

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 034 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=034>)

From: William Kniveton ([The Royal Court, London?]);

To: Bess of Hardwick (Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire);

Date: 22 June 1607

Summary: William Kniveton writes to Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury) of 'the certainest news I can at this time write': including that of land enclosures thrown open by 'unruly persons' near Lincoln; uneventful days in parliament; Thomas Fleming's new status as lord chief justice of England; and the king's intention for a progress and sending of a diamond ring to the lord treasurer (Thomas Sackville).

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (41)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: William Kniveton | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 034: William Kniveton

William Kniveton (b. 1558) was the son of Thomas Kniveton and his wife, Bess's half-sister, Jane (née Leche), and therefore Bess's nephew. He later became Sir William Kniveton of Mercaston, Derbyshire, and married Matilda, daughter of John Rollesley of Rollesley. Bess's Account Books record regular payments made to him during the 1590s, which include loans of money.

Other letters associated with William Kniveton:

31 December 1607 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=35>)

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People Associated with Letter 034: Bess of Hardwick

Born Elizabeth Hardwick (in c.1521/2, d. 13 February 1608), the woman known to posterity as Bess of Hardwick married four times during her life, as a result of which her name changed from Hardwick to Barlow (or Barley), Cavendish, St Loe and then finally (when she was countess of Shrewsbury and then dowager countess) Talbot. As one of the five children of John Hardwick (1495-1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth (née Leake), Bess had three sisters (Mary, Jane and Alice) and one brother (James). The Hardwicks were established Derbyshire gentry who had inherited a modest manor house and c.400 acres in and around Hardwick. But when John died in 1528, and their lands were seized by the crown, Bess faced hardship. Bess's mother quickly remarried but her new husband, Ralph Leche of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, brought little land or money to the marriage, and three more daughters were born (Bess's half-sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Margaret). Little else is known of Bess's childhood but, while still young, she was married for the first time, to Robert Barlow (or Barley) of Barlow, Derbyshire, sometime in or before 1543. Barlow died in 1544 and Bess received a small inheritance. In 1547 she married the twice-widowed Sir William Cavendish, treasurer of the king's chamber. Bess and Cavendish had eight children, six of whom survived: Frances (1548), Henry (1550), William (1551, from whom the dukes of Devonshire are descended), Charles (1553, from whom the dukes of Newcastle and Portland are descended), Elizabeth (1554) and Mary (1556). Probably due to a mixture of affection and shared social ambition, Bess's second marriage was happy and fortuitous. She was now moving in courtly circles and experiencing (for the first time) considerable wealth. In 1549 Cavendish and Bess bought the estate of Chatsworth, which was held jointly in both their names and which he and then Bess, following Cavendish's death in 1557, ambitiously rebuilt. Soon after her second husband's death, and sometime before Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), Bess married Sir William St Loe, a wealthy widower of ancient noble pedigree. St Loe was captain of the guard to the young queen and in addition to further improving Bess's finances, he also brought her into the queen's inner circle and she served briefly as a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber (in 1559). The marriage seems to have not been without affection; however, the two would have spent most of it apart - he serving the queen in London and Bess mostly at Chatsworth. Upon St Loe's death (probably in 1565), Bess inherited most of the estate. In 1567 Bess married for a final time, to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in England. To consolidate the union of their fortunes, the couple had Bess's eldest son, Henry, marry Shrewsbury's daughter (from his previous marriage), and Shrewsbury's eldest son, Gilbert (later the seventh earl), marry Bess's daughter, Mary. Also around this time, Shrewsbury was appointed to be the keeper of Mary Queen of Scots (from 1568-84). At first, relations between Bess and the Catholic Scottish queen seem to have been amicable; however, relations deteriorated all around as Bess's marriage to Shrewsbury broke down in the 1580s. An infamously nasty and highly public legal battle over estates ensued and finally the courts resolved that Shrewsbury provide Bess with a sizeable income from 1587 onwards (Shrewsbury died in 1590). In 1582, Bess took charge of the upbringing of her orphaned granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), claimant to the English

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and Scottish crowns. In 1587, Bess undertook her remarkable building works at Hardwick: the house now known as Hardwick Old Hall was complete by 1591; next to it, the extraordinary building now known as Hardwick New Hall was complete by 1599 and is one of the greatest architectural ventures of Elizabethan England. It was at Hardwick that Bess spent most of the remainder of her life, much of it devoted to caring for and managing Arbella, who came to loathe her existence in Derbyshire and devised several bizarre plans for her escape (to Bess's great distress). Bess also quarrelled with her eldest son, Henry, and disinherited both him and Arbella in her will. She left most of her estate to her beloved and faithful son, William Cavendish, who continued her great dynasty into the seventeenth century.

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Other letters associated with Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

- 1 Dec [c.1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=30>)
- 20 Jan [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=31>)
- [1574?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=41>)
- 3 Aug [1580s?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=205>)
- 2 Aug 1584 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=150>)
- 4 Aug 1584 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)
- 18 Feb [1591?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=233>)
- 21 Sep 1592 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=163>)
- 11 Mar 1593 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=160>)
- 19 Sep 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=1>)
- 20 May 1595 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=124>)
- 27 Feb 1596 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=16>)
- 11 Aug 1597 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=46>)
- 28 Feb [1598?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)
- [c.1600] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=7>)
- 2 Jun 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=125>)
- 6 Oct 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=126>)
- 28 Apr 1601 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=127>)
- 21 Dec 1602 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=44>)
- 9 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=128>)
- 18 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=139>)
- 29 Jan 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=129>)
- 2 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=130>)
- 6 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=131>)
- 21 Feb 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=132>)
- 3 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=134>)

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- 10 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=135>)
- 18 Apr 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=140>)
- 31 Jan 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=161>)
- 12 May 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=63>)
- 18 Jun 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=45>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 16 Dec 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=242>)
- 15 Jan [1606] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)
- 7 Mar 1606 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=49>)
- 13 Feb 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=14>)
- 25 May [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=3>)
- 27 Jun [1607] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=4>)
- 30 Nov 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=179>)
- 31 Dec 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=35>)

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Other letters associated with [The Royal Court, London?]

- 8 Mar [1560?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=100>)
- 13 Dec [1568] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=66>)
- 20 Feb 1576 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
- 19 Nov [1576?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=115>)
- 28 Feb 1579 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
- 23 Mar 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=24>)
- 10 Feb 1606 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=48>)
- 7 Mar 1606 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=49>)
- 13 Feb 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=14>)

Normalised view of Letter 034

To the Right honorable and my approued good Lady the Countesse dowager of Shrewesbury.

att Hardwicke

May yt pleas your Ladyship to vnderstand that we heare heare for Certayne that vpon thursdaie & fridaie last att night diuers of the Cittie of Lyncolne & other such vnruely persons thereabouts have throwen open Certayne inclosures of Sir Thomas Mountsons, & Sir Thomas Dallysons neere Lyncolne. The Kinge hath diuers tymes spoken of somme Lawe to be made agaynst Inclosers but ther is yet nothinge done therin. The parliamente sittes still but hath very little to doe./ yt is nowe agreed that Sir Thomas ffleminge who is Lord Cheif Baron shalbe Lord Cheif Iustice of England, and Iustice Tanfeild shalbe in his place & Sergeante Crookes shall succede him./ his Majestie intends a progresse (notwithstandinge all these stirres) into the Ile of Wight, but the Iests are not yet sett downe. yt is sayd he will goe within these xiiij or xv. dayes to Theobalds & lye there somme smalle tyme & then begin the progresse. The Lord Treasurer is Comme to his howse heere agayne who had bin in the Countrie for a tyme very discontented. I thinke partely with somme message the Kinge sent him after he had refused to paie money to ye Lord Hey which his majestie had giuen him. & partely also because the great sute for Sir Richard Lewsons lands is passed agaynst Sir George Curzon our Councieman, whose daughter & heire the Lord Buckhursts sonne hath married. his majestie after somme displeasinge messages sent ye Lord Treasurer a dyamond & wished he might liue so longe as that ringe would Continue, which they say reuiued my Lord Threasurer agayne. Thus being bould to troble your honour with these small matters which are the certaynest newes that I Can att this tyme write to your honour with my dayly prayer to god for your Ladyships longe lyfe with the Continuance of health, increase of honor & all happinesse to your Ladyship & all yours I most humbly take my leave & rest./

Your Ladyships euer most humbly to be Commaunded.

W:m. Knyveton:.

22°. Junij 1607.

Diplomatic view of Letter 034

[Address Leaf]

To the R. honorable and
my approued good Lady
the Countesse dowager
of Shrewesbury.

§

att Hardwicke

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(41) [Item number, hand: archivist]

8 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]

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& other such vnruely *persons* thereabouts have throwen
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The Kinge hath diu^{rs} tymes spoken of *somme*
Lawe to be made agaynst Inclosers but ther
is yet nothinge done therin. The *parliam.*^{te}
sittes still but hath very little to doe./
yt is nowe agreed that S^r Thomas ffleminge
who is Lo. Cheif Baron shalbe Lo. Cheif
Iustice of England, and Iustice Tanfeild
shalbe in his place & S^r geante Crookes shall
succeede him./ his Ma.^{tie} intends a *progresse*
(notwth standinge all these stirres) into the Ile
of Wight, but the Iests are not yet sett
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discontented. I thinke *partely* wth somme message
the Kinge sent him aft^r he had refused to paie
money to y^e Lo. Hey w^{ch} his ma.^{tie} had giuen
him. & *partely* also because the great sute for
S^r Richard Lewsons lands is passed agaynst
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daughter & heire the Lo. Buckhursts sonne
hath married. his ma.^{tie} aft^r somme displeasinge
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these small matt^{rs} w^{ch} are the certaynest newes
that I Can att this tyme write to yo^r ho. wth
my dayly prayer to god for yo^r La.^{ps} longe lyfe
wth the Continuance of health, increase of honor
& all happinesse to yo^r La.^p & all yo.^{ts} I most
humbly take my leave & rest./

Yo^r La.^{ps} euer most humbly
to be Commaunded.

W:^m . Knyveton:.
§

22°. Junij
1607 .

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