

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 004 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=004>)**

From: Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel (Arundel House, London);

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

Date: 27 June [1607]

Summary: Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel, writes to his grandmother-in-law, Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), regarding his newborn son: Bess had previously been asked to stand as godmother, but now the queen has requested to be the child's godmother.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (2)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: two seals over ribbon, red wax, arms embossed Ribbon, pale pinkish-lilac (close to Michel 2-19-3, 1-21-6 and 2-19-6) Letter packet - accordion

Hands: Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel | archivist |

Version: 1.0

## Copyright Information

All material is made available free of charge for individual, non-commercial use only. The copyright and other intellectual property rights in the transcribed letter text, metadata about the letters and the design of the letter display are owned by the University of Glasgow.

You are permitted to access, print and download letters from this site on the following conditions:

- use of all material on this site is for information and for non-commercial or your own personal use only; any copies of these pages saved to disk or to any other storage medium may only be used for subsequent viewing purposes or to print extracts for non-commercial or your own personal use.
- the content must not be modified in any way.
- any use of the material for a permitted purpose must be accompanied by a full source citation.

No part of this site may be reproduced or stored in any other web site or included in any public or private electronic retrieval system or service without the University of Glasgow's prior written permission. Commercial exploitation of the transcribed letters, including use by radio or television programme makers and examination boards, is prohibited without licence from the University of Glasgow.

Further information on copyright and citation can be found at:- (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/background.jsp?id=171>)

## **People Associated with Letter 004: Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel**

Thomas Howard, fourteenth earl of Arundel, fourth earl of Surrey, and first earl of Norfolk (1585-1646), was an art collector and politician. He married Bess's granddaughter, Aletheia (née Talbot) in 1606. Aletheia was the daughter of Gilbert Talbot, seventh earl of Shrewsbury, who was an early collector of paintings - a hobby he seems to have passed on enthusiasm for to both his daughter and son-in-law. Arundel's art collection became one of the largest in Stuart England, but he is equally known for being an intellectual and promoting works of history and literature. He also played a significant role in pre-Civil War politics (for example, as earl marshal from 1621), before he left for a life of exile in Europe in the early 1640s (then living apart from his wife, who was also in exile).

Other letters associated with Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel:

25 May [1607] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=3>)

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

## People Associated with Letter 004: 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

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

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.

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

## 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>)

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

- 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>)
- 22 Jun 1607 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=34>)
- 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>)

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

## **Other letters associated with Arundel House, London**

25 May [1607] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=3>)

## Normalised view of Letter 004

To my most honorable and worthy grandmother the Countesse of Shrewsbury at Hardwicke/

---

Madam, as soone as euer God, out of his greate goodnes, had blessed vs with a sonne; wee all resolued, to haue bin Sutors vnto your Ladyship, that you would vouchsafe, to haue bin his godmother; but it hath pleased the Queenes majestie (oute of her especiall fauor) to interpose her selfe; farre contrary to oure expectacion, (seeing it hath neuer till this time beene seene or knowne that the kinges majeste and the Queene haue christened any childe together,) which must at this time, stay the proceedinge in oure firste desire, vnlesse, eyther the vnusualnes, in like cases, or some other accidente, may diuert the Queene from her intente, which, if it doe happne, then, wee will aduertise your Ladyship thereof by poaste, and will earnestly goe forward in oure humbe suite. In the meane time, my wife & my selfe, beseech your Ladyship, that you will make vs both, with your little one, happy, by the continuance of your Ladyships good wishes, and daily blessinge; and cease not our continuall prayers to God, for your Ladyships longe health and happines and soe I rest

Your Ladyships louinge & dutifull son to commande

Arundell

Arundell house this 27th of Iune/



## Diplomatic view of Letter 004

[Address Leaf]

To my most honorable and worthy  
grandmother the Countesse of  
Shrewsbury at Hardwicke/

---

[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(2) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

Madam, as soone as euer God, out of his greate goodnes, had blessed vs with a sonne; wee all resolued, to haue bin Sutours vnto your La:, that you would vouchsafe, to haue bin his godmother; but it hath pleased the Queenes m<sup>tie</sup> (oute of her especiall fauor) to interpose her selfe; farre contrary to a oure expectacion, (seeing it hath neuer till this time beene seene or knowne that the kinges m<sup>te</sup> and the Queene haue christened any childe together,) w<sup>ch</sup> must at this time, stay the proceedinge in oure firste desire, vnlesse, eyther the vnusualnes, in like cases, or some other accidente, may diuert the Queene from her in=tente, which, if it doe happne, then, wee will aduertise

your La:<sup>p</sup> thereof by poaste, and will earnestly goe forward in oure humbe suite. In the meane time, my wife & my selfe, beseech your La:<sup>p</sup>, that you will make vs both, with your little one, happy, by the continuance of y<sup>f</sup> La:<sup>ps</sup> good wishes, and daily blessinge; and cease not our continuall prayers to God, for your La:<sup>ps</sup> longe health and happines and soe I rest

Y<sup>r</sup> La:<sup>ps</sup> louinge & dutifull son to  
commande

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

Arundell §

Arundell house this  
27<sup>th</sup> of Iune/

Version: 1.0