

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 046 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=046>)**

From: Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland (Kynolton (Kinoulton), Nottinghamshire);

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

Date: 11 August 1597

Summary: Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland, writes to Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury) on behalf of the bearer of the letter, expressing the latter's thanks for her favour and eagerness to be of service to her. Manners also acknowledges gratitude for Bess's favour shown towards himself, 'and the more that no sinister practice can withdraw your good opinion from me'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (56)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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## **People Associated with Letter 046: Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland**

Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland (1576-1612), was the eldest surviving son of John Manners, fourth earl of Rutland (d. 1588), and his wife, Elizabeth (née Charleton; d. 1595); and nephew of Edward Manners, the third earl (1549-87). He married Elizabeth Sidney (1585?-1612), daughter of poet Sir Philip Sidney, in 1599. Shortly after the accession of James I, Rutland was appointed lord lieutenant of Lincolnshire and steward of Queen Anne's manor of Grantham; however, his later life was plagued with ill health, as well as strained marriage relations, and he spent most of his time on his country estates.

Other letters associated with Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland:

13 October 1606 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=57>)

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## People Associated with Letter 046: 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>)
- 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>)
- 10 Mar 1603 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=135>)

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- 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>)
- 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>)

## Normalised view of Letter 046

To the Right honorable my Singular good Lady the Contes dowager of Shrewsburye at hardwick

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This berer my old acquayntance woll nedes have me write to your honour humble thanks for your honorable favour and bounte towards him, he protesteth that he wold think him selfe happie if it myght be in him to doe enny acceptable service to your ladyship or enny of yours./ now good Madam for my self I must nedes acknowlege my self beholding to your ladyship for your late honorable and kynd favour, and the more that no synister practise can withdraw your good opynion from me./ your ladyship shall therefore evor command me, with my prayer to the almyghtie longer to preserve you. at kynbolton this xj of August. 1597

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Your ladyship's most assured to be commanded

Ro. Manners

## Diplomatic view of Letter 046

[Address Leaf]

### [Address Leaf: Notes]

Roger Manners E of Rutland (tho' he does not sign himself so) Succeeded his father John in 1587. he was Constable of Nottingham Castle, Chief Justice of Sherwood forest, & died without Issue, 26. June 1612. [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To the Right honorable  
my Singular good Lady  
the Contes dowager of  
Shrewsburye at hardwick  
§

[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428  
(56) [Item number, hand: archivist]  
116 [Old foliation/item number, hand: archivist]  
9 [Old foliation, hand: archivist]

This berer my old acquayntance woll nedes have me write to yo<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>r</sup> humble thankes for yo<sup>r</sup> honorable favo<sup>r</sup> and bounte towards *him*, he protesteth that he wold think *him* selfe happie if it myght be in *him* to doe enny acceptable service to y<sup>r</sup> la. or enny of yo<sup>rs</sup> ./ now good Madam for my s<sup>t</sup> self I must nedes acknowlege my self beholding to y<sup>r</sup> la. for yo<sup>r</sup> late honorable and kynd favo<sup>r</sup> , and the more that no synister practise can w<sup>t</sup> draw y<sup>r</sup> good opynion from me./ yo<sup>r</sup> la. shall therefore evor command me, w<sup>t</sup> my prayer to the almyghtie longer to preserve y<sup>u</sup> . at kyn kynolton this xj of August. 1597

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*[significant space]*

Y<sup>r</sup> la. most assured  
to be *commanded*

Ro. Manners  
§

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