

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 049** (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=049>)

From: James Montague ([The Royal Court, London?]);

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

Date: 7 March 1605/6

Summary: James Montague, dean of the Chapel Royal, writes to Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury) from court following discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, reporting about the parliament's decision on obligatory communion; Henry Garnet's incarceration in the Tower of London, and the expected clearing of the earl of Northumberland; the King of France's army; and the queen's pregnancy.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (60)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: seal, red wax, embossed Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - tuck and fold

Hands: James Montague | 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 049: James Montague

James Montagu (1568-1618), bishop of Winchester, was involved in the building of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and served as its first master (due to familial connections with the Sidney circle), from 1598-1608. After the accession of James I in 1603, he was preferred as dean to the Chapel Royal. He was also dean of Lichfield, and then dean of Worcester, before becoming bishop of Winchester in 1608. He seems to have been a regular advisor and informant to Bess in the first years of James I's reign: his close contact with the King made him ideal for this role and Bess left him £20 in her will. However, that Montagu was careful to control the information he passed to Bess is suggested by a letter of 11 April 1605: on this date Montague's letter to Bess was sent first to Gilbert Talbot, seventh earl of Shrewsbury, and included with it was his own seal, so that Gilbert could read the letter to Bess and re-seal it without detection (Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers, Vol. L, fol. 7).

Other letters associated with James Montague:

10 February 1605/6 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=48>)

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

## People Associated with Letter 049: 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>)
- 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>)

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

## **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>)
- 13 Feb 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=14>)
- 22 Jun 1607 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=34>)

## Normalised view of Letter 049

To the most Honorable Lady the Countesse of Shrewsbury dougrer at Hardwike

---

My most Honorable good Lady vpon occasion of my continuall followinge of his Majestie in his iorneyes I haue ben longer silent then I should haue ben: The newes heere is all in parlament busines The matter of religion to compell euery man to the communion hath much trobled them but now they are agreed that all shall come to the communion within the space of 2 yeares or else they shalbe be in the nature of recusants for the matter of purueance the Kinge is very desierous for the ease of the subiect to haue a composition and to pay a yearely soome of monny and to be freed from the purueor But as yet the Lower house will not heare of any composition for that they feare they can haue no assurance from the Kinge and then they should boeth giue ther monny and be trobled with the Kinges takers to/ It is thought the parlament is like to continew yet a good while for they must part with on subsidy more and 2 fiueteenes or else this is nothinge that they haue don: The prouinciall of the Iesuites Garnet who is in the Tower will proue a notorious traytor and to haue had his hand in all these treasons and a principall man that caused them to take armes when the powder plott fayled The Earle of Northhumberland will goe cleere in this matter his Lady is permitted to come to him and ther is expectance of his liberty shortly But with the rest of the Lords it will goe hard Ther be many Traytors sent doune into ther seuerall counties wher the dwell to be executed ther and some more arraynments are expected heere The Kinge of france hath rayسد a great army and is reddy to goe into the feeld but no man knoweth whether or agaynst whom but as it is thought agaynst the duke of Bullayne who is at a place called Seydan toward Germany but he maketh all his neyghbors afrayd

Our Queene and mistresse groweth bigg and looketh her about the latter end of May The Court will tarry heere at White Hall till Easter and then to Greenwich wher the Queene purposeth to lye in

Thus hauinge no other matter at this time to troble your Honor withall with my humble Duty I take my leaue beesechinge the Lord to keepe your honor longe in health and prosperity from the Court this 7 of March 1605

Your Honors most assured and faythfull poore frend

James Mountagu



## Diplomatic view of Letter 049

[Address Leaf]

To the most Honorable  
La: the Countesse  
of Shrewsbury dougrer  
at Hardwike  
§

---

[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(60)

[Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

My most Honorable good La: vppon occasion  
of my continuall followinge of his Ma<sup>tie</sup> in his  
iorneys I haue ben longer silent then I  
should haue ben: The newes heere is all in  
parlament busines The matter of religion  
to compell euery man to the comunion hath  
much trobled them but now they are agreed  
that all shall come to the communion within  
the space of 2 yeares or else they shalbe  
be in the nature of recusants for the  
matter of purueance the Kinge is very desie=rous for the ease of the subject to haue a  
composition and to pay a yearely soome of  
monny and to be freed from the purueor  
But as yet the Lower house will not heare  
of any composition for that they feare they  
can haue no assurance from the Kinge  
and then they should boeth giue ther  
monny and be trobled with the Kinges  
takers to/ It is thought the parlament  
is like to continew yet a good while

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

for they must part with on subsidy more  
and 2 fiuteenes or else this is nothinge  
that they haue don: The prouinciall  
of the Iesuites Garnet who is in the  
Tower will proue a notorious traytor  
and to haue had his hand in all these  
treasons and a principall man that cau=sed them to take armes when the pow=der plott fayled  
The Earle of North=humberland will goe cleere in this mat=ter his Lady is permitted to come  
to him  
and ther is expectance of his liberty  
shortly But with the rest of the Lords  
it will goe hard Ther be many

[page break]

Traytors sent doune into ther seuerall counties wher  
the dwell to be executed ther and some more  
arraynments are expected heere The Kinge  
of france hath raysted a great army and is  
reddy to goe into the feeld but no man knoweth whether or agaynst whom but as it is  
thought agaynst the duke of Bullayne who  
is at a place called Seydan toward Germany  
but he maketh all his neyghbors afrayd

Our Queene and mistresse groweth bigg  
and looketh her about the latter end of May  
The Court will tarry heere at White Hall  
till Easter and then to Greenwich wher  
the Queene purposeth to lye in

Thus hauinge no other matter at this time  
to troble your Honor withall with my humble Duty I take my leaue beeseechinge the  
Lord to keepe your honor longe in health  
and prosperity from the Court this  
7 of March 1605

Your Honors most assured  
and faythfull poore frend

James Mountagu

# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

§

Version: 1.0