

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 061 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=061>)**

From: Sir William St. Loe (London, Greater London);

To: Bess of Hardwick (Chatsworth House, Derbyshire);

Date: 24 October [c. 1560]

Summary: William St. Loe writes to his wife, Bess (Lady St. Loe), from London, complaining of the cost of staying at court; asks her to send towels and other things; advises her on the use of horses at Chatsworth; and describes how the queen has complained about his previous absence from court. He mentions an 'extreme pain in my teeth'.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (77)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: Sir William St. Loe | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

## People Associated with Letter 061: Sir William St. Loe

Sir William St Loe (c.1520-65?) was Bess's third husband and the two were probably married in 1558 or 1559, right around the time Elizabeth I succeeded to the crown. In that same year, St Loe was appointed captain of the guard to the queen. St Loe seems to have had genuine affection for Bess; however, due to his duties at court (the queen did not like him being away), the two spent most of their marriage apart, he in London and she at Chatsworth (where she undertook considerable building works). Bess's marriage to St Loe undoubtedly brought her closer to the queen and she was named a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber in 1559. The marriage also improved her finances and when St Loe died Bess inherited most of his estate.

Other letters associated with Sir William St. Loe:

4 September [1560?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=59>)

12 October [c. 1560] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=60>)

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## People Associated with Letter 061: 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 Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

- 15 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=200>)
- 31 Mar [1550s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=198>)
- 13 Apr [c.1550] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=13>)
- 14 Nov [1552] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 13 Jan [c.1560] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=47>)
- 4 Sep [1560?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=59>)
- 12 Oct [c.1560] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=60>)
- 18 May 1562 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=55>)
- 20 Nov [1565?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=17>)
- 8 Dec [c.1565] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=28>)
- 26 Feb [1566?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=18>)
- Jun [1568?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=157>)
- 28 Jun [1568?] (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)
- [1570s?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=210>)
- [1570] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=178>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- [1577] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=182>)
- 2 Aug 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=197>)
- 23 Sep 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=121>)
- 22 Jun 1579 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=189>)
- 15 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=175>)
- 8 Apr 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=236>)
- 8 May 1594 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=102>)

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## Other letters associated with London, Greater London

- 14 Nov [1552] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=99>)
- 25 Feb 1558 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=112>)
- 4 Nov 1561 (destination) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=54>)
- 14 Dec [1564] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=50>)
- [23?] Jan 1569 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=164>)
- 28 Jul 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=25>)
- 31 Aug 1570 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=170>)
- 21 Sep 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=26>)
- 13 Oct 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=225>)
- 3 Feb 1574 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=27>)
- 9 Jul 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=191>)
- 21 May 1591 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=215>)
- [c.1600] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=22>)
- 12 Nov 1600 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=20>)
- 4 Jul 1604 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=21>)
- 23 Apr 1605 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=23>)

## Normalised view of Letter 061

To my loveng wyff att chatesworth yeve thys wyth spede./

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my honest swete chatesworth I lyke the wekelye pryce off my hyred cowrte stvff so evyll thatt apou thvrsdaye nextt I wyll send ytt home agayne att whyche daye the weke endyth I praye yow cawse soche stvff as mowsall left packt in a schete to be browght hythar by the nextt caryar there be hand towels and other thyngs therein thatt I mvst occvpye when I schall lye att whyte hawll my men hath neyther schvrtt nor eynye other thyng to schyft them vntyll thatt cvm./ trust noen off yowre men to ryde eynye yowre howsyd horsys bvtt onelye lhames crompt or Wyllyam marchyngton bvtt neyther off them wythowte good cawse serve spedelye to be doen for nags ther be enow abowte the howse to serve other pvrposys./ one handfvll off otes to everye one off the geldyngs att a wateryng wylbe svffysyent so they be not laboryd yow mvst cawse svm to overse the horskepar for thatt he ys verye well learnyd in loyteryng./ the qvne hath fownde greatt fawt wyth my long absens sayeng sche wolde talck wyth me farder and thatt sche wolde well chyde me therevnto I anseryd thatt when her hyghnes vnderstode the trawth and the cawse sche wolde nott be offendyd wherevnto sche sayed verye well [syr] very well howbeytt hand off hers dyd I nott kysse./ the lorde kepar hath promysed me fayth fvllye to be att boeth dayes heryng and thatt yff eyther lawe or consyens be on my syde I schall have ytt to my contentasyon./ Vawghan ys cvm vnto towne bvtt nott yett bagott./ stevyns and we schall go thoro on frydaye nextt att whyche tyme hys brothar wylbe here who hath dysbvrsed sevyn hvnderyed off the xij. hvnderyed pownsds./ I have had extreme payne in my teeth sythens sondaye dynar./ thvs wyth akeng teeth I end prayng the lyveng to preserve the and all thyen wrytan att london ageynst my wyll where I my yff other wayes owre mattars myght well be endyd thys xxiiijth off october./

yowr loveng hvsband wyth akeng hartt vntyll we mete

Wyllyam Seyntlo/

yff yow thynck good lease yowre fysschyng in dove vnto agard we ar the losers by svfferyng hytt as we have doen./

## Diplomatic view of Letter 061

[Address Leaf]

### [Address Leaf: Notes]

curious [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

To my loveng wyff att  
chatesworth yeve thys  
wyth spede./

[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(77) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

my honest swete chatesworth I lyke the <sup>^wekelye^</sup> pryce off my <sup>hyf</sup>  
hyred cowrte stvff so evyll thatt apou thvr d sdaye nextt I wyll  
send ytt home agayne att whyche daye the weke endyth  
I praye yow cawse soche stvff as mowsall left packt in a schete  
to be browght hythar by the nextt caryar there be hand  
towels and other thyngs therein thatt I mvst occvpye when  
I <sup>^schall lye^</sup> att whyte hawll ~~schall lye~~ my men hath neyther schvrtt  
nor eynye other thyng to schyft them vntyll thatt cvm./ ~~trust~~  
<sup>^trust^</sup> noen off yowre men to d ryde eynye yowre howsyd horsys bvtt  
onelye Ihames crompt or Wyllyam marchyngton bvtt neyther  
off them wythowte good e cawse serve spedelye to be doen  
for nags ther be enow abowte the howse to serve other  
pvrposys./ one handfvll off otes to everye one off the geldyngs  
att a wateryng wylbe svffysyent so they be not laboryd  
yow mvst cawse svm to overse the horskepar for thatt  
he ys verye well learnyd in loyteryng./ the qvne hath  
fownde greatt fawt wyth my long absens sayeng sche  
wolde talck wyth me farder and *[deletion]* thatt  
sche wolde well chyde me therevnto I anseryd  
thatt when her hyghnes vnderstode the trawth and the



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cawse sche wolde nott be offendyd wherevnto sche sayed  
verye well ... very well howbeytt had <sup>^hand^</sup> off hers dyd  
I nott kysse./ the lorde kepar hath promysed me fayth  
fvllye to be att boeth dayes heryng and that yff eyther  
lawe or consyens be on my syde I schall have ytt to my  
contentasyon./ Vawghan ys cvm vnto towne bvtt not yett  
bagott./ stevyns and we schall go thoro on frydaye nextt  
at whyche tyme hys brothar wylbe here who hath dysbvrsed  
sevyn hvnderyed off the xij. hvnderyed pownds./ I  
have had extreme payne in my teeth sythens sondaye  
dynar./ thvs wyth akeng teeth I <sup>^end^</sup> prayng the lyveng

[page break]

to preserve the and all thyen [deletion] <sup>^wrytan att^</sup> london ageynst  
my wyll ~~my~~ yff where I my yff other wayes owre mattars  
myght well be endyd [deletion] thys xxiiij<sup>th</sup> off  
october./

yowr [deletion] <sup>^loveng hvsband^</sup> wyth akeng hartt vntyll  
we mete

Wylyyam Seyntlo/

yff yow thynck good lease  
yowre fysschyng in dove vnto  
agard we ar the losers by  
svfferyng hytt as we have doen./

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