

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 083 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=083>)

From: Gilbert Talbot (Buxton, Derbyshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick; George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury;

Date: [30 June 1578?]

Summary: Gilbert Talbot writes to George (his father) and Bess (his stepmother and mother-in-law), earl and countess of Shrewsbury, reporting his recent dealings with Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester - to do with 'a packet' from George; Dudley's petitioning the queen on behalf of Elizabeth (née Cavendish; Bess's daughter), countess of Lennox; and an upcoming visit to Chatsworth.

Archive: Folger Shakespeare Library, Cavendish-Talbot MSS, X.d.428 (110)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

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

Hands: Gilbert Talbot | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 083: Gilbert Talbot

Gilbert Talbot (1552-1616) was the son of George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, and his first wife Gertrude (née Manners; d.1566). Gilbert was the second son but as his older brother Frances died in 1582, Gilbert succeeded to the earldom and became seventh earl of Shrewsbury after his father died on 18 November 1590. After his father's marriage to Bess (and to serve their interests), on 9 February 1568 Gilbert was married to Bess's daughter from her second marriage, Mary (née Cavendish). That is to say, Gilbert was married to his step-sister, at which point Bess became both his step-mother and mother-in-law. (At the same time, his sister Grace was married to Bess's eldest son Henry.) Gilbert and Mary were known for living large and eventually relations between Gilbert and his father Shrewsbury deteriorated over what Shrewsbury saw as his son and daughter-in-law's careless spending and the resultant debt. Gilbert also became notorious for his quarrelsome disposition. His relationship with his father suffered further damage when he accused him of siding with his wife Bess during their marriage breakdown. After his father's death he became engaged in litigation with Bess over the will (a legal battle which Bess won). Then, in 1594, he challenged his brother, Edward Talbot, to a duel amidst allegations of poisoning. These and other feuds were often long-lasting and expensive and left Gilbert with many enemies and debts. Gilbert had five children with Mary. His two sons, George and John, died in infancy and therefore his three daughters became joint heirs to their father's titles and great estate: Mary Herbert, countess of Pembroke (d. 1650), Elizabeth Grey, countess of Kent (1582-1651) and Aletheia Howard, countess of Arundel (b. After 1582, d. 1654).

Other letters associated with Gilbert Talbot:

- 4 November 1570 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)
- 28 June 1574 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=80>)
- 14 May 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=81>)
- [October 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)
- 13 October 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)
- 20 February 1575/6 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
- 28 May 1576 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=82>)
- [July 1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=84>)
- 1 August 1577 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=85>)
- 13 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=166>)
- 28 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
- 11 September 1580 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=154>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

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[19 September 1583?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=86>)

[February 1589] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=87>)

1 July 1589 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=88>)

28 February [1597/8?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)

[November 1604] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=177>)

15 January [1606] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)

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People Associated with Letter 083: 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.

People Associated with Letter 083: George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury

George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury (c.1522-90), was the eldest and only surviving son of Francis Talbot, fifth earl of Shrewsbury (1500-60), and his first wife, Mary (d.1538). In 1538, at the age of sixteen, he took up the title of Lord Talbot, until he succeeded to the earldom after his father's death twenty-two years later. In 1539 he married his first wife, Gertrude (née Manners; d.1566/7), with whom he had seven children: four daughters and three sons. Early on he acquired a number of honours stemming from his family's well-established prominence in the north: knight bachelor (1547), member of the council of the north (1549), knight of the Garter (1561), and lord lieutenant of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (1565). Following the death of his first wife, he married Bess, then the widow of William St Loe (c.1520-65?), in 1567. At this point Shrewsbury was one of the wealthiest men in England, derived from his estates and also business adventuring in farming, shipping, coal-mining, glassworks and lead extraction and production. Soon after his marriage to Bess, however, he was appointed keeper of Mary Queen of Scots, a custodianship he would hold from 1569-84. Shrewsbury prided himself on his loyalty to Elizabeth I, but he soon found her reluctant to provide sufficient diet money to keep Mary and her retinue. This, in addition to the monies needed for expensive building projects (at Worksop and Chatsworth), and his eldest son Gilbert's debts led to serious financial anxiety for Shrewsbury. Furthermore, he was forced to remain with Mary at all times and was therefore losing his place at court. As Shrewsbury's stresses grew and he became increasingly irascible, his marriage with Bess broke down spectacularly amid quarrelling to do with family finances and the allocation of estates. Scandal and mutual bad-mouthing soon became very public and the queen herself intervened, eventually dictating that Shrewsbury pay Bess a regular income (from 1587), while the two lived apart. Shrewsbury was an ill man for many years and suffered with a severe rheumatic condition, what he referred to as 'gout', which contributed to his terrible handwriting. He died in the company of his mistress, Elinor Bretton, at Sheffield Manor, on 18 November 1590, after being administered a mercury cure. His son Gilbert Talbot succeeded him as the seventh earl of Shrewsbury.

Other letters associated with George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury:

28 June [1568?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=64>)

[December 1568] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=65>)

13 December [1568] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=66>)

[1569?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=67>)

[1570s?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=184>)

[c. 1570] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=9>)

[1570] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=178>)

[1570s] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=203>)

[c. 1570] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=68>)

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4 November 1570 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=226>)
4 November 1570 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)
[c. 1571] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=70>)
[c. 1571] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=69>)
[1574?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=72>)
[1574?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=71>)
8 August 1574 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=73>)
[c. 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=76>)
[c. 1575] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=75>)
[1575-7] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=245>)
7 June 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=74>)
June 19 [c. 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=77>)
20 February 1575/6 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
19 November [1576?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=115>)
[1577] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=183>)
[1577] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=182>)
18 May [1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=109>)
4 June 1577 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=221>)
25 June 1577 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=172>)
14 May 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=188>)
2 August 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=197>)
28 December 1578 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=193>)
13 February 1578/9 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=166>)
28 February 1578/9 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
22 June 1579 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=189>)
17 January 1579/80 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=190>)
13 May 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=194>)
21 June 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=78>)
11 September 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=154>)
10 October 1580 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=79>)
8 February 1581/2 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=195>)
4 August 1584 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)
26 August [1584] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=116>)

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14 October [1585] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=229>)

23 October 1585 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=117>)

9 June 1586 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=176>)

4 August 1586 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=202>)

[April 1587] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=186>)

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Other letters associated with Buxton, Derbyshire

26 Apr 1589 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=95>)

Normalised view of Letter 083

To my Lord and my Lady

The LLordes doe pray your Lordship to remember theyr case knyves.

My duty &c. this morninge early I delyvered your Lordship's pacquett to my Lord of Leicester who vpon redyng therof sayde he wolde wryte to your Lordship by a poste yat is here, & willed me to sende away your Lackey. I asked him how Longe he thoughte to tarry here and prayed him to tarry as Longe as myghte be and he sayde he knew not whether to goe to chatesworthe on tuesday or wednesday or thursday cum sevensyghte but thone of thos three dayes withoute fayle/, There came sum score of fowle hither on saterday which serve here very well yesterday & will doe thes iij or 4 dayes.

Sir Hughe chomley sente hither to my Lord of Leicester a very fatte beiffe, which my Lord of Leicester bedd me goe doune to see, and to take him to vse as I lysted, but I toulde him I was suer your Lordship wolde be angry if I toke him, yet for all yat, he wolde force me to take him and so I kepe him here in the towne tyll I know your Lordship's pleasure what shalbe doune with him, he wolde serve very well for chatesworth master D. balye thynkethe yat they will tarry ij or iij dayes at chatesworthe. There is no worde yet come from my Lord of Hundington & my Lady whether they will meete my Lord of Leicester at chatesworthe or not, if they doe, (as he hath wrytten very earnestly to them), I thynke he will not cum to ashebye, but goe the nexte way to Kyllingeworthe & there tarry but ij or iij dayes only. /my Lord of Rutlande by reason of the fowle afternoone yesterday, Lay here all the Laste nyghte, in ye chambe[r] where Sir Henry Lea Lodged./ I shewed yat lettre of my Lady Lennox your daughter to my Lord of Leicester who sayde, that he thoughte it were farre better for him to deferr her sutes to her majestie till his owne comminge to the courte then otherwyse to wryte to her before, for yat he thynkethe her majestie will suppose his lettre if he sholde wryte were but at your Ladyship's requeste & so by an other lettre wolde streyghte answeere it agayne & so it doe no great good but at his metyng your Ladyship he will (he saythe) advyse in what sorte your Ladyship shall wryte to the Queen's majestie which he will carry vnto her, and then be as earneste a solisitor therin as ever he was for any thing in his lyefe, & he doubtethe not to prevayle to your Ladyship's contentacion./

To morrow my Lord of Leicester menethe to goe to Sir Peres a Leyes to mete with my Lord of Darbye, if the wether be any whytt fayre./

And thus moste humblie cravinge your honors' blessinge with my wonted prayer for your Longe continuans in all honor & moste perfyte healte & Longe Lyfe I sease. at buxstons in haste this presente monday before noone.

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Your honors' moste humble and obedyent Lovinge Sonne

G Talbott

Diplomatic view of Letter 083

[Address Leaf]

To my L. and my La.

The LLordes doe pray
yor L. to remember
theyr case knyves.

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

X.d.428

(110) [Item number, hand: archivist]

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

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

My duty &c. this morninge early I delyvered yo^r L.
pacquett to my L. of Lec. who vpon redynge therof
sayde he wolde wryte to yo^r L. by a poste y^t
is here, & willed me to sende away yo^r Lackey.
I asked him how Longe he thoughte to tarry here
and prayed him to tarry as Longe as myghte be
but and he sayde he knew not whether to
goe to chatesworthe on twesday or wednesday or
thursday cum sevennyghte but thone of thos three
dayes wth oute fayle/, There came sum score of fowle
hither on saterday w^{ch} serve here very well ~
yesterday & will doe thes iij or 4 dayes.

S^r Hughe chomley sente hither to my L. of Lec.
a very fatte beiffe, w^{ch} my L. of Lec. bedd
me goe doune to see, and to take him to vse
as I lysted, but I toulde him I was suer
yo^r L. wolde be angry if I toke him, yet
for all y^t, he wolde force me to take him

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and so I kepe him here in the towne tyll
I know yo^r L. pleasure what shalbe doune wth
him, he wolde serve very well for chateswrth
m^r D. balye thynkethe y^t they will tarry
ij or iij dayes at chatesworthe. There is
no worde yet come from my L. of Hundington & my La. whether they will ^{^meete^} my L. of Lec.
at chatesworthe or not, if they doe, (as he hathe
wrytten very earnestly to them), I thynke he will
not cum to ashebye, but goe the nexte way to
Kyllingeworthe & there tarry but ij or iij dayes only.
/my L. of Rutlande by reason of the fowle afternoone
yesterday, Lay here all the Laste nyghte, in y^c chambe...
where S^r Henry Lea Lodged./

[page break]

I shewed y^t *lettre* of my La. Lennox to yo^r daughter to
my L. of Lec. who sayde, that he thoughte it were
farre better for him to deferr her sutes to her ma.^{tie}
till his owne comminge to the courte then otherwyse to
wryte to her before, for y^t he thynkethe her ma.^{tie} will
suppose his *lettre* were if he sholde wryte were but
at yo^r La. requeste & so by an other *lettre* wolde streyghte
answere it agayne & so it doe no great good but
at ^{^his^} metyng yo^r La. he will (he saythe) advyse in
what sorte yo^r La. shall wryte to the Q. ma.^{tie}
w^{ch} he will carry vnto her, and then be as
earneste a solisitor ^{^therin^} as ever he was for any thing
in his lyefe, & he doubtethe not to prvaile to
yo^r La. contentacion./

To morrow my L. of Lec. menethe to goe to S^r
Peres a Leyes to mete wth my L. of Darbye, if
the wether will be any whytt fayre./

And thus moste humblie cravinge yo^r ho: blessinge
wth my wonted prayer for yo^r Longe continuans in
all honor & moste *perfyte* healthe & Longe Lyfe

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I sease. at buxstons in haste this p^r sente
mday before noone.

Yo^r ho: moste humble and
obedyent Lovinge Sonne
§

[significant space]

G Talbott
§

Version: 1.0