

## TWO SIXTEENTH CENTURY MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS

By LESLIE DOW, F.S.A.

A few years ago I had the opportunity of examining a small deed of settlement, measuring 15 by 8 inches, relating to a marriage between John Stubbe and Anne de Vere in 1577.<sup>1</sup> The seal is intact and bears the arms of Stubbe. The following is a transcript of the document, omitting some of the legal phraseology and repetitions; a photograph of it accompanies this note (Plate XVIII).

THIS INDENTURE made the firste day of Maye in the ninetenth yeare of the Raigne of o<sup>r</sup> Sovraigne Ladie Elizabeth by the grace of God Quene of England . . . Betwene John Stubbe of Lincolnes Inne in the County of Midls gent on the one pte And S<sup>r</sup> Robert Bell Knight Lorde cheife Baron Alberie Veer of Hennighame in the County of Essex esquire Drue Drurye of Norwiche esquire and Thomas Steyninges of Belinges in the County of Suff esquire of thother ptie WITTNESSETH that the said John Stubbe for and in consideracon of a mariage to be had and solompnized betwene the said John Stubbe and one Anne one of the daughters of the said Alberie Veer and late wief of Chropher Sharnborne of Sharnbourne in the County of Norff esquire deceased and for the jointure of the said Anne doeth for him his heires . . . covenante . . . to and with the said S<sup>r</sup> Robert Bell etc. . . . That he the said John Stubbe on this side or before the feaste of the nativity of o<sup>r</sup> Lorde God next comminge . . . shall . . . convey and assure to Hughe Veer & Charles Seckforde esquires . . . all that his mannor of Thelveton . . . lyinge . . . in the Townes of Thelveton Dickleburgh Shimplinge Skole Burston and ffrense in the said County of Norff . . . and the said Hughe and Charles . . . shall stande and be seised of and in the said mannor . . . to the onely uses and intents hereafter specified . . . That is to saye to the use of the said John Stubbe . . . untill the day of the solompnizacon of the said mariage . . . And then imediate-ly to the use of the said Anne for terme of the naturall lief of the said Anne for the full and whole jointure of the said

<sup>1</sup> Then in the possession of Mr. J. F. R. Prier de Saône, of Woodbridge, to whom I was indebted for its loan. Mr. de Saône has since generously deposited it at the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office (T3/1/3).



Anne and imediately from and after the decease of the said Anne Then to the use and behofe of the said John Stubbe and of his heires forever IN WITTNES whereof the pties abovenamed to theis . . . Indentures interchangeably have sette their handes and seales the day and yeare first above-written

JOHN STUBBE

Seal, in yellow wax, bears the arms of STUBBE:  
[sa] on a bend between three pheons [ar] as  
many round buckles [of the first].

On the dorse, the following witnesses have signed:—Ch. [?Calthorpe], John Tyndall, Richard Stubbe, Edmund Stubbe, Henry Gillinge [or Gittinge] and H. Blanchard. It is also indorsed, in a much later hand, 'Mr. Jn<sup>o</sup> Stubbs settlem<sup>t</sup> of ye Manno<sup>r</sup> of Thelveton his wifes joynture'.

Anne, the bride, was grand-daughter of John de Vere, 15th Earl of Oxford, who died in 1539, and 'Hugh Veer' was her brother.<sup>2</sup> She had married, first, at Earl Soham in 1569,<sup>3</sup> Christopher Shernborne, who died in 1575.<sup>4</sup> Her second marriage, with John Stubbe, with which we are here concerned, took place 21 July 1577 at Great Bealings,<sup>5</sup> perhaps from Seckford Hall, the home of her cousin Mary Seckford, of whom more later.

Of John Stubbe's antecedents I have not been able to learn very much. He was presumably a member of the Norfolk family of that name which was connected with Scottow and other places in the county; there was also a branch at Laxfield in Suffolk.<sup>6</sup> Venn states that he was the son of 'John Stubbe(s) of Buxton, Norfolk'; matriculated pensioner from Trinity College, Cambridge, 1555 (*impubes*);<sup>7</sup> born c. 1543; B.A. 1560-61; admitted Lincolns Inn 1562; called to the bar 1572. 'A zealous puritan. Held the manor of Thelveton and had also an estate at Buxton. Suffered the loss of his right hand for a pamphlet against the proposed marrying of the Queen 1579. Accompanied the army despatched to France to aid Henry IV

<sup>2</sup> *Visitation of Essex*, 1558, ed. Melcalfe (Harl. Soc., xiii, p. 47). There is also a pedigree in Ryece's *Breviary of Suffolk 1618*, ed. Hervey, 1902, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Parish Register.

<sup>4</sup> Venn, *Alumni Cantab.*, iv, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Parish Register.

<sup>6</sup> *Visitation of Suffolk, 1664*, ed. Rylands (Harl. Soc., lxi, p. 42); also *Visit. Norfolk* (Harl. Soc., xxxii, p. 273).

<sup>7</sup> 'under 14'.

[of France] against the Spaniards.' He died at Havre 1592 and was buried there with military honours.<sup>8</sup>

It is perhaps worth noting in passing that the reputed 1558 Visitation of Essex, in the pedigree of de Vere, says of Anne, 'renupta John Stapes postea Staple': this is surely an error for Stubbe or Stubbes.<sup>9</sup>

It will be noticed that one of the parties to this agreement was 'Thomas Steyninges of Belinges' and that 'Charles Seckforde esquire' is also named. This Thomas was uncle to our Anne, he having married in 1550 Frances de Vere,<sup>10</sup> sister of Anne's father, Aubrey, and widow of the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who was executed in 1547 and whose magnificent tomb is in Framlingham Church, Suffolk. Thomas Steyninge and Frances had a daughter, Mary, who had married Charles Seckford in 1575, two years before the wedding of her cousin Anne to John Stubbe.

This alliance was the subject of a similar but much longer settlement dated 20 October 1575,<sup>11</sup> the marriage having taken place two weeks earlier on 6 October at Framlingham.<sup>12</sup> It is an indenture tripartite between Thomas Seckford (famous Founder of the Seckford Charity at Woodbridge and uncle of the bridegroom),<sup>13</sup> Thomas Steyninge 'of Earl Sohm' and Charles Seckford himself. Under it, Charles conveyed to seven feoffees in trust for the use of himself, his wife and his heirs, certain lands in Bealings, Debach and Boulge in Suffolk and all other lands and property in Suffolk which had come to him on the death of his grandfather, Thomas Seckford.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, his uncle Thomas, who was childless, settled upon Charles and his heirs the reversion of lands in Woodbridge, Bealings,

<sup>8</sup> Venn, *loc. cit.* A gruesome account of his mutilation is quoted in *D.N.B.*, vol. lv, pp. 118-9, where also further details of him may be found. The offending pamphlet, entitled *The Discoverie Of A Gaping Gulf VVhereinto England Is Like To Be Swallowed by an other French mariage, if the Lord forbid not the banes, by letting her Maiestie see the sin and punishment thereof.* . . . , was directed against Elizabeth's proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. The pamphlet is 'extremely rare' and recently appeared in a bookseller's catalogue, priced at £30.

<sup>9</sup> Metcalfe, *loc. cit.*; the 1558 Visitation is printed from Harl. MS. 1137 and Mr. C. E. Wright, of the British Museum, has kindly confirmed for me that these words occur in the original. Mr. A. R. Wagner, *Richmond Herald*, (*in litt.*, 16.1.50) tells me that there is no such Visitation at the College of Arms and that he has always doubted whether Harl. 1137 is a copy of a genuine Visitation.

<sup>10</sup> Norwich M.L.

<sup>11</sup> Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office. (T3/1/2).

<sup>12</sup> Parish Register.

<sup>13</sup> There is a pedigree of Seckford in *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, ix, pp. 367-9, by the late V. B. Redstone, F.S.A.; but this has been extended and corrected in the light of modern research by his daughters, the Misses Redstone of Woodbridge, to whom I am indebted for help on several points.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Seckford, the grandfather, had died 20 Sept., only two weeks before the marriage (see Seckford pedigree, *ut supra*).

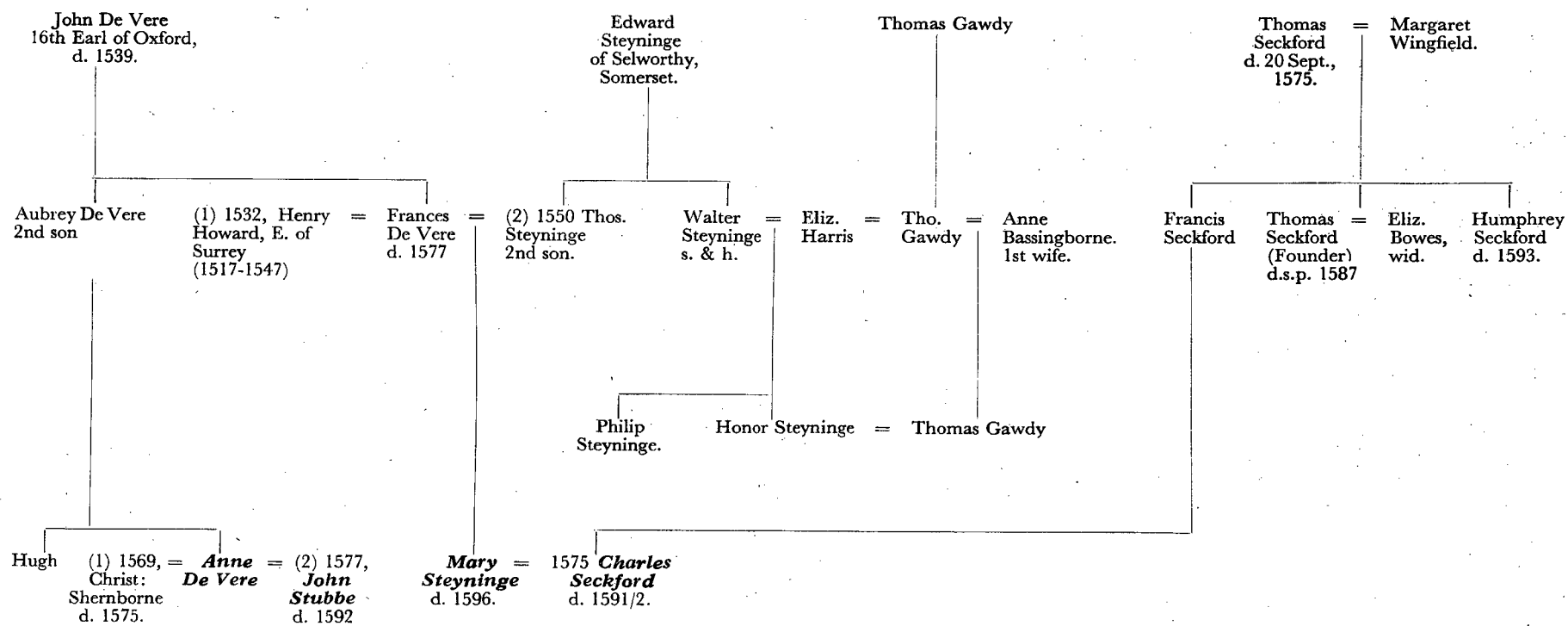


FIG. 21.—De Vere — Steyning — Seckford Pedigree.

Kesgrave, Hasketon and Alnesbourn, together with the rectorial tithes of Woodbridge and Brandeston; all of which were formerly the property of 'the late Priory of Woodbridge.' The seven feoffees were, Thomas Steyninge, Philip Steyninge, Francis Gawdy, Thomas Gawdy of Gawdy Hall, Bassingborne Gawdy of Mendham,<sup>15</sup> John Steyninge and Robert Buxton of Tibbenham.

Thomas Steyninge, the father of Mary, was of west-country stock, being the second son of Edward Steyninge of Honycote or Holnicote, a hamlet of Selworthy, Somerset.<sup>16</sup> It is not known what brought him to East Anglia, but it appears that he became steward of some of the manors belonging to the Howard family;<sup>17</sup> he evidently brought with him at least two of his relatives. His elder brother Walter Steyninge had married Elizabeth Harris of Devon and by her had, with other children, a daughter named Honor; it seems that Walter died fairly young, because we find that his widow married Thomas Gawdy of Norfolk. Nor is this all; this Thomas Gawdy had already had by his first wife, Anne Bassingborne a son who was also called Thomas, and who married his step-sister, Honor Steyninge.<sup>18</sup> These two marriages explain why the Gawdy family figure so prominently in this second deed of settlement.

Taken together, the two documents illustrate the tangled knots of inter-marriage and re-marriage which were so common at this period. In order to clarify the relationships of some of the persons mentioned, a skeleton chart pedigree is attached, omitting those with whom we are not concerned; it has been compiled from the various sources named in the footnotes. (Fig. 21).

<sup>15</sup> For the Gawdy family, see the two fully documented articles by Percy Millican, F.S.A., in *Norf. Arch.*, xxvi and xxvii.

<sup>16</sup> *Visit. Somerset*, (Harl. Soc. xi, p. 104); *Visit. Suffolk, 1561*, ed. Metcalfe, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, iv, p. 251.

<sup>18</sup> *Norf. Arch.*, xxvi, p. 347.