

SUMMARY: The document below is the copy on the Close Rolls of a recognizance in the amount of 1000 marks acknowledged by Oxford to Thomas Gent (d.1593) on 1 June 1582 in connection with indentures of 31 May 1582 for the sale of property. The property in question has not yet been identified.

From the entry by J.H. Baker in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

*Gent, Thomas (c.1530–1593), judge, was the first son of William Gent and his second wife, Agnes, daughter and heir of Thomas Carr of Thurlow, Suffolk. The Gent family had been seated at Steeple Bumpstead, Essex, since the fourteenth century . . . . The judge's family owned the manor house of Moyns Park, which he himself was to rebuild about 1580. Thomas was probably the 'Gent' who matriculated as a pensioner of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1548. He was admitted to the Middle Temple about 1550, and was duly called to the bar. Among his clients were the seventeenth earl of Oxford, who appointed him steward of all his courts in 1571, and the town of Maldon. He became recorder of Maldon in 1569 and represented the borough in the parliament of 1571.*

*Gent's marriage with Elizabeth (d. 1585), daughter and heir of John Swallow of Bocking, Essex, produced at least nine children; some sources give the number as twelve or thirteen. In 1586 he married Elizabeth Robyns, widow of Robert Hogeson of London. Gent agreed to serve as reader of the Middle Temple in 1569 but deferred office until 1574, and it is uncertain that he ever performed. He was created serjeant-at-law by himself at the end of June 1584, which was an unprecedented procedure save in the case of men chosen for the bench. The explanation is doubtless that he was already intended for the court of exchequer, to which he was appointed one year later. One of the offices of junior baron had become vacant in May 1584, about a week before Gent received his serjeant's writ, but in the event Gent's expectations were defeated and Edward Flowerdew was appointed. Gent was appointed to the next vacancy on 28 June 1585. As an assize judge for eight years he accompanied Chief Justice Anderson on the western circuit. Gent died intestate on 12 August 1593 and was buried at Steeple Bumpstead.*

The recognizance below is also mentioned in TNA PRO 30/34/14, No. 3.

LM: Recognizance between the Earl of Oxford & Gent

Edward, Earl of Oxford & Lord Great Chamberlain of England, having appeared personally before the Lady Queen in her Chancery, acknowledged himself to owe to Thomas Gent of Steeple Bumpstead in the county of Essex, esquire, one thousand marks of good & lawful money of England, to be paid to the same Thomas Gent or his designated attorney, executors or administrators, on the feast of Saint John the Baptist next to come;

And if he shall not have done [+so], he has granted for himself, his heirs, executors & administrators that the said sum of money be levied of the lands, tenements, goods & chattels of the same Edward, his heirs, executors & administrators, to the sole & proper use & behoof of the foresaid Thomas Gent, his executors, administrators & assigns, wheresoever they may then be found within the kingdom of England;

Witness the said Lady Queen at Westminster on the first day of June in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France & Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc.

The condition of this recognizance is such that if the above-bounden Edward, Earl of Oxford, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns and every of them, do well and truly observe, perform, fulfil, and keep all and singular the covenants, grants, articles and agreements contained, mentioned and declared in one pair of indentures bearing date the last day of May in the said four and twentieth year of the Queen's Majesty's reign that now is made between the said Earl of thone party and the said Thomas Gent of thother party which on the part and behalf of the said Earl, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns are to be observed, performed, fulfilled and kept, that then this present recognizance to be void and of none effect, or else to stand and remain in full force and virtue.

LM: Recognitio inter Oxonie Comitem et Geint

1 Edwardus Comes Oxonie & dominus magnus Camerarius Anglie coram domina Regina in Cancellaria sua

2 personaliter constitutus recognouit se debere Thome Geint de Bumpsted ad Turrim in Comitatu Essex

3 Armigero Mille Marcas bone & legalis monete Anglie Soluendas eidem Thome Geint aut suo certo

4 Attornato executoribus vel administratoribus suis in ffesto sancti Iohannis Baptiste proxime futuro Et nisi fecerit concessit

5 pro se heredibus executoribus & administratoribus suis quod dicta pecunie summa leuetur de terris tenementis bonis & catallis

6 ipsius Edwardi heredum executorum & administratorum suorum ad solum & proprium opus & vsum predicti Thome

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7 Geint executorum administratorum & assignatorum suorum vbicumque tunc fuerint  
inuentis infra Regnum Anglie Teste

8 dicta domina Regina apud Westmonasterium primo die Iunij Anno regni domine nostre  
Elizabethhe dei gracia Anglie ffrancie & Hibernie

9 Regine fidei defensoris &c vicesimo quarto