

No Memorial

William FRYER d. 1754

Frances Maria FRYER d. 1755

William FRYER d. 1756

There are numerous entries for the Fryer family in the burial register and accounts book for the Dissenters' graveyard.¹

The three earliest mentions (see above) may or may not be related. The only one we are sure of is Frances Maria Fryer who died in 1755. She was buried on 3rd April, but it appears that the cave in which she was laid to rest was never paid for. Frances Maria (née Codere) or Frances was the wife of William Fryer a merchant in Exeter. She was the only daughter of the Reverend Samuel Codere and his wife Francoise Marie or Frances (née Savary). She had two brothers John (?) and David (1738-1781).

Frances and William Fryer were married in St. Alfege Church, Greenwich on 18th September 1752. *'William Fryer of St, Edmonds in Exeter in the County of Devon, Bachelor and Frances Codere of the parish of East Greenwich, in the County of Kent, Spinster, were married by licence of the Lord Bishop of Rochester.'*² How they met or how their marriage was arranged we may never know. We do know however from William's Will that they had a marriage settlement.³

Samuel, Frances' father was a French Protestant minister at Le Quarré, Berwick Street and Castle Street chapels, all within a short distance of each other in Soho, London.

A baptism record shows a Samuel Codere being baptised on 31st May 1699 in Switzerland.⁴ If this was



Samuel we don't know when he arrived in England, but he was ordained on 5th June 1726 in St. Pauls Cathedral with Bishop Edmund Gibson presiding.⁵ The first time Samuel officiated appears to be in 1728 at the Baptism of one Henrietta Charlotte Ardouin on 18th November in Berwick Street Chapel.⁶

Hogarth's 'Noon' depicts French Huguenots leaving the French Chapel in Hog Lane, Saint Ann's, Soho just a few streets away from the Berwick Street Chapel where Hogarth may also have seen Samuel and his family leaving. Samuel was still minister there in the 1760s.

Hogarth's 'Noon' 1736

¹ See Fryer family biography www.edgt.org.uk

² St.Alfege marriage register accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

³ Williams will PROB 11/1263/122, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

⁴ "Schweiz, Katholische und Reformiert Kirchenbücher, 1418-1996", database, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6NQK-GCN3> : 5 April 2023), Samuel Codère, 1699.

⁵ <https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> accessed 02/07/2023.

⁶ Berwick Street Chapel register (1720-1788) accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

At some point in the early 1760s Samuel received poor relief from St Dionis Backchurch.⁷

When he died in 1773 Samuel and his wife were living in Little Compton Street, Soho.⁸ In his Will he mentioned his wife as, “*my spouse having of herself a competency is desired to accept of a ring as a pledge of my Remembrance*”.⁹ He also left “*to my grand daughter Ffrances Ffryer forty pounds sterling*”. He died in 1773 and was buried on 18th January 1773 at St. Ann’s, Soho. No burial or death notice has been found so far for Frances his wife although we know from a chancery document, she was still living in 1778.

Although Frances Maria Fryer’s mother, Frances Codere, was born in England, her parents Colonel John Savary (Jean de Savary) and Marie were refugees.¹⁰ Since the sixteenth century Protestants in France known as the Huguenots struggled to practice their religion in a dominantly Catholic country. Sometimes they were tolerated whilst others were persecuted. After 1685 they were no longer allowed to practice in France and in 1687 James II granted them freedom to worship in England.¹¹

Colonel Jean de Savary, originally from Périgord in the Dordogne, was in the Marquis de Miremonts Dragoons who probably came to England with the Duke of Orange, later William III.¹² The Dragoons were eventually disbanded, and Colonel Savary settled in Greenwich along with many other Huguenot settlers.¹³

Frances Savary was baptised in St. Alfege church (where she was also married) on 2nd August 1705. It is not known whether she was brought up in the French tongue but the baptismal entry notes, ‘*Frances, daughter of Col. John Savary and Mary, baptised by Monsieur Riviere.*’ Her mother (née Duport) was the daughter of Isaac and Frances (née Guyon) Duport. Isaac had been a merchant in St. Martins on the Isle de Ré, an island off the west coast of France. Frances Duport died in Greenwich in 1735. In her will she mentions her granddaughter Frances Codere, ‘*I will that immediately after my decease my executors give to my granddaughter Codere fifteen pounds worth of my household goods*’. She also left the interest of an eighth part of her personal estate to Frances.¹⁴

William Fryer, Frances’s husband was one of eight children born to John and Elizabeth Fryer. William’s father, according to a transcribed family document was a Spanish merchant but no evidence has been found to corroborate this fact.¹⁵ He was listed as a dyer on his children’s baptismal records. It is believed his name was John but again there are discrepancies between birth and burial registers. He

⁷<https://www.londonlives.org/search.jsp?form=persNames& persNames surname=Codere&match sur=exact& persNames given=Samuel&match giv=exact& persNames div0Type=DB PPfile&fromMonth=&fromYear=&toMonth=&toYear=&submit.x=53&submit.y=13> accessed 05/09/2023.

⁸ <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-buried-remains-of-little-compton-street-london-england> accessed 06/09/2023.

⁹ Samuel’s will PROB 11/984/339 accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

¹⁰ ‘In the purlieu of St. Alfege’s: Huguenot families in 17th-19th century Greenwich’ Randolph Vigne, pp.257-273, proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol XXVII, No.2, Summer 1999 <https://docplayer.net/155409554-Proceedings-of-the-huguenot-society-or-great-britain-and-ireland.html> accessed 11/7/2023.

¹¹ Information from the Huguenot Society <https://huguenotmuseum.org/about/the-huguenots/> accessed 18/06/2023.

¹² <http://www.thekingscandlesticks.com/webs/pedigrees/19207.html> accessed 18/06/2023.

¹³ As note 10.

¹⁴ Frances Duport’s will (PROB 11/671/319) accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

¹⁵ Notes on the Hadfield Family <http://www.gjh.me.uk/edale/edale.pdf> accessed 27/04/2023.

died intestate sometime in the 1730s. Elizabeth's maiden name is unclear, but it is believed she was related to the Reverend John Howe (1630-1705), Oliver Cromwell's chaplain.¹⁶ The transcribed document gives some background to the Fryer family but there are a few discrepancies.

After his death, Elizabeth was left supporting seven children, Elizabeth (1724-1797), John (1725-1774), William (1726-1795), Mary (1727-1793), Thomas (1729- ?) and Thomasin (1734-1734). Thomasin was born after her father died and lived only a few days after her baptism.

By the time William married he was working in partnership with his mother in the dye house on Exe Island. He had rented from the city chamber a bridge over the leat '*that runs from the water engine towards Cricklepitt Mills*'.¹⁷



William Fryer rented the highlighted bridge numbered 38.

William and Frances had one daughter Frances Mary Codere. The baptism entry at Bow meeting reads '*Frances Mary Cotea (sic) daughter of William and Mary Fryer baptis'd April 18 1755*'.¹⁸

It is assumed that Frances Fryer still in her early twenties died in, or because of complications with, childbirth. The burial register notes that she was buried on 3rd April, but it is interesting to note that the baptismal register for their daughter didn't mention that the mother was deceased. Frances died intestate and it wasn't until 1784 that William as her lawful husband was granted permission to administer her goods, chattels and credits. There is no mention of how much or what remained and no suggestion of why it took so long.¹⁹

Frances Mary Codere Fryer married William Browne on 22nd April 1776 at St. Edmunds Church in Exeter. William was a merchant from Watling Street in London. A chancery document shows that William was a Norwich Factor, presumably dealing in cloth from Norwich. He was also listed in the London Directory of 1772 as a Mercer. John Hadfield wrote '*I had the pleasure of seeing her previous to my going to America in 1783, she was an accomplished woman*'.

¹⁶ As note 15.

¹⁷ Exeter Chamber Map Book 1759 (ECA/7/1/1-59) www.swheritage.org.uk

¹⁸ Bow Meeting register accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

¹⁹ Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Related Probate Jurisdictions: Administration Act Books, National Archives, Kew.

They had at least two children, but both died very shortly after birth.

In 1758 William Fryer remarried. His spouse Mary Parker was a daughter of Francis Parker of Blagdon. They married on 18th July 1758 at Littleham church near Exmouth. With his second wife he became brother-in-law to John Baring who had married Anne, Mary's sister. Elizabeth Parker a third sister married Thomas Vowler Baring just one month later, but this marriage was to end in tragedy before it even started.²⁰

Possibly to mark the occasion of his marriage a set of at least nineteen Chinese export tableware pieces with William and Mary's coat of arms was commissioned.²¹



Part of the original set of tableware.

The Fryer family worshipped at both James' Meeting and George's. In 1759 William had subscribed fifty-two pounds and ten shillings towards the building of the new George's meeting on South Street.



William and Mary had three children together, Elizabeth (1760-1831), Mary (1762-1835) and William (1765-1827) who may have been buried in the Dissenters' graveyard with many of his family members. No definitive primary source has been found yet to link the two William Fryers buried in the graveyard as father and son. For William's (d. 1827) biography see 'Fryer Family' <https://edgt.org.uk/social-history.html>.

In 1781 Elizabeth married Sir George Collier, a successful Naval Officer in the Royal Navy.²² She was twenty-one and he forty-three. This was his second marriage; his first had ended in divorce.

Lady Elizabeth Collier née Fryer.

²⁰ Newspaper extract 1038M/F/1/435 DHC

²¹ Chinese armorial porcelain belonging to Frederick Arthur Crisp Esq., F.S.A. (London, 8-9 March 1923), Puttick and Simpson, London <https://archive.org/details/chinesearmorialp00putt/mode/2up> accessed 17/10/23.

²² <https://morethannelson.com/officer/sir-george-collier/> accessed 07/09/2023.

Mary remained unmarried. She moved to Bath where she died in 1835 in Johnstone Street.²³

The Fryers in business

William and his mother were in business together; firstly, as dyers of cloth but then later as merchants in other wares such as wine. This may have been triggered by William's brother John. Apprenticed to William Gifford a grocer, John married William Gifford's daughter Ann in September 1752. John and Ann settled in Oporto in Portugal, John trading as a merchant but by the early 1770s they were back living in Topsham.

About the same time William and his mother started trading goods mainly to Oporto and Lisbon. William and John's sister Elizabeth married a merchant, Benjamin Whiting, who settled in Lisbon. Their first entry in the Topsham Wharfingers account book was in November 1753 when they sent '20 barrells of flower' (flour).²⁴ They also traded pewter, wine and cloth.

As previously mentioned Elizabeth Fryer was a dyer by trade. A glimpse of her and son William's business transactions can be seen in Samuel Milford's account book which started in 1760. On December 19th 1761 he paid 'Elizh. Fryer & Son of Exon £418.17.6 for dying goods from Jany. to this day as pr. account.'²⁵

Amongst other things Samuel traded in Indigo which he then sold on to various dyers. In the same month he invoiced, 'Eliz Fryer & Son £1.13. 4d for 20lb of Endico they had on try all at 20d. pr. Lb.' Mention of Elizabeth Fryer's dyehouse is shown in the Sun Fire Insurance records. On 11th February 1739 her 'household goods, utensils and stock in trade in her dwelling house in the Island, stone, brick and slated £600' and her 'utensils and stock in trade in her dyehouse and warehouse adjacent, stone, brick, timber and slated £400' were insured for one thousand one hundred pounds sterling.²⁶

By 4th February 1752 the insurance notes her son William is now in partnership with her.

On 23rd October 1754 the worst event possible happened. 'Mr Fryers dye house was on fire'. The event was noted by Samuel Poole in his journal where he recorded that 'the water that runs through the Island was let run the night before.'

We hear from Exeter, that on Sunday Morning last, a Fire broke out in the Dye-house of Mr. Fryer, in the Island, but by timely Assistance was prevented from spreading further. The House was not quite destroy'd, but a great Part of the Dye Stuff was spoiled and consumed, and a great many Serges; so that the Loss is computed to be about One thousand Pound.

Kentish Post or Canterbury newsletter 19th -23rd October 1754.

A new insurance for Elizabeth Fryer and unnamed partner, dyers, was then taken out on 10th January 1755 for £5,900. It covered 'Dwelling house fronting the Island, warehouses and scarlet dyehouse on right. Dyehouse at end and warehouse and dyehouse on right, brick, timber and slated £400. Stock in

²³ Somerset England church of England Burials 1813-1914 accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk

²⁴ Topsham Wharfingers account book.

²⁵ Samuel Milford account book 1760-1774 (71/8/1) SWH

²⁶ The Devon Cloth Industry in the Eighteenth Century, Sun Fire Inventories of merchants and manufacturers' property, 1726-1770. Ed. Stanley D. Chapman, 1978 Devon and Cornwall Record Society Vol. 23.

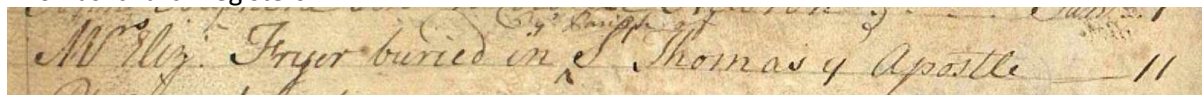
*trade and goods in trust therein £2000. Stock in trade and goods on trust in warehouse behind dwelling house, slated and brick £800. Stock in trade and goods on trust in dwelling house £2000. Stock in trade in warehouses and warehouses over dwelling house £700.*²⁷

On 28th August 1777 William was admitted and sworn as a 'freeman' of the Guild of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen based at Tuckers Hall on Fore Street in Exeter. He was admitted as a weaver and had to pay a fine of ten guineas and the usual fees. By 1780 he was one of the Wardens and in September 1781 *'William Fryer is duly elected Master for the year ensuing and sworn accordingly.*²⁸ He acted as an assistant right up until his death.

On 14th December 1784 William leased from the Exeter Chamber a *'plot or parcel of land near the Bonhay'* on the three lives of his younger children, *'Lady Elizabeth Collier (24), Mary (21) and William Junior (19)'* with the rent fixed at one shilling. It is not known what he used this land for.

His mother wrote her Will on 9th May 1766 about eight months before she died. In a codicil written on 1st August she made it clear that William was to receive very little. She wrote that, *"I do hereby revoke annul and make void the legacy of two thousand and ffive hundred pounds by my said will given to my said son William Ffryer And I do give him ten guineas only and no more and I desire he would therewith buy a ring to wear in remembrance of me and I declare that the said legacy of two thousand and ffive hundred pounds given by my said will to my said son William Ffryer and hereby revoked as aforesaid shall go to and be for the benefit of my executor"*. Her younger son John became her executor. What had happened between the writing of her Will and the codicil? According to John Hadfield, Elizabeth Fryer's son William *'was of a violent vindictive temper'*.²⁹

Her burial on 11th January 1767 at St. Thomas's church was recorded in both Holy Trinity and St. Thomas' church registers.³⁰



It appears that around the time of his mother's death or possibly before William gave up his Pew at George's Meeting.

Over several years William had opened his cave in the graveyard. Was there a burial associated with these openings? Was the opening in 1767 in anticipation of his mother's death? We may never know the answers to these, but they pose an intriguing question.

'Mr Fryer opening a cave never paid but noted 16 Apr 1763

Mr Fryer opening a cave never paid but noted 12 Jan 1764

Mr Fryer opening his cave never paid but noted 1 Jan 1767'.

William died on 23rd June 1795. Samuel Poole wrote in his journal *'Died Wm. Fryer Esqr merct of St. Edmund and was buried Thursday morning July 2d in St. Mary Steps Church aged 73 years.'* He was buried within the church.

After Mary his wife died in 1820 a memorial stone was erected in the church to William and Mary's memory by their children. Depicting two urns, an inscription and the couple's coat of arms. The

²⁷ As note 23.

²⁸ Minutes of the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen, (58/7/5/1-7) DHC.

²⁹ Notes on the Hadfield Family <http://www.gjh.me.uk/edale/edale.pdf> accessed 27/04/2023.

³⁰ Holy Trinity and St. Thomas registers accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk

memorial is unfortunately now in need of repair.³¹



Urns dedicated to William and Mary in St Mary Steps crypt.

Frances Maria Fryer's connection to Gainsborough

Frances Maria Fryer's first cousin once removed, Frances Jamineau married William Carter of Ballingdon Hall in Essex, a wealthy merchant and landowner. The couple were painted by Gainsborough who likewise painted their daughter Frances Andrews (née Carter).³²



Frances Maria Fryer's first cousin once removed Mrs Carter (née Jamineau) with her husband William c.1748.

³¹ Exeter Churches, Beatrix F Cresswell, Published by James G Commin, Exeter, 1908.

³² <https://thegardenstrust.blog/2020/01/18/a-triple-portrait/> for a more detailed critique of the two portraits. Accessed 08/09/2023.



Frances Maria Fryer's second cousin, Mrs Andrews c.1750

Frances Maria Fryer's brothers David and John Codere

Frances Maria Fryer's brother John is something of an enigma. His father's Will states that, "David Codere my youngest son being probably the only one living since for seventeen years nothing has been heard of John his eldest brother upon this ground I constitute David Codere the sole heir of my effects and faculties". We know from a legal document of 1776 that '*John Codere be living or dead he having gone some years ago to America*'.³³ There are no further references to John.

Very little is known of David too except that he had money and possibly alcohol problems. He was in the debtor's side of Newgate prison for three years from October 1775 to September 1778. In July 1776 a Bill of complaint of David Codere Gentleman Complainant was read in Chancery, where he, '*David Codere of James Street in the Parish of St. Paul Covent Garden in the county of Middlesex Gentleman*' was attempting to gain part of his reversionary interest of his grandfather John Savary's Will.³⁴ He died in 1781 in Dyott Street, Bloomsbury and was buried in St. Giles in the Fields Holborn.

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³³ Codere V. Savary (C 12/93/48) National Archives, Kew.

³⁴ As note 23.