

The Fryer/Stevens family path..

I have now found the not so long journey by which I came to be born in Thorpe Coombe maternity hospital Walthamstow on September 25th 1949. The following is the direct route missing out all the other children, step-children, stepmothers, cousins etc.:

On 10th September 1709 Thomas Fryer was baptised in St Margaret's Hempnall, Norfolk being the son of Thomas Fryer and of his wife Lucy. The baptismal record was then amended to show 1712.

Possibly, but not confirmed, this was the same Thomas Fryer who married Elizabeth Roberts by licence on 16th April 1747 at St Andrew's in Beddingham Norfolk. She clearly died as a result of child-birth and was buried as Elizabeth Fryer on the 6th July 1747 in Hempnall, Norfolk (About ten miles from Norwich).

(Coincidentally there was another Thomas Fryer who married Mary Roberts of Hempnall a Spinster in St Andrew's Beddingham on 4th March 1738. I digress).

Thomas and Elizabeth Fryer nee Roberts as above had a daughter Lucy born July 1747 but not baptised until 2nd June 1754 in St Margaret's Hempnall, Norfolk. Clearly Elizabeth Fryer nee Roberts was advanced in pregnancy and as they came from Hempnall, Norfolk (which both gave as their abode), they may have eloped or married out of sight of the village!

Later, this same Thomas Fryer (widower) married Frances Ward (Spinster) on 31st October 1755 in All Saints Alburgh, Norfolk. Thomas Fryer states his abode as Alburgh. Both bride and groom and one witness were illiterate and made their mark "X".

Frances Fryer as she then was died in 1771 and was buried in St Margaret's Hempnall Norfolk 2nd June 1771

Thomas and Frances Fryer had a son called William Fryer who was born in Hempnall. Norfolk 1756 and baptised in St. Margaret's Hempnall 9th May 1756.

William Fryer, (a widower his first wife Mary Fryer nee Mary Bowles 1757-1785 had died aged 28 leaving him with three children, to wit: Thomas Fryer born 1778, William Fryer 1781 and Charles Ledger Fryer born 1784 all baptised St. Margaret's Hempnall. Mary Fryer nee Bowles was buried in St Margaret's Hempnall Norfolk on 2nd December 1785), he, William Fryer then married Bridget (Biddy) Beckett a spinster on 1st February 1787 in St Margaret's Hempnall, Norfolk. Biddy had been born in 1762 and baptised on 27th September 1762 in Hedenham Norfolk.

William Fryer and Bidy Fryer had a son called Christmas Fryer born 25th December 1794 in Hempnall Norfolk and baptised in St Margaret's Hempnall 31st December 1794. He remained in Hempnall living on The Green, Hempnall until about 1871 with the incidental occupation of pub landlord in 1836 but mainly farmer until moving to Norwich where he died on 2nd February 1874 in Bull Close, St. Paul's Norwich.

On 17th October 1814 he married Lucy Scarnell at St Nicholas' church (ie Santa Claus/Father Christmas) Great Yarmouth. The record says Frier but he signed as Fryer. It is possible that they eloped and married without parental permission being under 21 in a place the respective parents would not be aware of.

Lucy Scarnell was the daughter of the late Lawson Scarnell described as a yeoman farmer and also carpenter who had died at Hempnall in 1808 aged 41 being buried in St Margaret's Hempnall. Lucy had been born on 9th July 1797 daughter of Lawson Scarnell and his wife Sarah Cox and baptised at St Margaret's Hempnall on the 9th July 1797. Lucy was thus 17 when they married and Christmas Fryer was but 20.

Both were under age for the time but the law did not require a home address to be given and so people could elope to another Church of England parish and be married after three weeks of Banns. The parents had to know of the wedding before they could object.

The only other way to annul a marriage in those days was if the Bride and Groom had lied, perpetrated fraud or been in error over essential facts. This I think is how the parents were able to object to and annul the marriage.

Either way, Christmas Fryer and Lucy Scarnell were married again but this time in St Margaret's Hempnall on 20th October 1815 where it is recorded that the Banns had been read, parental consent obtained and the Bride and Groom both declared themselves Bachelor and Spinster.

It is my theory that Christmas Fryer and Lucy farmed the Scarnell lands such as they were as Lucy's brother Lawson Scarnell worked as a carpenter.

Christmas Fryer and Lucy Fryer nee Scarnell had a son called Lawson Scarnell Fryer who was born in Hempnall in 1824 and who died in St. Olave's district Bermondsey in 1892.

Lawson Scarnell Fryer married an Ann Lawson born about 1825 who may have been a relative or cousin of some sort.

They moved to London to Stoney Street in the Borough, Southwark where he worked as a general labourer and had a son called William Lawson Fryer born on 11th May 1852 in Bermondsey Workhouse and who died in Chester Road

Walthamstow 1940. GThis was my Great Grandfather.

William Lawson Fryer married Mary Ann Pennington on 26th March 1876 in St James' Bermondsey. Mary Ann had been born in 1855 in Holborn and died in Edmonton in 1897.

They had a son John (Jack) Fryer who was born in Bermondsey on 29th May 1882 and who died on 29th January 1968 in the Langthorne Hospital Leytonstone.

John (Jack) Fryer as above (My Grandad Fryer) married Rose Alice Fryer (My Nana Fryer) - who was born Epping Essex on 2nd April 1886 - on the 29th June 1907 in the church of St James the Greater Walthamstow. Nana Fryer died in Whipps Cross hospital Leytonstone on 19th June 1972

They had a daughter Kathleen Maud Fryer born June 15th 1926 at 2, Jessie Cottages Low Hall Lane Walthamstow. (There was also a son another William Lawson Fryer born Walthamstow 1913 died Toronto Canada 1985)

Kathleen Fryer (later my mother) then married Kenneth Harry Stevens at St Saviour's Walthamstow in July 1948.

I was born on 25th September 1949 at Thorpe Coombe maternity hospital and baptised at St Saviour's Mark House Road Walthamstow on 18th December 1949.

Kathleen Fryer (my mother) died in Homerton Hospital the Gordon Hamilton Fairley ward on 22nd September 1990 being only the second patient registered in what was then a new hospital.

There are many, many Fryers baptised, married and buried in St Margaret's church Hempnall.....But not on single Fryer lives in the village to this day. Likewise, there are no Fryers of my lineage living today in Walthamstow.

I live in Chelmsford. My sister lives in Chelmsford. My cousin Howard Fryer lives in Chelmsford and has a son called Thomas Fryer

And so it goes! What goes round comes around!

Not moved far have we?

Barrie Stevens

barrie.stevens@yahoo.co.uk