

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### FRYE, Thomas

Offaly 1710 – London 1762

Frye was born near Dublin, and was initially influenced by the portrait painter James Latham. The earliest known pictures of this Irish artist were pastel portraits in the manner of Carriera, from 1734. By 1735 he had moved to London in the company of Herbert Stoppelaer. Here he produced portraits in oil and miniature. He also made mezzotint engravings of his own and other portraits. Preparatory chalk studies for these prints have been confused with those of Piazzetta, whose inspiration was mentioned by Frye in an advertisement in *The London chronicle* for 3–5.vi.1760. A full length portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales was commissioned by the Saddlers' Company in 1734, and was engraved by the artist in mezzotint to considerable acclaim. In 1744 he helped found the porcelain factory at Bow with Edward Heylyn, but ill health forced him to retire in 1759. He exhibited portraits in oil, pastel and miniature at the Society of Arts in 1760 and 1761.

Frye's works were original, with larger than life heads often providing a distinctive intensity. His pupil William Pether (*q.v.*) assisted in the engraving of some of these heads. The pastel of Dr Smyth shows a somewhat loose approach in the chalk strokes on the surplice but the drawing of the face is more blended. Wynne 1977 divides the drawings into three groups: early works, with colour; later works in chalk executed with a light touch, properly regarded as drawings; and a group of chalk drawings with deeper tone quality (executed around 1761, and possibly including those shown at the Society of Artists) which are referred to as pastels. Whether they were executed with fabricated pastels in the strict sense is difficult to establish without scientific analysis.

Probably through Pether, Frye's monochrome heads had a direct influence on Joseph Wright of Derby (*q.v.*) during his time in Liverpool (c.1768–71), and the group of artists around him, including the Tates, Thomas Chubbard, and Ottwell Worrall (*q.v.*), all of whom showed chalk drawings at the Liverpool 1774 exhibition. Although one of Worrall's exhibits was after Frye, there is no evidence that these lost works were in monochrome pastel rather than natural chalks.

### Bibliography

Bénézit; Bourke & Bhreathnach-Lynch 1999; Brieger 1921; Bryan 1816; Crookshank & Glin 1994; Crookshank & Glin 2002; *Dictionary of Irish biography*; Dublin 1969; Figgis & Rooney 2001; Foskett 1987; Grove 1996; Nicolson 1968; Oxford DNB; Pilkington 1852; Stewart & Cutten 1997; Strickland 1913; Waterhouse 1981; Wright 2006; Wright 2007; Wynne 1970; Wynne 1972; Wynne 1977; Wynne 1982

### Pastels

Sir John BELLEW, 4<sup>th</sup> Bt (1728–1750), pstl/ppr, 58.4x43.2 (PC, Ireland, 1982). Lit.: Wynne 1982, no. 8 n.r.

Lady BELLEW, née Eleanor Moore, widow of Sir Edward Bellew, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bt (c.1695–1741),

pstl/ppr, 55.9x43.2 (PC, Ireland, 1982). Lit.: Wynne 1982, no. 7 n.r.

Gentleman, ?father of Benjamin COLE, pstl/ppr, 51x43 (London, Christie's South Kensington, 23.x.1996, Lot 182 repr., est. £1000–1500, £1700)

Colonel Thomas EYRE (c.1720–1772), in the uniform of the 49<sup>th</sup> (Irelawney's) Foot, captain 1748, surveyor general of Ireland 1752–63, MP for Fore; & pendant: spouse, née Anne Cook, in a yellow dress with blue wrap, pstl, 55.9x43.2 (London, Christie's, 17.v.2001, Lot 64 repr., Irish sch., c.1750, est. £10–15,000) [new attr., ?] φ



Dr F. Arthur SMYTH (1707–1772), Archbishop of Dublin, pstl/ppr, 58x44.5, 1740/53 (Kenwood, English Heritage, 88028351, dep.: Marble Hill. Desc. Earl of Iveagh; legs). Lit.: Wynne 1982, no. 12, fig. 52 ◻



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*Photo courtesy English Heritage*

Sir Peter THOMPSON [(1698–1770), Kt., FRS, merchant of Bermondsey and Poole]; & pendant: [step-mother] Mary, wife of Captain Thomas Thompson, pstl, 57x43, s "T. Frye Fecit" (London, Christie's, 5.ii.1910, Lot 50, 6 gns; Parsons. (*Mary*): Salvator; New York, Anderson, 20–21.i.1927, Lot 64). Lit. Wynne 1972, no. 33 n.r.

A boy, pstl/ppr, 56x43.2, sd "T. Frye fecit 1734" (Earl of Iveagh 1972; PC 2002). Lit.: Wynne 1972, no. 1, fig. 17; Crookshank & Glin 2002, n.r.; Oxford DNB, n.r. φ



Man, pstl/bl. ppr, 36.4x27.3, inscr. 1734 (New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, inv. B1975.4.1519). Exh.: New Haven 1979, no. 246 n.r., attr.

Gentleman in a blue coat, pstl/ppr, 61.2x46.2, c.1745 (Dublin, NGI, inv. 7342). Lit.: Wynne 1982, no. 5 n.r.; Le Harivel 1983, repr., attr. φ



A boy, pstl/ppr, 56x43.2, c.1734 (Earl of Iveagh 1972; PC 2002). Lit.: Wynne 1972, no. 2, fig. 17; Crookshank & Glin 2002, n.r.; Oxford DNB, n.r. φ



Scholar, half length, wearing a turban, pstl/gr. ppr, 44.5x33.2, c.1755 (London, Christie's, 20.vi.1978, Lot 80 n.r.). =?Lit.: Wynne 1982, no. 13

Man leaning on a staff, pstl/ppr, 43.2x30.8, c.1761 (Somerville & Simpson, London, 1975, exh.; PC England 1982). Lit.: Wynne 1977, fig. 203; Wynne 1982, no. 26 n.r., as pstl φ



Man, in profile, to left, leaning on a staff, black, white chlk or monochrome pstl/ppr, 40x32.5, c.1761, inscr. *verso* "Mr Tate to Mr Benson" (New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund. ?William Tate; his brother-in-law, John Benson of Liverpool. Somerville & Simpson, London, 1975, exh.; Dr Michael Wynne; Dublin, James Adam, 28.ix.2005, Lot 35 repr., est. €3–5000, €32,000). Exh.: Wright 2007, no. 54. Lit.: Wynne 1977, fig. 204; Wynne 1982, no. 27 n.r., as pstl; Wright 1990, p. 61 repr. φ



~figure in Joseph Wright of Derby, An experiment on a bird with an air pump, pnt., 1768 (Tate)

Gentleman, seated, pstl (London, Christie's, 25.V.1914, Lot 57 n.r., £1/8/- with another item; Justice)

Lady (PC 1921). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 158 [one of a series of ladies engraved as mezzotints] **Φ**



Lady, pstl (London, 27.X.1943, £10)

Girl with a kitten, pstl/ppr, 43.2x30.8, c.1761 (British Museum, inv. 1975-12-6-1). Lit.: Wynne 1977, fig. 202; Crookshank & Glin 1978, fig. 33, as chl; Wynne 1982, no. 25 n.r.



Young boy, half-length, in a brown coat and blue waistcoat, pstl, pencil, 31.1x25.1, sd ∨ "T.Frye Pinx/1746"; & pendant young girl, half-length, in a blue dress, pstl, pencil, 31.1x25.1, sd ∨ "T.Frye Pinx/1746" (Michael Moseley 1939; desc.; London, Christie's, 12.V.2006, Lot 19 repr., est. £10-15,000, £9500). Lit. Wynne 1972, no. 26/27 n.r.; Baetjer 2009, -/fig. 48 **φ**



Three portraits, pstl, Society of Artists 1761, no. 32