

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF SARAH CHAMPION FOX

Editor Madge Dresser (Reproduced by permission of the Bristol Record Society)

This year Bristol Record Society is publishing the Victorian manuscript edition of an eighteenth-century diary written by a Bristol Quaker, Sarah Champion Fox. A passage from the diary is reproduced below. It is followed by extracts from the introduction to the diary by the editor Madge Dresser. If you would like to join the society and/or purchase this volume please contact the Bristol Record Society c/o the Regional History Centre.

1768

March 20th. Went with my niece and nephew Eliza and J. L. Champion to the inoculating house at Barton Hill, opened by one of Sutton's partners, Abraham Ludlow and John Ford¹ – a very commodious house fitted for the reception of many patients, and under good regulations. After the operation was performed we brought them home till they sickened, and then sent they back with a servant who was to be subject to the rules of the house.

April 4th. The children being pretty well, whom we had seen most afternoons at the inoculating house, I went to Stoke with my aunt for the summer.

May 1st. The Yearly Meeting (Bristol) The principal minister C. Payton, with whom on the forth, we spent the evening at A. R. Hawksworth's.

July 29th. At Frenchay meeting, where was S. Neale of Ireland, with whom I had a few days before, drunk tea at M. Harford's and supped at T. Frank's. After meeting we dined and drank tea with him and John Elliot at J. Beck's.

Augt 1st. Left Stoke in order to go to Cheltenham with my brother and sisters. We staid there till the 14th of September. Having spent so much time with my brother and sister C. and with each other, we found a great reluctance to separate, which produced a resolution in my sister and myself to live with them. There had been from infancy an uncommon affection subsisting between us, it had been my favourite wish that we might live together, and now it seemed as if the desire was almost irresistibile. My aunt Lloyd and M. Harford's family had been for some time united, which, I flattered myself set me at liberty; but I did not immediately declare my intentions, fearing her dislike to parting with me, thinking it would come on better gradually (Perhaps inclination alone dictated this change of abode. Every step we take is an important one, and inclination is often a very mistaken guide. Though we were very happy together, yet I fear it was of no real advantage to any of us – to my sister and myself particularly.)

Oct (?) 15th.² In the morning of this day Lydia Hawksworth³ came to see us. She had been for some months married to A. R. Hawksworth. She was from Alton and her maiden name Waring. A natural reserve made her difficult of access, which often drew on her from those unacquainted with her merit the reputation of pride. She was a woman of very good

¹ This of course predates Edward Jenner's inoculations against smallpox in 1796-8. Intriguingly Edward Jenner had been apprenticed to a Bristol apothecary named Daniel Ludlow, possibly a relation to Abraham Ludlow. See 'Smallpox: an on-line exhibit' staged at the University of California at Los Angeles biomedical library at: <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/biomed/smallpox/jenner.html>.

² Sharp-eyed readers will notice that this entry supposedly dated on the 15th of October discusses an event which happened on the 29th of that same month. This may be due to a mis-transcription by the Victorian editor of the date or to the fact that the original diary entry may have been written retrospectively

³ She was the daughter of Samuel Waring Esq. of Alton, Hants and her obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 17 Dec. 1788 described her life as of 'self-denial amidst an affluent fortune, in order to supply more liberally the wants of others'. The *Gentleman's Magazine* (1788) cited in 'Obituary of Lydia Hawksworth', *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. 16 (1919), pp.117-118.

understanding, and owed little to books. There was something in her manner to those whom she liked and with whom she conversed with freedom peculiarly attractive. She was of the same generous disposition to the poor as her husband, and yet, in many respects, there did not seem to be a suitability between them. But the time drew near in which it pleased his heavenly father to call him home, for on the 29th October, A. R. Hawksworth departed this life after a few day's illness of fever. The universal regard and respect felt for him by the city in general, as well as by the Society of which he was so usefull a member, occasioned universal regret for his loss. I think I never knew a private person so much lamented. And as he so well fulfilled the duty and followed the precept of visiting 'the fatherless and the widow in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world,' so did the tears of many such give proof of their grateful regard. His remains were interred from Friar's Meeting in Redcliffe Burying Ground. The house was much crowded on the occasion. During the time of solemn silence around the coffin, Lydia his widow, stood up and delivered a few words, in an awful,⁴ affecting manner, to the surprise of many, his being the first time of her public appearance. In the interval between his death and burial, Sukey, Hetty, and myself, visited the widow, whose mother was with her.

November 9th. S. S. and 8 other gentlemen at dinner. S. S. seldom passed unnoticed in company. He had very superior abilities and an address very insinuating, having the art of making one pleased with oneself, without descending to the meanness of flattery. But his good sense and plausible manners wanted their best recommendation, good principles, as his conduct but too plainly demonstrated. He had long loved a very agreeable, sensible girl, eminent for her personal attractions; but though, he had gained her affections, his character was an obstacle she could not overcome. He had been her preceptor in some branches of learning, though by profession a surgeon. Her mother, notwithstanding she was a sensible and worthy woman, acted in this matter like too many inconsiderate parents, who, if they do not push their children to the brink of a precipice, suffer their inexperienced feet to wander to its verge, and are then surprised or disappointed if they fall from it. Those who have the care of young women cannot be too careful how they suffer the other sex to assist in their education.



Sarah Fox refers repeatedly to Ivy Bridge as a place she enjoyed stopping at en route to Plymouth. This late eighteenth century print conveys some idea of transport facilities available to her at the time. The bridge was enlarged sometime around the 1780's- evidence of the sort of improvements characteristic of this period.

⁴ Laying her hand on the coffin. {SCF?} See notice of L. H. Piety Promoted. Vol IX. { - J.F. }