

# ANOTHER QUAKER “LUNATICK”: THE WORCESTER ORIGINS OF JONATHAN STOKES, JUNIOR (1754-1831), PHYSICIAN, BOTANIST, GEOLOGIST AND YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE LUNAR SOCIETY (FROM 1783).

## INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses an inadequately known eighteenth century scientist, whose origins and Quaker connections have been quite forgotten. As a result his Worcester birth and date of birth, are both confused in his entry in the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004 (hereafter ODNB). Similarly he gets no mention in analyses of Quakers, or of Quaker scientists, like Geoffrey Cantor’s recent survey (Cantor 2005).

## JONATHAN STOKES’ ORIGINS AND GRAVESTONE

Jonathan Stokes’s origins were shrouded in mystery. His ancestry, and date of birth, have defeated all those who have worked either on him or on the Lunar Society. A source now at Derby Public Library clearly originated the claim that he had Derbyshire origins. This three volume MSS *Derbyshire Biography* dated 1853, was gathered by William Bateman (1787-1835) and Stephen Glover (c. 1794-1869 – ODNB for both). It records that Stokes “was born at Chesterfield, or Dronfield” [where he was to marry in 1784] (Derby Public Library, MSS 3296, vol. 3, 213). The German botanist George August Pritzel (1815-1874) next recorded that Chesterfield and 1755 were Stokes’s place and date of birth (Pritzel 1872-1877, 307). The English botanist James Eustace Bagnall (1830-1918) was perhaps the first to claim in print in English that Chesterfield was his birthplace (1901, 70-71). More recently Lunar Society historians, Robert Schofield (1963, 223) have agreed, either that “Stokes was born at Chesterfield in 1755”, or according to Jenny Uglow (2002, 584), at least in that year. The new ODNB entry (by the late Joan Lane) is more circumspect, stating that Jonathan Stokes (1755?-1831), physician, the son of Jonathan Stokes (d. 1807?) was probably born at Chesterfield, Derbyshire [although] his family had originated in Worcester, where his father was a nurseryman [and where]

Stokes was living in 1775 (Lane 2004).

But Stokes's Worcester-based notices only recorded that he had once "resided in Worcester" (*Berrow's Worcester Journal*, (hereafter *BWJ*), 12 May 1831, 3, col. 1; Hastings 1834, 87 & Lees 1867, lxxxix). A Derbyshire appeal for Stokes information (*Derbyshire Times*, 31 December 1937, 18, cols 6-7) apparently drew no response.

The first indication that Stokes was not born at Chesterfield or in 1755 came from a Chesterfield history. This recorded that his monumental inscription had read "In memory of Jonathan Stokes M.D., who was born in the city of Worcester, 4 November [recte October] 1754, died in this parish the 20th [recte 30th] April 1831" [Wallace], 1839, 111). The local printer of this anonymous work, first issued in about 18 parts from 1837, was Thomas Ford of the Irongate, "but a clergyman (believed to be the Rev. R Wallace) was the author, who based his work on [Rev. George] Hall's history of 1823", (*Derbyshire Times*, 7 February 1941, cutting pasted to front fly in Chesterfield Library copy). Robert Wallace (1791-1850, see ODNB) was Unitarian minister of Elder Yard, Chesterfield from 1815 to 1840. This was the religious persuasion of Jonathan Stokes, after he left, or was disowned by Quakers. Wallace had also been a schoolmaster there until 1831. The ending of this task could clearly have given him time to produce his anonymous 1837-1839 *History*.

The Stokes's family gravestones, once just outside the south-east corner of St Mary's church, no longer survive in place. Their former locations, according to another transcript, were recorded, after 1930's local road improvements necessitated their removal. Jonathan's gravestone (no. 589) had read, according to this; "Jonathan and Thomas Stokes (born in the city of Worcester), born 4th November 1754, date of death 20th April 1831" (Parish Church Graves Register, 1933), and map (1934 – A 3194, both Chesterfield Public Library). This stone must survive, among the hundreds of stones now stacked vertically, but invisibly, around the perimeter of the graveyard. At least all records are definite about Stokes's birthplace, if neither are accurate about his dates, or of the wholly mysterious Thomas Stokes recorded in one. Some misinformation is clear, since Stokes is now known to have been born on 4 October 1754 and to have died on 30 April 1831 (and been buried 9 May - see *Derbyshire Courier (Chesterfield)*, 7 May, 3, col. 3, *Derbyshire Mercury*, 11 May, 3, col. 2 & *BWJ*, 12 May 1831). Similarly erroneous dates were recorded of other Chesterfield gravestones, for Stokes's wife and eldest son. The former was aged 91, not 94 (*Derbyshire Courier*, 17 August 1844, 3, col. 6), and the year of death of Dr. Jonathan Rogers Stokes (1785-1818) was not 1819 (compare *Derby Mercury*, 24 December 1818, 3, col. 1, with [Wallace] 1839, 112).

### JONATHAN STOKES'S WORCESTER QUAKER ORIGINS

Armed with this information, the mystery was solved in *Monthly Meeting of Worcestershire Register of Births 1660-1793, Marriages 1663-1792 and Burials 1666-1776 of the People called Quakers in and near the city of Worcester* (Public Record Office – hereafter PRO – RG 6/808 (formerly 664), 36). The following entry, “Jonathan, the son of Jonathan and Rebecca Stoakes [sic] born the 4th of 10th month [October] 1754”, is confirmed in the copy Digest of Worcester Births preserved at Friends House Library, London. With this a search could start for Stokes’s ancestry.

But hopes of finding any record of his parents’ marriage proved illusory, even after the discovery of the allegation for their marriage licence. This dated 31 January 1753, read

Appeared personally, Jonathan Stokes [Jonathan’s father] of the parish of St. Nicholas, in Worcester, Glover and John Stokes [his grandfather] of the same parish, Clerk and alleged that there is a Marriage intended to be solemnized between him, the said Jonathan Stokes aged 29 years, a Batchelor and Rebecca Allen of the Tything of Whistones [or Whitstone] in the parish of Claines, aged 28 years, a Spinster, her Father and Mother [being] dead and she at her own disposal... they severally made Oath and prayed Licence for the said Parties to be married in the Parish church of Claines, or the Chapel of St. Oswald’s Hospital, near the city of Worcester (Worcestershire Record Office – hereafter WRO).

The Marriage Bond (also WRO) only names St. Oswald’s Hospital as their intended venue. Since this marriage was not a Quaker one, a first question is why Jonathan Stokes senior’s apparently Quaker parents were intending their marriage should be before a priest, and thus face disownment (Milligan & Thomas 1999, paras 50 & 61). A second is why were they taking oaths, which Quakers then refused, instead of affirming. These must show that at least one parent was not then a Quaker.

On 30 January 1753 another surviving document was drawn up, previous to this marriage. Details of this are recorded in the draft “Abstract of title to estates at Cannock, co. Staffordshire, Worcester and Chesterfield, co. Derbyshire, commencing with the settlement, dated 30 January 1753, upon the marriage of Jonathan Stokes [senior] of Worcester, glover, and Rebecca Allen of the same, spinster, daughter of Isaac Allen, late of Birmingham, gent. deceased” (Shakespeare Centre Library and Records Office – hereafter SCLRO – ER 4/545, Stratford-on-Avon). This long document traces title through three generations to 1840, and includes some draft, uncatalogued, notes and a family tree concerning the descent of these estates from the children of Isaac Allen to, Jonathan Stokes junior’s surviving son, John Allen Stokes

(1786-1858). These documents, at least, explain the later Stokes family connections with Chesterfield. An updated, eighteenth century, map of their 28 acre Cannock property, named here at Walk Mill on the road from Cannock to Great Wyrley, "in the Liberties of Cannock and Wyrley", also survives (William Salt Library 115/3/41, Stafford).

Sadly the registers of both the places named for this intended marriage (Claines, in WRO, or St Oswald's Hospital, in Worcester Cathedral archives) were then badly kept and no such marriage, which must certainly have taken place early in 1753, was entered at either. The set of *BWJ* held in Worcester Library is equally incomplete. The then current standard of record keeping of registers in the Churches and Chapels of Worcester, was clearly appalling. The Stratford-on-Avon documentation noted above (SCLRO ER 4/545) confirms this, recording that this marriage had been in 1753 but that this "entry [was even in 1840] not to be found".

It is no wonder that Philip Yorke (1699-1764), first earl of Hardwicke, should have seen the need to promote, later in 1753, what became known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act to prevent clandestine marriages (see *ODNB*), and to better regulate their record keeping. This would not, of course, have applied to marriages in which both parties were Quaker (Milligan & Thomas 1999, para 59). But this Act only came into force on 25 March 1754. One can at least see why, from this Stokes example, this Act should have declared that any relevant "marriage was [now to be] null and void, unless an entry was recorded in a parish register, and signed by the bride, and groom, at least two witnesses and the officiating clergyman" (Stone 1990, 124).

The other major problem facing the historian of Worcester Quakers is the surviving eighteenth and nineteenth century records of the Monthly Meeting there, from at least 1722 to 1840. Apart from their registers, which had had to be deposited earlier, these became flood victims which "badly damaged documents by water leaking into the safe, circa 1913". Some of these damaged records are now preserved at WRO (898.2, BA 1204, parcel 3 and BA 5583, received 1951 and 1971) but these are now both illegible and unavailable (Poole & Whistlecroft 2000, 7, 13, & 109-110). A further deposit (WRO 898.2 BA, 5570/4/ii) comprises "Extracts from Monthly Minutes now beyond repair 1722-1773". This loss has already thwarted the search for the history of William Gunn's Charity, and does now for the Stokes's Quaker connections.

**GRANDFATHER REV. JOHN STOKES (c. 1697-1783)**

The Stokes family had come from Dudley in today's Black Country to Worcester. John Stokes arrived there in 1720 to act as assistant minister to Rev. Chewning Blackmore (1663-1737- see *ODNB*) at the Angel Street Nonconformist (then Congregational) Church, Worcester. In about 1722 Stokes married Penelope Hand (c.1695-1780 – *BWJ*, 23 March 1780, 3), daughter of the previous assistant there, Jonathan Hand, and soon Stokes

commenced as schoolmaster, and kept his school in the present chapel, till from injuries to the building he was obliged to remove the school elsewhere. He never would be ordained, but continued to assist Mr. Blackmore and others till an unfortunate disagreement caused him to remove from Worcester. His refusing ordination was the reason that prevented his becoming pastor. He lived to the advanced age of 86, and died at his son's home, at the Rhyd, [south of Worcester] now the seat of the Lechmeres (Noake 1861, 116, copied by Urwick 1897, 92-93 & 213).

When John Stokes left Worcester, he had become minister, by 1764, "to a small congregation at Ledbury, but for some years before his death resided in Worcester or its vicinity" (Noake 1861, 118). After Ledbury, he moved to Rhydd [Ridd] Green, east of Great Malvern, 6 miles south of Worcester. An intriguing notice written later by his grandson, Jonathan junior, shows he here became, late in life, a commercial florist or market gardener, with his eldest unmarried daughter; at "Riddgreen garden on stratified red clay, cultivated by J[ohn] and his daughter Penelope Stokes, florists" (Stokes 1830, cxxiv).

The death here of the "Rev. Mr John Stokes, on Sunday last" in August 1783, aged 85, was reported, and that "his great abilities and excellent character, as a minister of the gospel, and an instructor of youth, procured him great respect" (*BWJ*, 4 September 1783, 3, col. 4). His will dated 14 May 1770, proved 24 September 1783, of "the parish of Hanley Castle", survives in PRO, among Prerogative Court of Canterbury (hereafter PCC) wills (PROB 11 / 1108). It left his Summer House in Sansome Fields Garden, Worcester and his two houses in Powick to his son Jonathan senior. It also mentions his daughter Penelope, his son-in-law Yerrow Arrowsmith senior and his four grandchildren, our Jonathan Stokes junior (to whom he left all his books) and Mary, Samuel and Yerrow Arrowsmith junior. In a codicil added 1 June 1782, he asked that "five pounds be given to the Worcester Infirmary to ye poor of ye Congregation of Protestant Dissenters to which I now belong". His wife Penelope had died before him, in March 1780; "on Thursday last, Mrs Stokes, late of this city, aged 85" (*BWJ*, 23 March 1780, 3).

**JOHN STOKES' SIX CHILDREN**

The Angel Street Congregational baptismal registers have major gaps from 1736-1743, 1748-1758 and 1760-1777 so records of John Stokes's family and children are incomplete. But five children as recorded in these, without the parents being named, who must be his and his wife Penelope senior's. These are

- 1) Jonathan [senior], bap 8 August 1723,
- 2) Elizabeth, bap 24 September 1728,
- 3) Mary, bap 3 March 1730,
- 4) Joseph, bap 22 January 1736,
- 5) Ann, bap 28 March 1736, (see Urwick 1877, and Registers at WRO)

The sixth, named only in John Stokes's will, was his eldest, market-gardening, daughter, Penelope junior, who had escaped registration. She was born circa 1725, since she died in October 1787 aged 62 (*BWJ*, 11 October 1787, 3 col. 4). She was buried 14 October 1787 (Register of St Martin's, Worcester – WRO). In her will, dated 7 October 1787, she, "a spinster late of Leopard in the parish of St Martin", left "to my nephew Dr. [Jonathan] Stokes [junior] the sum of £20" (will in WRO).

Another daughter, Mary Stokes (1730-?) married Yerrow Arrowsmith (1715-1781) of Ledbury, at Colwall, Herefordshire on 24 January 1750 (see Fletcher 1894, 434-435 & Fletcher MSS, Shrewsbury Public Library, vol. 3, ff. 173-191). According to their marriage settlement, dated 16 January 1750, Yerrow Arrowsmith was then a merchant in Ledbury and, on their marriage, was to sell properties at Ledbury, Bosbury and Leominster, while John Stokes [Mary's father, then] Gentleman of St. Nicholas, Worcester was to pay in £1,000 (Fletcher MSS, Shrewsbury Public Library, vol. 1). The Stratford documents record that Yerrow was in 1753, also a distiller at Ledbury (SCLRO ER 4/545). Mary's brother, Jonathan Stokes senior (1723-1788, is again named in this marriage settlement as a glover of Worcester. Mary and Yerrow Arrowsmith had three children, 1) Yerrow junior, 2) Samuel and 3) Mary junior. The first two attended James Fell's Boys' School in Worcester, while Mary junior later married John Bourne Ford then of Newton, co. Montgomery, at Claines on 7 November 1789 (he had been baptised in Birmingham on 7 December 1762 – see International Genealogical Index – hereafter IGI).

It was clearly this new Arrowsmith connection which brought John Stokes, and his daughter Penelope, to live at Rydd Green, after 1764. Here Yerrow senior, "Esquire", died on 11 May 1781 (*BWJ*, 17 May 1781, 3, col. 4). In his will, proved in PCC, 27 June 1781 (PRO, PROB 11/1078), he devised his properties to his children and directed his

trustees to sell his lands in Ridd Green and Hanley Castle and to pay, out of the proceeds, £1,500 to his daughter Mary. But his will was then left unadministered by his executors, Jonathan and Penelope Stokes, and administration had to be much later granted to Samuel Buxton of Grays Inn, London on 26 April 1825.

### JONATHAN STOKES SENIOR (1723-1728)

The eldest son, Jonathan Stokes senior, christened 8 August 1723, was father of 'our' Jonathan Stokes junior, youngest member of the Lunar Society. Jonathan senior was admitted a Worcester Freeman in 1745: "27 May 1745, Jonathan Stokes admitted and sworn a citizen as an apprentice to Benjamin Beesley, Glover" (Book of Freeman Admitted to the City of Worcester 1723-1757, Worcester City Archives, A15, p. 441, WRO). Jonathan is one of many Worcester glovers listed in 1747, of St Nicholas parish (*Worcester Poll Book, 1747, 24, Worcester City Library and Eighteenth Century Collections Online*). By the end of the eighteenth century 4,000 Glovers were said to be employed in Worcester (*Victoria County History, 1906, vol. 2, 304*), but the trade greatly suffered, after 1825, when importation of foreign gloves was allowed (*Hull 1834, 57-60*).

It seems likely that this Benjamin Beesley, whose will "of Worcester" was proved on 8 April 1754 (PRO, PCC, PROB 11/807), was then a member of Worcester Quakers. He must surely be the same man who married Ruth Dickson on 17 September 1724 in a Quaker marriage at Bristol (IGI). But Jonathan senior was probably not then a Quaker, because he was prepared to swear. Friends seem generally to have been recorded in these Worcester Admission books as making affirmations, "being of the people called Quakers". But perhaps the connection with Beesley and the Quakers is what led one or other of the Stokes towards Quakers? But which ones, and for how long, remain unsolved questions, because of the destruction of relevant Worcester Minutes. The Quaker Worcester glover Thomas Beesley (c. 1724-1797), who might even be Benjamin's son, later had strong connections with Coalbrookdale Quakers (Labouchere 1993, 359). He married, Mary née Reynolds (c. 1743-1808) in 1786 (*BWJ, 2 March 1786, 3, col. 4, also Greg 1905, 35-36, 173-176*). The name Beesley often appears in Worcester Quaker registers, but we should be reluctant to make connections without conclusive proof; a number of families in this Worcester meeting had members with the same names, but they were not all members of the Society of Friends.

**JONATHAN SENIOR'S WIFE REBECCA, NÉE ALLEN (c. 1723-1800)**

Jonathan senior married Rebecca Allen in 1753, as noted above. His wife, who came from Stafford, is better known, as this notice, certainly provided by her only son, Jonathan junior, appeared in 1800.

died May 1 at home of her son in Chesterfield aged 77, Mrs Rebecca Stokes, widow of Mr S. of Worcester, and second daughter of late Isaac Allen, Esq. of Stafford. She was an attentive reader of this [*Gentleman's*] *Magazine* from its first institution, and her occasional contributions are marked with the initials of her name ([Stokes] 1800).

Rebecca Allen was born about 1723. Her father was Isaac Allen of Birmingham and Stafford. He, as "Mr. Isaack Allen of St. Martin's parish in Birmingham", married "Mrs Rebecka Dancer of Stafford" at Kingswinford, Staffordshire on 4 November 1719 (Register at Staffordshire Record Office, hereafter SRO). She was clearly the daughter of John and Marie Danser, baptised on 28 September 1690 at St. Mary, Stafford (IGI). Isaac died intestate, but according to his 1733 letters of administration, which allowed for the education of their three young daughters, Mary, Rebecca and Anna, he had died in March 1733 (papers at Lichfield Record Office). His wife was here named as his executrix and, according to the attached inventory, his goods and chattels were valued at £437. It is also clear from Stratford records (SCLRO ER 4/545) that Allen was owner of considerable property at Cannock, Stafford, Worcester, and Chesterfield and Newbold, both in Derbyshire, which then descended to the Stokes family. These records also confirm that Rebecca's only surviving, younger, sister Ann(a) Allen (c. 1727-1801 – see *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 16 May 1801, 4, col. 5, and her will, PRO, PCC PROB 11/1359, proved 25 June 1801) had married John Southwell (c.1724-1797 – see *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 25 November 1797, 4, col. I) on 13 January 1762. They had no issue but he was headmaster of the free Grammar School in Stafford from 1749 to 1780 (Horne 1930, 43 & 70). Education was clearly an important priority for both the Allen and Stokes families.

**JONATHAN STOKES SENIOR'S WORCESTER NURSERY**

Apart from his work in gloving, Jonathan senior also carried on a market-gardening nursery and florist's business in Worcester, just as his father and sister had, probably before him, at nearly Rhydd Green. This is first confirmed by this 1770 notice.

Whereas between the 16th and 17th of this Instant the Gardens of Jonathan Stokes [senior], in Sansome-Fields [Worcester], and of Mr.



Benjamin Karver, in the Tything, were robbed; of the former were taken a Bed-Quilt, and a Pair of Stockings... Whoever will hand over the Offender or Offenders, so that he or she may be brought to Justice, shall receive a Guinea Reward of either of the above Persons (*BWJ*, 24 May 1770, 3, col. 1).

In an assessment dated 22 April 1773 towards a Levy for the Relief of the Poor in St. Nicholas Parish (WRO, 850, BA 3696/5) Jonathan Stokes's Summer House in Sansome Fields was levied at 5 shillings. The previous two levied here were his two neighbours, schoolmaster James Fell (see below) and Charles Trubshaw Withers (1720-1804 – see *BWJ*, 27 September 1804, 3 col. 4 & Covins 1989, 1-10). Both of these properties are marked, and named, on the 1779 map of Worcester made by George Young.<sup>1</sup>

Sansome Place is where Worcester's present Quaker meeting house had been opened in 1701 (Leech 2002, 1), but there is no evidence that any of the Gardens were owned by the Stokes family. From at least 1757, the lessee of this Bishopric land, part of the manor of Whiston's, was the well-to-do Worcester weaver and glover Charles Trubshaw Withers, later knighted, in Worcester in 1788. Withers lived at Sansome House – a fine view of which was published by Nash (1782, vol. 2, opposite p. cxvi), near the meeting house. Withers developed this area, between 1757 and 1787, to create the famous Sansome Fields Walk, "the principal promenade in Worcester" with gravelled walks and "embowing" elms (Britton 1814, 136-138). Withers was also much involved in the establishment of the Worcester Infirmary (McMenemey 1947, 49 & 120) from 1747. A painting in the Worcester City Art Gallery of "Worcester from the East" made in the mid-eighteenth century, shows a distant view of what Sansome Fields must have looked like during this transformation. The Doharty map of 1741 and George Young's of 1779 both show the extent of the estate. Withers's lease passed to Thomas Blayney (1762-1838) in 1804. Only the Summer House was owned by the Stokes family (see John Stokes's will of 1783).

At some stage, and certainly by 1775 (see below), Jonathan junior had joined this nursery business with his father Jonathan senior. The son later referred to their joint garden as "Sansom Fields Garden in Worcester, on silicious sand gravel, cultivated by Jonathan Stokes [senior] florist and his son [Jonathan junior]" (Stokes 1830, cxxiv). This demonstrates that he and his glover father had here continued the market-gardening tradition of Jonathan junior's grandfather. Their garden was on, or near, the site of the present Quaker meeting house in Worcester (Leech 2002, 1). But neither of these early Stokes's nursery businesses are noticed by Harvey (1974, 103) who only



Figure 1. The Sansome Fields Walk area as shown on George Young's plan of 1779. Fell's Boarding School and Withers's Sansome House residence are both clearly marked.

records the two others, of James Biggs and Thomas Hammond, in Worcester, named in the *Universal British Directory* of 1793-1798, after Stokes senior had died and Jonathan junior had left the area. The historian of Sansome Fields area of Worcester equally fails to mention any Stokes nursery here (Covins 1989).

We know little more of Jonathan senior. He, and his sister Penelope, were involved in "leasing a messuage and land at Handley Castle" (clearly from the Arrowsmith connection) on 6 December 1782 (Birmingham City Archives, Bickley papers, MS 3069/Acc. 1920-020/288237). The register of Quaker Monthly Meeting births, marriages and deaths, for Worcestershire 1660-1793, makes no further mention of him. His supposed date of death ?1807 (Lane 2004), is also wrong, as his wife was widowed by 1800. In fact, "Mr. Jonathan Stokes of Sansome Fields, in this city" had died on 6 April 1788 (*BWJ*, 10 April 1788, 3, col. 3). He was buried 10 April 1788 at St Martin's church, Worcester (register WRO). According to SCLRO ER 4/545, the "letters of administration of his effects [were] granted to his son Dr. Jonathan Stokes on 4 March 1789".

#### **JONATHAN STOKES JUNIOR (1754-1831)**

His birth as "Jonathan, son of Jonathan and Rebecca Stoakes [sic] on ye 4th of 10th mon[th] 1754" is recorded in the Register "of the people called Quakers in and near the city of Worcester" (PRO RG 6/808 [olim 664], 36). It gives no more detail. There is no indication which of his parents were then members of the Society of Friends, or 'in unity', although this may simply be because the registering Friend left this out. The Quaker custom of eschewing the pagan names of some months by numbering them all, with the national changeover in 1752 to New Style dating, might perhaps still then have confused some, but it seems certain that Stokes was born on 4 October 1754 in Worcester, and that his Chesterfield gravestone was slightly inaccurate. Stratford records wrongly claim instead that this date was that of his unperformed baptism!

#### **JONATHAN JUNIOR'S EDUCATION AT JAMES FELL'S WORCESTER QUAKER SCHOOL, CIRCA 1764-1766**

Jonathan Stokes junior's connections with Quakers continued at school in Worcester. A Friend called James Fell (c. 1707-1788), assisted by his wife Grace (died 1768), ran the local Quaker Boys School, attended by Jonathan junior. Fell had come to Worcester, from Glastonbury, Somerset, in 1742 to open this school (Collier 1949, 118-119 & Labouchere 1988, 272; 1993, 368). We do not know exactly

where it was first located in its early days, but it was almost certainly in the parish of St Nicholas (since Fell then had goods distrained there). Later he brought property opposite the gate of the present meeting house in Sansome Place (Leech 2002, 2), as shown on Young's map of 1779 (Figure 1). This school was well known in its day (and is listed by [Tuke] 1843, 70-71, amongst the Quaker Boys Schools between 1760-1780), but it seems to have sunk quickly, and almost without trace, after 1768. This is sad, considering the number of important Friends who were taught there, as the following list of scholars at Fell's school in circa 1764-1766<sup>2</sup> (see Atkinson 1933, 248) demonstrates [additions to this are given in square brackets here].

- 1) James Stone, Grindon Court, Herefordshire
- 2) Thomas Tanner, Shiplot [Sidcot], Somersetshire [presumed ancestor of the paper manufacturing family, Milligan 2007, 429]
- 3) Richard Vaux, London, Middlesex
- 4) Richard Naylings, Leominster, Hertfordshire
- 5) Joseph Hillear, Osentry, Worcestershire
- 6) James Motley, Morton [near Thornbury], Gloucestershire [1752-1788, see *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* (hereafter DQB – TSS at Friends House, London) & James 1980, 2). His grandson Thomas (1808-1891) became a noted civil engineer, but his own son Thomas senior (1784-?) went bankrupt in 1820 and was disowned by Quakers]
- 7) Samuel Freeth, Coventry, Warwickshire
- 8) William Blew, Bromyard, Herefordshire
- 9) Thomas Corbyn, Eymore, Worcestershire [only son of Thomas (1710/11-1791), Worcester-born pharmaceutical chemist [Milligan 2007, 117-118]
- 10) Ambrose Lloyd [1754-1787], Birmingham, Warwickshire [Banker, Lloyd 1975]
- 11) Thomas Beavington [1754-1837], Ross, Herefordshire [Tanner, the compiler of this List, see Atkinson 1933, 248 (who wrongly called Fell, Joseph) & Labouchere 1993, 77. His father William (1722-1809) is in *DQB*. His relative Timothy (1726-1802), is another Worcester glover listed by Milligan 2007, 48]
- 12) John Miller, Jamaica, Westmoreland
- 13) William Young (1754-?), Leominster, Herefordshire [son of William Young (1718/19-1808) – see *DQB* & Labouchere 1993, 77, a younger brother of the map maker (of Figure & Note 1)]
- 14) John Allen, Bradford, Wiltshire

- 15) Jacob Young, Earthcot, Gloucestershire
- 16) Richard Corbyn, Eymore, Worcestershire [a relative of 9) above]
- 17) John Fowler, Horton, Staffordshire
- 18) Samuel Darby [1755-1796], Coalbrookdale, Shropshire  
[Ironfounder – Milligan 2007, 141-2 & Labouchere 1993, 365,  
younger son of ironmaster Abraham Darby II. He entered Fell's  
school on 23 July 1766 (Atkinson 1933, 248)]
- 19) Thomas Hunley, Netherton, Worcestershire
- 20) Charles King, Bristol, Somersetshire
- 21) Walter Berry, Taunton Somersetshire
- 22) Thomas Slarey [Slaney?], Tenb [u] ry, Worcestershire
- 23) Sil [a] s James, Swansea [Swansea], Glamorganshire
- 24) Joshua Chorley, Leek, Staffordshire
- 25) Richard Woodmass, London, Middlesex
- 26) William Rathbone [IV 1757-1809], Liverpool, Lancashire  
[Mercantile Merchant – see *DQB*; Nottingham 1992, 15-22 &  
Milligan 2007, 354]
- 27) Robert Clibborn, Dublin, Ireland
- 28) Henry Deaves, Dublin, Ireland
- 29) Robert Fowler [1755-1825], Melksham, Wiltshire [Wine & Spirits  
merchant – *A Memoir* of his life was published 1833 (Norwich:  
Wilkin & Fletcher), see Milligan 2007, 180 & Labouchere 1933,  
370]
- 30) Edward Chorley, Leek, Staffordshire [a relative of 24) above]
- 31) Y[errow] Arrowsmith [junior], Ridd Green, Worcestershire [see  
above re Arrowsmith family, son of Mary née Stokes, Jonathan  
senior's sister, who married in 1750]
- 32) Henry Fry [1756-1817], Bristol, Somersetshire [eldest son of the  
founder, Joseph (1728-1787) of the firm of cocoa manufacturers in  
Bristol, see *ODNB*, Milligan 2007, 188 & Townend 1970, 1053]
- 33) Josh[ua] Shelton, Pershore, Worcestershire
- 34) Charles Tompson, East Indies
- 35) James Hale, Bristol, Somersetshire
- 36) James Miller, Jamaica, Westmoreland [a relative of 12) above]
- 37) Edmund Fry [1757-1835], Bristol, Somersetshire [Typefounder,  
see *ODNB* & Milligan 2007, 188; brother of Henry 32) above]
- 38) Samuel Arrowsmith, Ridd Green, Worcestershire [brother of  
Yerrow, 31) above]
- 39) George Abney, Birmingham, Warwickshire
- 40) Jacob Frampton, Bristol, Somersetshire

**DAY SCHOLARS**

- 41) John Nott [?Mott], Worcester
- 42) John Burlingham [1753-1828], Worcester [Glover, see Burlingham 1991 & Milligan 2007, 80]
- 43) Thomas [Ford] Hill [1753-1795], Worcester [son of George, Worcester glover. He abandoned business for literature and antiquities and travelled widely on the Continent, see *ODNB*, he also corresponded with Jonathan Stokes junior]
- 44) James Turner, Worcestershire
- 45) William Trehern, Worcestershire
- 46) James Gammon, Worcestershire
- 47) Thomas Hill, Worcester [see Atkinson 1933, 248. There were then many families of Quaker Hills, at Worcester]
- 48) Edward Green, Worcester
- 49) Samuel Bradley, Worcester [1756-1767], [John Bradley (1737-1797), the Worcester glover listed by Milligan 2007, 60, was his eldest brother—and probably Thomas (1751?-1813), the Worcestershire-born schoolmaster, see Note 1, and later the physician of *ODNB*, was another]
- 50) Edward Reding, Worcester
- 51) John Yeates, Worcester
- 52) Thomas Ashton, Worcester
- 53) **Jonathan Stokes [1754-1831 junior], Worcestershire [subject of this paper]**
- 54) John Rose, St Johns
- 55) Richard Skinner, Worcester
- 56) Samuel Overton, Worcester
- 57) Richard Crump, Worcester

**OTHERS****a) Half Boarders**

- 58) Thomas Hill, Worcester [see also 43) and 47) above]

**b) The Usher [Deputy Schoolmaster]**

- 59) William [Manwaring] Hollifear [or Hoolefear (c. 1741-1816)], Worcester (He later matriculated at Oxford University, where he graduated B.A. in 1774. He became a Church of England minister, serving, by 1782, as curate at Croome D'Abitot and Croome Hill, Worcestershire, see Ransome 1968, 90-91. He was a botanist, like Jonathan Stokes, who recorded how Hollifear had collected the plants of Worcestershire to which his name is attached

in [Withering and Stokes] *Botanical Arrangement*, vol.1 [1787] p.xi at Severn Stoke and Crome, when curate [there]. The cultivator of Crome garden [Croome d'Abitot, Worcestershire], George William Coventry, [sixth] Earl of Coventry [(1722-1809) then] appointed him to the vicarage of Wolvey in Leicestershire [now Warwickshire], when relinquishing the study of nature and, presenting me with his herbarium, he gave himself up wholly to parochial duties (Stokes 1830, cxvii).

Here Hollefear proved a devoted minister (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 86 (1), 281, 1816). But Stokes's own herbarium is now sadly lost (Kent & Allen 1984, 251-2).

**c) no place mentioned – so it not clear if these were pupils or teachers** (see Atkinson 1933, 248)

60) James Bullock and 61) Adam Bullock

Any full list of Fell's school pupils, over earlier and later years, would include all the children of ironmaster Abraham Darby II (1711-1763), of Coalbrookdale (see *ODNB*). As a result there are several references to Fell and his school in the diaries of Darby's wife Abiah (1716-1793), and 1767 (Labouchere 1988) and those of their daughter-in-law, Deborah Darby, née Barnard (1754-1810), between 1762 and 1764 (Labouchere 1993). A Fell school book which belonged to Abraham Darby III (1750-1789, see *ODNB* & Milligan 2007, 139), is a fascinating survival from the school before 1764 (now preserved at Ironbridge Gorge Museum).

Other well known figures above, apart from Jonathan Stokes, who as a day boy could have walked from his close-by Summer House, include William Rathbone IV of Liverpool, the Frys of Bristol and Thomas Ford Hill. Another Quaker member of the Lunar Society, Samuel Galton junior (1753-1832) of Birmingham (see Smith 1967), was also briefly at James Fell's school in 1760-1761 (Pearson 1914, vol. 1, 43), before he moved on to Warrington Academy in 1768 (Turner 1957, 65). Galton was the father of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck (1778-1856) whose *Autobiography* contains the fascinating glimpse of Jonathan Stokes; "profoundly scientific and eminently absent" Hankin 1860, 31), which first enabled him to be identified as a member of the Lunar Society (Schofield 1963, 223). Another earlier Quaker pupil here was John Player (1725-1808 – Torrens 2003, xx-xxii), farmer of Stoke Gifford and Tockington near Bristol. He was a pioneer in both vaccination and geology, and noted in his diary how "on 9 September 1789 [he had] visited Grace and Sarah, two

daughters of my old master James Fell", after Fell's death (Diaries at Gloucestershire Record Office, D 5090). This shows that Player was another Fell pupil. This Player connection is confirmed by the receipt, signed by James and Grace Fell, for his brother James Player's boarding and schooling with Fell in 1744-1745 (Friends House Library, London, Portfolio 36/100). John Player's diaries only start in 1763 and his Fell schooling was at least two decades earlier.

Galton's move to Warrington in 1768 must have been one sad result of the death of Grace Fell, James' wife, in December 1768. She had played a vital part in the running of the school. Some pupils only stayed for a very short time after this, and, as Fell grew older and later became senile, the school declined rapidly as parents became dissatisfied with standards, after Fell's death. These included the later physician George Logan (1753-1821) of Pennsylvania, in North America. He had been sent to finish his education in England at the age of 14 in 1768 at Fell's school. Logan's biographer recorded how by then

James Fell was a sullen misanthrope... George was especially unlucky in his teachers. James Fell had conducted the Friends School in Worcester for a quarter of a century [1742-1767], quite to the satisfaction of his Quaker employers. But when George [Logan] came under his tutelage, he was an embittered, bewildered man, stunned by the loss of his wife (Tolles 1953, 11-13).

James Fell had several children, including daughters Molly and Peggy (Labouchere 1988, 272; 1993, 16) and Sarah (c. 1738-1811). After the death of his wife Grace in December 1768, James moved to Charlbury, Oxfordshire to live with his daughter Sarah who later married William Squire (c. 1722-1784), a Charlbury maltster, at Worcester on 2 January 1783 (*BWJ*, 9 January 1783), but she sadly died soon afterwards (see *DQB*). Charlbury was then another centre for both Quakers and Gloving (Hey 2001, 63-76). James Fell himself died at Charlbury in December 1788. His long obituary notice recorded how he was

one of the people called Quakers, who for many years was Master of an eminent Boarding School in this city and as such was not without his peculiarities... He experienced much of the imbecilities incident to old age (particularly to men of genius) and a state of second childhood formed a striking contrast to that active exertion which so conspicuously marked the [earlier] vigour of his mental faculties (*BWJ*, 11 December 1788, 3, col. 4).

His will was proved on 8 July 1789 (PCC, PRO, PROB 11/1181).



### JONATHAN STOKES JUNIOR'S EARLIEST WORK ON BOTANY

From his *Botanical Commentaries* (1830) we have already seen how Stokes inherited an interest in market gardening and thus botany, while working in Sansome Fields Garden, Worcester, with his florist father, Jonathan senior. Stokes's published botanical work yields further clues to his early days in Worcester. For example he had found "*Scandix cerefolium* near Worcester, growing in considerable plenty in the hedge on the south-east side of the Bristol road, just beyond the turnpike, in May 1775" (Lees 1831, 437 & Lees 1867, lxxxix). Other records date from this year, like "*Chaerophyllum sativum* in profusion on the sides of the Tewkesbury Road, just beyond the turnpike, first noticed by Dr. Stokes in 1775", or record significant locations like "*Apium graveolens* in Sansom Fields" (Hastings 1834, 158).

Unfortunately, the seventeenth and eighteenth century Monthly Meeting records for Worcester meeting were destroyed by water early last century, and so there seems no extant record which would give details of any potential admissions or subsequent disownments of Worcester Friends, like the Stokes's, for the period in question. But, as we shall see, the greater number of the known early associates of Jonathan Stokes junior were members of the Society of Friends. The first such association came when "Jonathan Stokes junior" was one of the many witnesses to the Quaker marriage of his Worcester glover school-friend John Burlingham (1753-1828) on 28 November 1777, to a sister of Samuel Bradley, another Fell pupil above. The certificate survives in family possession (I was sent a copy by Annette Leech, who obtained it from the late Richard Burlingham – see Burlingham 1991, 12).

The next such association is demonstrated in 1778 when, that spring, Stokes visited London. He wrote at length of his experiences there in a letter to the Quaker botanist William Curtis (1746-1799 – Curtis 1941, 32). His letter reads

Sansom Fields, Worcester, Thursday evening – May 21 1778 – the day which your Lectures begin for the success of which you have my sincerest wishes.

The pleasure which I received from the agreeable society in Grace Church Street, [London, where Curtis lived], during my stay in the great City will not suffer me to be any longer silent... When I tell you that on the morning after my arrival in Sansome Fields I found markes of the Jaundice in my face, with that excessive languor & disinclination to motion which you know is its constant attendant, your wonder will cease at me... Your letter to Mr. Heaton [sic – William Aiton (1731-1793, gardener at Kew 1759-1793, see *ODNB*)] procured me the most

obliging reception. He was so obliging as to conduct me all over the Garden which is an elegant & noble collection of plants which does equal honour to the taste & skill of its Director. As I trust you will not suffer another summer to pass away without seeing it, I shall say nothing more of its contents, than that Mr. H. was so obliging as to fill my Botany Box with specimens of most of the more curious plants which were in blossom. You will be particularly pleased I think with the disposition of the Arboretum which is the design of Mr. H. It is almost needless to say that I found Mr Heaton to be an accurate & intelligent observer & found that he happily unites the manner of the English Country Gentlemen & the Man of Science. To add to my pleasure I was agreeably surprised to find him an advocate of a certain system of botanical nomenclature [clearly the new Linnean System, see Allen 1994, 34-37] which has only to lament that it has found the Botanists of London amongst the foremost of its opponents, amidst a crowd of amateurs who study Botany because it is fashionable, & condemn a performance which they have heard condemned. Forgive this digression & attribute it to a friendly partiality, which may have blinded my eyes though it cannot Mr. Heaton's. I left Kew & Mr. Heaton not without a degree of Reluctance. I pursued my walk after dinner to Richmond along the side of the Thames & the Pleasure Gardens of Kew & Richmond which do honour to the taste of the King. [After Hampton Court Palace] I walked through Eton to Slough, 12 miles, where I slept & the next morning got into one of the stages [coaches] to Oxford. The Physic Garden there is but the ruins of one, neglected & deserted & consisting of a number of plants which owe their existence to their hardiness & the Severity of the Seasons being incapable to destroy them. I found however a considerable number of plants which I was unacquainted with, specimens of [which] I extorted from an ignorant & conceited Gardener (as unenlightened as its Professor). The next day I arrived in Sansome Fields where I had the pleasure of finding my father and mother both well. (letter in Curtis archives, Hampshire County Museum Service, Winchester).

Stokes corrected Aiton's name by 1830, when he published his notes on Gardens and Persons, including Kew and the Aitons' various botanical publications (Stokes 1830, cxvii-cxviii). Here Stokes noted that his introduction to Aiton had then come via an earlier letter from Curtis. The Oxford garden was that then run by the Sherardian professor of botany, Humphrey Sibthorp (1713?-1797), famous for having given only "one lecture, which was not a notable success", while holding his chair (see *ODNB*, sub John Sibthorp). Clearly Sibthorp's activities in Oxford Physic Garden were of similar quality...

As we have seen, Stokes and his glover father continued the market-gardening tradition of his grandfather (Stokes 1830, cxxiv). This activity is clearly how Jonathan junior was introduced to the serious study of botany, on which his reputation now mainly rests (Lane 2004). In 1780 Jonathan Stokes junior was admitted, like his father, a Freeman of Worcester (see List of Worcester Freemen 1740-1818, Worcester Local History Centre). Stokes' earliest properly 'scientific' work in botany also dates from this time. This was the printed catalogue of the *Collection of hot house and green house plants, late the property of [John] Fothergill M.D. sold at auction on 20 August 1781* (copy in Banks Library, British Library, B. 95 (4)). John Fothergill (1712-1780) was another Quaker, an enthusiastic gardener at Upton in Essex (see *ODNB & Stokes 1830*, cxxviii). Stokes later recorded how this "collection... was sold by auction. It was thrown into lots by Lee [the auctioneer], the numbers corresponding to those of the manuscript catalogue of Fothergill's garden in my possession, drawn up by me at the request of Fothergill's executors" (Stokes 1830, cxiv-cxv).

### STOKES' LATER LIFE

Jonathan junior moved from Worcester to study medicine at Edinburgh University late in 1778, aged 34. As a dissenter, English Universities were still closed to him. Here in 1779, he "communicated to the Medical Society there the result of Dr. [William] Withering's experience in the use of [the Foxglove in treating Digitalis]". He then became one of the four annual presidents of this Royal Medical Society there in 1781-1782 (Gray 1952, 45 & 316). On 31 March 1782, "Jonathan Stokes of Worcester" became the first-named of the founders of the new student Natural History Society of Edinburgh, to which he soon read a paper "on the Nomenclature of Fossils" (Anon. 1803, 25 & 46). His Edinburgh M.D. degree was awarded in 1782, with a thesis on "De Aere dephlogistico" (Anon. 1846, 261; A---- 1832, 265 recorded that he had also earlier studied medicine at Leyden). He had started in medical practice at Stourbridge by June 1783, although he is still listed as "of Worcester" in the list of subscribers to Sheldon (1784). While at Stourbridge he joined the "Lunaticks" (Schofield 1963, 223-226). But the mystery remains of why he was never elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, as were so many of his fellow "Lunaticks" (Miller 1999, 192-193). But this is another story.

Finally Jonathan junior married Ann Rogers (1753-1844 – see *Derbyshire Courier*, 17 August 1844, 3, col. 6), in an Anglican service, outside the Society of Friends, on 10 June 1784. She was the eldest

daughter of the late Dr. John Rogers, of Bolton, Lancashire, who flourished there from 1752 to 1764, and Ann, née Yates (1730-1820 – see *Derby Mercury*, 19 April 1810, 3, col. 2). Ann Rogers was baptised there on 14 September 1753 (IGI – not elsewhere on 1 April 1755, as stated by Lane 2004). Their marriage was by licence at Dronfield, Derbyshire (Marriage Allegation, Lichfield Record Office, Bk/6. 7). We can thus be sure Jonathan junior was, by now excluded from Quakers. But the connections of these Rogers sisters with Quakers continued. Ann's younger sister Charlotte (1760-?) next married, on 9 September 1789, also at Dronfield, John Zachary (IGI), who was soon described by the poet Anna Seward (1742-1809 – see *ODNB*) as “a man of considerable estate and acknowledged merit. Gentle, benevolent, intelligent; it is of little moment that Mr Zachary has but one arm, and is a Quaker” (Seward, 1811, vol. 2, 359).

Their four known Stokes children were thereafter baptised in dissenting Unitarian chapels, like those in the High Street, Shrewsbury, also attended by the Darwin family, as was John Allen Stokes (1786-1858 – born at Shrewsbury on 20 October 1786 – Evans 1903, 26). He later became a land and road surveyor, and was their only child who stayed in Worcestershire. His younger brother Joseph Southwell Stokes (1789-?), clearly the black sheep of the family, was born on 10 February 1789, and baptised in the New Presbyterian, or Unitarian, meeting house, Kidderminster (IGI). By November 1794, the Stokes's had settled at Chesterfield (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 64 (2), 1009, 1794). For a characteristic description of Jonathan's life here, see Phillips (1829, 233-238). For clues to Joseph's subsequently even more extraordinary “career” here, see *Derbyshire Times*, 15 November 1935, 6, cols 2-3.

Jonathan Stokes always retained his dissenting attitudes, as Anna Seward's many letters make clear; “Dr. Stokes' political sentiments have been injurious to his interests” (in 1796 – Seward 1811, vol 4, 268), or that he “is a worthy and ingenious man, but a dissenter, and consequently a democrat” (in the dangerous year of 1793 – Seward 1811, vol. 4, 268). Stokes was honoured by obituaries in the main Unitarian magazines, which recorded how “he was attached both by education and by principle, to the Dissenting interest, but had nothing of the Sectarian in his character” (*Monthly Repository*, new series 5, 498, 1831), or that “the religious doctrines he professed were those of Unitarians” (A---- 1832). This last notice did at least confirm that Worcestershire was “his native county”.

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**NOTES**

1. George Young (1750-1820), maker of this map, was another Quaker. He was born in Shrewbury in 1750 and had settled in Worcester by 1775. Here he became progressively a land surveyor, schoolmaster, and civil engineer (Torrens 1983,149). From 1783 he ran the Quaker boarding school for boys in the old Worcester Infirmary buildings in Silver Street, with the probable brother of a fellow Fell pupil, Thomas Bradley (1751?-1813), but who gave up teaching about 1786 to become a physician (see *ODNB*). Young now got into financial difficulties and was soon disowned by the Society of Friends (Leech 2002, 3). He died on 25 January 1820 (*Salopian Journal*, 2 February 1820, 2, col. 4 & Chambers 1820, 523).

2. This is taken from a copy of the "List of Boys at School at Worcester, ca. 1764, probably made by Thos. Beavington (1754-1837), his parents then living at Ross. Copy made by Harold W. Atkinson, West View, Eastbury Avenue, Northwood, Middx from the original in his possession 20/2/1914. Spelling as in original, a few marked (?) are difficult to read" (From a transcript held in the Society of Friends Library, Friends House, London, portfolio 34/42).