

Pills, Shocks and Jabs. The Remarkable Dissenting Doctors of Georgian Bristol
by Peter Cullimore

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Peter Cullimore is a retired journalist and longstanding resident of Bristol. His book, *Pills, Shocks and Jabs* is an introduction to several important aspects of the social history of medicine in Georgian Bristol. The lives of Cullimore's *dramatis personae* are linked through Bristol's medical fraternity and the religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Just as the featured families were woven together through marriages and religious affiliations, the author interweaves their stories through the various sections of the book. Many of these biographical accounts were recorded by the Quaker Sarah Chapman Fox whose diaries formed the main primary historical source. Some of the practitioners were professional medical men: whilst others had little or no formal medical training.

Remarkably, *Pills, Shocks and Jabs* was written during the Covid pandemic lockdowns of 2020/2021 when archives and libraries were closed. Most of the research was done on-line from home and consequently the biographies of more than a dozen individuals are somewhat sketchy. However, the author succeeds in highlighting several important medical innovations and social developments that were prominent in Georgian Bristol. These include variolation (Ludlow), vaccination (Jenner and Jesty), electrical treatment (Charles and John Wesley), patent medicines (Shurmer Bath), chocolate (Joseph Fry), man-midwifery (John Till Adams and Thomas Pole), madhouse doctoring (Edward Long Fox) and body snatching (Richard Smith jnr).

The book also covers the foundation of several important institutions including the Bristol Infirmary, the Bristol dispensaries, St Peter's Hospital and Brislington House Asylum. A contemporary perspective is added by including a section on vaccine passports.

Pills, Shocks and Jabs is attractively presented with coloured photographs and illustrations. It will appeal to those seeking a short introduction to medical developments and pioneering practitioners in Enlightenment Bristol.

Christopher Derrett
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