



Last year you were kind enough to publicise among members of Tewkesbury Historical Society our house history book, 'Saints Crooks and Slavers', which I wrote with my wife Sue. That book was inspired by our 18th century home being shortlisted for the Bristol series of 'A House Through Time' on TV.

Now I've written a stand-alone follow-up, also nonprofit. Its full title is 'Pills, Shocks & Jabs - the Remarkable Dissenting Doctors of Georgian Bristol'. Would you mind spreading the word in Tewkesbury about this new book, too? I'm a retired journalist, and started my career with the Echo in Cheltenham and its Tewkesbury office in the 1970s.

There's a slight overlap between the two books. 'Pills, Shocks & Jabs' starts with the Quaker maltster who first built our house, called Shurmer Bath. My

further research has led me to new discoveries about his work as a philanthropist and untrained amateur doctor, giving out "Shurmer Bath's Restorative Pills" to the poor free of charge.

But the narrative soon widens to his friends, or Friends - mostly fellow Quakers - who were also prominent Bristol medics. All are profiled against a background of the very flawed health service in Georgian England's second city.

They included: Joseph Fry (an apothecary before starting to make chocolate for its alleged medicinal benefits); Dr Abraham Ludlow (cousin of the doctor who trained Edward Jenner in Chipping Sodbury and a jabs specialist himself); Ann Till Adams (a successful chemist, despite being denied medical training because she was a woman); her husband John Till Adams (physician, astrologer, man-midwife and electric shock practitioner, much admired for his versatility).

They all knew and helped each other, living in the same tight-knit religious and social community. A disproportional number of Quakers became outstanding doctors, despite forming only a tiny minority in the population. They faced discrimination for their nonconformist faith, but also shared a moral duty to help the sick and needy.

My book also draws parallels between the 18th century smallpox pandemic and the modern struggle against Covid.

'Pills, Shocks & Jabs' is published by Bristol Books and costs £12. Copies are

available from independent bookshops, or you can order direct from the publisher via their website www.bristolbooks.org (ISBN: 9781909446298)

Any help in telling people about the book would be gratefully received. Perhaps one option could be to forward this message, or an abbreviated version, to your membership mailing list? If it's possible for you also to post something on your website and/or social media, that would be icing on the cake. I'm sure 'Pills Shocks & Jabs', although not about Tewkesbury history, will be of great interest to a wide readership.