

Michael Whitfield, *Richard Smith: Bristol Surgeon and Medical Collector 1772-1843* Avon Local History & Archaeology Books 26 (Bristol 2018). 44 pp., 11 ill. Cardcovers, £3.50 [ISBN 9781911592266] **Reviewed 09.2018**

Richard Smith was one of the notable Georgian surgeons of Bristol, son of a Bristol Surgeon he rose to be one of the leading surgeons of the City, working at the Royal Infirmary but with a large private practice. He was a skilled surgeon in his heyday and a well-recognised teacher with his series of medical lectures prompted by Beddoes. He was part of local society and was involved in the Theatre Royal as well as being a newspaper proprietor. He is treasured locally for his large collection of contemporary documents of medicine that are now deposited in the Bristol Archives office.

This a publication typical of Dr Whitfield's writing - an entertaining and informative read, that cites Smith's writings and his medical lectures and spices the pamphlet with accounts of Mr Smith's patients and operations and his medical museum that has been lost. He describes witnessing the 1793 riot at Bristol Bridge, and trialling fake therapy units in 1799 and so demonstrating the placebo effect - one of the first single blind controlled medical trials.

I have a few quibbles - some of the sections seem slightly disjointed, with one patient cited twice in differing detail, but would recommend this as an entertaining and informative read.

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