

**Dinah Moore. Dr Edward Long Fox: Radical and Mental Health Pioneer. ALHA Books No 36, Avon Local History & Archaeology, 2022. 41 pp, many black/white illustrations. Paperback £3.50. [ISBN 978-1-911592-36-5].**

The Bristol Medico- Chirurgical Society, founded in 1874, is the oldest and pre-eminent medical society in Bristol. It has a prestigious annual lecture, the Long Fox Memorial Lecture, instituted in 1902 and named after Edward Long Fox, who was a physician at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, with a national reputation. This publication is not however about him, but about his grandfather of the same name. This Edward Long Fox (1761-1835) was, in the words of the sub-title, a radical activist and mental health pioneer, who was, Moore suggests, greatly influenced by the values that his Cornish Quaker roots and upbringing gave him.

This monograph, based on meticulous research, using many primary sources, such as Annie Fox's 'A Short Account of Brislington House', is well structured and engaging with, in places, considerable detail. Along with the story of Long Fox, it provides a valuable insight into the social and political climate of Bristol, then England's second city. It is well illustrated, particularly with the only known portraits of Long Fox.

Edward Long Fox was born at Falmouth, where his father was a surgeon and apothecary. He aspired to be a physician and studied medicine in Edinburgh. Moore suggests this was probably because, as a Quaker, he would have been barred from getting a degree from an English university, and Edinburgh had a high reputation. He settled in Bristol, where he became one of the senior honorary physicians at the Bristol Royal infirmary and developed a large private general practice.

Probably because of his religious background, he became active with the Bristol Quakers in the anti-slavery movement. Moore reports that Long Fox helped Thomas Clarkson, when he came to gather evidence about the Bristol slave trade. He also became involved with local politics, being active against the injustices surrounding the 1793 Bristol Bridge Riots. In the 1790s there were many radical ideas being promoted in Bristol and from Moore's research, it seems that Long Fox had support from the poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Lovell, when leaflets were being distributed warning of the danger of '*Jacobin*' sentiment. His son wrote that his father later regretted this involvement, which prejudiced his medical career and created life-long enemies. He also wrote that his father supported the ideas behind the French Revolution, believing in freedom of thought and action.

In 1792, Long Fox purchased an asylum in Downend, where he had been working as a visiting doctor. The ethos of this asylum was to treat patients 'not by fear, but by love'. Long Fox developed this, advocating 'the advantages of a pure air' and 'the benefit of a quiet, retired and pleasant situation, free from the risk of dangerous accidents'. In 1799 he acquired Brislington estate and built there a state-of-the-art asylum for the insane. Unlike the common practice of the time, as in London's Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam), patients

were not in solitary cells, where they might be treated with punishment and physical restraint. In contrast, they were free to wander in the landscaped gardens and given occupation such as gardening, farming, housework, music, drawing, cards and board games.

Long Fox gave advice to the new asylums at Gloucester, Edinburgh and Nottingham and Brislington House was given as an example of good conditions and best practice by the Parliamentary Select Committee on the State of Madhouses (1815).

In 1830, when Long Fox was 69, he purchased Knightstone Rock, a small island just off the coast at Weston-super-Mare (WSM). Here he built a state-of-the-art therapeutic spa. This provided lodgings, hot and cold saltwater, sulphur, chlorine and iodine baths with vapour and shower baths. The spa made a significant contribution to the growing popularity of WSM as a seaside resort.

Moore has researched this monograph well, with 111 references and a useful bibliography. Many pages have footnotes, which are very informative, and give helpful context to the main narrative. There are two useful boxes early in the narrative, setting the scene about contemporary religion and medicine. Although this publication is only 41 pages long, a short index, particularly of people, would have been helpful. It fits well into the canon of ALHA booklets, many of which have focused on Bristol medicine in the Georgian period.

Paul Main