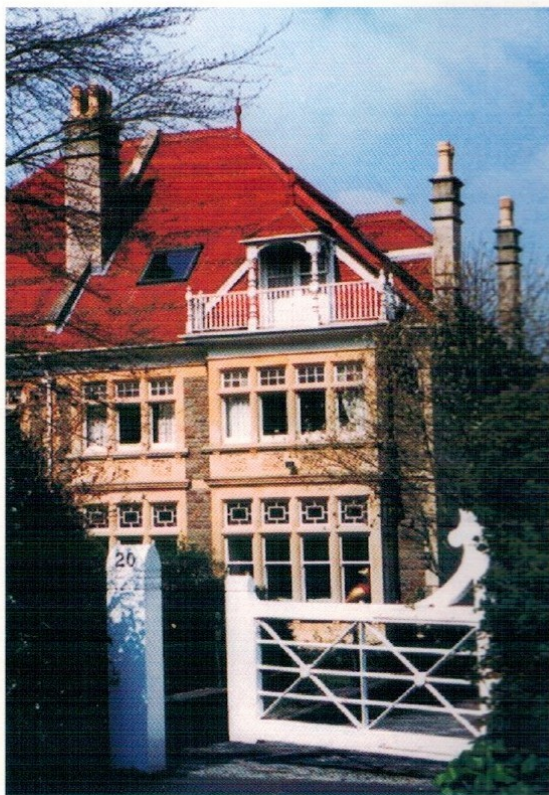


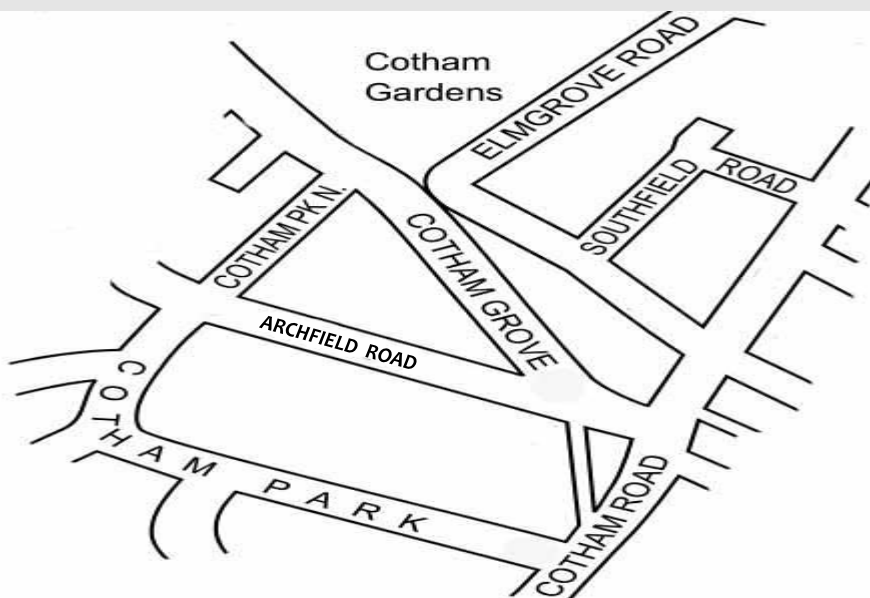


above, 16 Cotham Park, built on the site of Cotham Lodge in the 1840's.

right, 22 Cotham Park, one of six houses built in the 1890's.

below, 23a -13 Cotham Park, town houses built in 1964, seen from Cotham School grounds.





Welcome to the second book based on our project - LIVING HERE.

This initiative encourages residents to study their particular part of Redland or Cotham. Research so far has revealed the interesting architectural and social history, and increased our appreciation of this attractive area.

Our first book, covering another part of Cotham was published last year and No 3, covering part of Redland, is under preparation. The accounts have been only lightly edited and we hope readers will enjoy the varied approaches and interests of the contributors.

The LIVING HERE books are an important venture for the Society. We hope they will encourage residents to join RCAS and thus help to protect and enhance our environment. For information about membership, and other RCAS publications, please see page 44 or visit www.rcas.org.uk

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society

LIVING HERE

THE RESIDENTS ACCOUNT

Account No 2

—COTHAM—
**PARK, FIELD, ARCH
and GROVE**

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Background

The new houses on Clotts Hill, Herestone
and Arch Field.

Cotham Gardens and Lovers Walk



Above,
architectural fashions,
Cotham Park
and Cotham Park North

Designed and edited by *Roger Mortimer*

Published by

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society

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Outside cover

Extract from Ashmead's map of
1828 and one of the Obelisks at
Cotham Park.

INTRODUCTION

Two studies from the LIVING HERE project form the basis of this book. The first covers the Cotham Park area in some detail. The second covers the Cotham Grove, Elmgrove, Archfield and Southfield Road areas, together with Cotham Gardens, in less detail.

At the end of the 18th century most these areas were farmland belonging to the Cotham Lodge and Redland Court estates. To the south most of Kingsdown had been built but the City of Bristol stopped on the line of Cotham Road.

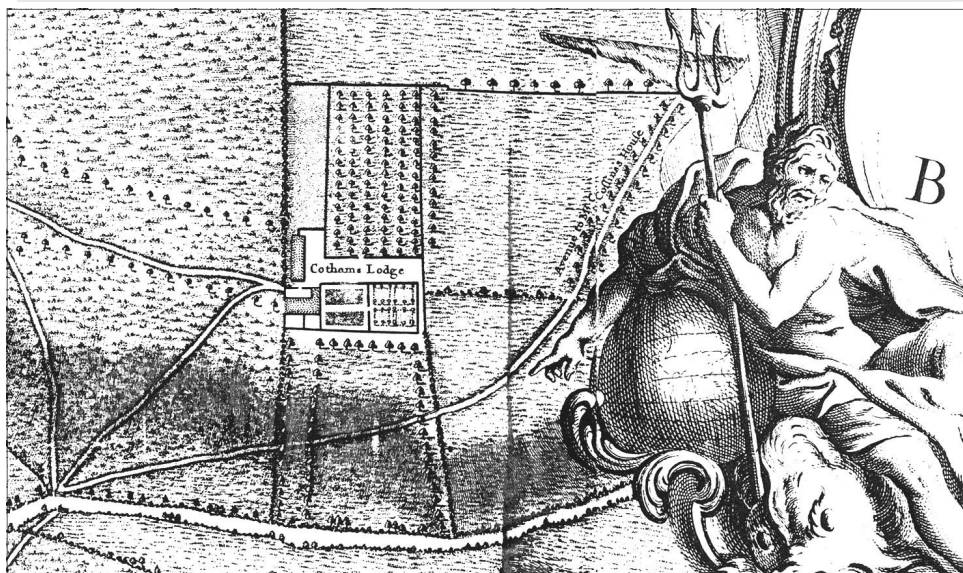
This book covers the development of these estate lands during the massive growth of the city in the 19th century and subsequently. We also note recent changes to how the area looks, and what it is like to be 'living here'. The views and sometimes critical comments are the authors.

Our research has involved maps, legal records, and census books, and in the case of Cotham Park documentation and information from many past and present residents. We are very grateful for all assistance. Our sources are further acknowledged on page 43. Comments, corrections and further information including pictures would be welcome for the LIVING HERE archive.

Eileen Beaumont and Roger Mortimer

below, summer in the city - Cotham Gardens.





Above, extract from the 1742 map by John Rocque. (Courtesy, Bristol Library)
The road along the bottom became Cotham Road.

See also the 1828 map on the outside cover of this book, that shows the semi-circular stable block added at the top of the drive to Cotham Lodge.

Below, part of a photograph of Cotham Marble (Courtesy, Natural History Museum). This



Introduction

The district known as Cotham lying to the North of Bristol city centre occupies a 1.5km ridge beyond Kingsdown. The name Cotham is actually a corruption of Codde Downes which, according to title deeds, later became Codd or Cod Down, Coat Down, Coat Ham and Cod Ham and finally Cotham.

The street named Cotham Park was originally the entrance drive to Cotham Lodge. It was probably called 'park' because the initial 1845 building development occupied just a small part of what had been the Cotham Lodge Estate, an area rich in trees. Today there are impressively wide grass verges and mature trees in some of the gardens. The view down Cotham Park to the south east is also impressive, as it is closed by the amazing Jacobean style houses, 58-62 Cotham Road.

The Cotham Lodge Estate

John Rocque's map of 1742 shows a property called Cotham Lodge occupying a central position in the district. Stephen Jones in his book *Cotham Walks* (published by RCAS) tells us that it was the only house of any importance in Cotham. *" The Aldworth family owned and lived in the house from the 17th century until 1737. In 1753 it is described as having a good orchard and garden with two houses adjoining, several closes of pasture, a new built inn near Cotham Hill and a windmill "*. The house passed through several owners until 1845 when Francis and Richard Fry bought the house and estate. This house was demolished. The land was divided into "divers building lots" (see later).

It is the two obelisks standing at the entrance to Cotham Park (from Cotham Road) which alert the passerby to a street with an interesting history. These obelisks are not shown on the 1742 map. However, when we look at Ashmead's 1828 map there is a formal approach to the property from Cotham Road, with an avenue of trees. The obelisks obviously mark this entrance to the grounds of the house and are thought to have been built in the 18th Century.

The pillars make good use of Cotham marble, which can be seen in some of the decorative bands. This very unusual rock is 205-210 million years old. It was laid down in the late Triassic Period. It is also known as 'landscape marble' because of the characteristic 'trees in a hedgerow' shapes (seen in polished slices of the rock) which are really due to mounds of algal growth in the mud or silt being deposited at that

time. The upper/ outer surface of samples shows rounded corrugations. (There is a display in the city museum). Cotham is the type locality for this stone. Apparently several quarries were worked in Cotham and Redland in the 19th century. One area of working is thought to lie between Cotham Park and Cotham Grove. When new buildings were being erected at Cotham Grammar School in 1971, samples of this marble were freely available from an excavation hole on the site.

In 1829 Cotham New Road was built as a bypass allowing traffic from Clifton to avoid St Michael's Hill and the narrow city streets when travelling west.

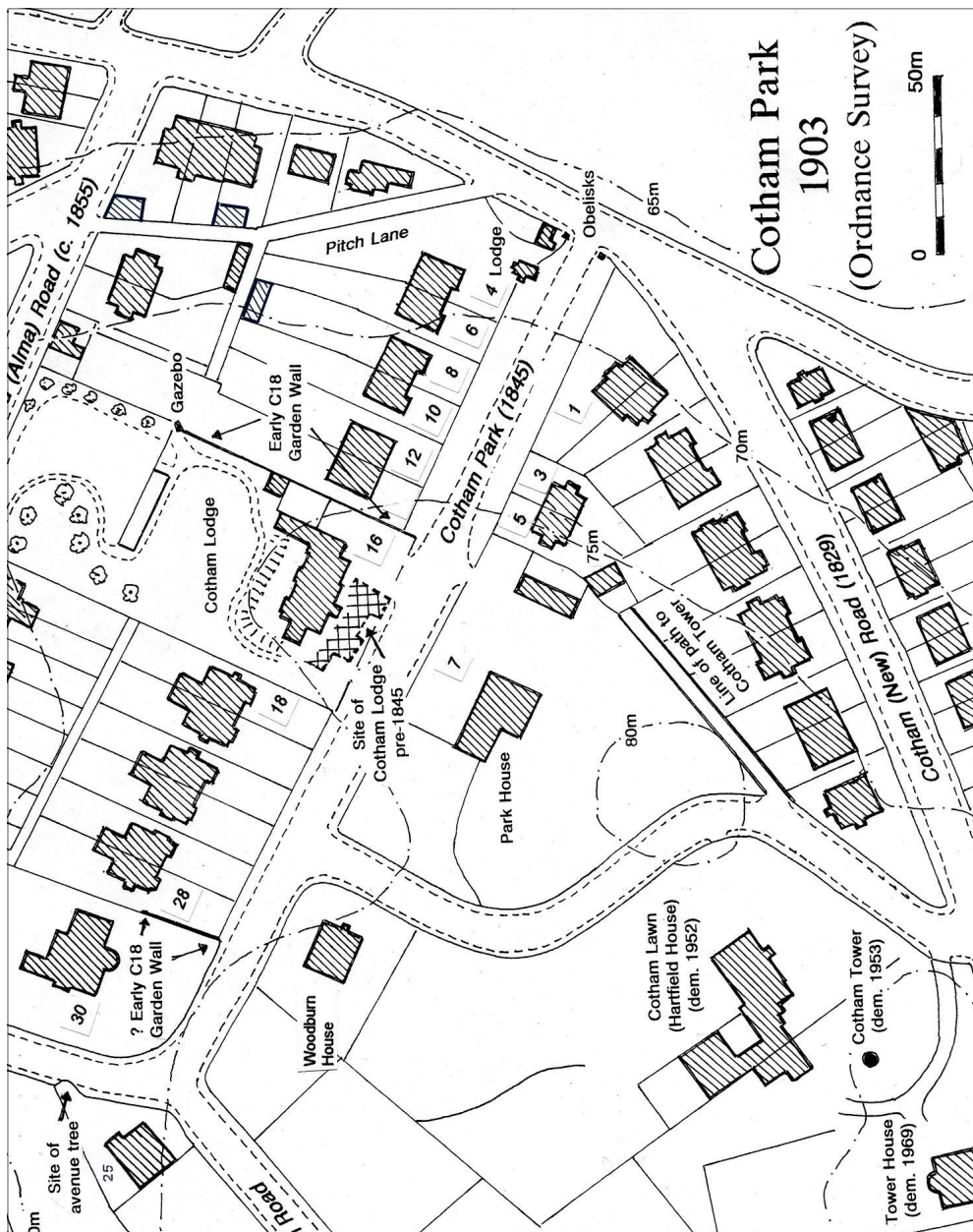
In 1837 Francis Fry bought a plot of land that had recently been sold from the Cotham Lodge estate. Here he built a large house set well back from the road. He called it Tower House because of the 18th century tower that was situated in the grounds.

In 1845 Francis and Richard Fry bought the rest of the Cotham Lodge estate and Richard Fry, on a large plot next to Tower House, built Cotham Lawn. Cotham Tower was demolished in 1953. It is however commemorated in the school badge of Cotham School. The tower was originally a windmill. A document of 1725 mentions a windmill recently built in Cotham let to Williams Beverstone, a baker. In 1754 it was let to William Hulme who used it for grinding snuff. In 1772 Cotham Lodge estate, together with the windmill, was bought by Charles Partridge. In 1779 he heightened the windmill and made it into an observatory. It was 70 feet high and standing on land more than 250 feet about sea level it gave extensive views. The tower of rubble construction had ogee Gothic windows around the top and arrow slits below.

In 1920 Bristol University was given permission to use the Tower, rent free, for experiments in wireless directional research and in the 1939-45 war it was used by the Home Guard as a Lewis gun post.

Cotham School 'began' in 1919 when the Merchant Venturers secondary school moved to a new site in Cotham Lawn Road. Bristol's Education Committee became the owners of Tower House and the tower when they were given control of the school in the post war re-organisation of education. For a short period Tower House provided the Headmaster's room, school office, library and rooms for the sixth form, only to be demolished in 1969 because it was 'unsafe'.

This followed on from the Education Committee's demolition of Cotham Tower in 1953, again as unsafe - very specious grounds in the opinion of independent observers at the time. The only memorials to the tower are the stone gate posts of Tower House and a few original trees.



Above, extract from a Map of the Cotham Park Area as it was in 1903, drawn by James R

Phases of development

As there were three main phases of development, three very different building styles can be seen in the street today. Each will be amplified later.

1845 The earliest houses were the 3 pairs of Italianate Villas now numbers 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. Cotham Lodge(16), Woodburn House (vanished 1931/2) and Park House (now Muller House) and numbers 1, 3, 5.

1890 Three pairs of houses were built in the 1890s on the garden of the old Cotham Lodge (numbers 18-28).

1964 Eight houses (numbers 13-23A) were built on the site of Woodburn House.

A Study of one house, Wharncliffe, 6 Cotham Park

I am beginning with no. 6 since it was one of the first houses to be built and from the house deeds and other sources I have been able to trace some of its history.

18th September 1846. Francis and Richard Fry - Chocolate Makers of the City of Bristol sold a plot of land to Andrew Langdon - a Builder - for £762.

“Francis and Richard Fry had set out part of the hereditaments known by the name of the Cotham Lodge Estate into divers building lots with roads and approaches thereto.”

Four houses were to be built on building lots 8 and 9 (current house numbers 4, 6, 8 and 10). The land on the south westward side was the approach to Cotham Lodge House “lately taken down”. At the back a strip of land 11 feet wide was intended for a way into land adjoining the property. On the eastern side a 15 feet wide strip of land used by the public as a footpath was to become Pitch Lane.

Francis and Richard Fry promised that they “should or would on or before 9th September 1847, at their own expense and with sound and proper materials construct and completely finish that part of the new road which lay in front of the said hereditaments”. No trade, business or manufactory whatsoever or any Boys school could be within 600 feet of the hereditaments.

“Not more than one single messuage or dwelling house or single villa or one double messuage or dwelling house or double villa with offices thereto respectively should be erected on each of said lots or parcels of land thereby assured.” Each villa at the time of completing should be of the annual value of £50 at the least.

“4 coachhouses and 4 stables might be erected on any part of the said hereditaments which coachhouses and stables should not exceed the height of 20 feet from the ground and should be roofed with slate and no stable yard should be within 15 feet of the North-westward boundary of the said hereditaments.”

If we look at the plan on an 1874 conveyance only one stable has been built together with the adjacent coachhouse. This is now the garage of No. 8 Cotham Park. It still has an upper storey.

Right, 6 Cotham Park

The house has changed hands 10 times since 1874 with interesting variations in value.



1874. Conveyance of a dwellinghouse, J.B. Weston to W. Franklin, **£1,095.**

1879. W.Franklin Gent, to T.C. Gardner, Manufacturing Ironmonger, **£1,150.**

1899. T.C.Gardiner, and mortgagees, to A.Milroy, Draper, **£1,000.**

1907. E.A. Milroy (his widow) to H.H. Dennis Chartered Accountant, **£800.** **1921.**

H.H.Dennis to William Albert Tasker, Commercial Traveller, **£1,500.**

1931. W.A.Tasker to Mrs J.E.Eckford, widow from Finchley **£1,300.** The property was then mortgaged to Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society **1934** C&G Building Society to A.V.Osmond, Auctioneer, **£700**

1935 A.V.Osmond of Bridge Street to Mrs Eliza Powell Porter, wife of W.Porter, Estate Agent, for **£750.** Property immediately mortgaged.

1951 sold by auction to Arthur T.C Fisher and Mildred Fisher, **£1,900.**

1970. A.T.C. Fisher sold it to Leonard Beaumont, **£9,500**

1990 - Estimated value - **£150,000.**

I came to Bristol in 1965 and fell in love with the garden flat from the moment I walked in and saw the back lawn with apple and pear trees-an oasis in the heart of the city. The rent was 4 guineas per week but I felt well worth it. (My salary was about £1,000 per annum) The landlord, Mr A T C Fisher, an engineer at the BBC had bought the property in 1951 and gradually converted it into bedsitters above the landlord's flat with the garden flat below. In 1970 ill health forced him to retire. He sold the house to my parents.

Some former inhabitants of Wharncliffe, 6 Cotham Park

In **1855** a Mrs Else lived here. In **1857** we have "the Misses Else Boarding school for young ladies. Kelly's **1870** Street Directory gives Miss S.W. Kilpin Ladies' boarding school. The **1871** Census does not name her, instead we have:-

Ann Keddell aged 66, widow born in Devon

Anne P. Keddell aged 37, daughter, teaching at home born in Keynsham

Ellen M. Keddell aged 35, daughter, teaching at home born in Keynsham

Two cousins aged 14 and 12, scholars, born in Newfoundland

Three boarders 16, 14 and 13, two of these from Plymouth and one from Wrexham - I wonder why they came here, to this house?

Cook aged 27 Housemaid aged 20.

Ladies Boarding Schools in the Cotham Park Area

In the **1870** street directories, two of the 16 listed for Bristol are to be found in Cotham Park, one at no.6, and another at no.34. No.36 was a preparatory school for young gentlemen. From the **1881** census we learn that Lansdown House, Cotham Park North is a school run by the Misses Elliott both schoolmistresses, there are 2 other teachers and 13 pupils mostly boarders.

In the **1891** census Avenue House, Cotham Park North is a Private School. The Principal is a widow .Her 3 older daughters are assistant teachers. There are 8 boarders coming from a wide range of birthplaces - Pill, Birmingham, Edinburgh and even Mozambique.

House histories

The next houses are considered in numerical sequence, (not all the houses are mentioned)

No.1 Cotham Park

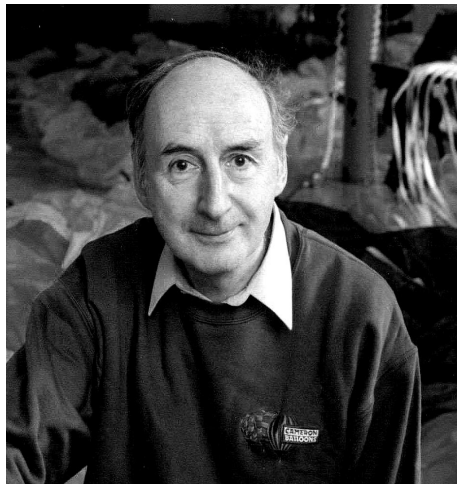
27th November 1850 was the date when the Fry's sold the land for this house. It was purchased by George Gay and Thomas Dix. **George Gay** was a builder who appears to have been responsible for the construction of some of the earliest houses in both Cotham Park and Cotham Park North. He lived at no.1 from 1857-1879 and then at "The Knoll" (no. 33) until his death aged 77 in May 1891. From the 1881 Census we learn that he was employing 40 men and 2 boys. In 1885 he gave no.35 as the vicarage of St Matthew's Church(built in the 1830s) .There is a memorial plaque to him and his wife in the church although he was interred at Holy Trinity, St Phillips.

This particular villa, because it was on the corner, was to have two uniform fronts of freestone, one for Cotham New Road and the other for Cotham Park. There was to be "free use and enjoyment of the 5 elm trees now standing and growing upon the ground outside the boundary wall ".Mr Gay could enter the land to fell and cut down the trees but must restore the ground afterwards. The frontage was to match that on the opposite side of the road The trees were felled in the 1970s when they became victims of Dutch Elm disease .Depressions can still be seen were they were. However we still have the pleasant matching bands of grass on each side of the road which gives a park-like feel to the street.

Don Cameron, an aeronautical engineer lived here from 1965-1982. In 1970 he set up **Cameron Balloons**. Initially they were manufactured in the basement of his home but in 1972 the company moved to the nearby disused St. Matthew's Church Hall where there was more available space. Today Cameron Balloons is the largest manufacturer of hot-air balloons in the world, building, on average, one balloon a day.

His daughter Hannah, born in 1970 remembers how "all manner of balloon related equipment was scattered around the garden eg. the purple and yellow gondola which was used in the 1978 attempt to fly across the Atlantic -during its manufacture and for storage on its return until it was shipped to a museum in America, a double-decker balloon basket that was used to carry 50 people- the largest balloon in the world."

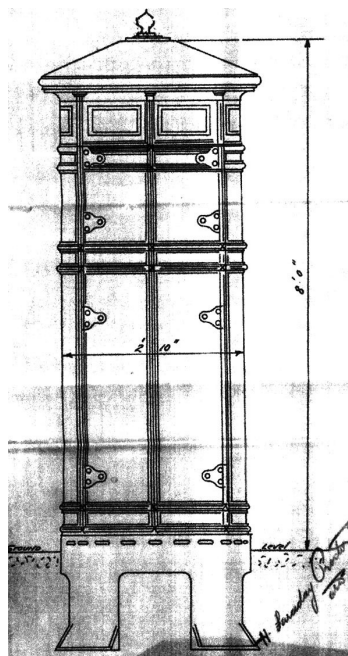
Right, Don Cameron



In 1907 mains electricity supply was made available to residents of Cotham Park.

In the Bristol Record Office is a copy of an agreement dated 26th Nov 1907 between Messrs F.J & C.P Fry and the Corporation of Bristol " in respect of constructing a Transformer Kiosk at Cotham Bristol ". This was to be erected in the garden of No 1. Today the spot is marked by a birdbath and there is an electricity substation commissioned in 1965 across the road in the garden of no 4. The Transformer was housed in a cast iron pillar. The engineer signing the document had the appropriate Christian name of Faraday.

Right, The cast iron pillar housing the transformer.



No. 3 Cotham Park. This house is a utility rebuild, having been bombed on 18th March 1941. A string of four bombs fell in the area that night. One destroyed the entrance lodge to the street, one fell in the middle of the road, the third hit No. 3 and the fourth fell onto the tennis court of No 7.

No. 4 Cotham Park. Today this property is divided into flats. However back in 1940 it was a family home with lodgers. Margaret Hayman was one of three lodgers. She came to Bristol to work as a civil servant with the Ministry of Labour.

January 1st 1941 "I've started the New Year with a New Year Resolution - to keep a diary and just in case I should forget it I will here record that on Monday December 2nd a bomb collided with the side of No. 4 Cotham Park and we had to evacuate, hence my present address" (in Upper Cranbrook Road).

She and the other lodgers and the Day family (who owned the house) were sheltering in the kitchen, fortunately no-one was upstairs visiting the w.c. The bomb landed just outside the front door, the kitchen window was blown in and the ceiling came down. They walked out through the hole created by the blast. It was about a week before they were able to re-enter the house. Everything was just as they had left it (No looting). However when they went upstairs an unexploded incendiary

bomb was poised on the mantelpiece in one of the attic rooms.

Tuesday 18th March 1941 - *Another bomb fell near No. 4.*

Wednesday 19th March 1941 - *Returned home though Cotham, saw the bomb crater just outside the little cottage. The cottage is just a skeleton. I'm afraid the Days will have a shock. Two or three other houses in Cotham Brow were damaged.*

The little cottage mentioned above must be the lodge shown at the bottom of Cotham Park on 1848 deeds and said to be the lodge by the entrance gates to the original Cotham Lodge. Today there is just a patch of rough ground (to the right of the entrance path to number 4) marking the spot.

No.5 Cotham Park has had only three owners since it was built in 1872 for the University.

Consequently the interior still has many Victorian features. Professor W. Mc Stewart (medieval French history) bought it in 1946-47 from the University. It was then sold again in 1990. It was used by the BBC in 1990 to film "Heading home" since it contained good examples of post-war furnished rooms, available for renting.

Right, 5 Cotham Park, built 1872. The freestone facade has recently been cleaned and restored.



No. 7 Cotham Park, originally called **Park House** and now called **Müller Huse**.

S. Jones notes *“The stone scrolls to the entrance and the pretty Lodge inside given an impression of country house grandeur”*



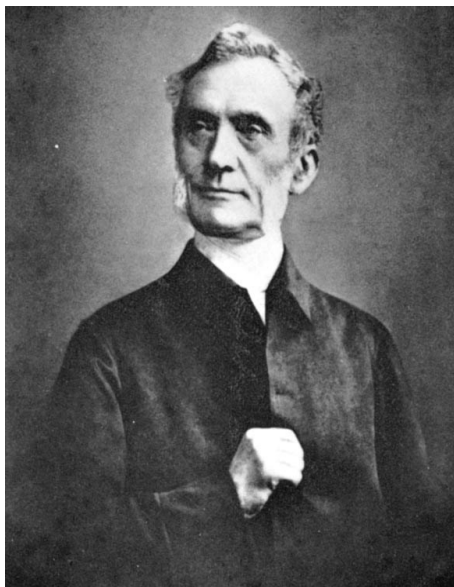
The Lodge of Park House, *above*, was actually the coach-house. It is a fascinating building, kindly shown me by the present occupants Mr and Mrs Jim Pullin who have lived there for the last 25 years. Mr Pullin having been the gardener at Müller House. On viewing it from the outside one is not aware that there are no downstairs windows. The front door leads directly onto a staircase, which was put in during 1907, as was the extension to the left of the door. Stretching away down the garden (and underneath the present living accommodation) we have the coach-house, tack room and stables.

The main house has a superb entrance hall and grand staircase. It is currently the headquarters of the George Müller Foundation and on the ground floor a museum outlining the history of the organisation is open 10am-4pm, Monday – Friday, except Bank Holidays .

George Müller, (1805-1898), is well known as a man of great faith, who in 1849 opened the first of five purpose built houses for orphans at Ashley Down.(In those days this was a rural site outside the city boundary). All the money and workers came as a direct result of prayer with no debts being incurred and no appeals or requests were ever made. When Müller started these homes his primary objective was not the

welfare of the children but to demonstrate God's providence .”Open wide your mouth and I will fill it” Psalm 81 verse 10. At the time of his death in 1898 there were 2,050 children in the five houses.

As a result of the 1948 Children Act it was decided to sell the five large houses at Ashley Down. They were purchased by the local education authority in 1958.They bought instead, smaller properties to house family groups of from ten to twelve children Married couples were taken on as house parents to care for the children and they were helped by assistants.



Above, George Müller

Right,

The decorative tiled floor to the entrance hall, Müller House.



Three houses in Cotham Park were purchased, no.7 became the headquarters of the Müller Foundation and so was named Müller House. no.16 was used as a children's home and was named Ashley Down House and no.10 was also a home.

In **1852** Lieutenant Colonel Crawford lived here. His initials are in the shield over the fireplace in the present committee room.

In **1864** Mr H.O. Wills bought the house. In **1871** it was sold to Thomas May, a tea-dealer down at Mardyke below Castle Park. There is an etching of the house at the time of this sale, hanging in the entrance hall. It depicts the house as it was before the 1907 alterations.

The 1881 census records the following occupants:-Thomas May(50) and his wife (49), their four daughters and two sons with ages ranging as follows: 21, 20, 17, 13, 11 and 9. There were 2 housemaids, 1 parlour maid, 1 nurse, 1 nursemaid, 1 cook, 1 kitchenmaid and 1 coachman. It seems strange that the nurse and nursemaid are still needed.

1907 Mr Richard Dalton bought the house. A conservatory complete with a delightful Pulhamite grotto was added at the back.

Below, The conservatory, 7 Cotham Park



(In 1860 James Pulham had developed a reconstituted stone material which he patented as Pulhamite.) Mr Pullin (the gardener) showed me that in the grotto we can see fragments of stalactites incorporated into its fabric. It has been sculpted into crags etc with planting pockets at intervals into which soil can be placed. The porous nature of the “rock” means that moisture is retained - ideal conditions for growing ferns.

1931 It was bought by the Bible Churchmens’ Missionary Training College for Women. After the war it was bought by the Muller Homes for Children when the Ashley Down Orphanage was sold to the education authority.

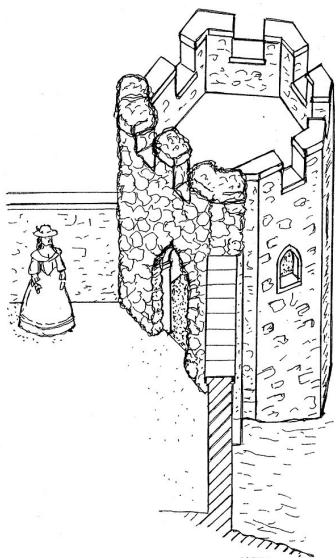
No. 12 Cotham Park. This was named Toad Lodge in 1987. Mrs Carlton has told me that when her son was water-divining in the garden he found a well. When they dug it out, first one toad popped up, then two more. They had been wondering what name to give their house and as the property is not big enough to be Toad Hall decided on Toad Lodge.

No. 14 Cotham Park. This is now occupied by Mr & Mrs P. Scroggs and their children. However at the beginning of this century it was the Police and Fire Brigade Children’s Home - the subject of a charming sketch by Samuel Loxton, *below*.



No. 16 Cotham Park formerly the new Cotham Lodge is now owned by the Muller Foundation. *“Its architecture lives up to its importance as the new Cotham Lodge. The usual classical villa is given a profusion of paired pilasters, and a four column portico on the main front. The side elevation is even more grand with an eagle crowned pediment. S.Jones.*

In **1921** it was a girls’ school, in **1930** and **1940** Hampton House school, **1950** Toc H were there. In **1960** the Müller Foundation bought it, and its uses have included the Institute of Child Studies, Oakhill School and the Woodland Christian Centre.



Gazebo, Cotham Lodge, Bristol
Reconstruction

In the garden of no. 16 is an 18th Century **gazebo**. This, along with the pillars at the entrance to Cotham Park is a relic from the original Cotham Lodge (see p.5) The hexagonal building, now partially covered in ivy can be glimpsed from the cul-de-sac off Pitch Lane or from the car park of Knightstone Lodge, Archfield Road.

At the time of its construction one would have had good views of Redland and Cotham through its Gothic windows. Sadly in 1984 these windows were filled in with breeze blocks to prevent the structure being totally vandalised.

In January 2002 the gazebo was surveyed by James Russell et al. for the Avon Gardens Trust.

left, one of Russell’s drawings.

A detailed report and a fuller account of the history of the estate are to be published in the AGT newsletter. Russell thinks that the gazebo shows the influence of Thomas Wright (1711-1786) a designer of arbours and grottoes who is known to have worked at Stoke Park and Badminton. Interestingly it features in the “Panoramic view of Bristol and Montpelier” (as ‘the seat of Barrow Esquire’) sketched in 1830 by Thomas L.S. Rowbotham now in the Braikenridge collection in the City Museum. It is also just visible in the trees on the right in Loxton’s 1908 sketch (p.17). It can be seen today.(see14 Cotham Park). The battlemented parapet has vanished and today there is a flat concrete slab roof which as Russell says makes it look like a decrepit World War 2 pill box.

Numbers 18-28 Cotham Park:

“Are three pairs of houses built in the 1890s. Their glory is the massive area of red-tiled roof and the wooden balconies all very much in the Norman Shaw Domestic Revival manner.”

Right, detail of No 20 Cotham Park.



I am indebted to Sally and Sean McInerny for allowing me to read the deeds of No. 24 which enabled me to trace both the demolition of the original Cotham Lodge, the building of the new Cotham Lodge and finally the building of six houses on the site of the kitchen gardens, vineries and orchard of the old lodge.

In an indenture of 184 it was stipulated that a strip of ground , running the length of the properties (adjacent to the new road) should be planted with evergreens. This explains why these properties have a holly or laurel hedge outside their front garden walls - an early conservation measure?

The document goes on to say - as did that for No. 6 that each Villa should be of the annual value of £50 at least.

Below are some sales details

1879 H. Camps, gentleman, sold Cotham Lodge and the kitchen gardens, orchard, paddock and lawn to Robert Bartlett Pierce for **£5,250**.

1899 F.W. Griffin who had erected a dwelling house called Haslemere (now No. 24) on one plot from the kitchen garden sold it to J. Kebby for **£925**.

1907 J. Kebby sold it to Mrs J.A. Callander for **£750**. The property was then mortgaged to Mrs W.H. Butler and others.

1910 Mr W.H. Butler and others sold it to Mrs L.E. Slater for **£800**.

1924 Mrs L.E. Slater sold it to Mr P.R. Eskill for **£1,675**.

1926 Mr P.R. Eskell sold it to J.S. Wright Esq. for **£2,100.**

1962 Mr Wright's son and daughter sold it for **£5,100** to the Church Commissioners for England, to be the vicarage for the Reverend Stanley William Short, Incumbent of the Benefice of Kingsdown St. Matthew (presumably this was a replacement for no 35)

1976 The Lord Bishop of Bristol, with the consent of the Church Commissioners sold it to Mr and Mrs S.K. McInerny for **£23,000.**

Nos. 23A - 13 Cotham Park

"Are brick and timber townhouses built in 1964 on the site of Woodburn House."

S.Jones. For each house the garage is adjacent to the front door with living accommodation above.

I have been unable to discover when Woodburn House vanished. It is shown on Ashmead's 1882 map and occupants are listed in street directories 1850-1931. The 1962 deed map for No. 24 shows a water tank on part of the site.

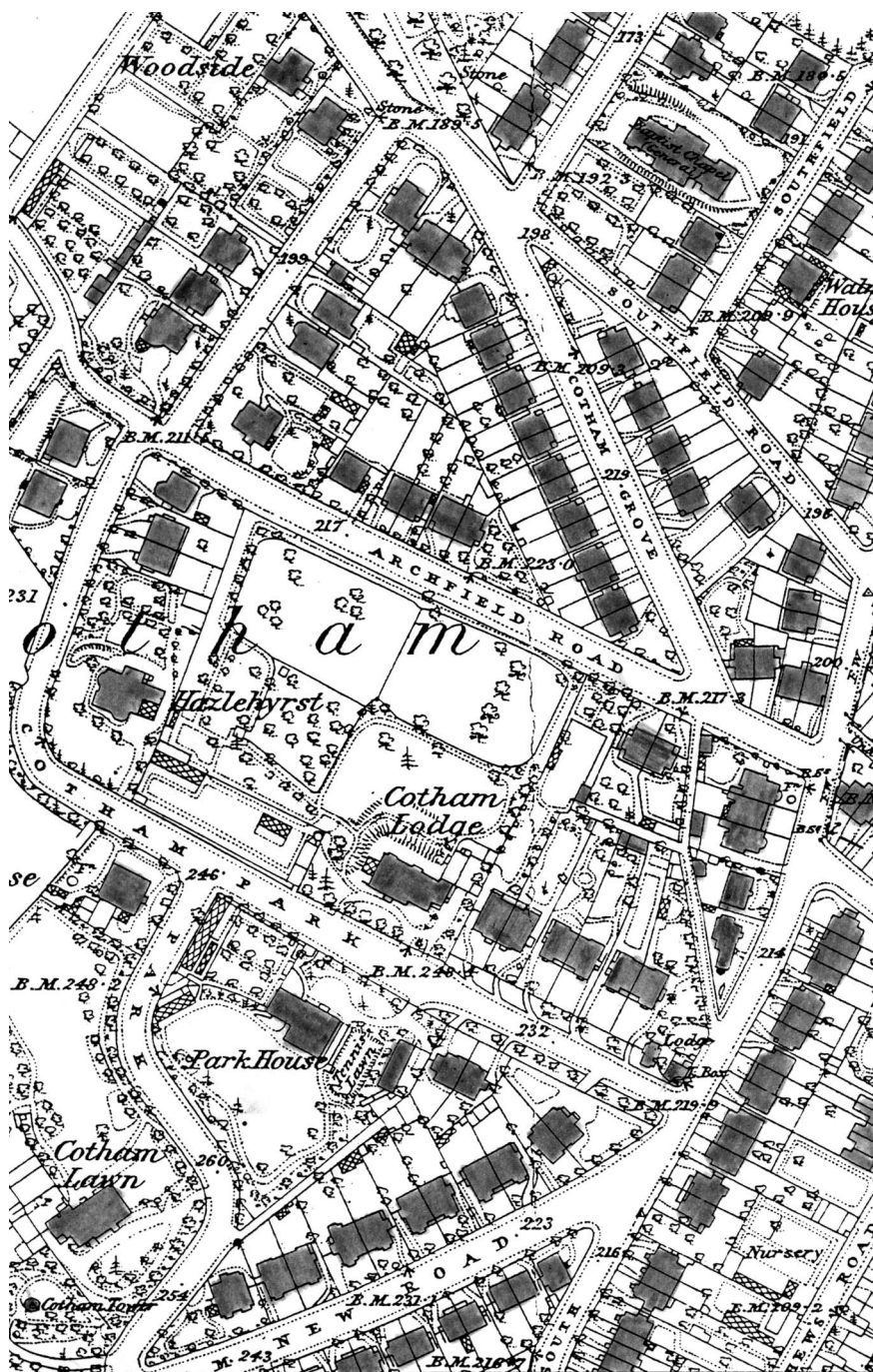
Mrs C. Hebblethwaite has lived at No. 19A since 1964 when she and her husband purchased the house for £5,200. (In 1998 the end one was sold for £170,000).She remembers a bare site prior to the houses being built and was able to tell me that during the war it was used by the Gloucestershire Regiment as a vehicle park; with the water tank occupying part of the site. The site was sold for £14,000 to JT (Bristol) Limited who had intended to build two semi-detached houses. However as these would have had to be sold for astronomical prices they built 11 town houses instead.

No. 30 Cotham Park: better known as Charnwood

This house is called Hazlehyrst on Ashmead's 1880 map. However by 1900 it had become Charnwood and was then occupied by the T.Butler family who were there at least until 1930. T Butler worked for the family firm of Tar Distillers at Crew Hole. I have been told that his father was a friend of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Brunel needed a preservative to treat railway sleepers to prevent them decaying. Mr Butler experimented with tar distillation in order to find a suitable substance.

Charnwood was used by the Territorial Army in the 1940s/1950s and the Civil Defence Corps in the 1960s, at the time of the Cold War nuclear threat. In 1967 it was acquired by Bristol L.E.A. and after extensive modifications by 1970 was flourishing as an annex to Cotham School.

Opposite, extract from the 1880 OS map, showing area almost fully built.



Cotham Park North

It would appear that development of this road began 1869-70. There was a conveyance of four plots of ground and hereditaments from Messrs F & R Fry to Mr George Gay (builder) on 29 September 1868. The dwellings were to be finished on or before 29 September 1870. On a plan of that date the present road is indicated as “new road”. On the said plots there were to be either 4 single villas of clear annual value of £70 each at least or 4 semi-detached villas of clear annual value of £60 at least.

The fronts of the villas were to be of freestone or pennant or red sandstone and roofs of slate. Again the premises were not to be used for trade or any Boys School “nor as a burial ground”, however use as a Girls School was permitted. Four villas were built, now known as Cotham Park Mansions, Lansdowne House, Kirwin House & Avenue House to give them their present names. As can be seen the style is “*florid Italianate at its peak*”. S.Jones.

No.5 Cotham Park North, Avenue House

This is first mentioned in the 1871 street directory and the Census indicates that Charles Townsend was the first occupier, living there with his wife, four young children and three servants. He was a wholesale druggist employing 14 men and 7 boys - by 1881 this had grown to ‘51 hands.’ His firm was Ferris, Broome, Townsend and Boucher, Pharmaceutical Chemist, Druggist and Surgical Instrument Maker of Union Street, which survived as Ferris and Co until quite recently. Their instruments are now collectors items - an Amputation Set in a brass bound mahogany box holding more than 30 gruesome sounding instruments was recently advertised as a fine example of the period.

In 1881 Charles Broome, another partner in the firm, was living in what is now called Cotham Park Mansions (but has also been called Kendrick House and judging by the gate pillars, Ounsley House.). By 1891 another Ferris man, N. A. Burt, was living in this house. The Census returns for the period show how many houses were occupied by Victorian entrepreneurs and professional men. A commentator at the time noted the areas residents to be ‘respectable citizens, with two or three servants and a carriage and pair.’

The school use of Avenue House had ended by 1910 and it was to have 5 further owners before acquisition by the Society of Friends. Much of the above information was researched by a friend of Avenue House. Its recent history and current story, related by Lorna Thompson, follows.

Avenue House

As a home for older people.

Lorna Thompson

5 Cotham Park North, built in 1871, has always been called Avenue House. This is probably because it sides onto a road originally called 'The Avenue', now Cotham Grove. In spite of the change of street name Avenue House still suits it well as its windows look onto the avenue of lime trees in Lovers' Walk.

Avenue House was bought by the newly formed West of England Friends' Housing Society Ltd in 1949 as a 'hostel for aged Friends'. The word 'Friends' here means a member of 'The Religious Society of Friends'. This is itself shorthand for its seventeenth century name 'The Religious Society of Friends of the Truth'. Friends are also called 'Quakers' - originally a term of abuse referring to their way of trembling or quaking when they felt the power of divine inspiration. Quaking is exceedingly rare now.

The moving force behind the founding of the Housing Society was Alice Sturge, a lifelong Friend. She was then aged nearly eighty, with only about four more years to live. She was concerned at the difficulties experienced by older Quakers. Like many other people, they could not get the domestic staff they and their homes needed, due to the many changes brought about by the second world war. The solution seemed to be buying a large house where several residents could share domestic arrangements.

Alice Sturge gathered several Friends with relevant skills like accountancy, social work and building. These members of the Management Committee were (and are) all voluntary. However, they now include several non friends.

The committee looked at several houses before choosing Avenue House. It was to provide accommodation for thirteen residents. Not everyone was happy with the choice - there were steps up to the front door and the nearest tram stop was Zetland Road, some distance for an older person. There were no buses then along Cotham Grove. However, there was a railway station nearby. Also people going into residential care in those days were on average at least a decade younger than nowadays and much fitter.

Avenue House was bought for £5,500, free of ground rent. The final cost of purchase and adaptations was £10,054 and furnishings and equipment another £365. An appeal to local Friends raised over £3,000. There was also an anonymous donation of a house at Shaftesbury. A bank overdraft was obtained for £4,000 and later £3,500 of local authority loan stock was bought for the term of 20 years at 3.25% interest.

There was much work to do. The Housing Society registered as a non-

profitmaking charity. Tenders were sought for a builder to do the necessary alterations and implement the fire precautions - Joseph Coleman of Dowry Square was chosen. The posts of warden, assistant warden and cook were advertised. The warden earned £170 p.a. plus "usual emoluments". She worked a 5 1/2 day week and had one month's paid leave a year. There was also daily help employed and a boiler stoker and his wife who did the 'rough work' for 1/9d per hour.

The first residents moved in in January 1950. It is difficult to work out the rent charged but in the management committee minutes in 1957 there is reference to double rooms let to a single person for £5.5.0 a week or to a couple for £7.10.0 a week. More than half the residents were Quakers in the early days, whereas less than a quarter are Quakers nowadays. Avenue House seems to have met a real need. Marion MacPherson, warden 1950 -1959, wrote in 1950: "I have dropped into a very happy household, mutual consideration, which is evidence of real fellowship, is the keynote". However it soon became clear that thirteen residents was too few to be economic. Therefore in 1971 a new wing was built to accommodate ten more residents, along with a new kitchen and a lift. In 1978 a second extension was built bringing the number of residents to thirty.



Above, a new floor of bedrooms being added to Avenue House, September 2002, part of a major internal and external upgrade.

The early residents had become frailer and needed more care which Avenue House was attempting to provide without raising the rents. A financial crisis was narrowly averted by Vaughan Southam, Chairman of the Management Committee in the late 1980's, by another fundraising drive. Wanting to provide a range of accommodation for elderly people, the West of

England Friends' Housing Society Ltd bought the neighbouring two houses when they came up for sale.

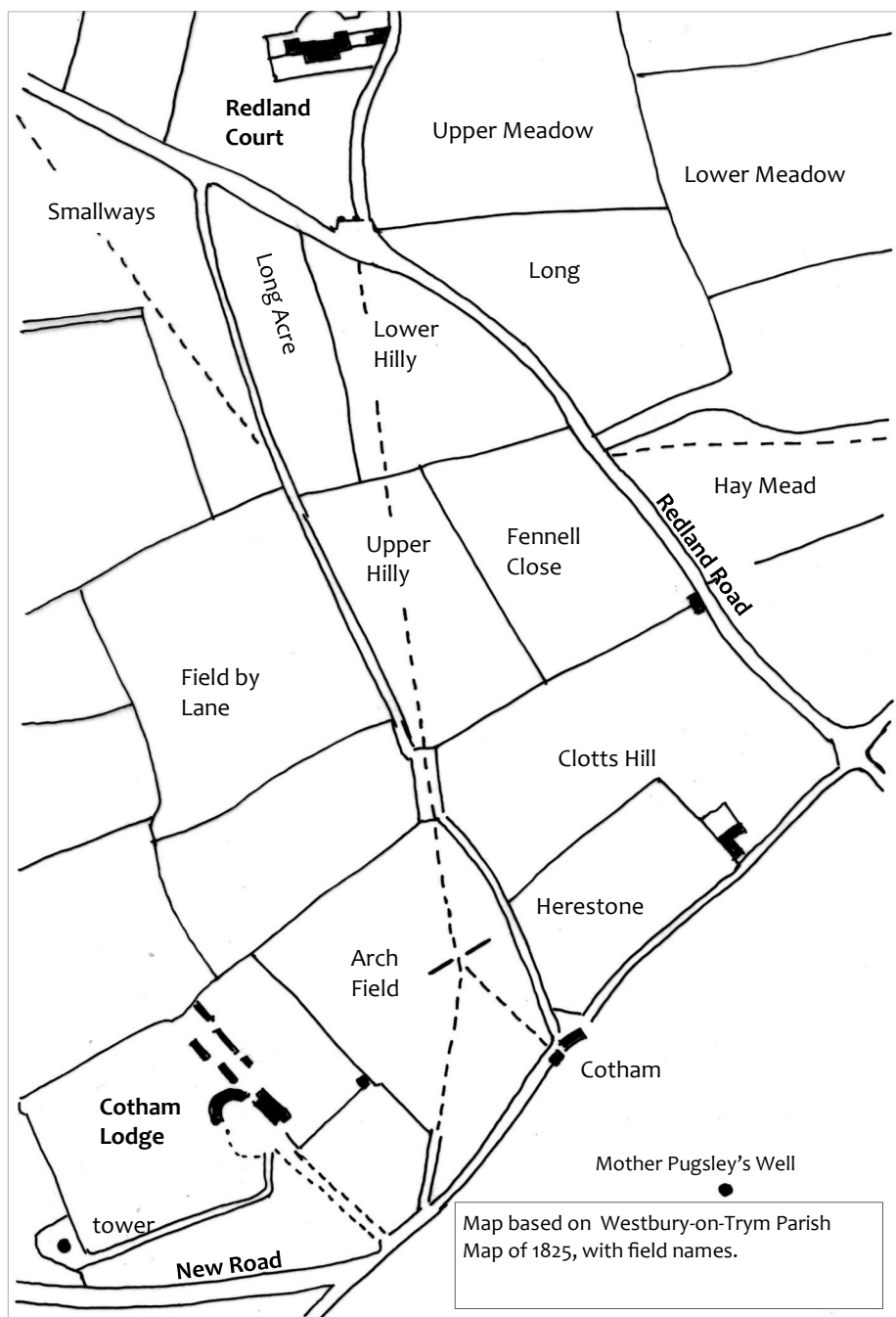
It named them Kirwin House and Lansdowne House after two Friends who gave significant service on the Management Committee. One house provides sheltered accommodation for eight people, the other independent living for eight people.

In 2001 more building started - to put an extra floor on the two storey extensions. There is not room to list the many benefits except to say that all of the thirty rooms will have en-suite facilities. The cost is estimated at £1,750,000. A part-time fund-raiser worked hard raising money from individuals and trusts. The Management Committee is aware that Kirwin House and Lansdowne House await their turn for refurbishment - more fundraising!

Avenue House has always tried to be a community where residents are encouraged to live their lives to the full. There are several weekly interest groups, like music, craft, discussion, exercise, painting, knitting and excursions. The staff and Management Committee realise it is not easy for an elderly person to leave the way of life they know and start again in new surroundings, living in close contact with a number of strangers. The living environment, the staff and the philosophy of care all contribute to providing a warm supportive home for frail older people.

Below. Avenue House residents enjoy an Edwardian day.





Cotham Grove, Elmgrove, Southfield, Archfield, Cotham Gardens and Lovers' Walk

Roger Mortimer

Background

This area was developed during the building boom of the middle to late 19th century. The land was almost entirely agricultural and the 1825 Westbury-on-Trym parish map shows the field names. Some field names suggest their use, for example Hay Mead and Fennell Close (fennel was grown for medicinal and culinary purposes.)

When house building began in earnest some roads were in existence as shown on the Ashmead map of 1828, reproduced on the outside cover of this book. One road followed the line of today's Redland Road, generally thought which to have formed part of the Roman road connecting Bath to the port at Sea Mills. However it has now been speculated by David Higgins in the 2002 Bristol and Avon Archaeological Trust Report that this road might have run further west, crossing a brook near today's Redland Station and coinciding with Fremantle Road. The Roman road would then have conveniently passed the perennial spring that became Mother Pugsley's Well. However, the need to tackle the slope of Nine Tree Hill seems to make this route improbable.

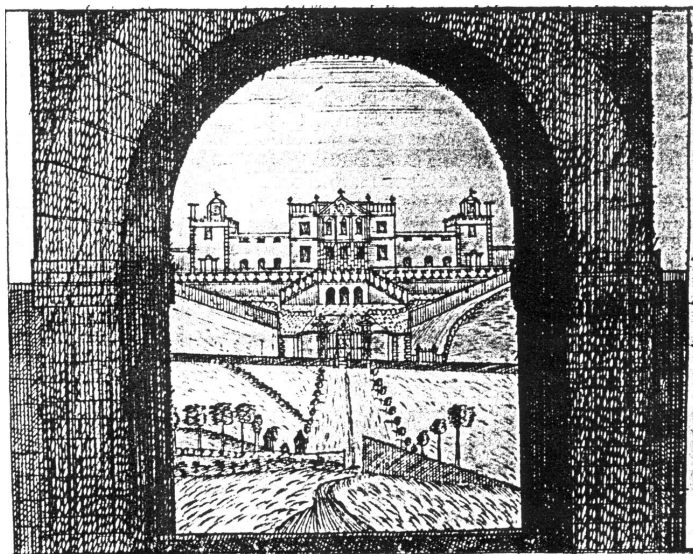
The route of Cotham Road / Cotham Brow shows on the John Rocque map of 1742. It became a 'proper' road in about 1825 and was called Cotham New Road. The flourishing district of Kingsdown adjoined to the south.

There was a turnpike on New Road, near its junction with a route roughly on the line of today's Fremantle Road. This, and the celebrated Mother Pugsley's Well, can be seen in the watercolour of 1820 by Lieutenant W Booth, reproduced overleaf. This painting, in the City Art Gallery, records the topography of the area with appropriately military precision. The other structure on the 1833 map, at the corner of what are now Southfield Road and Cotham Brow appears to be a modest farm, judging from a naive painting reproduced in Reece Winstone's 'Bristol as it was'.

An important feature of the area was an avenue of trees running from a point on what is now Cotham Grove, near the junction with Archfield Road, to the impressive gates of Redland Court. This avenue, and the coach drive it contained had been established by John Cossins in about 1735, and formed part of the grand approach and setting for his recently built Court. At the southern end of the avenue Cossins built a substantial stone castellated archway. Tim Mowl, describes it as 'an eyecatcher gate, Gothic but round arched below its pinnacles'. The Booth painting suggests rustic grandeur. However best estimates of the size of the structure suggest a somewhat toy castle scale. The main reason for this building boom was simply that this was one of the next areas of country into which Bristol could expand. Those who could afford



Above, Mother Pugsley's Well, Cotham Gate and the castellated arch, as shown in the 1820 painting by Lt W Booth. Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.



Left,
a 1746 drawing
of the arch, with
Redland Court in
the distance.

The View thro the Gate of the Avenue enlarged J.S. Stiles April 12th 1746

it had long tried to have at least a 'second home' on higher ground such as St Michaels Hill, away from the largely sewer-less old city. One wonders what the then residents of Kingsdown, etc felt about losing their adjacent countryside in Cotham to new development!

The 1828 Ashmead map shows no development but by 1885 maps show Elmgrove, Southfield and Archfield Roads substantially complete. Note that Southfield Road then included what is now part of Fremantle Road. This accounts for the missing numbers 1 and 3 in Southfield Rd - they are the pair now in Fremantle Road. Sir Thomas Francis Fremantle KCG, was the landowner. Sir Thomas, who died in 1819, served under Nelson at Trafalgar, commanding 'Neptune'.

No new suburban area was complete without at least one church. St Nathanael, now the Elmgrove Centre, was built by public subscription and consecrated in 1875. The architect was J. Bevan, who also designed St Saviour in Chandos Road. Cotham Grove Baptist church, running between Elmgrove Road and Southfield Road, was built in 1872. It is said that Garibaldi made a speech there - but this is unconfirmed.

Development on Arch Field, Clotts Hill and Herestone

William Coates, who bought the pasture known as Clotts Hill, is referred to as a 'builder, of Cheltenham Road'. However he seems also to have sold plots for others to build on, retaining a 'farm rent' and laying down conditions about what could be built and the sharing of drains and road upkeep costs. His name is associated other parts of Redland, such as Zetland Road.

The southern section of **Archfield Road** had been laid out by about 1855. It was then named Alma Road, after the Crimean war Battle of Alma. However the 1871 map shows no development on the south side, the land remaining part of the Cotham Lodge gardens. On the north side there was a detached house and two pairs of semi-detached houses. (No 1 has been compromised by the addition of a rather poorly designed block of flats).

It seems likely that **Cotham Grove** (then named Avenue Road) was an early focus of building. Leading straight off Cotham New Road and aligned with the avenue and vista to Redland Court it would have made a fine place to launch into this new development area. Cossin's castellated arch must have been demolished at about this time.

The formality of this road is emphasized by the layout of the eleven four storey villas that line it. Precisely aligned and spaced, seven on the west side and four on the east, these each contain a pair of semi detached houses. It Bristol and makes the street very unusual in Cotham and Redland.

Fortunately the houses have survived with few damaging alterations and mistakes such as the painting of Bath stonework, though the degrading effect of PVC windows is well demonstrated here. Almost all the original slate roofs have been replaced by tiles but these are high enough to be little seen. Most front boundary

would be even more impressive if the east side had contained another two villas but these were built facing Fremantle Road. Nos 1 to 14 are all described as Belgrave Villas on the 1880 map, the detached house, No 15, being Belgrave House. Beyond this lie Airdrie and Osborne Houses, 16/17, with Upton Lodge on the corner.

The freestone facades of the villas are almost identical and this design is repeated in Elmgrove Road and other Cotham streets. The stone detailing shows only minor variation such as the solid balustrades to some of the bay windows. One wonders if the elegant carved stone openwork balustrade was offered as a 'purchasers extra'? The recent restoration work to the balustrade of No 8 shows how fine this feature must have looked when Victorian house hunters came to inspect



Above, typical bay window and balustrade, 8 Cotham Grove.

Behind the facades the floor plans are virtually standard with central staircase, generous rooms and ceiling heights - except for the service quarters located in the characteristic semi-basement. Houses such as these have proved remarkably adaptable to changing housing patterns, being easily converted to flats and today often converted back to family homes. They are excellent examples of sustainable development.

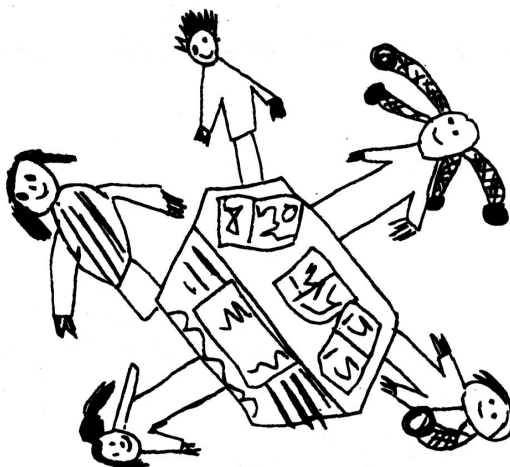
The design restraint and calm formality of Cotham Grove, with the repetition of a single house type, seems more reminiscent of Bath than Bristol and makes the street very unusual in Cotham and Redland.

Fortunately the houses have survived with few damaging alterations and mistakes such as the painting of Bath stonework, though the degrading effect of PVC windows is well demonstrated here. Almost all the original slate roofs have been replaced by tiles but these are high enough to be little seen. Most front boundary walls and gardens survive and the road remains a fine example of urban development.

The major changes in the road including the demolition of Nos 13/14 all arise from **Colston's Primary School**. This important element in the life of the area came into being in 1946 and has already served two generations of Cotham and Redland residents. Fortunately the physical expansion of the school to its current roll of 420 children has been well handled.

Four of the original houses have been converted for teaching. The new buildings-school hall, classrooms and particularly the link building containing office and library have been well designed, the latter receiving an RCAS Gold Star Award in 2000.

Right, a child's view of Colston's Primary School.



Imaginative and attractive recreation areas have been created from the original gardens, with many trees retained including a fine *Wellingtonia*. From a practical point of view the converted houses may not be as convenient as a purpose built school but one would like to think that what appears to be continuous popularity and success are partly due to its distinctive home. The range of extra curricular and after school activities is impressive. The contribution of the Parent Teachers Association and Friends of Colston's School is obviously very important.

It is perhaps fortunate that **Elmgrove Road** was named after the elms that then formed the nearby avenue – rather than the field name, Clotts Hill.

All properties at this time were known by names rather than by numbers. The 1885 OS map gives many of these. The choice of name was clearly given as much attention as that of a child. Popular fiction, loyalty to Queen and pride in the British Empire seem to have been major sources of inspiration.

Some of these names can be seen on gateposts etc and are well worth preserving. Or even creating, as the owners of 9 **Southfield Road** (the Field family) have recently done . The whole Southfield Road frontage has been immaculately reinstated, and the name ‘Field House’ cut into one of the new stone gate pillars .

5/7 and 9 Southfield were built early on and retained their large gardens facing Elmgrove Road for many years. The layout of these gardens is shown on the beautifully detailed map of 1885. The garden of No.9 provided the site of 28/29 Elmgrove Rd in the 1900’s.

The Mortimer family have lived in Elmgrove Road since 1969 in the house we designed and built in the double width rear garden acquired from Mr and Mrs Whitfield of 5 Southfield Rd. The house was designed not to obstruct the views from No 5, and all the stone boundary walls were retained, together with the large silver birch on the corner.



Above, detail of 30 Elmgrove Road.

The deeds of 5 Southfield Rd show that Mr W Coates sold the site, and possibly also the house, to a Samuel Kepple in 1870. The owner of the new house was a china merchant and called the house Etruria Villa, presumably in honour of his suppliers, Wedgwood of Etruria, Staffordshire. The adjoining house was named Grosvenor Villa and the detached house No 9 was Carisbrooke Lodge.

Etruria Villa had several owners following Samuel Kepple – the names of Seymour Watts, William Parham and Chapman appear in the deeds. The last sold to Henry Burrige Burt in 1937. The Burt family were manufacturing chemists, as noted in relation to Cotham Park North.

Until his death in 2000, Henry Burt's son Brian lived in the garden flat at Etruria Villa, the rest of the house having been converted into student rooms following the sale of the property after the death of Mrs Doris Whitfield, Brian Burt's sister. Brian Burt lived in the house throughout the war and lent me photographs that he had taken (probably against war time regulations!) of bomb damage in the area. He had vivid memories of the air raid, on Good Friday 1941. This was one of the worst raids, with massive damage in central Bristol. A stick of bombs fell in a line from the Kensington Rd area to Cotham Brow. The post war block of council flats in Cotham Brow marks the site of the last bomb.

6 Southfield Rd was destroyed and rebuilt after the war – a close look at its pair shows some very minor differences to the front elevation. 5 and 7 were not so badly damaged by the bomb that fell in their back garden



Above, bomb damage in Southfield Road.

and destroyed the garage for the Burt's family car – the car survived

In **Elmgrove Road** 4/5/6, a block similar to the remaining block 1/2/3, was very badly damaged and like the pair 7/8 were demolished and the site redeveloped with the present 3 storey terrace houses in the 1960's.

The **Baptist Church** and the Sunday School hall occupied a large site running between Elmgrove and Southfield Roads. The Church faced Elmgrove Road. The church and hall were made unusable in the air raid mentioned above. This was the third time the church had been hit. On November 24th 1940, the evening congregation had to take shelter in the cellars. They were soon joined there by about a 100 local residents, some of whom stayed for a week. Fortunately the last had left by December 2nd when the church was hit again and the houses opposite destroyed. Temporary repairs allowed the hall to be used. After the war it was fully repaired and reopened in 1955, only to be demolished a few years later. The site was redeveloped by the housebuilding firm McGill, with a small terrace house type they successfully used on many infill sites in north Bristol.

It has to be said that the effect of all this rebuilding on the visual quality of the street has been unfortunate. On the north side the coherent and simple development of two 3 house terraces and six semi-detached blocks, all faced in freestone, would have created an architectural quality equal to any in the area. The surviving original houses, Nos 1-3 and Nos 9-18, stepping neatly down the hill, confirm this. It is the steep slope and spectacular views across the city that make Elmgrove Road so interesting.

The south side, with a number of large detached houses is less coherent visually. Near the bottom the rather grandly named Elmgrove Park gives access to a development of 3 storey flats built in the late 1990's as part of the student housing boom. They occupy a large backland site. They have been discreetly done and the fall of the land is so great that the open view from the end of Southfield Road is unaffected.

On the corner with Redland Road is a large enclosed site, with many trees, formerly occupied by a large detached house, a one time vicarage.. The site is the property of the Electricity Board. In 1982 after prolonged negotiations in which Redland & Coham Amenity Society, led by Rosemary Russell, played an important part the land was leased to Colston's Primary School for use as an informal recreation and nature study area. It continues to be a valuable facility for a large city school with limited outdoor space.

The Elmgrove Centre in the former St Nathanael's Church is owned by the Christian Enterprises Trust. In addition to its use by an independent Christian church it offers facilities for many community activities such as toddler groups, dance classes, meetings and parties. This unusual private initiative has provided a most appropriate use for a redundant building.



above, looking down Elmgrove Road, across to Ashley Down.

Living Here

The Census Enumerators ledgers for the late 19th century record the very varied occupations of the heads of household - an amazing mix from retired Judge to solicitors clerk, surgeon to butcher, shipping broker to tanner. A fair number were of 'independent means'. Large households were commonplace, with grown up sons and daughters living at home, plus assorted cousins and lodgers.

Old photographs and contemporary accounts give some impression of life in this area. The streets look empty, but were dusty or dirty from horse drawn traffic. Everyone guarded their privacy behind the garden walls, railings and hedges, that lined the streets.

Today an equally varied population enjoys the convenience of this location, and facilities such as public park, primary school, tennis, bowls and health club. In terms of visual amenity we benefit greatly from the character created by the Victorian developers.

Cotham Gardens - history.

This public park dates back to 1879, when Richard and Francis Fry offered the City a 1000 year lease of four and three quarter acres of land, known as Upper Hilly Close, part the Cotham Lodge estate. The lease, at 1/- per annum, included part of 'the Grove of Trees' forming part of what was then known as Redland or Cotham Avenue.

The survival of this avenue during a period of rapid building all around seems to have been thanks to the initiative, in about 1865, of a *'Mr George Thomas and a few other public spirited citizens who, in order to prevent the entire destruction of an agreeable resort'* had come to an agreement with the then owners for its preservation. The Local Board of Health thanked the *'subscribers to the fund for preserving the avenue'*.

Was this an early example of community action to protect amenity or just action by wealthy individuals who may have had an eye on the desirability of their land nearby?

The City, in the form of the Sanitary Committee, inspected the land and the Surveyor was told to prepare specifications and obtain tenders for fencing, laying out and planting. All the work was done for less than £1000 and on 20th April 1881 *'a beautiful little pleasure ground adjoining Lovers' Walk was opened as a place of recreation for the public'*. Mr W Lane is recorded as having presented a flag for the flagpole that had been erected on the highest part of the park.

It seems likely that at least some of the trees at the upper end of the park already existed, perhaps having been planted as a small arboretum by the owners of Redland Court. The 1883 OS map, surveyed before the public park existed shows a number of deciduous and coniferous trees in this area and City records refer to tree surgery as early as 1884. More tree planting was done and but it seems likely that some of the present fine collection of trees are more than 130 years old.

The curvaceous layout of paths is shown on contemporary maps. Walking on the paths and sitting on the benches was assumed to be the purpose of the pleasure ground, and the cast iron 'keep off the grass' notices show clearly on early photographs. By 1886 byelaws had been brought in concerning behaviour, and warnings about damage to trees and municipal property were posted.

The fencing of the park actually consisted of substantial iron railings, with spiked finials, mounted on a low stone wall, the whole being almost 5 feet high. The park was thus fully enclosed and the two entrance gates were locked at dusk. It was a proper Victorian Park. An elaborate shrubbery ran the length of the park inside the railings, the sort of feature that today would be ruled out by maintenance costs and worries about crime.



Above, Cotham Gardens in the 1920's, showing the shrubbery screening the park from Lovers' Walk, and the bandstand.

A committee was formed in 1885 to manage the trees. In 1887 the Sanitary Committee agreed to a request by the Bristol and Clifton Band for a bandstand, which was provided at a cost of £60. Despite the almost permanent presence of a park keeper it seems that public behaviour was a concern as there were requests for better policing.

On the 5th December 1902 an oak tree was planted to mark the coronation of King Edward VII, at a ceremony lead by Alderman Cope-Proctor. This pedunculate oak has flourished, and the cast iron plaque recording the event survives, though barely legible.

Some of the original cast iron bench ends remain and all the recesses to accommodate benches in the upper park can still be seen. Many of these recesses were backed by stones set upright in the ground. Such stones were very fashionable in the new gardens of the area, and many survive in rockeries and path edges today. The fancy shaped stones were apparently obtained by quarrying the bed of water-sculpted limestone that lay near the surface of the Mendips.

The pattern of paths in the upper gardens is virtually unchanged, a tribute to a good layout for this steeply sloping area. There are some 20 different tree species in this small arboretum, some probably new to the country at the time of planting.

It is easy to picture the Gardens in their heyday but the war changed everything. A major blow was the loss of the iron railings, theoretically to make armaments, that preventing the park being locked at night. Some local residents also recall a permanent park keeper, an equally important feature. Other changes have been in response to the different requirements of today's city park life. Also, in the 1950's a very large storm water tunnel, with an access shaft, was installed. Subsequent inappropriate reinstatement included much tarmac and the loss of some of the curvaceous layout. However, as described later, people power has recently improved matters.

Lovers' Walk

The historical background has been outlined. The stretch of Lovers' Walk alongside Cotham Grove provided a fine grassed approach and setting to the new park when it opened in 1881.

The stretch from the railway line to Redland Road did not become a public amenity until 1883/4. Once again the City benefited from the generosity of a land owner, Mr W H Edwards of Redland Court. The considerable expanse of grass alongside Redland Grove makes this a particularly valuable visual amenity. It appears that technically this section is called Grove Park, the council having decided on this in 1923 to distinguish it from Lovers' Walk proper, the Cotham Grove section.



Left, from a photograph of 1858 showing the elm tree avenue that became Redland Grove. The whole avenue up to the castellated arch would have had this rustic appearance until the creation of Cotham Gardens.



above, Lovers' Walk, from a coloured postcard c.1890. Note the circular wooden seats to the elms.

Below, from a drawing by Samuel Loxton (c. 1910). This is almost identical to a contemporary photograph. Note the new trees planted between the elms. The circular seats have gone and walking on the grass has been banned.



These massive elms are clearly the reason for the name, Elmgrove Road. However they were to be felled in the early 1900's, either because they were thought to be too large or to be coming to the end of their life span. The alternative possibility is that elm disease, which had occurred periodically in Britain for some time, was threatening the avenue. One postcard, posted in 1908, seems to show some of the elms in a very distressed condition. Other photographs, and the Loxton drawing shown on the previous page, show well staked young trees planted between the elms. Ghostly evidence of the former elms can be seen today – in the form of shallow depressions in the grass, half way between each pair of limes. This is where the ground settled after the elms were removed.

The choice of lime trees for replanting was inspired. Their shape and relatively light foliage make them very suitable for this urban avenue. Now about 100 years old they appear to be in good condition and barring a new disease or other catastrophe they should give pleasure for another 100 years or more.

The trees may be the most important feature but the gently undulating ground and the view up to Redland Court make Lovers' Walk an exceptionally fine piece of urban landscape, that numbers John Wesley amongst its admirers.

Recent developments, Cotham Gardens and Lovers' Walk.

In 1991 local users, mostly parents of young children, started fund raising and campaigning for improvements. An action group was formed and RCAS became heavily involved in ambitious proposals. At the same time a planning application was made by Viva Leisure to develop the adjoining unused land. RCAS negotiated with the developer and the Planning Department and Viva agreed to convey some extra land to the park, and also make a donation of £10,000. Some £30,000 was also raised by the community and RCAS. This enabled major re-planning and re-equipping to be started. In a very successful joint venture with the City Council some £80,000 has been spent over the last 10 years. This work has included :-

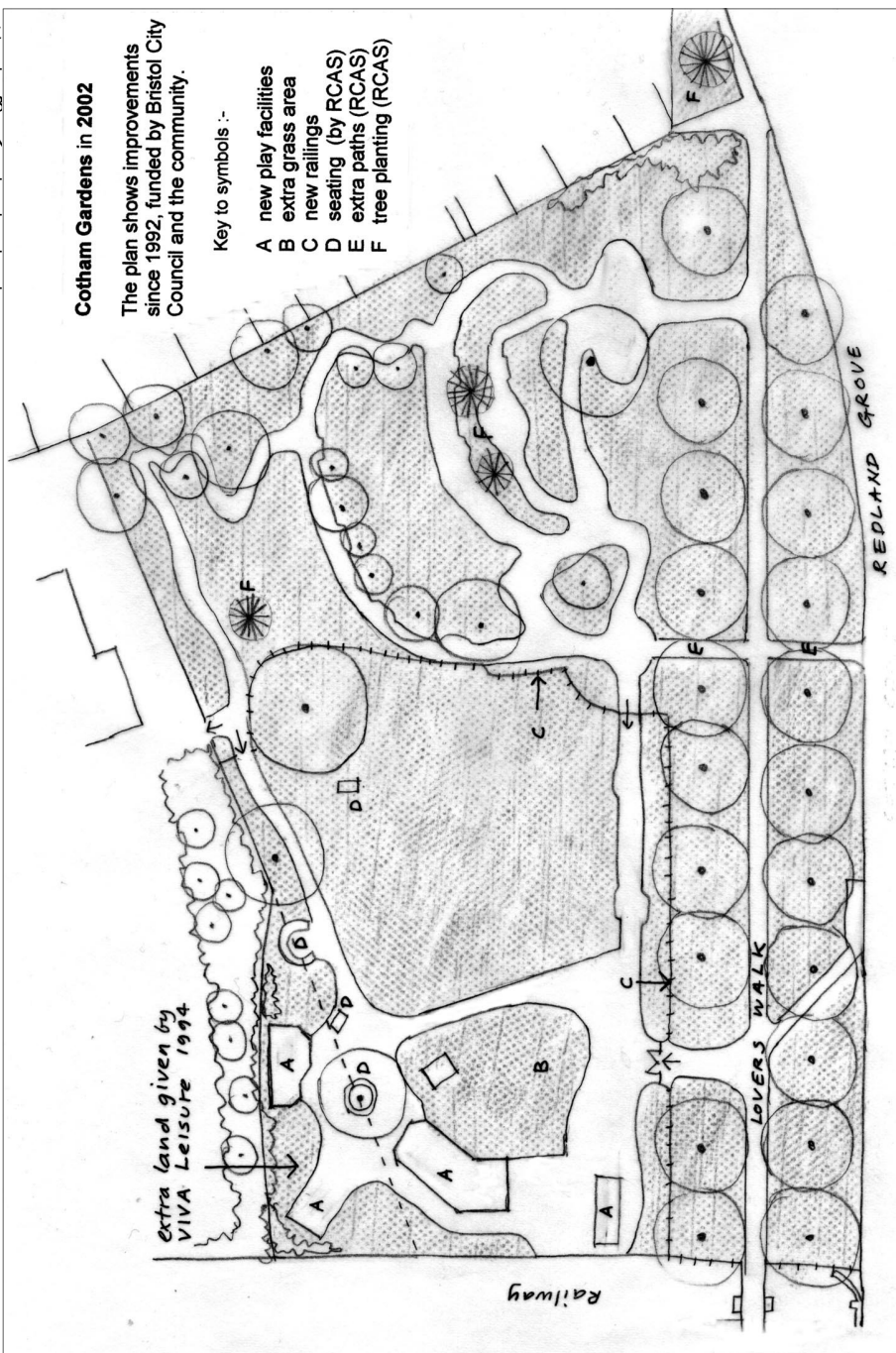
- + New railings to create a dog free area.
- + New layout including additional grass in lieu of tarmac.
- + New play equipment including sand pit and bark pit.
- + New seats including circular seats round tree.
- + Human sundial with hours and calendar carved in Purbeck stone paving in a

Cotham Gardens in 2002

The plan shows improvements since 1992, funded by Bristol City Council and the community.

Key to symbols :-

- A new play facilities
- B extra grass area
- C new railings
- D seating (by RCAS)
- E extra paths (RCAS)
- F tree planting (RCAS)



- + Planting of 3 semi mature specimen trees in upper gardens.
- + New period style lantern to one of the Lovers Walk lamp posts.

Every attempt has been made to make the park suitable for the need of today's users while retaining what remained of the original framework, basically the upper park. It was initially proposed that the new railings would run on the original line for their whole length, thus making the whole park dog free. However following public consultation and strong representation from dog owners only the lower park is dog free. The upper park layout is virtually unchanged.

Much remains to be done, especially in the upper park where tree surgery and phased replanting of trees needs consideration. Refurbishment of the original cast iron lamp posts, including replacement of the ugly modern lanterns with appropriate replica period lanterns is a priority.

Sustained pressure by RCAS succeeded in getting the cast iron footbridge, which is a Listed structure, restored and painted by Railtrack.

The park is hugely popular, particularly with families and children, many users coming from some distance. It is also used by local nursery schools. RCAS continue to monitor park maintenance, and lobby for adequate financial and other resources to be allocated to achieve the standard that it and local residents deserve.

below, Cotham Gardens, the circular seat provided by RCAS in full use.



Credits and sources of information

James Russell, for his Cotham Lodge area research and drawings.
Lorna Thompson, for 'Avenue House, as a home for elderly people'.
Cotham Walks by Stephen Jones, an RCAS publication.
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The Friends of Avenue House. Colston's Primary School - *Prospectus*.
Leisure Services, Bristol City Council. City Museum & Art Gallery.
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RCAS Committee member.

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society

Affiliated to the Civic Trust - Registered Charity no 268848

About the Society

RCAS was founded in 1973. Currently we have about 800 subscribing households, comprising over 1200 members. Our general aim is to preserve and enhance the character of our area, its architecture, trees and amenities, for the benefit of present and future residents. Our main activities are :-

- + Monitor and comment on **Planning Applications** and local planning policy. Monitor and campaign about **Liquor Licensing** policies, national and local. Make representations on licensed premises applications.
 - + **Plant trees** in our streets and parks – Redland Green and Cotham Gardens / Lovers Walk. Monitor applications for **tree works**.
 - + **Monitor street lighting**, drainage, and remove fly-posting. Report problems and commenting on transport issues.
 - + Initiate and help to fund raise for projects to **improve our parks and childrens play facilities**. Monitor park maintenance.
 - + Sponsor the **May Fair** on Redland Green and organise **Open Gardens Sunday**. Organise talks, guided walks and concerts.
 - + Organise **Annual GOLD STAR Awards** to publicise examples of developments that enhance our area.
 - + Publish a quarterly **Newsletter**, distributed by hand to all members.
- Publish greeting cards and **local history** books. Organise and fund projects such as **LIVING HERE**.

RCAS welcomes new members. The Annual Subscription (2001) is £5 per household (£2 concessions) This includes all events.

To find out more or to join the Society



contact Liz Scott, Membership



above, Cotham Grove, built c.1865

below, Lovers Walk and Cotham Gardens, looking east from Redland Grove. On the left, the railings installed as part of the 1995 improvements.

