

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society

# LIVING HERE

THE RESIDENTS ACCOUNT

## Introduction

In 1999 we invited residents to contribute to LIVING HERE, an account of Redland and Cotham. We suggested that their street and immediate area should be the focus. The brief was very open and allowed contributors to cover the aspects that interested them and to do as little or as much as they chose.

Some 25 members have participated. Their contributions were displayed at our Winter meeting in 1999 and to the public at the May Fair in 2000. They provide much new and fascinating detail about the history of Redland and Cotham, and the life of residents through the years. Some also provide an account of 'living here' at the start of the 'new' millennium. We believe the research will help both residents and visitors to understand and appreciate this attractive part of the city.

We always hoped to publish some of the material and this book is the first in a series, each covering the interests of two or three contributors. The accounts have been only lightly edited and we hope that the varied approach and style of the authors will add to the enjoyment of readers. We would welcome further information, and corrections, which it may be possible to include in later editions. Some parts of the account may also be seen on the Society's web site, [www.rcas.org.uk](http://www.rcas.org.uk).

We thank all those who have participated and those who have provided information and photographs. Also Julie Levoir and Roger Mortimer who have designed, edited and produced this first Account.

The LIVING HERE books are an important new venture for the Society. We hope that they will encourage residents to join RCAS (see information on page 35) and thus help to protect and enhance our area.

Alison Bromilow

Chairman

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society, 2001

# Residents Account No 1 - Cotham

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*Jennifer Milligan*

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### WESTERN COLLEGE

*Roger Mortimer*

### SPRINGFIELD HOUSE

*Roger Mortimer  
Mary English*



*Above:* From Trelawney Road, at the junction with Cotham Vale. The hillside location provides fine views to the north.

## TRELAWNEY ROAD

*Jennifer Milligan*

### 1. Introduction

If you come up the steep hill at the southern end of Hampton Road towards the Homoeopathic Hospital roundabout, Trelawney Road sits along the slope to the left. This hilly location is one of its attractions. Very few of the 58 houses in the road have front and back gardens on the same level. Many on the north side have bottom floors which are basement at the front, but well above the garden at the back. Extensive views over Redland and large skies are enjoyed by many.

Two things have added to the interest and demands of this investigation. Firstly, the road has developed in fits and starts over about 150 years. Five main phases of development have emerged, but I suspect anyone with an expert eye for buildings could have walked up and down the road, noted the different appearances of the houses, and sketched in their ages quite clearly. I have looked for the evidence to back up such an expert.

Secondly, as in much of this area, the numbering of the houses has been through several changes, with the added complication of numbers 1 - 5 being kept separate under their original name of Trelawney Place, then counted in, then taken out, and finally put in again when the present numbering was established as late as the 1930s. I have given all numbers as they are today. Many of the older houses had only names when they were built, and it is a pity that more of these cannot still be seen on gate pillars.

This is mainly an historical study, partly because of my interests, but also because there are too many residents for a present-day survey to be easily managed. Many of the larger houses are now divided into flats. Some similarities between past and present have however become clear. This road has always had families and individuals who stayed and stayed, some for fifty years or more. It has also, mainly I suspect because of the variety of house size, had quite a few 'road movers'. In the 30+ years that I have lived here I can think of four families who have moved within the road to meet changing needs. Several Victorians did the same.

Any more information or any corrections would be appreciated. Help from individuals, for which I am most grateful, has been mentioned in the appropriate place.

## 2. The Piecemeal Development of Trelawney Road

There were five main phases of development.

### The first phase

Trelawney Place (now numbers 1, 3 and 5 Trelawney Road) has proved the most difficult to pin down exactly, but also the most intriguing.

The Jean Rocque map of 1750 shows no building on the area that is now Trelawney Road, and the same is true of Richard Benning's map of 1780. Ashmead's map of 1828 (see the cover of this book) shows Trelawney Place and the two developments at either end of Cotham Vale very clearly.

Trelawney Place appears for the first time in the Westbury-on-Trym Parish Rate Books in 1826, as a named group of three houses which were part of the estate of Samuel Cox, who died in March 1821. Samuel Cox's estate also included eight houses in Cotham Vale, and another six which I haven't placed, but could be what is now Cotham Place. Looking back through the rate records it is clear that Samuel Cox had over the years owned a variety of properties in the area at the north end of St Michael's Hill (Clarence Place, Walker Street, Cox's Buildings) as well as others simply described as 'house and garden'. He appears to have been a minor Georgian property developer/investor.

Samuel Cox's name first appears in the Rate Books in 1793-4 as the owner of part of the Cotham Lands. The evidence of his holdings at his death seems to confirm that he owned the field shown on the 1828 Ashmead map. No houses are mentioned until 1796-97. In the deeds of what is now 3 Trelawney Road (kindly lent to me by Wendy Russell) Samuel Cox's will of 1818 shows him to have been living on St Michael's Hill and to have had two daughters, Sarah Hale Cox and Elizabeth Palmer, married to Arthur Palmer, barrister. Arthur Palmer bought up Sarah Hale Cox's share of the inheritance, so it is the Palmer name that dominates succeeding documents.

In his will of August 1884 Samuel Cox's grandson, Rev. Jordan Roquette Palmer-Palmer describes Samuel Cox as 'of Trelawney, Jamaica and Cotham, Bristol'. Trelawney was a parish in the northern part of Jamaica where Cox presumably had business interests related to the slave trade. Trelawney Place may commemorate these connections.

The Rate Book information gives a time band for the building of Trelawney Place of 1796 to 1821. Stephen Jones in Whiteladies Walks hedges his bets by calling them Georgian. The terrace is described in the Department of the Environment List (1977) as early nineteenth century: 'Street front has single-story three-bay facade with entrance door, but lower floor on the garden side owing to fall in land. Doric doorcases with open pediment on columns, windows in relieving arches'.



Trelawney Place, built c.1800, now 1. 3 and 5 Trelawney Road.

The houses in Cotham Vale owned by Samuel Cox are described as circa 1800. So a date around this time for Trelawney Place seems feasible. Looking through the 'house and garden' entries of Samuel Cox in the Westbury Rate Books I have not been able to tie any entries conclusively to Trelawney Place until its clear mention in 1826. I may well be missing an obvious line of enquiry, and any suggestions are welcome.

Michael Tucker of number 1 has pointed out the possibility that at least one other house may have been planned beyond his, as the end wall is like a party wall, with extra chimney spaces and originally no windows.

It seems likely therefore that the houses were built in 5,3,1 order. Number 1 has a much larger garden than the other two, having the land that appears as a separate strip in the 1828 map.\*

### The 1870's – 80's

In 1875 the Palmers, heirs to Samuel Cox, sold some of Cox's land to Francis and Richard Fry, with a yearly rent charge payable to Palmers' Trustees.

In 1877 the Frys sold some of the land to George Stallard Nipper, a builder, of Budleigh House, Nugent Hill. By 1879 he had erected numbers 11 and 13 to let and number 8 (detached and on a larger plot of ground) to live in himself. The three houses show similarities in the use of Bath stone for the frontages and in the details of windows and bargeboards.

By 1882 there were ten semi-detached houses up to the Cotham Vale turning and number 8 in splendid isolation on the opposite side of the road. The majority are in local rough cut limestone with Bath stone window dressings, and show some effort to avoid too uniform an appearance. Stephen Jones in *Whiteladies Walks* describes them as Gothic Villas. Numbers 2,4 and 6 at the entrance from Cotham Lawn Road were built and occupied by 1886. By 1888 the gap between numbers 5 and 11 had been filled with the last semi-detached pair in this section of the road.

*\*Francis and Richard Fry gave the land for Cotham Gardens to the Corporation in 1879. Francis Fry lived in the Tower House, Cotham Road and Richard lived next door in Cotham Lawn (See the next map). The Fry chocolate manufacturing business grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century, from 350 workers in 1866 to 4,600 in 1908.*



Typical decorative details  
of the period.

## The 1890s

Building now started to the east of the turning into Cotham Vale. As Mr Nipper died in 1889 he could have had no part in this.

The corner house, number 31, is a great mix of styles and quite different from anything else in the road, or indeed the area. Its first occupant in 1890 was an architect James La Trobe, noted for his combination of a variety of styles into one building. (See La Trobe in the Resident's Section).

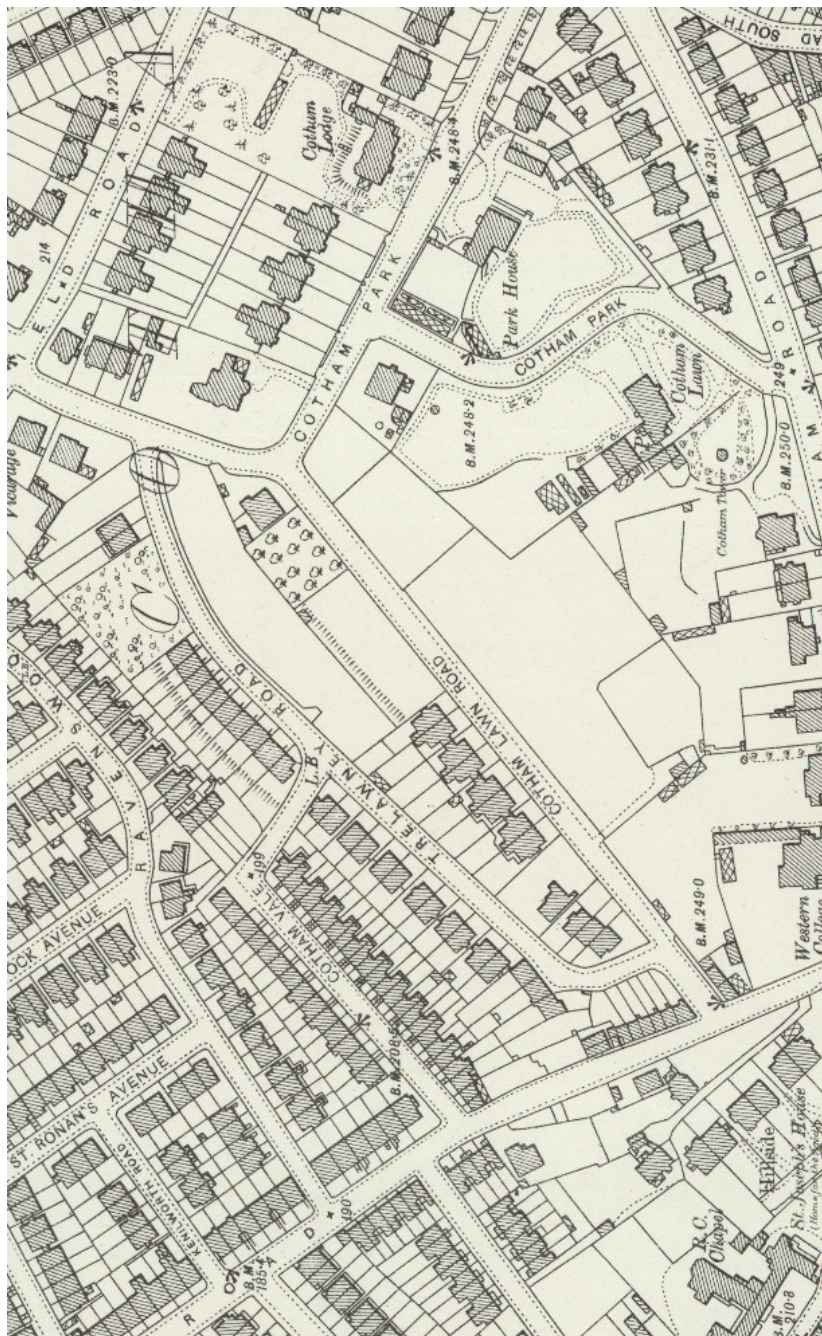
Number 33 was occupied from 1895 to 1902 by the architect George - later Sir George - Herbert Oatley. (See Residents' Section).

By 1903 eight further houses had been built in this part of the road, making a slightly curving late Victorian terraced group of more modest and simple proportions than the earlier semi-detached houses.

Numbers 61 and 63, a semi-detached pair on a plot of land near the east end of the road, were built and occupied by 1900. They are on more generous plots of ground than the Victorian semi-detached houses at the other end of the road.



31  
Trelawney Road.  
Door detail - the  
initials appear to  
be those of  
La Trobe



1904 OS map see [Know Your Place](http://www.knowyourplace.org.uk/) online maps Bristol

## 1908-1914

Four pairs of semi-detached houses were built on the south side of Trelawney Road at the east end (now numbers 46 - 60). Three pairs have timber cladding to the top storey, with brick cladding on the first floor and stone on the ground.

The distinguished physicist and F.R.S. Arthur M Tyndall, D.Sc. lived in number 52 in 1914, despite the general view in the University that staff should live in the Clifton area if they hoped to be visited.



45-60 Trelawney Road

## 1930s

Neat 1930s houses of suburban design completed the eastern end of the road (numbers 62 - 66 and 65 and 67).

The terrace of houses in the middle of the southern side, and numbers 28 to 34, were occupied by 1940. (The gap in numbering between 8 and 28 results from the gardens of the eight Victorian houses in Cotham Lawn Road extending through to Trelawney Road).

Numbers 55, 57 and 59, quite substantial detached and semi-detached houses, first appear in the street directory in the later 1930s.

The final gap in the road was filled when numbers 51 and 53 were built. (These were occupied by 1958).

So the building of Trelawney Road extends from c.1800 to the 1950s: one and a half centuries of shifting social and economic conditions and resultant changes in styles of domestic building for a comfortable inner city road.



62-66 Trelawney Road

### 3. The 1891 Census

I selected 1891 as the first census to show a good number of houses in Trelawney Road. Twenty-one houses are listed: all those now to be seen to the west of the turning into Cotham Vale, and numbers 31 and 33.

Nineteen forms were returned, as numbers 23 and 27 were unoccupied. One hundred and seventeen residents are listed, and what immediately strikes the modern eye is the fact that twenty-four of these residents are living-in servants. All are female, ranging in age from 14 to 58, though only a few are over 25 years. Only three households have no living-in servant. Eight have two servants, eight have one. Miss Arabella Gray, living 'alone' at number 13, has a cook of 58 years and a parlour maid of 30.

Of the nineteen heads of household five are female: four are of independent means and one wife is head of household whilst her husband is away. Three men describe themselves as of independent means. Four men are professionals: two accountants, one G.P., one architect. Six men are in business: a wholesale manufacturer of confectionery, an auctioneer and commission agent, a stationer, an asbestos merchant, a wine merchant (and author) and a tanner's agent. One head is a commercial clerk.

Three heads of households are widows; one is a widower. Only a handful of the residents are over the age of sixty.

Families do not seem to have been very large, though it is possible that older children have left home. There are two exceptions. The widow Martha Stanton, aged 44, at number 8 has five daughters and one step-daughter. The widower George Wise, aged 53, at number 7 has three daughters and three sons.

Six of the nineteen households have relatives other than spouse and children resident. These are: mother-in-law; sister; two nieces; father-in-law and brother-in-law; grandson; mother-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

Small signs of Empire can be found. Dr William Elder at number 19, a general practitioner who worked for many years at the Medical Mission in Redcross Street and lived in several houses in the road, has two daughters aged 14 and 9, both born in Madras. James La Trobe at number 31 has a boarder born in Calcutta.

Most heads of household are of West Country origin but John Latimer at number 1 was born in Newcastle, Dr Elder in Scotland and William Methven Brownlee at number 29 in Lanarkshire.

Workplaces were near at hand. Neighbours at home could be neighbours at work. Walter Warton at number 21 was a partner in W & F Morgan, Booksellers and Stationers, 22 Clare Street. James La Trobe at number 31, architect, was working in offices at 20 Clare Street.

This seems an appropriate place to give some house names. Starting from number 7 and going up to Cotham Vale we have Hazeldene, Glendale, Woodmancot, Claverton Villa, Gleneright, Gotha, Hillcrest, Lynbrook, Heathside, Wilford, Chestnut Villa and Glena. Numbers 2 to 8 are St Aubyn's Lodge, Highbank, Penrose and Birkenfell. The first numbering system came in during 1889, and must have been a great help to any new postman.

Though the number of occupants in 1891 may sometimes seem large (two houses have nine residents, four have eight - including servants) such numbers do not generally suggest overcrowding. Is this a middle middle-class road by late-Victorian standards. Or is it more mixed than that? A family of seven plus a servant squeezed into number 1, while Miss Gray lives on her own in a much larger house with two servants attending her.

#### **4. Residents of interest**

Samuel Jackson (1794-1869) was a lifelong friend of the better-known Francis Danby (1793-1861) and a leading figure in the Bristol School of Painters. He lived in 2 Trelawney Place, now 3 Trelawney Road, from 1827 to 1831, and described himself in Matthews Bristol Directory as a 'Drawing Master'. In 1826 he had been living just down the hill with his mother in 3 Cotham Vale. (Both properties owned by Samuel Cox and then by his heirs). In 1828 he married Jane Phillips. He moved from Trelawney Place to 3 Freeland Place, Clifton, and by 1845 - with growing success - was resident in what is now 8 Canynge Square, where he lived until his death.

A book on Jackson by Francis Greenacre and Sheena Stoddard, The Bristol Landscape, shows many of Jackson's watercolours of Bristol and the surrounding area and gives more information about his life.

Jackson's watercolours were often done for the collector G W Braikenridge, whose remarkable record of Bristol in the early nineteenth century is now in Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.



Samuel Jackson (left)  
Francis Danby, c 1855



John Latimer,  
Photo, Abel Lewis & Son

John Latimer (1824-1904) lived in 3 Trelawney Place, now 5 Trelawney Road, between 1871 and 1904. He came to Bristol from Newcastle in 1858, living in 1 Cotham Vale End before making the short move up the hill.

Latimer was editor of the 'Bristol Mercury', later the 'Daily Mercury', for 25 years. He retired in 1883 and was then able to devote himself to his lifelong interest: 'For more than twenty years my historical jottings lay untouched, but not forgotten'.

Latimer was a founder member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society and the Clifton Antiquarian Club. His documentary research led to four volumes on Bristol history, covering the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, which are still considered authoritative. His memorial in the north transept of Bristol Cathedral reads: 'John Latimer Historian and Journalist of Bristol Who Laboured in this city for nearly fifty years and whose beautiful character endeared him to many friends'.

His obituary in the Mercury describes 'a man of retiring disposition, of great amiability, kindness, and urbanity which, in conjunction with his scholarly attainments and his sterling qualities, made him a most interesting and attractive personality'.

His funeral was at the Unitarian Chapel and burial ground in St Pauls. The chief mourner was his closest friend Mr Walter Reid, also a journalist. Reid, who was five years younger, had been a neighbour for many years and also came from the north east. Reid moved into 3 Trelawney Road in 1872. His daughter and son-in-law were also living there from 1878 and by 1884 they had all moved down the road to a larger house, now number 21. So Reid and Latimer were close in their profession and as neighbours over many years. Latimer never married and his sister shared his home. I have included the poem written at Latimer's death by his friend Stanley Hutton and printed in the Mercury. Readers can make their own judgment on it.

*O patient seeker after truth, revealing Bristol's past,  
Death's icy grip, tho' long delayed, now falls on thee at last;  
But though thy busy brain is still, and beats no more thy heart,  
With thine own 'Annals' shall thy name have here immortal part.  
None will refuse the meed of praise to thee whose labours show  
The great part Bristol played of yore in the days of long ago.  
Not with the rhetorician's art where truth and falsehood blend,  
But thine to seek and delve for truth till death should make an end.  
Last of the four\* whose light has lit the darkness of our past,  
To thee in gratitude we own how great our debt, how vast.*

\* Barrett, Seyer, Taylor and Latimer - historians of Bristol.

The work of James Henry La Trobe, architect, born in 1862, was not as universally admired as Latimer's. He lived in what is now 31 Trelawney Road from 1890 as its first resident. His work is certainly eclectic, borrowing freely from a mixture of architectural styles.

The Cabot Café, 38 College Green (1904) and Whiteladies Cinema (1921) are perhaps his best known work. 178 to 188 Whiteladies Road (1897), at the top of Blackboy Hill, is described in a Department of the Environment survey of 1977 as 'Elaborate yellow terracotta facade in debased Italianate with very bad Russell-Squarish detail'. Whiteladies Cinema escapes more lightly: 'a complex art-deco mixture including domed tower and classical quadrant entrance'. No's 31 and 33 Trelawney Road show the mixture of styles typical of La Trobe's work.

Numbers 31 and 33 Trelawney Road show a mix of styles typical of La Trobe's work



Detail of doorway, 33 Trelawney Road

George (later Sir George) Herbert Oatley (1863 - 1950) is a better-known and more highly regarded architect. He lived in the house next door to La Trobe's, now number 33 Trelawney Road, from 1895 to 1902.



His work includes the Wills Memorial Building, the Homoeopathic Hospital, Will's Hall and St Monica's Home of Rest, all completed in 1925. (The Homoeopathic Hospital was designed in 1908.)

Earlier he had remodelled Cotham House, on Cotham Hill for Sir George White, who lived there from 1889 to 1915.

Oatley also designed the Police Station on Lower Redland Road (1890) and the Police Houses in East Shrubbery (1893).

### Long-term residents

I have found four families who lived in Trelawney Road for over fifty years - the Lewises at number 3, the Stear family at 4, the Stantons at 8 and the Dorringtons at 45. Two individuals - Mrs Barber at number 11 and Stanley Clarke at number 9 also reached 50 years or more. There may well be others.

Looking at two examples in a little more detail, Edwin Stear bought number 4 in 1886 as the first owner. His son, Charles Wesley Stear, described himself in 1900 as Professor of Music. Mrs H G Stear was the occupant of the house in 1947. Mrs Stanton, a widow, bought number 8 in 1890 as its second occupant. She had a number of daughters, some of whom were still living in the house at the end of the Second World War.

## **5. Events of Interest**

This is an entry in The Clifton Chronicle and Directory for Wednesday, February 12, 1890, (with thanks to Liz Scott)

*'An explosion of gas occurred on Monday morning at Trelawney Road, Cotham, forcing up the roadway in three places, as well as several sewer gratings, and breaking the glass in one of the public lamps near, causing great alarm in the locality. The explosion appears to have been caused by the escape of a quantity of gas, which accumulated in the sewer, and by some means became ignited.'*

In the Second World War, on Friday, April 11th, 1941 there was a fire at the Cotham Park end of Trelawney Road, in an area described as an ammunition dump. The same day incendiary bombs fell on Charnwood House in Cotham Park and a house in Hartfield Avenue, and fierce fires raged at Cheltenham Road Library and Colston's Girls' School. (This was also the day on which a section of tramway landed in St Mary Redcliffe grounds and remains there as a memorial to the Bristol Blitz).

Later in 1941 two bombs landed in Cotham Lawn Road gardens, opposite numbers 21 and 23 Trelawney Road, but did not explode. Houses were evacuated whilst they were made safe. (Thanks to Mrs Featherstone for this information).

## 6. A Study of One House: Woodmancot, 11 Trelawney Road



This house was built in 1879 at the start of the Victorian development of the road. In its 120 year-old life it has had five owners:

1. George Stallard Nipper the builder, 1879–1889, who rented it out over this period;
2. Mrs Henrietta Langdon 1890–1903;
3. Mr and Mrs Charles Barber 1903–1953;
4. Miss Susan Freeman 1953-1962 (sister of Mrs Barber);
5. David and Jennifer Milligan 1962 to present day.

Only two major alterations seem to have been made to the house over this time. At some point before 1962 the two smaller bedrooms at the front of the house on the first floor were made into one. And the kitchen in the front basement area was divided at some time before the 1960s to provide a bathroom and small internal room as well as a kitchen.

Looking in more detail at the history of the house, the land on which numbers 11 and 13 were built, by Mr Nipper, had been owned by Samuel

Cox, and sold by his heirs to Francis and Richard Fry. (See the first section). The documents say that Mr Nipper 'had expended upon each of the said messue [house and garden] sums amounting together to £950' and that the yearly rent charge would be £10.10s.0d, payable to Francis Fry and the heirs of Richard Fry.

Several conditions are attached to the houses. The road outside must be kept in good condition until it becomes a public road. The house must not be used as a Boys' School or for a trade or business, but it could be used as a Girls' School or as a lodging or boarding house. Fire insurance from a reputable company must be kept up. Given the relatively small size of the gardens it seems strange that permission is needed for the erection of a hothouse if more than twenty feet high.

After George Nipper's death in 1889 his wife Sarah sold the house to Mrs Henrietta Langdon, who was living at the time in Cambrin House, Cotham Road South with her husband. Number 11 was sold for £620, (compare the costs given above) with the tenant Dr Elder moving down the road to number 19. In the 1891 Census the residents at number 11 are Andrew Langdon, accountant, his wife and a female servant aged 16. Sarah Nipper also sold her own home at number 8 Trelawney Road to the Stanton family.

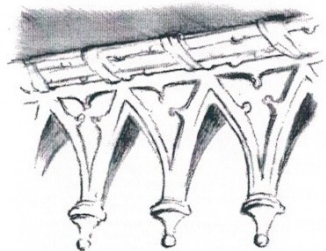
After the death of her husband Mrs Langdon married Sidney Ames Ford at St Mary's Church, Tyndall's Park in October 1902. This second marriage must have been short, as in January 1903 Mrs Henrietta Ford, widow, of Hill House, Pensford sold 11 Trelawney Road to Charles Barber and his wife.

Charles William Wookey Barber was an accountant, as Andrew Langdon had been. The house was sold for £550, quite a decrease on the price thirteen years earlier. Perhaps buyer and seller were either close friends or relatives, as Mrs Ford lent £270 to the Barbers towards the purchase of the house. This was paid back in full with interest four months later.

In 1909 Mr Barber gave the house to his wife, Edith Mary 'in consideration of the natural love and affection of the said Charles William Wookey Barber for his said wife and for divers other good causes and considerations'. He died in the mid 1920s. Ownership of the house by Mrs Barber continued until February 1953, when she died at home. There seem to have been no children, or no surviving children, as the house passed in 1953 to Susan Freeman, a sister of Mrs Barber. Miss Freeman lived in the house until 1962, with some gas lighting and meals brought up the outside stair from the basement kitchen: by this time the basement had been made into a

self-contained flat. She then moved out to Brockley Court at Brockley Combe and sold the house to David Milligan for £3,550.

I have found no evidence of children living in the house between the departure of Dr Elder and his family in 1890 and the arrival of ours, born in 1969 and 1971.



The house contains original fireplaces, balustrading and plaster work such as the cornice illustrated above.

Right, the north side of the house. Such extensive use of Bath stone is unusual on a rear elevation.



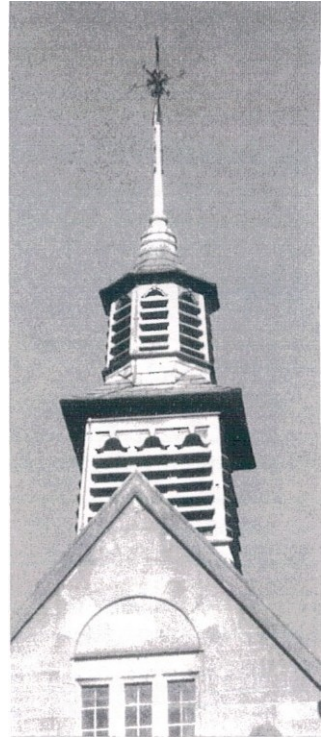
## WESTERN COLLEGE, Cotham Road

*Roger Mortimer*

Western Congregational College, now the home of The Family Practice, is quite a landmark. A building on this hill top site, looking like a Jacobean manor house, is likely to be noticed.

It is clear that those who commissioned it were very concerned that it should have the right image. Speaking at the opening in 1906 the Rev. H Arnold Thomas said that *'any building that was connected with the great cause of education ought to be of external dignity and beauty'*. \*

The story of how the college came to be built Starts in 1752 when Congregational leaders met in Exeter and agreed that new facilities were needed to educate and train those entering the ministry. At that time the Universities did not admit Nonconformists.



An 'academy' was set up. This had various homes in the West Country, eventually settling in 1845, as Western College, in a new building in Plymouth. Here it remained until the new Western College opened in Bristol. Another educational establishment, The Bristol Congregational Institute, had been established in 1863, and operated at one time from a classroom and library near Arley Chapel.

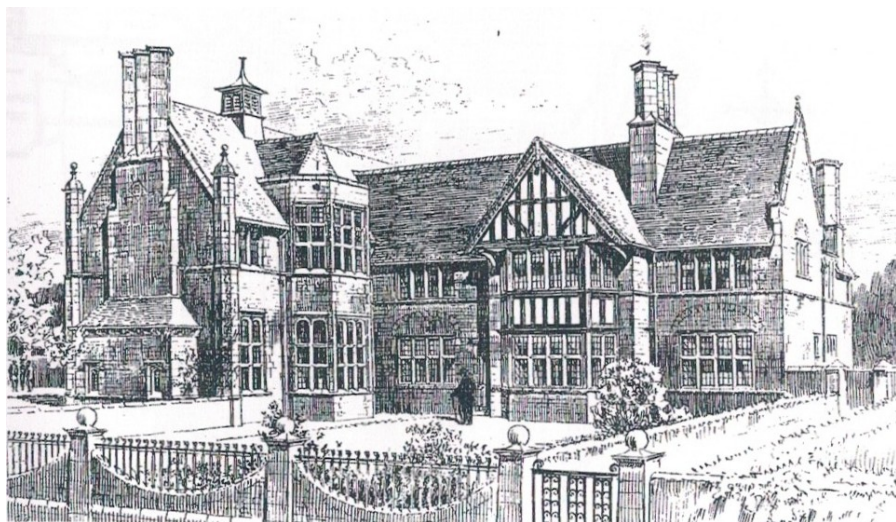
The decision to move the college to Bristol appears to have been influenced by the belief that the city was to become *'a great educational centre for the West of England'*. The University, then known as University College, Bristol, had been established in 1876. The Western College students were to take the arts part of their course at the University.

*\* The newspapers and journals of the period, both local and professional, went into lengthy detail about the background to such events. Also, speeches seemed to be reported almost verbatim.*

The chosen site was then occupied by a very large mansion, No 1 Cotham Road, used as Exley's school. This building can be seen on the 1884 map. (see centre pages) It can have been only some 50 years old when demolished for the new college – no Listed Buildings then!

The architect for the new Western College was Henry Dare Bryan. A local man, he had started practice in 1890. His work included houses in the Domestic Revival Style in Downleaze and The White House, Leigh Woods. Like many architects of this design conscious period he could work in more than one of the various different architectural styles then in vogue. Indeed, his first scheme for the college was apparently in Edwardian Classical style.

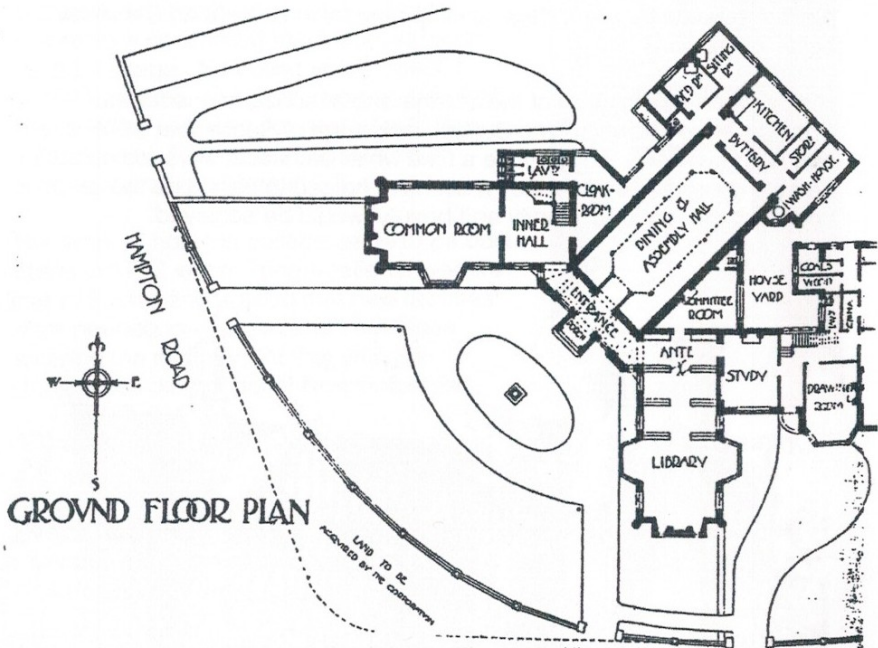
His perspective drawings of the college and attached house for the Principal were shown in 'The Builder' magazine of September 1906 and one is shown here. They evoke a time when architects were expected to be able draughtsmen and they must have helped to persuade the client body that the required 'dignity and beauty' would be achieved.



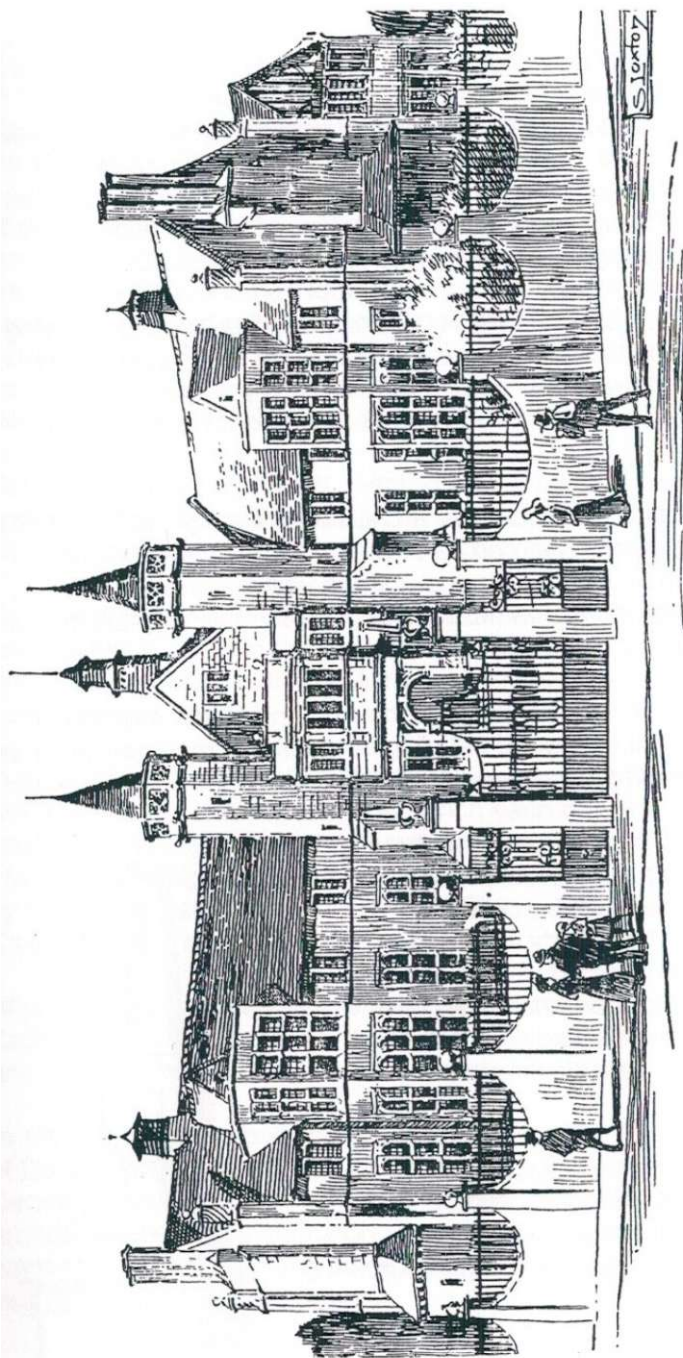
One of Henry Dare Bryan's drawings.  
Left, the Library wing. Right, the Principal's House.

They were also very specific; all the features of this intricate architecture can be seen. The finished buildings vary little from the drawings such as the omission of a projecting front entrance porch with a balcony over. Perhaps even then cost reductions were necessary when the builders estimates were received.

The architect's plan reproduced below shows the original proposal for two entrances gateways in the boundary wall, from Cotham Road and Hampton Road,. This could have been more practical if less impressive than the single central gateway that was built.



The drawing reproduced opposite is by Samuel Loxton, who produced hundreds of drawings for Bristol's newspapers. This is quite obviously based very closely on the architect's original perspective, the viewpoint being exactly the same.



WESTERN COLLEGE, COTNAM ROAD; 1906.

The impact of the unusual boundary wall is particularly strong today. This is because the substantial wrought iron railings that filled each bay were removed for the war effort in 1940. (It would be easier to live with this loss if the iron that was collected from all over the country had been used but it has since emerged that almost all of this was still lying in scrap yards after the war). The appearance of this important feature of the frontage would be greatly improved by replacement railings of identical design.

The Clifton Gazette and Chronicle in 1906 described the building as being in '*a reposeful Tudor style*'. The profusion of detail on this modest sized building hardly seems reposeful now. Indeed I feel Bryan must have quietly enjoyed himself designing such a decorative building for such a serious purpose.

Gomme, Jenner and Little in 'Bristol: an architectural history' report that the college '*is full of nice detail – pierced parapets and little pyramidal caps to the turrets, finials with twisted fluting and a stone wall that swings its looping way round the site; the varied skyline gives it a jolly prominence on the top of the hill*'.

The building shows how well architects of the Arts and Crafts movement knew their materials and how good detailing of traditional materials such as stone, clay tile, oak and lead can provide lasting quality.

The impressive interior features much oak in fittings and panelling. The double height Assembly Hall was also used for dining by students and tutors.

The Library is said to have housed '*the best collection of old versions of the scriptures outside the British Museum*'.

This included the only known copy of the Tyndale Testament, in the edition printed at Worms in 1525.

The whole project, including fittings and furnishing cost £12,000. The architect, who died aged only 40, left a building that thoroughly deserves its Listed Building status.

In 1910 the Reverend Doctor R.S. Franks became the Principal of the College. His eldest daughter Mrs Rosalind Fells was 3 at the time they moved into the Principal's house.

She remembers playing in Cotham Road - hopscotch, whipping tops, bowling hoops - all with safety since the horse-drawn traffic was slower and more infrequent than today's cars. Milk was delivered to jugs in the house. The baker called and on Good Friday morning there was an early delivery of Hot Cross buns. Her vivid memories of life in Cotham in those days were printed in the RCAS Newsletter and more fully in 'St Michaels Hill and Cotham Not So Long Ago.'

Her younger brother, Martin, planted the horse chestnut tree that now enhances the front garden when he was about 9 or 10, so it must be about 80 years old.

Until the age of 7 she was educated at home by her mother, also in the lessons being given to her older brother Oliver. Oliver was to become the British ambassador to the USA in the post war years, and later became Lord Franks.

In the summer term of 1914 she became a pupil at Redland High School. She remembers walking home for lunch each day, the rush back and the privilege of taking sandwiches when one was in the Sixth Form. The Sixth Form room being the present Headmistress' Study (and Kindergarten was by the Dutch Garden). She left in 1926 to read mathematics at Girton College, Cambridge.

After many years of service to religious education and scholarship, Western College became the offices of one of the University Examination Boards and the Principal's house became a separate private residence.

In 1993, the college building was acquired by The Family Practice, a group of Doctors then working from a somewhat overcrowded Whiteladies Health Centre in Whatley Road. The college had the potential to provide excellent facilities with minimal alteration. This community use has the additional and admirable benefit of letting many residents see and use one of the most interesting buildings in Cotham.

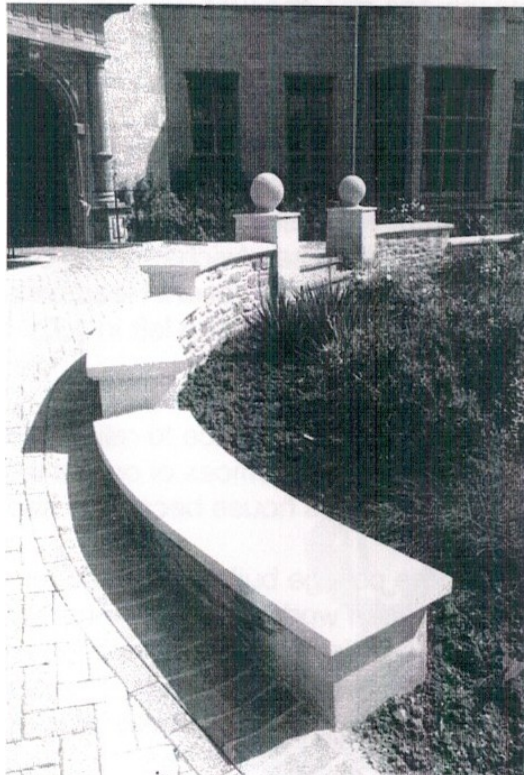
The alterations involved some modest extensions at the rear, which were carried out in a simple and sympathetic fashion. Very major overhaul of the building and services were of course essential, but all the critical features of the interior were preserved. The architect for the conversion was Edward Nash of Bath. The front garden has been completely remodelled and the generous and colourful planting creates a setting of almost country house character for our 'Jacobean mansion'.

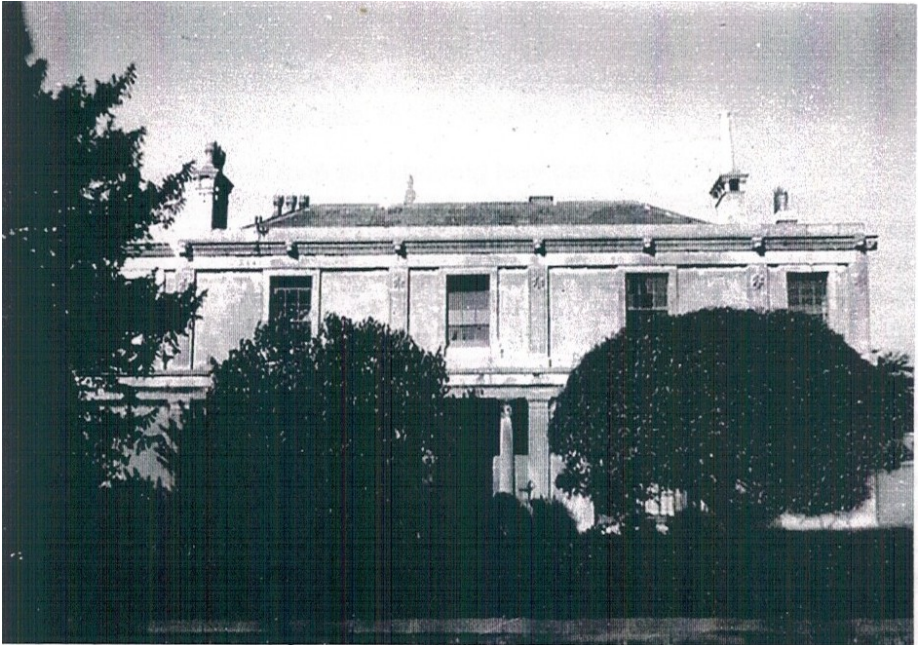
Recently the need to provide wheel chair access to the front entrance led to the creation of new sloping paths. Alterations to achieve such important facilities all too often lead to solutions that disfigure period buildings.

Here the solution by the architect has much improved the appearance of the entrance to the college. The new paths, with their retaining walls decorated with stone spheres similar to those on the front boundary wall, form an attractive and entirely appropriate addition.

In 1998 RCAS awarded The Family Practice and the architect, Richard Pedlar, one of its Annual Gold Stars.

I would like to think that Henry Dare Bryan would have approved of the changes made to his building in the last few years.



**SPRINGFIELD HOUSE, Cotham Road.***Roger Mortimer*

3 Cotham Road, in the early 1950's.

As Mary English records in her contribution, the present flats are built on the site of the original Springfield House, 3 Cotham Road. This very large detached house, that appears to date from about 1850, will be remembered by some long-standing local residents as 'the Doctors'. It became the Doctor's surgery when Dr Caplan moved there in 1939.

I certainly remember it, for it was with Dr George Caplan that I registered in 1951, soon after coming to Bristol to complete my training at the Royal West of England School of Architecture.

3 Cotham Road was very much a family home as well as 'the Doctors'. Patients generally waited in the spacious front hall. On busy days the stairs provided additional seating. The atmosphere was different to most doctor's waiting rooms, with a fair amount of conversation.

This somehow reflected the Doctor's approach. I recall his bedside manner as friendly and cheerful, but firm - woe betide those who had failed to take the prescribed medicine.

In 1999 I talked to Mrs Mary Caplan about the family's time at 3 Cotham Road. Dr Caplan had been working in Bristol as a locum and in 1939 took over the 'panel practice' of Dr Roy Fells of Clifton. He bought No 3 for about £2000.

Springfield House originally had vast grounds that enclosed those of what is now Western College and included a carriage access to Hampton Road. This can be seen in the 1884 map. (See centre page map) When I knew it the back garden included a tennis court, though this was turned over to vegetable growing during the war. Apparently stray footballs from Cotham Grammar School, and boys attempting to retrieve them, were a problem even then.

Dr Caplan took on the lists of two other doctors who were on active service and like most civilian doctors worked under huge pressure. Home visits were normal and he was often out for hours, so Mary Caplan had to cope with all manner of emergencies. As was normal practice at the time the doctor also dealt with accident injuries at the surgery, sometimes assisted by his wife with sal volatile or hot sweet tea.

The medicines that he prescribed were mostly made up in his dispensary on the premises, by Mary Caplan. She remembered that some untrusting patients asked her to taste their medicine before accepting it. She collected supplies for the dispensary from Ferris and Co, manufacturing chemists, and was allowed a small petrol ration for her work.

The family and sometimes neighbours used the large cellar to shelter during raids, and at times daily surgery took place here. Mary recalled standing on the front porch one night with George, who was able to read the British Medical Journal by the light of burning Bristol

Shopping was done in the 'village' – basically St Michaels Hill and Cotham Hill. Many of the shops mentioned by Mrs Rosalind Fells were recalled by Mary Caplan as catering very well for the daily needs of local residents.

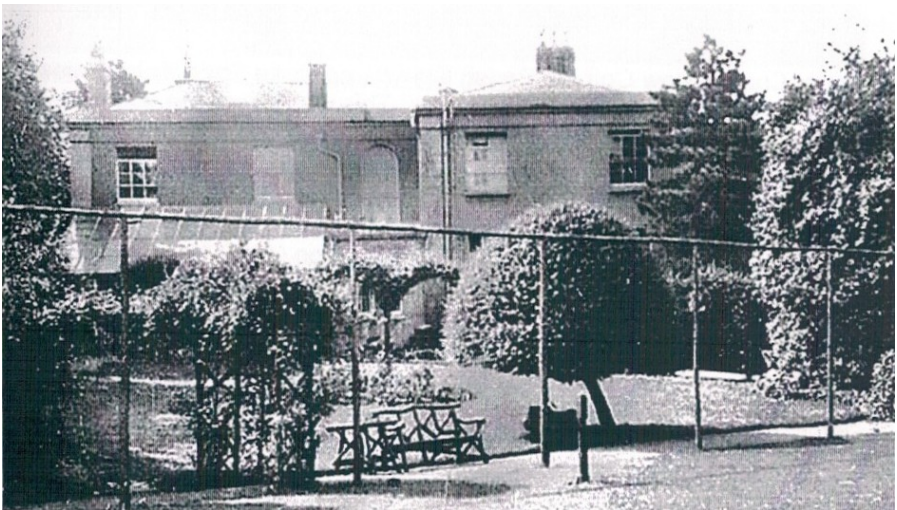
The Caplan's neighbours in the Principal's house next door were the Lovell Cocks. H F Lovell Cocks was a regular contributor to the BBC's weekly

religious broadcasts,' Lift Up Your Hearts'. Their son Michael was elected an MP after the war, and later becoming Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe.

I believe that Dr Caplan retired from practice in 1958, the house being sold to Dr Ellis Jones. When I joined JT (Bristol)Ltd in 1965 as company architect, the firm were just completing the flats development, which incorporated a surgery for Dr Ellis Jones and Dr Doney. JT had already built a terrace of town houses in Cotham Park, backing onto the Grammar School grounds, and was later to carry out the High Kingsdown development.

Today a proposal to demolish a building of the quality of the original Springfield House would certainly attract the wrath of RCAS Planning Group. Indeed, I would probably be writing the letter of objection!

However, the Cotham Road carnage had started in the 1950's when Bristol City Council, on behalf of the Education Committee, demolished the three mansions shown on the 1884 map together with Cotham Lawn and the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cotham Tower. The remains of boundary walls and gate posts hint at the quality that was destroyed. The fine group of trees on Cotham Road leading into Hartfield Avenue now have great landscape importance and any further threats to these from development by Cotham School need to be resisted.



The house from the rear garden. Photographs lent by Dr Mark Cobby of Napier Road, grandson of the late Mrs Mary Caplan.

**SPRINGFIELD HOUSE, Cotham Road***Mary English*

The present Springfield house consists of two blocks of flats, one facing Cotham Road, comprising an osteopathy clinic at one end, then carports with three flats above them, and a further two flats one above the other (known to residents as 'the tower') over the walkway at the other end. The second block of 14 flats in two storeys is at a right angle to the road. These flats are approached from a footpath backed by shrubs and there is a large garden behind them well screened from Cotham Road by the front wing of the development. The site is large with mature trees. The flats were built in the early 1960's on the site of the original Springfield House that was demolished for the purpose.

The old house, a 2-storeyed stone building almost as long as the block of flats that replaced it had a very beautiful garden at the back. It differed from most of the remaining houses in Cotham Road which are three storied and semi-detached or terraced.

Cotham Road (or Cotham New Road as it was originally called) was built in 1820 and land on either side began to be sold for building ten years later; building was completed by 1860. Springfield House appears on the map of 1884 (see centre pages) but I have been unable to find any mention of it in the Local History section of the Public Library and it is not mentioned in Stephen Jones book 'Cotham Walks', first published by RCAS in 1980.

Highbury Chapel, now Cotham Parish Church, opposite Springfield House, was built in 1842 on the site of the gallows. This was where the Marian Martyrs were burnt at the stake. The Cotham Lodge estate, on the north side of Cotham Road was being broken up by 1837 to build Cotham Lawn and Tower House etc. These large houses must have had fields close by because Mrs Pat Featherstone, three generations of whose family had lived in Cotham tells me that her father Ernest Warburton (1889-1976) could remember cows grazing in the fields. Indeed, as recently as the early 1950's land now occupied by Cotham School was let to a dairy farmer.

When I first knew Springfield House it was owned by a general practitioner, Dr Caplan. He retired in 1955 and sold the house to Dr Ellis Jones. About 5 years later, when Dr Ellis Jones decided to sell the land for building, one of the would-be purchasers was Bristol University, who wanted to build a tower block as a student hall of residence! Fortunately even a City council that was prepared to allow the demolition of the old house (the district was not a Conservation Area then) balked at a tower block. It eventually became one of the first development projects of a new firm, JT(Bristol)Ltd.

Dr Ellis Jones stipulated that the development should include a surgery for his practice at the front of the site which had to be completed first. This is now the osteopathy clinic. Dr I Doney joined the practice at about this time. After completing the surgery JT left the front block unfinished, built the back block in its entirety and only then completed the front - so that when I moved into the back block in 1964 from the garden flat at 6 Cotham Park, where I had lived for ten years, I was living entirely alone for a week on a building site. My old flat was taken over by Eileen Beaumont, another contributor to 'Living Here', who now owns the house.



Springfield House from Cotham Road, 2001

One night during that first lonely week I was woken by noises and hushed voices coming from the garden which was at that time a sea of mud where the builders parked their vehicles. I retreated hastily under the bedclothes. The next morning Ron Lane, the foreman, told me off in no uncertain terms for allowing thieves to steal the wheels from one of his trucks.

A few days later the builders, while preparing to pave the footpath giving access to the flats, uncovered a deep well. The foreman told me that it would have been dug in Victorian times to collect rainwater, as there was insufficient pressure to provide an adequate supply of water to the hill top.

The pressure was still too low in the 1960's to serve showers in the first floor flats. I am glad to report that the well was filled with rubble before being paved over. The first occupants of the flats had considerable trouble with the front lawn. First, JT had left it unfenced as was the fashion of the time. It was quite remarkable how soon the local dog-owners took possession..

Almost from the beginning animals would be let off their leads on approaching it, allowed to frolic, etc, on the grass and then be put back on the lead. There was nothing for it but to put up the present fence at our own expense.

The second problem was that the builders had used the land as a dump for their rubble, though before leaving they had levelled it off and laid some turf on top. The next summer the grass naturally died of drought. There was considerable community spirit, pioneering spirit even, amongst the residents and we all set to and dug out the worst of the rubble ourselves before having topsoil put down and more turf laid.

Our grounds contain another and ever spreading relic of the past. On the corner of the boundary wall at the far end of the back block there is a sloping line that clearly marks the roof of a lean-to building. We believe that it must have been a greenhouse, because very gradually over the years the lawn adjacent to it has been taken over by a tiny moss-like plant called *Soleirolia soleirolii*, or Mind-your own business.

In fact this is not a moss but the smallest flowering plant known except for duckweed. It is so small that it never needs mowing but unfortunately it cannot survive being walked on. It is a Mediterranean plant which is brought into this country unintentionally on the soil of imported pot plants: given the right conditions, and global warming is providing increasingly suitable conditions, it can flourish out of doors here.

It seems that one of the doctors must have kept plants of Mediterranean origin in a green house here and when it was pulled down Mind-your-own-business escaped, survived unnoticed in the lawn for many years. Later, encouraged by increasing temperatures it not only took over that corner of the lawn but spread to all of the rear lawns and now even the flowerbeds.

When the Whatley Road Health Centre was built the Springfield House doctors moved their practice there. The surgery and the freehold of the flats were bought by a private practitioner, Dr Dennis Waldron, who lived with his family next door in 1 Cotham Road - the house originally built for the Principal of Western Congregational College.

Eventually the residents of the flats bought the freehold from Dr Waldron. On the Doctor's retirement the surgery was taken over by his daughter and is used now as a clinic for her osteopathy practice.

### **Redland & Cotham Amenities Society**

Affiliated to the Civic Trust – Registered Charity 268848

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. We attempt to achieve our aims via these main activities :-

- + 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 children's 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 Secretary, 13 Hartington Park, Redland, BS6 7ES .  
Or visit the Society website on [www.rcas.org.uk](http://www.rcas.org.uk)

The Residents Account - No 1 Cotham  
**Trelawney Road, Western College, Springfield House**

The authors

**Jennifer Milligan** was brought up in York, studied in London and came to Bristol in the 1960's. She taught literature – mainly for adults – for many years.

**Roger Mortimer** came to Bristol in 1950 to study architecture. After National Service he worked in private practice. In 1965 he joined JT as company architect, becoming Deputy Chairman of JT Group. Projects in Bristol included Arnolfini and Watershed. He has lived in Redland / Cotham since 1960.

**Dr Mary English** came to Bristol in 1939 to study Botany. She worked in agricultural research, mainly crop diseases, initially in Berkeley Square, Bristol. In 1954 she became the first medical mycologist in Bristol, working at the General Hospital. She has lived in Cotham since 1954.

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**Thanks** for information, help and co-operation of many residents and friends including Joan Dehn, Pat Featherstone, Wendy Russell, Michael Tucker, David Milligan, Allen Harris, Viv Nelson, Eileen Beaumont. And to all whose property has been used to illustrate this book.

**The authors and RCAS hope that readers will offer further information**

*Photographs Jennifer Milligan, Julie Levoir, Roger Mortimer*

**corrections and comments on the area covered by this Account.**

Please send these to .....