

Redland Past Revisited for the Redland Directory - No. 2 in a series

The story behind the name; Metford

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Some years ago I was pleased to be numbered amongst those who were able to help, our now sadly late, friend Veronica Smith ferret out snippets of information about Bristol's street name, information that she then spent a number of years cross checking and putting in to order. The result was Bristol's Street name 'Bible' which ran to two editions and which I will be referring to for the series on Road names

1. Metford Road

Why Metford, you may ask. Like many of our street names a simple name often conceals a fascinating story. In this case the road that runs from Cossins Road, to Harcourt Road is named in memory of William Ellis Metford who was born at Taunton, and came firstly to Bristol as a Railway engineer, in connection with the Bristol and Exeter railway, and subsequently to India for their railways. However in India he became ill and was forced to return home to England after less than a year, setting up home at Redland Villa in Elm Lane. He spent the rest of his life developing an improved rifle. Possibly his interest in firearms, and the need to develop a better rifle arose from his experiences at the start of the Indian Mutiny. He was the Proprietor & Sole inventor of the Metford sporting rifle, which won 4 Gold Medals, was prized by marksmen and was a consistent match winner for many years. It proved to be the forerunner of many modern rifles not least the Lee-Enfield. He made his own ammunition, at home in Redland Villa, a practice that I guess would be frowned on by the authorities today! The Metford street names, arose because the land was owned by Baron Cottesloe who used his rifles and was a strong advocate of his designs.