

**Redland Past Revisited for the Redland Directory - No. 5 in a series.**

**Redland's own Urban Myth** © Julian Lea-Jones Aug 2007

Dinner parties are the breeding ground of Urban Myths - the usually implausible events that happen to someone else. A case of in vino, but not necessarily veritas?

In Cranbrook Road, part of Bristol's 1920's expansion, a well maintained house with no occupants gave rise to this bizarre belief. Friends of newcomers moving from the centre of Bristol were concerned that there could be trouble from a Gypsy encampment on the banks of the Cran behind their house, (photographed by Bertram Tarr and given to me many years ago).



**The banks of the Cran Brook in the days before Cranbrook Road**

However concerns were allayed when it was explained that a tunnel led from Redland Road Police station to the mystery house – the tunnel exit, allowing police to be rushed through in the event of any ‘Civil Insurrection’. This conjures up an image of a file of silver buttoned Bobbies, with truncheons at the ready, singing jolly policemen’s songs such as Gilbert & Sullivan’s ‘When a felon’s not engaged in his employment’, and “He loves to hear the little brook a gurgling”.



**The Cran Brook in 2007 - flowing between the houses of Elton and Cranbrook Road**

Enquiries into this absurd belief revealed the truth. The Cran Brook rising in Redland Green is culverted beneath Dugar Walk, Cranbrook Road, Clare Avenue, briefly emerging between Cranbrook and Elton Road flows to the River Frome. Credulous new residents coming from the 'city', enquiring about the reason for the tunnel were kidded into believing the story. However the real explanation is simple but sad. The owner was in care for many decades, and the house administered by the Court of Protection. Sorry to spoil a bizarre urban myth but it does conjure up an interesting image.

**If you would like to learn more about this and many other curious events and beliefs in Bristol, such as the escaped barrel of frogs and their connexion with Green Tea, get a copy of 'Bristol Curiosities' (25 Chapters), by Julian Lea-Jones published by Birlinn Books, ISBN 978 1 84158 589 5, main bookshops or direct from the author: via the enquiry web form at 'contact us'**