

Redland Past Revisited for the Redland Directory - No. 4 in a series.

The Railway comes to Redland © Julian Lea-Jones July 2007

Nowadays we generally think of Bristol's reduced railway service as a single system, but it was not that long ago that Bristol had a multiplicity of separate railway systems. As well as Brunel's Great Western Railway, there were the Midland, the Bristol and Exeter, the South Wales Union, and the North Somerset railways. By the 1870's a need for links to the national network was recognised and the Clifton Extension railway was established with stations at Clifton Down and Montpelier linking to the Midland Railway, but Redland's inhabitants had to wait for twenty-three years to get their own station because the land, part of the Redland Court estate wasn't available. It was the donation of the remainder of the Grove, known as Lovers Walk to the city for a public open space that made the land available. Also selling off of some of the estate for building plots provided the necessary rail customers. In addition to this Clifton Extension Railway, there were also The Harbour railway, that ran from Temple Meads, across Victoria Street, (remember the viaduct across the road just before Temple Meads?), past St Mary Redcliffe Church to the Floating Harbour at Wapping. The Bristol Port & Pier railway passed under the Suspension Bridge to link up with the railway from Clifton & Redland at Sea Mills to Avonmouth. South of the River there was the North Somerset railway and the Bristol and Portishead Pier railway with Clifton Bridge station by the Rownham ferry. Doesn't it seem puzzling that at a time of increasing traffic congestion commuters are having a daily fight to retain our few remaining rail links?

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