

## **Redland Past Revisited for the Redland Directory - No. 20**

**In Limbo, Typo or fact? Or, what's in a name?** © Julian Lea-Jones. March 2009

One day in the 1980s I noticed a black-painted house sign on a gate in Upper Cranbrook Road that upon first reading I took to mean that the house was the abode of poor damned souls, i.e. those who had been consigned to linger on the borders of hell or possibly the home of a lithe Caribbean family. Closer examination of the over-painted sign revealed that the house name was not Limbo, but Limbe. I asked the occupants if they could assuage my curiosity and explain the meaning of their unusual house name. Whilst not objecting to my possibly impertinent questions they explained that they had only recently bought the house and knew nothing about the name. There the matter rested for about a year until I bought a large collection of WD & HO Wills's magazines. As well as company news these are a goldmine of Bristol History, and also contain reports from their tobacco plantations abroad. One of their plantation managers at Limbe in Nyasaland, (now Malawi) retired to this house in Redland which he named and marked with this splendid hand beaten copper nameplate. I explained my discoveries to the new house owners, and as they had no attachment to the name gave it to me in exchange for repainting their gate.

Read about other unexpected connections in my books 'Bristol Curiosities' and 'Bristol Connections', or book one of my twenty-six talks" that are listed on our website [www.history4u.info](http://www.history4u.info)



**Lastly, this sign is also an example of a well known optical illusion. When you look at it is the lettering proud of the surface or sunk in?. It all depends when you first look at it, often if you blink it will change. Blink and it might change back again. The lettering is actually raised.**