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Eastville Workhouse Rosemary Green Burial Ground Data  
Vrs. 2.0 - 15/11/2015  
Explanations and notes concerning released burial data

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Data and sources .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Limits and ranges of the data .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Description of categories and nomenclature in the pdf files.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Statistical analysis.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. How to search the spreadsheets .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Checking illegible names.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Corrections, omissions and additions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>9. Disclaimer .....</b>	<b>10</b>

## 1. Introduction

This document was written to provide information and guidance for researchers who are accessing data collected by Bristol Radical History Group (BRHG) concerning unmarked graves at Rosemary Green<sup>1</sup>; the Eastville Workhouse<sup>2</sup> burial ground in the latter part of the 19th Century.

The aim of the data collection was three-fold:

- To provide a publically accessible documentary record of those people buried at Rosemary Green
- To facilitate statistical analysis of the sample
- To provide the evidential basis for a permanent memorial to those buried at Rosemary Green

The burial data was originally collected over a two year period from 2012-14 at the Bristol Record Office (BRO), mostly from microfiche, by three researchers from BRHG. The records were first transcribed by hand and then transferred to Excel spreadsheets, where summaries and some basic statistical analysis were undertaken. In January 2015, the BRO made high-resolution images of the original sources available which enabled a collective checking process to be undertaken<sup>3</sup>. Finally, pdf versions of the data were released to the public at version 1 on the BRHG website in January 2015.

Version 2 of the data was released in November 2015 and included the following changes:

- the addition of the years 1851-55
- a number of inmates bodies given to the medical school in the 1870s were missed in version 1 and were added
- a considerable number of names which were unclear were checked against the ancestry.com data base and corrected
- the summary of summaries was reorganised to show data year by year

The Version 2 data can be found at this location:

<http://www.brh.org.uk/site/project/eastville-workhouse/>

Advice on searching the data and understanding the categories and scope of its content can be found in sections 3, 4, 6 and 7.

1 The land containing the Eastville Workhouse burial ground was named Rosemary Green in 2004 and can be located at the following postcode BS5 6LB.

2 BRHG (and the BRO) nominally refer to the 'Eastville' Workhouse as it was situated at 100 Fishponds Rd in the district of Eastville. It was named the Clifton Union Workhouse upon its opening in 1847 and later renamed as Barton Regis Union Workhouse in 1877, both of which are misleading in locating it in the city of Bristol.

3 This was undertaken by members of BRHG and local residents from the recently formed Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group (EWMG).

## 2. Data and sources

This document accompanies the following pdf files compiled from the original spreadsheet data containing details of the burials at Rosemary Green between 1851 and 1895:

Period	PDF
1851-59	workhouse-data-1851-59-VRS-2-0.pdf
1860-69	workhouse-data-1860-69-VRS-2-0.pdf
1870-79	workhouse-data-1870-79-VRS-2-0.pdf
1880-89	workhouse-data-1880-89-VRS-2-0.pdf
1890-95	workhouse-data-1890-95-VRS-2-0.pdf
1851-95	workhouse-data-Summary-VRS-2-0.pdf

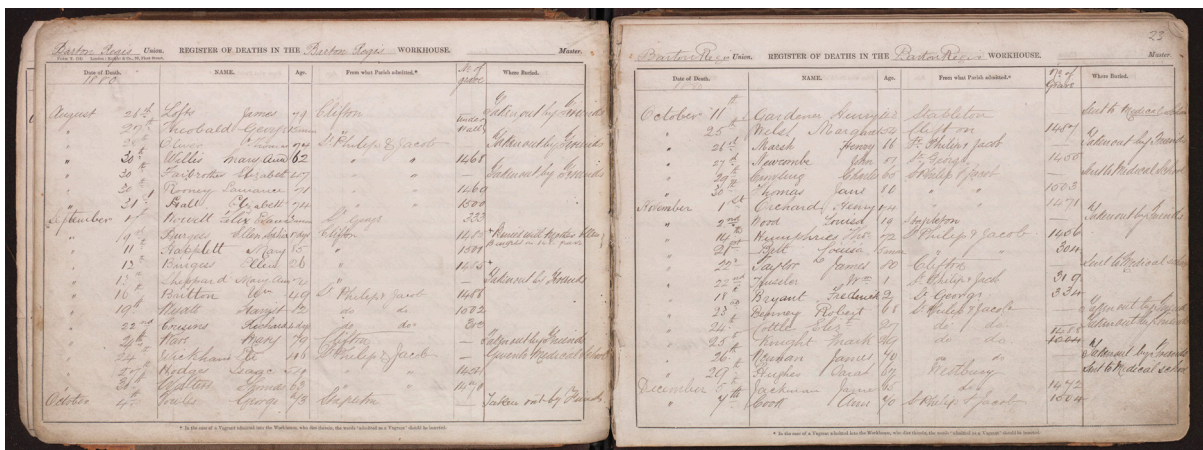
This data was gathered from the workhouse death registers which were formally introduced in July 1847 as part of a General Consolidated Order issued by the Poor Law Commissioners. The order stated that one of the duties of the workhouse Master was:

When requisite, to cause the death of every pauper dying in the Workhouse to be duly registered by the Registrar of Births and Deaths within five days after, the day of such death ; and also to enter such death in a register kept according to Form (T.) hereunto annexed.<sup>4</sup>

The death registers (Form T) for Eastville Workhouse are held at the Bristol Record Office under the following title and reference numbers:

*Social Services Committee: Records of the Home for the Aged, Chronic Sick and Able bodied at 100 Fishponds Road (now closed), originally the workhouse of the Clifton Union at Eastville- Registers of deaths*

BRO reference	Period
30105/3/1	1847 Sep 27 - 1868 Sep 22
30105/3/2	1868 Oct 5 - 1878 Mar 25
30105/3/3	1878 Apr 2 - 1888 Dec 29
30105/3/4	1889 Jan 4 - 1898 Jun 15



4 The 1847 Consolidated General Order: Duties of the Master Art. 208 No. 17 <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/gco/gco1847.shtml>

As the original documents are fragile and thus only available under special circumstances, the data collection process which originally began in 2012 was undertaken using the microfiche copies which are listed below:

<b>BRO microfiche reference</b>	<b>Period</b>
FCEW/D/1/1	1847-1858
FCEW/D/1/2	1858-1868
FCEW/D/2/1	1868-1874
FCEW/D/2/2	1874-1878
FCEW/D/3/1	1878-1882
FCEW/D/3/2	1883-1888
FCEW/D/3/3	1888
FCEW/D/4/1	1889-1893
FCEW/D/4/2	1893-1898

In January and November 2015 a checking process was undertaken using high resolution scans of the original documents which were kindly provided by the BRO.

### **3. Limits and ranges of the data**

The aim of collecting information specifically for a memorial at Rosemary Green burial ground created a number of limits to the published data.

#### **Rosemary Green burial ground usage**

It is now clear when Rosemary Green was first employed as a burial ground for Eastville Workhouse. The institution opened in 1847 and the first death is recorded in the registers as occurring in September of that year<sup>5</sup>. Between 1847 and 1851 bodies of inmates were returned for burial to the parishes from whence they came. Examination of consecration documents for the site and other sources suggest that the first phase of usage of Rosemary Green as a burial ground was after April 1851<sup>6</sup>. The death registers show no burials for April 1851 and the first after the consecration (which occurred on or about April 25th 1851) is noted as 13 May 1851.

It appears that the Rosemary Green site became a disused burial ground around 20 November 1895<sup>7</sup>. After this point the death registers mark the new burial ground as the 'Ridgeway' which is almost certainly the Ridgeway Park Cemetery located a few minutes' walk away at the top end of Eastville Park which was opened by a private company in 1888<sup>8</sup>.

Greenbank Cemetery which lies adjacent to Rosemary Green was opened in 1871 and there is significant evidence that parts of the site were used for burying workhouse inmates in unmarked graves, though it is unclear (as yet) when this activity began<sup>9</sup>.

5 This was David Jones who died on 27th September 1847 aged 47.

6 Petition, act, sentence on consecration of land adjoining Comb Brook Lane, with plan BRO Ref. EP/A/22/CU/1a-c.

7 The final burial at the site appears to be Ann Evans who died on 20th November 1895 aged 41 and was buried in grave number 946.

8 It is located at Oakdene Avenue, Eastville, Bristol, BS5 6QQ. See also <http://www.bafhs.org.uk/burial-data>

9 For example, the entrance into Greenbank Cemetery opposite Rosemary Green is known as the 'Union' gate.



### Inclusion and exclusion in the data

The data collection activity concentrated on those workhouse inmates who were buried at the Rosemary Green site, consequently there are some exclusions from the original death register data.

- A proportion of those inmates who died in the Eastville workhouse are listed in the death registers as “taken away by friends” or “buried by friends”. This refers to bodies that were recovered by existing family and friends who paid for a funeral at another undisclosed location. These cases have been excluded from the published data.
- The parish of a number of inmates is listed as “Bristol Incorporation” and there is no grave number stated in these cases. It is assumed that these inmates were not buried at Rosemary Green, were taken by the Bristol Incorporation of the Poor (another Poor Law Union) and thus have been excluded from the published records.
- A small number of entries are listed as being “Given to the medical school” denoting that the body was ‘donated’ for medical science. It was decided to include these in the records, as there is apparently no final resting place for these inmates.

## 4. Description of categories and nomenclature in the pdf files

The categories in the pdf’s are explained below:

**Year/Month/Day:** Date of death of inmate

**Surname/Forename:** Self-explanatory

**Gender:** This category does not appear in the death register but is, where possible, derived from the forename<sup>10</sup>. M = Male, F = Female and U = Unknown.

<sup>10</sup> BRHG recognise the limitations of this approach but it was thought useful to get an overall approximation of male

**Age at Death:** Ages at death are recorded in three ranges:

- Those of 1 year or greater in age are rounded down to the nearest year. So, 18 months would be recorded as **1**.
- Those greater or equal to 1 month but less than 1 year are recorded as fractions of a 12 months rounded down to the nearest month. These are listed in the table below:

Age (months)	Fraction of a year	Designation in pdf
1	1/12	0.083
2	2/12	0.167
3	3/12	0.250
4	4/12	0.333
5	5/12	0.417
6	6/12	0.500
7	7/12	0.583
8	8/12	0.667
9	9/12	0.750
10	10/12	0.833
11	11/12	0.917

So a recorded age of 6 weeks in the death register would be rounded down to 1 month and shown in the pdf as **0.083**.

Those less than one month in age are shown as **0.001** in the pdf.

**Parish:** This column is stated as 'To what parish chargeable' in the death registers, and refers to the parish within the Clifton/Barton Regis Poor Law Union responsible for the relief of the inmate. A list of Clifton/Barton Regis Union parishes that appear in the records is given below:

Clifton, Filton, Henbury, Horfield, Shirehampton, St Philip & Jacob or St Philip(s), St James & Paul, St George(s), Stapleton, Stoke Gifford, Winterbourne and Westbury<sup>11</sup>

The parishes of St Philip & Jacob and St James & Paul were 'out parishes' as against the 'in parishes' which lay within the city boundaries and thus came under the Poor Law Union known as the Bristol Incorporation of the Poor.

Occasionally bodies were brought from other institutions for burial at Rosemary Green and were recorded under this category. These include:

Bristol Lunatic Asylum<sup>12</sup>  
Bristol Royal Infirmary

and female burials.

<sup>11</sup> This list comprises all of the parishes in the Clifton/Barton Regis Poor Law Union except for the tiny Compton Greenfield which does not appear in the death registers.

<sup>12</sup> This is now the site of UWE Glenside Campus in Fishponds. at More details can be found at: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Bristol/>

**Grave No:** This refers to the plot allocated in Rosemary Green.

- It appears that over certain periods no grave numbers were allocated to plots at all.
- In other periods 'In old ground' is stated in this column in the death register signifying a previously used part of the burial ground is being employed. This may signify that multiple burial (i.e. stacking of bodies) was being undertaken.
- It is clear from the graveyard sequencing that children under the age of 10 were buried in separate plots to adults.
- In some cases very young babies have not been given grave numbers and may have been buried outside the consecrated ground as they were not baptised before their deaths<sup>13</sup>.
- The letter "M" signifies that the body was "given to the medical school" and thus not buried at Rosemary Green.

**Notes:** In most cases these are reproduced from the original death registers verbatim, but interesting conjunctions noted by researchers are also included<sup>14</sup>.

### An important note on legibility

The death registers are often unclear and consequently open to interpretation particularly with regard to forenames and surnames. Consequently the following designations have been added to the data by researchers:

- U** Designates unknown, either illegible or cannot be determined (e.g. gender)
- ?** Researcher is unsure of interpretation of forename or surname

## 5. Statistical analysis

Some basic statistical analysis of the data has been carried out on decade by decade basis, and also over the whole period. This includes:

- A breakdown of numbers of male, female and unknown inmates
- Details of deaths by month, including graphical representation
- Details of death by age, including graphical representation

Analysis of trends within this data related to life expectancy and epidemics can be found in the BRHG book *100 Fishponds Rd: Life and Death in a Victorian Workhouse*<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> One example is George Theobald who died at the age of 15 minutes on 27th August 1880. He was given no grave number and is listed as "Under Wall".

<sup>14</sup> These include for example the deaths of several family members in a short period, references to cause of death such as "small pox" or "drowned in river" etc.

<sup>15</sup> Ball, R., Parkin, D. and Mills, S. *100 Fishponds Rd: Life and Death in a Victorian Workhouse*, Bristol Radical Pamphleteer #34 (Bristol: Bristol Radical History Group, 2015).



## 6. How to search the spreadsheets

With the file open in your browser or Adobe Acrobat Reader pressing the 'Ctrl' key and the 'F' key ('Cmd' and 'F' on a Mac) simultaneously will open a search box, the location of which will depend on the browser you are using but it is normally top left or bottom right.

BRHG recommend using a number of surname searches (varying the spelling) as misinterpretation of the death registers during transcription is fairly common. The dates of death are far more reliable and if this information is available to the researcher, it is the best way of tracking a particular person down.

The best way to check the interpretation of the death register in the online data is to visit the BRO and check the original sources which are listed in Section 2.

## 7. Checking illegible names

To check the accuracy of some of the less legible hand written records in the workhouse death registry (i.e. those marked with a ?) or if you cannot track a name in records but have a date of death we used Ancestry.co.uk which is available free in the public library.

Insert the date of death of the person and type in what you think the first name and surname are. Add the date of birth, by deducting the age at death. Ancestry also allows you to put in a town where the person might have lived, so in our case, 'Bristol Gloucestershire'.

The system then searches and throws up likely matches. In the case of a perfect match it will record that the person had died on the date you inserted at 'Clifton' (from 1851-1877) or 'Barton Regis' (from 1877-1895), the respective Poor Law Unions.

You can also confirm the fact that the person had been baptised in Bristol, and noted in the 1851, 61, 71, 81 or 91 census as living in Bristol. Or there might be record of a marriage.

In a few cases you may find that a simple misspelling or misreading leads you to your person.

In a very few cases there maybe no confirmation, no one with that name, or similar name, recorded at all in the data. Either the person was using an alias or the clerk was entirely in error.

## 8. Corrections, omissions and additions

BRHG are very interested in any corrections or omissions to the online data.

Please let us know:

- what you have found
- the exact location in the pdf
- the pre and post corrected items
- the evidential basis for your change

Then send us an e-mail from this link: <http://www.brh.org.uk/site/contact-us/>

BRHG aim to update the online data as we receive changes from users and revisions to our research.

BRHG are also very interested in any evidence you may have which can help to illuminate the location and content of unmarked pauper graves associated with Eastville Workhouse.

## **9. Disclaimer**

Bristol Radical History Group takes no responsibility for the accuracy of Eastville Workhouse burial data supplied online. It is the responsibility of the user to determine its accuracy.