

Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group (EWMG)

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

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Eastville Workhouse Burial Ground Memorial Unveiling Ceremony Rosemary Green, Eastville, BS5 6LB 11.00am Monday 16 November 2015

Residents of East Park Estate are to unveil a memorial to more than 4,000 men, women and children who died in Eastville's notorious Workhouse between 1851 and 1895 and were buried in unmarked paupers' graves in what is now Rosemary Green.

A six foot Welsh slate standing stone, carved by local stone mason and sculptor Matthew Billington using designs from pupils of May Park Primary School, will be erected on the disused burial ground which has remained unmarked for over 150 years. It is adjacent to the site of the Workhouse, which is now largely covered by housing and a primary school.

The standing stone is the centrepiece of a project which will eventually include a memorial garden and a historical plaque at the original gates of Eastville Workhouse at 100 Fishponds Road, now the entrance to the new East Trees Health Centre.

Over the last year, Eastville residents have raised nearly £10,000 to commission the standing stone, working with members of Bristol Radical History Group (BRHG) who initiated an investigation into the pauper burial ground in 2012 and are publishing '*100 Fishponds Rd: Life and death in Victorian Workhouse*' to coincide with the unveiling. After three years of painstaking research, they have collated the names and details of 4,084 men, women and children who died in the Workhouse and were buried in Rosemary Green. They also discovered that another 118 bodies were acquired by the medical school for dissection. They too are remembered on the memorial.

Among those taking part in the unveiling ceremony will be residents of East Park Estate who have campaigned for many years to improve facilities for children in the area, family historians whose ancestors were buried in Rosemary Green, and pupils from May Park Primary School who have contributed to the project.

Funding for the memorial project has principally come from the John James Bristol Foundation, and the Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership with contributions from Living Easton history group, local branches of the National Union of Journalists and the General, Municipal and Boilermakers Union, and relatives of the community activist, the late Hannah Purbrick.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS, PLEASE CONTACT

Roger Ball (Secretary, EWMG) 0117 9390447

NOTE FOR EDITORS: See over for details of more related events.

Full **data on the burials at Rosemary Green** was released online in January 2015; an update is planned to coincide with the unveiling of the memorial. The data can be viewed at:

<http://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/rosemary-green-burial-ground-data/>.

Further details of Matthew Billington's work in stone can be found at:

<https://dragonstonecarving.wordpress.com/>

A series of **free public events** are planned to compliment the unveiling which include:

- **Tuesday 17 November, 2.00-6.00pm *Opening the archive: Eastville Workhouse burial ground*** at **Bristol Record Office (BRO), Smeaton Rd, Bristol, BS1 6XN**. As part of **Explore Your Archive week**, a free drop-in session to see the archival records behind the project, meet members of Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group and hear about their research. The current BRO exhibition **'Documenting Death'** (27 Oct - 12 March 2016) also features the workhouse burial ground project.

- **Thursday 19 November, 7.00-9.00pm** at the **Friends Meeting House, Champion Square, Bristol BS2 9DB**. **Book launch** for **'100 Fishponds Rd: Life and death in Victorian Workhouse'** by Roger Ball, Di Parkin and Steve Mills. A presentation of the findings of the research into Eastville workhouse and Rosemary Green burial ground.

More details on these and other events can be found at: <http://www.brh.org.uk>

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