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**Eastville Workhouse Death Registers 1895-1914**

**Data V 1.0 - 11/09/2025**

**Explanations and notes concerning released data**

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### Abbreviations

EWMG	Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group
BRHG	Bristol Radical History Group
F	Female
hrs	Hours
M	Male
mths	Months
No.	Number
N/R	Not recorded
NTBF	Not taken by friends
PLU	Poor Law Union
U	Unknown
wks	Weeks

## 1. Introduction

This document was written to provide information and guidance for researchers who are accessing data collected and collated by Eastville Workhouse Memorial Group (EWMG) concerning deaths at Eastville Workhouse<sup>1</sup> in the period November 1895 to July 1914. This work was undertaken after the first release of data by Bristol Radical History Group in 2015 which covered more than 4,000 unmarked burials from the workhouse in nearby Rosemary Green over the period May 1851- November 1895.<sup>2</sup> This current data release covers the location of burial of unclaimed pauper bodies and where possible details of interment of those corpses that were 'taken by friends'.<sup>3</sup> The former largely occurred in different phases in the private cemeteries Ridgeway Park, Greenbank and Arnos Vale which have all since become publicly owned.

The aim of the data collection was three-fold:

- To provide a publicly accessible documentary record of those inmates of the Eastville Workhouse interred in private/public cemeteries after the cessation of burials in Rosemary Green in 1895.
- To provide an evidential basis for the memorialization of mass unmarked pauper graves in private/public cemeteries.
- To facilitate further statistical analysis of those that passed away in Eastville Workhouse.

The data was transcribed from 2021-2023 by members of EWMG into Excel spreadsheets using photographic images of the Eastville Workhouse death registers provided by Bristol Archives. Interments that occurred in Greenbank cemetery were cross referenced with the existing transcripts of the burial registers.<sup>4</sup> The spreadsheets were then re-checked against the images of the death registers in 2025 by a different member of EWMG and any corrections made. The overall numbers of pauper burials in Ridgeway Park were confirmed by an historian from the Bristol & Avon Family History Society (BAFHS) in July 2025.<sup>5</sup>

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

## 2. Data and sources

This document accompanies the transcriptions of the Eastville Workhouse Death registers for November 1895 to July 1914 in the following pdf file:

- 1895-1914 Eastville Workhouse Death Register - pdf – v1

This data was gathered from the workhouse death registers which were formally introduced in July

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<sup>1</sup> 'Eastville Workhouse' was situated at 100 Fishponds Rd in the district of Eastville, in east Bristol. 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. It was latterly known as Eastville Workhouse and 100 Fishponds Road.

<sup>2</sup> The land containing the Eastville Workhouse burial ground was named Rosemary Green in 2004 and can be located at the following postcode BS5 6LB. The data for Rosemary Green can be found at: <https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/rosemary-green-burial-ground-data/>

<sup>3</sup> The death registers state 'Taken by friends' when a body was recovered from the Poor Law Union by relatives and/or friends of the deceased and privately buried.

<sup>4</sup> Bristol Municipal Cemeteries: Burial Registers Volume 1 Greenbank Cemetery 2 July 1871 – 31 October 1991 (Bristol: Bristol and Avon Family History Society, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Our thanks go to John Butland Watts, Project Co-ordinator for the Bristol & Avon Family History Society, and more recently a member of the Friends of Ridgeway Park Cemetery, for checking these numbers.

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>6</sup>

The Registers of Death (Form T) are part of the Eastville Workhouse collection held by Bristol Archives and copies are available to view under the following title and reference numbers:

Ref: 30105 - Records of the Clifton Union workhouse at 100 Fishponds Road, Eastville, 1847 - 1952

<b>BA ref.</b>	<b>Title</b>
30105/3/4	Registers of deaths, 4 Jan 1889 - 15 Jun 1898
30105/2	Register of births and deaths, 3 Apr 1898 - 6 Oct 1943 (births)*, 3 Apr 1898 - 22 Jan 1907 (deaths)
30105/3/5	Registers of deaths, 23 Jan 1907 - 30 Jul 1914

\*Please note that access to part of the births section of volume ref: 30105/2 is a restricted under Data Protection legislation since they contain personal data about still living individuals.

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

#### **Date range**

The data covers the period November 1895 to July 1914. No data appears to exist for the period from August 1914 – December 1923, though clearly the cessation of reporting in this form corresponds with the beginning of World War One.

#### **Claimed and unclaimed bodies**

The data in the Eastville Workhouse death registers is essentially divided into two groups:

- The first are those listed in the death registers as “taken away by friends” or “buried by friends”. This refers to bodies that were recovered from the Poor Law Union (PLU) by existing family and friends who paid for a funeral. Where information exists, the date and place of burial has been added to these entries.
- The second group are those bodies that were unclaimed or where friends/relatives could not prove that they could afford to bury the corpse. These became the responsibility of the PLU, and were buried in either Ridgeway Park, Greenbank or Arnos Vale cemeteries. A small number were given to the Medical School for dissection.

#### **Places of burial**

On 20 November 1895, the last burial of an unclaimed pauper inmate took place on the piece of land adjacent to Eastville Workhouse, known today as Rosemary Green, ending more than forty years of interments.<sup>7</sup> For the next 19 years (1895-1914), the subject of this study, the Guardians of Eastville Workhouse principally turned to nearby private or municipal cemeteries to satisfy their need for burial

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<sup>6</sup> The 1847 Consolidated General Order: Duties of the Master Art. 208 No. 17

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/gco/gco1847.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> The final burial at Rosemary Green was Ann Evans who died on 20th November 1895 aged 41 and was interred in grave number 946.



space. The two main sites were Ridgeway Park and Greenbank cemeteries (see Figure 1). Ridgeway Park cemetery, located a few minutes' walk away at the top end of Eastville Park, was opened in 1888 by a private company and came into public ownership in 1954.<sup>8</sup> Greenbank cemetery, which lies adjacent to Rosemary Green, was opened in 1871, and in 1895 became the first private cemetery to be taken over by the Bristol Corporation.<sup>9</sup> In addition to these two principal sites, a small number of unclaimed pauper bodies (mainly those of the Roman Catholic faith) were interred in Arnos Vale cemetery in south Bristol.<sup>10</sup> This private cemetery was opened in 1839 and taken into public ownership in 2003.<sup>11</sup> A very small number of unclaimed pauper bodies were given to the medical school for dissection.



Figure 1: Location of Rosemary Green burial ground, Ridgeway Park and Greenbank cemeteries relative to Eastville Workhouse (1894-1903).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ridgeway Park cemetery is located on Oakdene Avenue, Eastville, Bristol, BS5 6QQ.

<sup>9</sup> Bristol Archives Guide to cemetery and burial records (Bristol: Bristol Archives, n.d.) p. 16, 18. Available from: [https://archives.bristol.gov.uk/about/source\\_guides](https://archives.bristol.gov.uk/about/source_guides)

<sup>10</sup> Arnos Vale cemetery is located on Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 3EW.

<sup>11</sup> Bristol Archives Guide to cemetery and burial records p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Taken from Know Your Place - Bristol - 1894-1903 OS 25" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

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

Year	Month	Day	Surname	First Name	Age	Sex	Parish	Burial Date	Burial Number	Burial Place	Taken by friends	Notes
1897	Jan	1	MAV	CHARLES	76	M	St Philip & St Jacob			Bideaway		

The categories in the column headings in the transcriptions 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>13</sup> M = Male, F = Female and U = Unknown.
- **Age:** Ages at death are recorded in two 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 less than 1 year of age are recorded as they are in the death register: hours (hrs), days, weeks (wks) or months (mths).
- **Parish:** This column is entitled 'From which Parish admitted' in the death registers.<sup>14</sup>

For the years 1895-1898 this refers to the parish within the Barton Regis PLU that the inmate was a resident of. The parishes in the Barton Union PLU in this period were:

Clifton, Filton, Henbury, Horfield, Redland, Shirehampton, St Philip & St Jacob (out parish), St James & St Paul (out parish), St George(s), Stapleton, Stoke Gifford, Winterbourne and Westbury.<sup>15</sup>

All of these parishes appear in the death registers for the period 1895-1898, except for Henbury. Between 1898 and 1905 boundary changes occurred, as the Barton Regis PLU was slowly absorbed into the Bristol PLU.<sup>16</sup> This explains why the parishes of residence of the inmates begin to disappear from the death registers in mid-1898 to be replaced with 'Bristol' and 'Barton Regis' and after the dissolution of Barton Regis in 1905, just 'Bristol'.

Occasionally bodies were brought from other institutions for burial by the PLU and were recorded under this category. This was so that burial costs could be reimbursed to the PLU. These include Bristol (Lunatic) Asylum and Bristol Workhouse, adjacent institutions in Fishponds.<sup>17</sup>

- **Burial Date and Burial Number:** These columns were added by the researchers to allow cross referencing with burial data from the relevant cemetery. This cross referencing has been carried

<sup>13</sup> BRHG recognise the limitations of this approach, but it was thought useful to get an overall approximation of male and female burials.

<sup>14</sup> There is also an asterisk which leads to the standard printed statement: 'Note – In the case of a Vagrant being admitted into the Workhouse who dies therein, the Words "admitted as a vagrant" should be inserted.' It is unclear if this practice was adhered to.

<sup>15</sup> The parish of Redland was formed from Westbury in 1894. 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 Bristol PLU.

<sup>16</sup> See Roger Ball, Di Parkin & Steve Mills *100 Fishponds Road: Life and death in a Victorian Workhouse* (Bristol: BRHG, 2020) pp. 28-30; UKBMD Births, Marriages, Deaths on the internet, Registration Districts in England and Wales – Bristol and Barton Regis. Retrieved from: <https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/reg/districts/index.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Bristol Lunatic Asylum (now the site of UWE Glenside Campus in Fishponds) was opened in 1860 and the Bristol Workhouse in 1837. Neither institution was part of Barton Regis PLU.

out for burials at Greenbank Cemetery for the years 1906-1914.<sup>18</sup> Similar cross-referencing could be achieved for Ridgeway Park and Arnos Vale cemeteries using recently released data.<sup>19</sup>

- **Burial Place:** This is self-explanatory in that it refers to the cemetery where the burial took place: Ridgeway Park, Greenbank, Arnos Vale or the Medical School in the case of a handful of corpses that were given to that institution.
- **Taken by friends:** An asterisk in this column means that the body of the deceased was recovered by family and/or friends and thus was not the responsibility of the PLU. These private burials have been cross-referenced with the Greenbank cemetery records, so in some cases the burial date and burial number are available.
- **Notes:** In most cases these are reproduced from the original death registers verbatim, but interesting conjunctions noted by researchers are also included.

### A note on legibility

The death registers are often unclear and consequently open to interpretation particularly with regard to forenames and surnames. Also, in some cases the original entries in the death register are incomplete. Consequently, the following designations have been added to the data by researchers:

**U** Designates unknown, either illegible or cannot be determined

**?** Researcher is unsure of interpretation of forename or surname

**N/R** Not Recorded

## 5. Statistical analysis

Some basic statistical collation of the data has been carried out on a year-by-year basis at the end of each tranche of deaths and summarised over the whole period on page 3. This includes:

- A breakdown of numbers and percentages of male, female and unknown inmates
- The numbers and percentages of bodies claimed by family and/or friends
- Where the body was not claimed by family and/or friends (NTBF) a breakdown of the number of burials in each cemetery and those given to the Medical School.

Further analysis may be added at a later date.

## 6. How to search the pdf

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 Bristol Archives 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 registers

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<sup>18</sup> The cross-referencing used data from Bristol Municipal Cemeteries: Burial Registers Volume 1 Greenbank Cemetery 2 July 1871 – 31 October 1991 (Bristol: Bristol and Avon Family History Society, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Bristol Municipal Burial Registers Volume 2: (Bristol: Bristol and Avon Family History Society, 2019).

(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 'Barton Regis' (from 1877-1895).

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 may be 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.

## **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.

## **10. Acknowledgments**

Bristol Radical History Group would like to thank John Butland Watts, a long-standing member and Project Coordinator of the Bristol & Avon Family History Society, and more recently a member of the Friends of Ridgeway Park Cemetery, Matt Coles at Bristol Archives for his help with the Eastville Workhouse death registers and Kate Clements, John Jenkins, Richard Collins, Ruth Symister and from the Friends of Ridgeway Park Cemetery.