

# **HIGHLAND ROAD CEMETERY, PORTSMOUTH**

## **A GUIDE TO THE “DICKENS” GRAVES**

a self-guided walk

This information was provided to Portsmouth City Council  
by Professor A.J. Pointon from the Friends of Highland  
Road Cemetery and Dickens Fellowship

**GRAVE** (see plan for location)

- ET** Ellen Lawless Ternan (see “The Invisible Woman” by Claire Tomalin) was the love of Charles Dickens from 1857 to his death in 1870. Of a theatrical family, she met Dickens when he was in a play with her and her two sisters (see below). After Dickens died, she subtracted 10 years from her age and wed Rev. George Wharton Robinson in 1876; after he died, she gave up work (at real age 70) and went to live with Fanny in Victoria Grove, Southsea. She died in 1914, living on as Helen Landless in “Edwin Drood”.
- MT** Maria Ternan, married name Taylor, lived with sister Fanny after they moved from London to Southsea; she died in 1903. Fanny, who had been introduced to Anthony Trollope’s brother Thomas by Dickens, and was his wife until he died in 1892, had been both actress and opera singer; she moved to Southsea in 1900 and died in 1913.
- SP** Susan Pearce, daughter of John Dickens’s landlord, William Pearce (who lived in the grand house two doors down from the Birthplace Museum at 393 Commercial Road). Lived in 393 up to her death in 1903 when the Council were able to purchase it (See **D** below).
- WP** This headstone commemorates the sons of William Pearce. William Baker Pearce (junior) shared a midwife (Mrs Purkiss) with Charles Dickens.
- MB** Maria Beadnell was the first love of Charles Dickens; they met when she was 19 and he 18; although he was rejected by her family as a suitor, he later made her the model for Dora in David Copperfield. She married Henry Winter (after whom a road right by the cemetery is named) and they moved to Southsea where she died in 1886.
- AS** Alfred Arthur Seale was a world expert on Dickens and the first curator of the Birthplace Museum. He received Dickens’s family and friends visiting the Museum and was able to acquire the couch on which Dickens died.
- D** The Dupree family was very influential in Portsmouth and a driving force to obtain the Birthplace for the city. Sir William Thomas Dupree was Mayor in the year it became available (see **SP** above) and achieved the family ambition.
- GH** Georgina Margaret Hayman (nee Bridges) claimed that Dickens told her she was chosen as the model for Little Dorrit when he visited her father (a Solicitor) and she was a petite 17-year-old. She came to Southsea to live with her son and died in 1912.

## SELF-GUIDED WALK ROUND THE “DICKENS” GRAVES OF HIGHLAND ROAD CEMETERY

(walk is about half-a-mile, as a guide 5 yards is about 6 normal steps)

Enter the cemetery by the Lodge on Highland Road about 80 yards south of St. Margaret's Church (there is a bus stop and small car park by the gate). About 30 yards from the gate you will pass a path to the right, keep straight on. After 15 yards the path splits. The left goes to a little chapel. Take the right. After another 20 yards, on your right is a flat grave with the name “Russell” (**R**). Look over it to a small bank, on top you will see the white grave of **Ellen Ternan (ET)** 14 yards from the path. After reading the inscriptions, turn round, there are two rows of graves behind you, walk 9 yards passing the two rows and turn right along the second row. Three graves along, you will see a grave with dedications to **Maria Susanna Taylor (MT)** and **Frances Eleanor Trollope (Fanny)**.

Return to (**ET**) and then to the path by **R**.

Continue along the path (east) as before for about 27 yards, you will see the headstone for Jane Young on your right and next is the stone for the three **Pearce** daughters (**SP**). After a further 8 yards, on your right with its plain side facing you as you approach will be a 4ft high brownish headstone for the **Pearce** sons (**WP**).

Return to the path and continue east. After 29 yards you will come to a “cross-roads”, go straight on. After another 56 yards you will stand at a T-junction with a little tree on your near left and a bigger tree on your right. Turn left towards a little chapel. After 21 yards you will come to a path off to your right, you turn onto this path (going east) leaving a bush of palm leaves to your left.

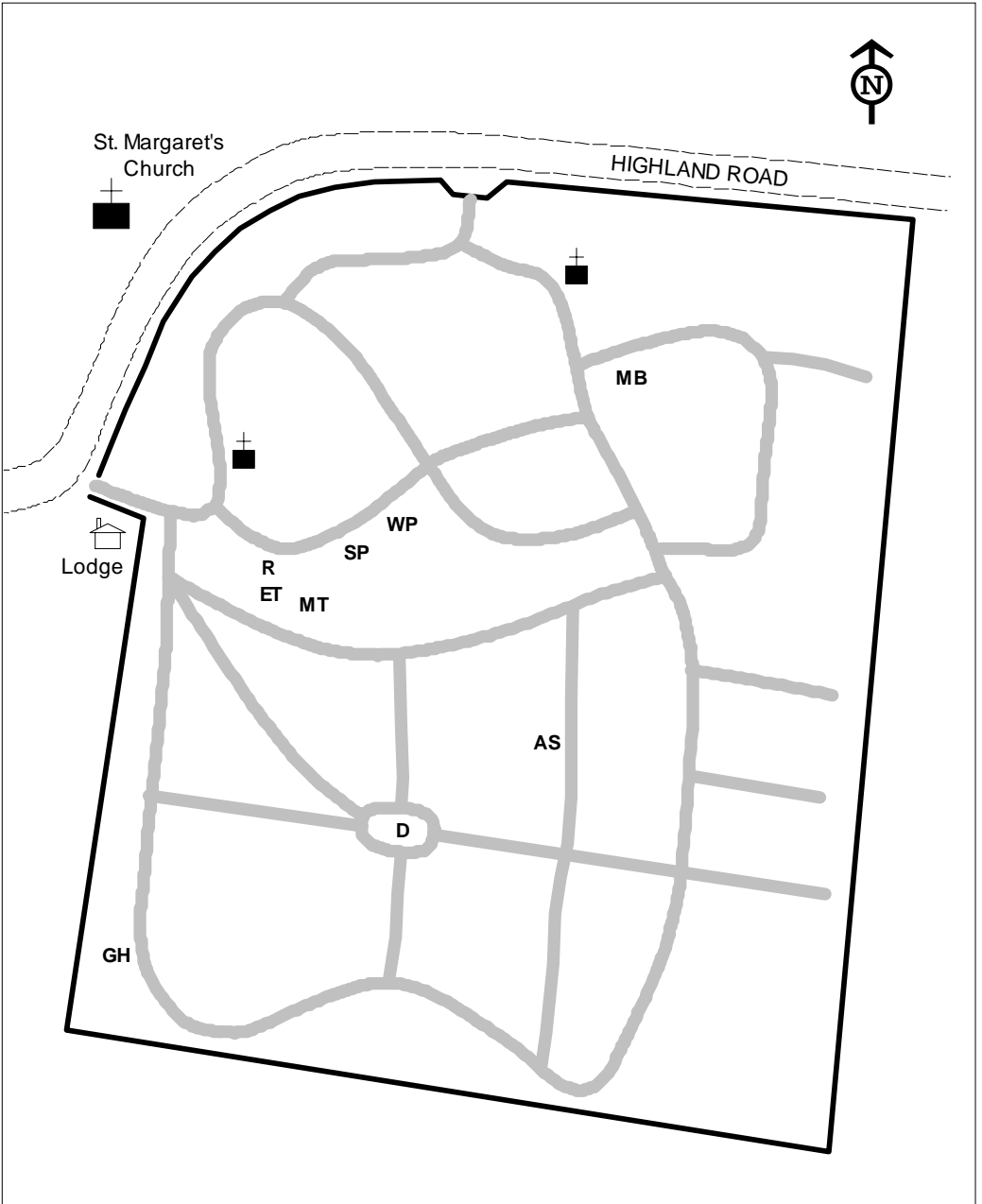
After some 18 yards, with a “monkey puzzle” tree on your left, there will be a row of graves to your right, mostly big ones. The third in from the path (about 5 yards) has a little white stone dedicated to **Maria Winter** nee **Beadnell (MB)**.

Go back to the path and retrace your steps to the palm bush, turn left onto the main path (away from the chapel). Pass the junction on your right with the little tree and the big tree after about 21 yards. Another 34 yards and you will pass a junction on your right, keep straight on. Another 19 yards and you will pass a junction on your left. Keep straight on for another 7 yards and turn right onto a path going west back towards the Lodge.

After 32 yards you will find a path off to your left while diagonally to your left is a mausoleum like a big brown slug, you are on the way there. Take the path to the left for 58 yards. On your right, without leaving the path, you will see a grave (**AS**) with a memorial to Henrietta Seale, round the edge you will see the memorial to her husband, **Alfred Arthur Seale**.

Continue along the path for 30 yards to a junction, turn right to the mausoleum which is the tomb of the **Dupree** family (**D**).

Go a half-circle round the island on which (**D**) stands, and then continue going west until, after 73 yards, you come to a T-junction. Turn left and after 57 yards (just before you would pass between two sturdy trees as the path bends to the left) on your right you will see a white headstone to **Georgina Margaret Hayman (GH)**. Retracing your steps, but passing the turn to the Dupree mausoleum, will bring you back into the Lodge.



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