

**St Nicholas Churchyard Extension,
Thorne, South Yorkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3529

J. H. HARRISON

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

19TH APRIL, 1918 Age 59

John Henry HARRISON

John Henry Harrison was born on 12th May, 1857 in Thorne, South Yorkshire, England to parents Abner & Sarah Harrison (nee Bell).

The 1861 England Census listed John Harrison as a 3 year old, living with his family at Back Street, Thorne, Yorkshire. His parents were listed as Abner Harrison (Joiner & Cabinet Maker (Master employer of 2 Apprentices), aged 37, Born Thorn, Yorkshire) & Sarah Harrison (aged 38, born Thorn, Yorkshire). John was one of two children listed on this Census – younger sister Emily Harrison (aged 2, born Thorne, Yorkshire). Also listed were 2 Apprentice Joiner & Cabinet Makers – Enoch Meggitt (aged 16) & George Clark (aged 16) – both born at Thorne, Yorkshire.

The 1871 England Census listed John H. Harrison as a 13 year old Scholar living with his family at Market Place, Thorne, Yorkshire. His parents were listed as Abner Harrison (Joiner & Cabinet Maker, aged 46) & Sarah Harrison (aged 47). John was the eldest of 4 children listed on this Census – John then Emily A. Harrison (Scholar, aged 12), Martha E. Harrison (Scholar, aged 9, born Thorne, Yorkshire) & Abner A. Harrison (aged 4, born Thorne, Yorkshire). Also listed was a visitor – Betsy Outwin (Farmer's daughter, aged 15, born Thorne, Yorkshire).

John Henry Harrison married Emma Jackson on 5th February, 1877. Their marriage was registered in the March quarter, 1877 in the district of Sheffield, Yorkshire West Riding.

The 1881 England Census listed John H. Harrison as a 23 year old Joiner living with his wife & children at Market Place (Grange Bldg). His wife was listed as Emma Harrison (aged 24, born Hatfield, Yorks). Emma & John's two children were listed on this Census – Jenny Harrison (aged 3, born Sheffield, Yorks) & Ethel B. Harrison (aged 1, borne Thorne, Yorks). Also listed was a Lodger – Clark Kendle (Warehouseman (Grocer's), aged 26).

Abner Harrison, father of John Henry Harrison, died on 14th February, 1895 at Thorne, Yorkshire, England.

Sarah Harrison, mother of John Henry Harrison, died in 19th January, 1908 at Thorne, Yorkshire, England.

The 1903 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Northern Melbourne, subdivision of Carlton, Victoria listed John Harrison, Carpenter & Emma Harrison, Home Duties, living at 416 Cardigan Street, Carlton, Victoria.

The 1909 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne, subdivision of Carlton South, Victoria listed John Henry Harrison, Carpenter & Emma Harrison, Home duties living at 390 Drummond Street, Carlton. Also listed was their son - John Sidney Harrison, Carpenter.

The 1917 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Batman, subdivision of North Carlton, Victoria listed John Henry Harrison, Carpenter & Emma Harrison, Home duties, living at 570 Rathdown Street, North Carlton. Also listed were 2 of their children – Jennie May Harrison, Dressmaker & John Sidney Harrison, Carpenter.

John Henry Harrison signed an agreement on 1st November, 1917 to be an Australian Munitions Worker in Great Britain for service in the production of Munitions. He was assigned Muniton Worker Badge No. 3529. John Henry Harrison was a 56 year old, married, Carpenter & trained as a Joiner & Ship's Cabin Fitter.

John Henry Harrison embarked from Australia on 7th November, 1917 on *Demosthenes* & disembarked at Glasgow, Scotland on 31st December, 1917.

John Henry Harrison was called to Australia House on 2nd January, 1918 to be medically examined. It was reported that John Henry Harrison was suffering from Debility and irregular action of the heart. It was considered he would not be fit for duty for 14 days.

A letter was sent to John Henry Harrison on 22nd February, 1918 asking him to report to Australia House for the purpose of a Medical Exam. A Medical Certificate was produced on 1st March, 1918 stating that John Henry Harrison was suffering from Bronchitis, Heart disease and was unable to travel to London.

Another Medical Certificate was produced on 11th March, 1918 stating that John Henry Harrison was still suffering from Bronchitis & Heart Disease & it would probably be another 3 weeks to a month before he was able to travel to London. It was also stated that John Henry Harrison was a “*man well on in years and had not been able to stand the strain of coming over from Australia.*”

A Letter was written by Dr E. E. Parrett on 23rd March, 1918 which reads: “*This is to certify that Mr J. Harrison is suffering from Bronchitis and Valvular Disease of Heart, and is not able to work, and will not be able to travel to London for about a fortnight.*”

Munitions Worker John Henry Harrison died on 20th April, 1918 at the residence of Mrs J. Farnworth, King Edward Road, Thorne of Syncope, following Valvular Disease of Heart. Mrs Farnworth was the sister of John Henry Harrison. (Note: Some forms & the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have the date of death as 19th April, 1918 however, his headstone reads 20th April, 1918. Other information states he died in his sleep on the night of 19th /20th April, 1918).

A death for John H. Harrison, aged 60, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Thorne, Lincolnshire. The Death Certificate for John Henry Harrison, aged 60 years, states he died on 20th April, 1918.

Munitions Worker John Henry Harrison was buried on 23rd April, 1918 in St. Nicholas' Churchyard Extension, Thorne, South Yorkshire in the Family Vault. He was included on his parents' headstone.

A letter by James Servant, J.P. for the W.R Yorkshire, reads:

“A.M.W. No. 3529 J. H. Harrison

Mr John Henry Harrison left Melbourne in time to catch a steamer from Sydney on Novr. 7th 1917 landing in Glasgow on Dec. 31st 1917. He was medically examined and found to be quite unfit to take up the work at the Works of Messrs. Newport & Glendy, Aircraft Co. Cricklewood, London N.W. which he had journeyed to perform. He came to Thorne a day or two later and lived with a daughter (a widow), Mrs Ethel B. Sanderson 24 Lower Kenyon Street, Thorne, until some four days before his death. He then went to reside with a sister – Mrs J. Farnworth, King Edward Road, Thorne. He suffered from Bronchitis and Heart Disease contracted on the journey owing to the alteration from great heat to excessive cold and he died on the morning of Saturday April 20th just as his sister (Mrs Farnsworth) went to his bedroom to see why he had not responded to her call to breakfast. He was buried in the family vault in the Churchyard on the following Tuesday afternoon, April 23rd. His Father and Mother had been interred there. He was 60 years of age and had been into the town on the day preceding that on which he died.

The writer had frequently seen him during the time he was resident at Thorne. He complained much of the Bronchitis and his legs were often much swollen.

Harrison's boxes of tools and other belongings are at Cricklewood.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker John Henry Harrison, aged 59, Australian Muniton Worker. He was the son of Abner & Sarah Harrison; husband of Emma Harrison, of Rathdown St., Carlton, Melbourne, Australia. Born at Thorne.

At the time of researching (December, 2016) Australian Munitions Worker John Henry Harrison was not remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

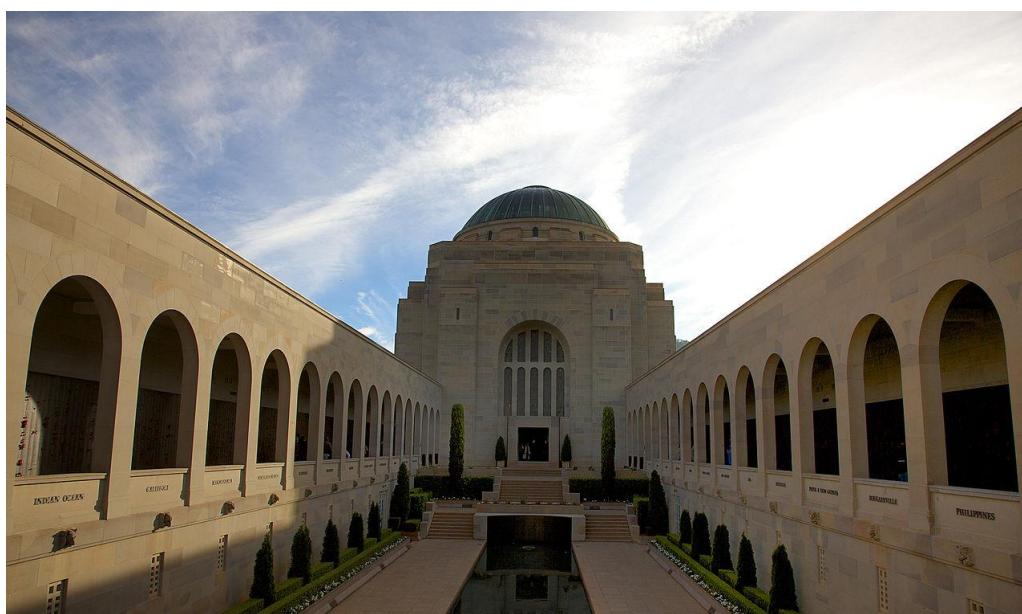
His case was submitted to the Australian War Memorial in December, 2016 to be investigated.

UPDATE: June, 2020

Advice was received on 11th June, 2020 from the Australian War Memorial that Muniton Worker John Henry Harrison's name has been added to the Commemorative Roll.



Commemorative Roll Book at The Australian War Memorial *(Photo from AWM)*



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial *(Capital Photographer)*

Australian Munitions Workers

Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance for the duration of service, and eventual repatriation to Australia. Married men also received a separation allowance, but were required to allot a portion of all their earnings to dependants. The men were expected to work in whatever industries they were directed to by the British Board of Trade, and under the prevailing conditions and wages for the duration of hostilities.

Government newspaper adverts appeared in August, 1916, and the first party of 76 workers departed Australia in September. Groups continued to be recruited and sent at intervals, with the eventual number of workers under the scheme totalling just over 5,000. Almost 1,000 of these had already been working in Britain under private agreements with large firms such as Vickers, and were brought under the conditions of the scheme. An additional 200 former AIF soldiers were also recruited in Britain. Initially only skilled workers were sought, however at the request of the British Government later groups included large numbers of navvies for general labouring.

These men were not members of the Australian Imperial Forces and did not serve in combat units, but were recruited to meet the shortfall in skilled labour that threatened many of Britain's key wartime industries including munitions. *(Source: Australian War Memorial)*



(65 pages of Munition Worker John Henry Harrison's file is available to view on-line at The National Archives (Australia).



Newspaper Notices

The newspapers at the time were encouraged not to report munition explosions or deaths through TNT poisoning as it would affect the morale of the civilian population and so reports in newspapers are virtually non-existent. When the war ended the Australians returned home and life moved on.

MUNITION WORKERS

AUSTRALIANS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Melbourne, Thursday.

The Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) announces that during the period from the inception of the schemes for the despatch of munition workers and navvies to Great Britain up to June 30 last, 2662 munition workers had been disembarked in England for employment on munition and war work. There had also been enrolled under the munition workers' scheme 124 men who had been discharged from the A.I.F. in England for that purpose, and two discharged A.I.F. men had enrolled under the navvies' agreement, making the total number of men engaged in work in Great Britain under both these schemes 4,998. Of this number 384 men had returned to Australia – the majority on account of ill-health. There had been 23 deaths. The agreement of 38 men had been cancelled for disciplinary and other reasons. Six of the men had enlisted in the A.I.F., in England, five men had enlisted in the Royal Navy, and nine men had enlisted in the British Army, leaving the total number of men still in England under the Commonwealth agreement as 4,533. In addition these men were registered on the index held in Australia House 674 Australian munition workers who proceeded to Great Britain under private contract prior to the inauguration of the Commonwealth scheme. Of the men still in England on June 30, 1918, 87 were waiting return up to that date, 152 men had proceeded to France to engage in special work, and 107 of them had returned again to England. Australian munition workers were employed at 409 different firms or centres, and navvies at 192, and the value of the output produced by the labour of these men was estimated at £6,000,000.

Provision for the payment of munition workers and navvies who proceeded to Great Britain on war work under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government is made in an amendment to the war financial regulations issued today. Munition workers and navvies are to be provided with a free passage from Australia to Great Britain and back. In the case of munition workers a dependants' allowance of 25s a week, with allowances for children, will be made for the first eight weeks after embarkation. Subsequently the allowance will be 20s. Separation allowances equal to that paid in the case of a private in the A.I.F. will be paid to dependants.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 1918)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1,700,000 men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth who died in the two world wars and ensures that their memory is never forgotten. The applicable periods of consideration are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.

The Commission's principles:

- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

During both WW1 (& WW2) a number of Commonwealth civilian organisations were accepted by the military as qualifying for war grave status.

Members of the Recognised Civilian Organisations had to meet two additional criteria not required by military casualties.

1. Their death had to be caused by war actions or the increased threat caused by war and
2. They had to be on duty at the time of their death - being posted overseas counted as 'being on duty'.

The Australian government deemed that their War and Munitions Workers (men and women) qualified for war grave treatment as they were recruited as a body and were posted overseas for the war effort. Some of their CWGC entries show a 'service number' indicating that they were an organised body. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

John Henry Harrison is included on his parents' Private Headstone in St. Nicholas's Churchyard Extension, Thorne, South Yorkshire, England.

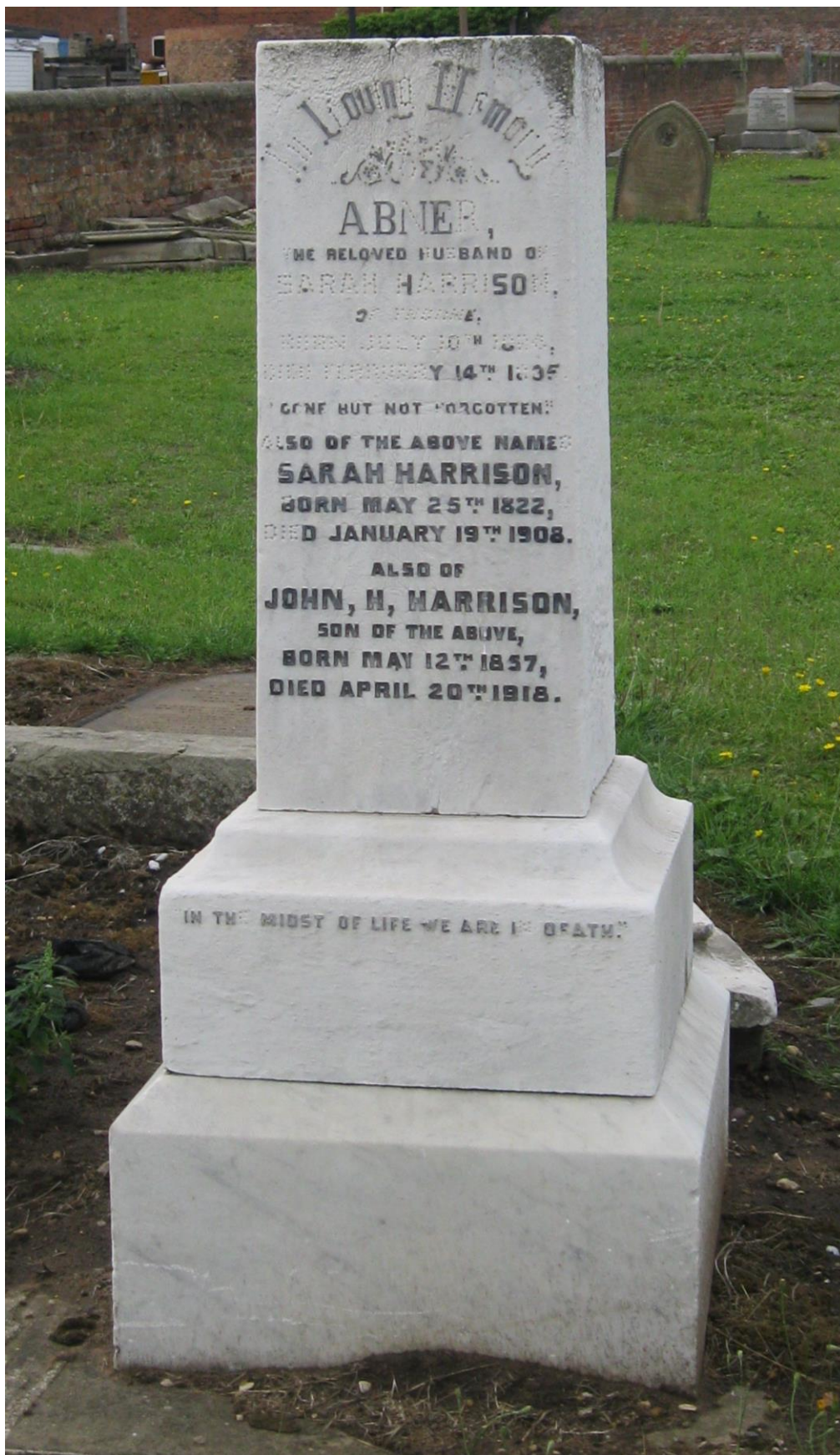
St. Nicholas's Churchyard Extension, Thorne, South Yorkshire, England

St. Nicholas's Churchyard Extension, Thorne contains 5 Commonwealth War Graves – 4 from World War 1 & 1 from World War 2.



St. Nicholas' Church (Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)

Photos of Munition Worker John Henry Harrison's Private Headstone in St. Nicholas's Churchyard Extension, Thorne, South Yorkshire, England.





ALSO OF
JOHN, H, HARRISON,
SON OF THE ABOVE,
BORN MAY 12TH 1857,
DIED APRIL 20TH 1918.



ABNER,
THE BELOVED HUSBAND OF
SARAH HARRISON,
OF WINDHAM,
BORN JULY 10TH 1830,
DIED FEBRUARY 14TH 1835.
"GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN!"
ALSO OF THE ABOVE NAMED
SARAH HARRISON,
BORN MAY 25TH 1822,
DIED JANUARY 19TH 1908.
ALSO OF
JOHN, H, HARRISON,
SON OF THE ABOVE,
BORN MAY 12TH 1857,
DIED APRIL 20TH 1918.

(Photos by Geoffrey Gillon)



St. Nicholas' Churchyard *(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)*