



Percy William Harrison (1864-1951)

(The West Australian Craftsman, November 1951, p.40)

Percy Harrison was born at London on 19 June 1864. Harrison served five years articles with Thomas Watts in Melbourne 1880-1885, and was chief draughtsman to Watts & Son from 1885 to 1892. He lived in Toorak when he was married during September 1887 at St Martins Church, Hawksburn (South Yarra) to Ruth Aginoria Henderson Dean, and became an associate of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) in 1891. Harrison may have been retrenched by Watts with the early 1890s crash in Victoria, as he was a surveyor for the Metropolitan Waterworks Board 1892-93, and designed several private residences on his own account from 1893. As with many other Victorians, by 1895 he had fled the depressed conditions of Melbourne for booming Perth, and in 1896 was a foundation member of the West Australian Institute of Architects (WAIA). Harrison was in partnership with P.D. Wyburn at the Bank of Australasia Chambers in William Street, Perth, until late 1896, from whence he continued as a sole practitioner once more.

Harrison's fellowship nomination papers to the RVIA of August 1900 reveal at that time his office was in the National Mutual Building in St George's Terrace, Perth, and that he had been nominated by three other Fellows of the RVIA in Talbot Hobbs, Henry Stirling Trigg, and Thomas Watts. Some of Harrison's work in Western

Australia from 1895-1900 included Anglican churches at Katanning and Wagin; St John's Anglican Parish Hall; Bunbury Municipal Offices (won in competition); Ministering Children's League Convalescent Home (now Wearne Hostel), Marine Parade, Cottesloe; Presbyterian Manse West Perth (also won in competition); various shops and offices; and about £30,000 worth of private residences.

Percy Harrison was President of WAIA from 1907-1909, following George Temple Poole 1896-1903, Michael Cavanagh 1903-1905, and Poole again 1905-1907. Harrison handed over the presidency to Talbot Hobbs, who served 1909-1911, and then took the job back again in 1911. Harrison was prominent in the Freemasons, in 1912 holding high honours in the Masonic world as Senior Grand Warden, and Master of the Mundaring Lodge. In 1916 Percy was elected a Fellow of WAIA.

Harrison has been identified as the architect for the Anglican Church of the Epiphany, Mundaring; Corrigin Town Hall & Road Board Office (fmr); Dangin Masonic Lodge (fmr); Freemasons Hall (fmr), cnr Roberts & Coghlan Roads, Subiaco; a house at 4-18 Rheola Street, West Perth; 'Laxey Glen', 102 Broome St (cnr John St), Cottesloe; Morawa Shire Office & Town Hall; a portion of the Rokeby Road Precinct between Hay and Barker Streets, Subiaco; St Margaret's Uniting Church, 65-67 Raglan Rd cnr William Street, North Perth; and St Mary's Church, Colin Street, West Perth.

Harrison had a long and successful career – he was also involved in designing flats, and a two storey brick factory in Brown Street, Perth for the Western Hat Manufacturers (1934-5). He died on 1 November 1951, and was cremated at Karrakatta. A few of Harrison's drawings are found within Battye Library records, and his body of work would form a fine topic for an undergraduate study.

References: *The West Australian*, 18 November 1896, p.2; RVIA notes, State Library Victoria, MS 9454, box 87, barcode M06293, envelope 13; Battye, J.S., *Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol.1, 1912, pp.623-4; *The West Australian Craftsman*, obituary, November 1951, p.40; *West Australian Mining, Building, and Engineering Journal*; Heritage Council of Western Australia database.

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