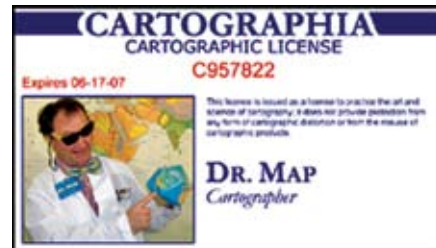


# Ask Dr. Map!

monumental cartography



Dear Dr. Map:

**Q:** Where is John Harrison buried?

**A:** John Harrison, much celebrated inventor of the chronometer and solver of the "longitude problem" is buried at Saint-John-at-Hampstead Churchyard at Hampstead, England. He lived at Red-Lion square, London, while working meticulously on the problem of building a clock that could meet the requirements set for the prize, offered by the British Navy's Board of Longitude. After a lifetime of work, and many remarkable successes technically, but failures bureaucratically, he was finally awarded the prize. The story of Harrison and the search for Longitude is superbly told by Dava Sobel in her excellent book, *Longitude*. The clocks themselves, some even still running, can be seen at the Museum of Time at the Greenwich observatory.

Harrison's tombstone reads, in part:

*Before he attained the Age of 21, He without any Instruction, employed himself in cleaning & repairing Clocks & Watches & made a few of the former, chiefly of Wood. At the Age of 25 He employed his Whole Time in Chronometrical Improvements. He was the Inventor of the Gridiron Pendulum and the Method of preventing the Effect of Heat and Cold upon Time keepers by Two Bars of different Metals fixed together. He introduced the Secondary Spring to keep them going while winding up; and was the Inventor of most (or all) of the Improvements in Clocks & Watches during his Time.*

*In the Year 1735, his first Time keeper was sent to Lisbon, and in 1764 his then much Improved fourth Time keeper having been sent to Barbadoes, the Commissioners of Longitude certified that it had determined the Longitude within one Third of Half a Degree of a great Circle, having erred not more than 40 Seconds in Time.*

*After near fifty years close Application to the above Pursuits, he departed this Life on the 24th Day of March 1776, Aged 83.*

Dr. Map was recently in London and visited Westminster Abbey with Mrs. Map. After viewing the tombs and monuments of the likes of Darwin, Newton, Livingstone, and Franklin, he sat down to listen to the start of a choral service, and glancing down saw a plaque. It reads: *John 'Longitude' Harrison, Clockmaker, 1693-1776*. Across the plaque is a bi-metallic strip or "gridiron

pendulum," labeled "000°07'35"W, which is, of course, the longitude of Westminster Abbey. Appropriately enough, Harrison's plaque is only some 20 m away from the memorials for Darwin and Newton. Not bad for a self-taught clockmaker!

**Q:** When tables of distances between cities and places in the U.S. are listed in guides, atlases, and directories, where are they measured from?

**A:** The reference point for all distances by road in the United States is a real monument. It is called the "Zero milestone" marker, and it is located right at the apex of the ellipse, on the North side of the Mall in Washington, D. C., and directly in front of the White House, in fact at the exact spot where the famous "Doonesbury" view of the south façade of the White House can best be seen. Standing at the marker, and turning 180 degrees, you look directly at the Jefferson memorial; in fact, the line forms the axis of that part of the Mall. The monument is quite substantial and is often used by tourists as a camera-resting spot for timed dashes into the view with the White House in the background. As far as where the distances are measured to, that is usually the city hall or state capitol for each city.

Dr. Map has a Ph.D. and a cartographic licence. Send questions to Dr. Map at [askdmap@cox.net](mailto:askdmap@cox.net) or visit him on the web at <http://www.drmap.info>

