



There are a number of unusual and interesting grave markers in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery. Two cast iron markers maintain their lonely vigil, as do two markers cut from slate. A beautiful example of the latter is the slate slab marker for Robert William Symington Grieve, which upon investigation reveals the following story.

A strange case of suicide was discovered at the Kaikorai on Tuesday afternoon, when it was found by Mounted Constable Bevan that the unhappy man Mr Robert W. S. Grieve, manager of a flaxmill there, had hanged himself in his own house.

As he had not been seen since Sunday night suspicion was aroused, and one of the neighbours effected an entrance. A light was seen in the house about 11.30 on Sunday night, and the milk-boy who called at the house on Monday morning knocked several times, but was not answered. The deceased, who was a civil engineer, was unmarried, about 30 years old, and a native of Edinburgh. He was well known here, and came to the colony about five years ago in charge of the Government dredging machinery, which was afterwards erected in the Exhibition building under his superintendence. He was subsequently contractor for and superintended the work carried on by the little dredge *Pioneer* in Otago Harbour.

It is supposed, that recent pecuniary losses preyed upon his mind and led him to commit this act. At an inquest held at the Argyle Hotel, Kaikorai Valley, before Mr T. Hocken, the jury returned a verdict that "the deceased Robert William Symington Grieve committed suicide by hanging himself, while in a state of temporary insanity, at the Kaikorai Valley, on or about the 17th day of April, 1870, in the passage of the house he lived in."

The flax mill in Kaikorai Valley was adjacent to the entrance to the Lookout Point Tunnel [now known as the Old Caversham Rail Tunnel] which was completed in 26 September 1872. Flax covered most hillsides in this area of early Dunedin

He died intestate and his assets were administered by the state.

Narrative removed at request of ODT.

He found the deceased suspended from the roof in a state of nudity. His feet were partly resting on a door mat, and behind him was a chair off which he had evidently jumped. He had made a loop of a silk scarf, to which he added a piece of rope, which was fastened to some pieces of scantling nailed together, and resting on the trimmings of the door, which had been locked from the inside. The window-blinds were down, and from the disarranged state of the bed clothes it is conjectured that he had previously been in bed.