



In Dunedin's beautiful Southern Cemetery there is one small enclave, a path with a few graves on each side, where there is a common thread running, a thread of accidental death. The most imposing memorial is that to Balfour & Paterson, (already covered in this series), but one inscription has intrigued me for a long time. Since the Otago Witness issues have now been scanned and are available to search on <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>, I thought I would follow up and find the newspaper's report of the incident. Here are the words of the resident reporter writing in the issue of 13 April 1872.

It is with very great regret that we record the death by drowning of Mr Thomas Janverin, of the Occidental Hotel. At about four o'clock on Sunday morning Mr Janverin, accompanied by Mr Harris, a gentleman in the employ of Mr Flexbian of Rattray Street, left town in a dog cart for Portobello, and afterwards proceeded to Papanui Inlet. On arriving there, and each having a gun, they attempted to cross an outlet of the bay in quest of snipe, the tide being out. In a short time afterwards, however, they noticed that it was coming in with a rapidity that threatened to prevent their reaching the shore with safety, unless a retreat were effected very expeditiously. As the ground is of a very swampy nature their progress was proportionately retarded, and the water which always rushes in with the force of a millstream, at length got so far ahead of them that they were obliged to swim for the shore. Their dogs, as if conscious of danger attempted to get on Harris's back, as he buffeted with the waves, and at last, Janverin, being thoroughly exhausted, cried "Goodbye Harris, I can swim no longer;" and then the poor fellow sank and was seen no more. Harris fortunately managed to reach the shore in safety.

Accompanied by a settler, to whom he related the particulars of the accident, Harris took a boat, and searched during three hours for the body of his friend, but without avail. The unwelcome news was brought by a man named Samuel Gill to Port Chalmers, where it caused a painful sensation, and

arrangements were at once made by Sergt. Golder, of the Water Police to search for the body at daylight next morning. The deceased was about 24 years of age, and had been an able assistant of Mr Walter of the Occidental Hotel for many years. Mr Janverin's untimely death is regretted by a large circle of friends, with whom his genial character rendered him a universal favourite.

The Port Chalmers Water Police, assisted by a number of friends, diligently searched for the body until Thursday, when the Police desisted, though the settlers still persevered. The guns of both the young men had been recovered the previous day. Yesterday just as the settlers were about to give up the search, their exertions were rewarded by the recovery of the body by Messrs William Geary and George Harris, not many yards from the scene of the accident. It will be satisfactory to friends of the deceased to learn that his body is but little disfigured. The remains were conveyed to town last night, and an inquest will be held on them today. The funeral takes place tomorrow.