



A particularly distressing accident occurred at Harrington Point, on the Peninsula, near Otago Heads, on Friday, the 29th January 1904, resulting in the death of Mr Francis Antonio Joseph, a member of the literary staff of the Otago Daily Times and Witness newspapers, while several other well-known city residents had a miraculous escape from meeting the same sad fate.

Mr Joseph was engaged in his duties as a journalist, and formed one of a party who went down to Harrington Point at the invitation of the Otago Harbour Board for the purpose of inspecting the protective works carried out by the board.

For the past eight or nine months the Harbour Board has devoted its attention in the direction of improving the channel at Harrington Point, and with the object of diverting the scour and straightening the channel it has been quarrying metal and constructing a training wall.

The tug *Plucky* was used for the conveyance of the party of notables and reporters down the harbour.

The mine was charged with about 800lb of gunpowder, and everything was in readiness for the explosion when the visitors arrived, the shot being fired about 4- p.m.

When previous blasts had been fired the stone simply fell down, and never had any tendency to shoot out from the face to any extent, but the unfortunate accident shows that really nothing can be taken for granted.

When the explosion took place the bottom part of the face was driven out first, and was shot in almost a straight line with terrific force. An enormous quantity of stone was dislodged, and one pile of rock, estimated to weigh about five tons, was thrown bodily a distance of 100 or 120 yards into the channel. Another piece- weighing from 3cwt to 5cwt was projected down the wharf, and there was a complete chain of boulders of all sizes from the face of the quarry right down to the outer end of the jetty. The projectile which struck Mr Joseph was about half the size of a man's head, and it struck the unfortunate man on the side of the head, killing him instantaneously.

It is estimated that fully 100 tons of stone were hurled over the protective wall on to the sea beach at the edge of the channel. One big piece weighing about 5cwt struck one end of the cast-iron bedplate of the steam derrick, snapping off a piece of solid casting about 12in by 4in. This, if it had struck the crane fairly, would probably have pretty well demolished it. Mr George Simpson, who was standing beside Mr Joseph, received a small abrasion on one of his thumbs, but cannot say whether he was struck by the same stone that killed Mr Joseph.

Mr P. Ryan, a resident of the Kaik, who was present for the purpose of witnessing the explosion, and who was standing on the jetty, was also struck by a piece of stone, the force of the blow throwing him violently against Mr Barclay. The two fell on the wharf together, and it was immediately afterwards ascertained that Mr Ryan had had his arm fractured.

Mr E. G. Allen, M.H.R., who was much nearer, was struck on the left ankle by a stone which cut through his boot and inflicted a gash about an inch long and half an inch deep, just missing the ankle-joint. Several pieces of stone went over the end of the wharf, one striking the hawser bridge of the tug, and leaving an indentation on the hard wood, and another piece falling on the captain's bridge.

Mr F. W. Mac-Lean had a very narrow escape, a large boulder striking his overcoat, which he was carrying on his arm, and tearing a great rent in it. Several of the party evaded the flying fragments, and there were quite a number of very narrow escapes.

The body of Mr Joseph was brought to town, by the *Plucky*, and conveyed to his residence in Russell street, an inquest being held on Saturday morning in the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel.

By the death of Mr Joseph this journal loses a valued member of its staff. In addition to the position he held as a member of the reporting staff, Mr Joseph was a regular contributor of articles to the leading columns of the paper on educational, scientific, and agricultural subjects.

The deceased gentleman, who was 50 years of age, was the eldest son of Mr Antonio Joseph, of Taieri Mouth, and was born at Macandrew's Bay, Otago Peninsula.

He was educated in Dunedin, and after a course, at the Otago University took up the duties of schoolmaster. He had charge of schools at Akatore, Waipori, Waiareka, Milburn, and Temuka,

Mr Joseph, who married a daughter of Mr Andrew Chapman, of Balclutha, is survived by his widow and two children — a daughter nine years of age, and a son 15 months old.

Francis Antonio Joseph is buried in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery in the Circle C grave block inside the holly hedge of the 'Roundabout'.

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