



Charles BONNER

In the new cemetery at Port Chalmers stands a memorial to Charles Bonner who was a seaman on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ship *Discovery*.

The Otago Daily Times of Tuesday 7 January 1902 records as follows:

HMS Ringarooma had passed the *Discovery* south of Lyttleton, and on arriving at Port Chalmers on Sunday gave out the news of a fatal accident to one of the exploring vessel's seamen on the departure of the boat from Lyttleton.

The unfortunate victim was Charles Bonner, who was at the time waving farewells to the crowd on the steamers that accompanied the vessel out of Lyttleton harbour. It is said that, standing near the "crows nest", the rope by which he was supporting himself gave way, precipitating him to the deck, a distance of over 120 feet. He fell clear of almost

everything until his head came with a fearful smash on an iron reel on the deck, rendering him senseless and causing death in a very few minutes.

When the Discovery came alongside on Monday the blue ensign was flying at half on the mizzenmast, and everyone recognized it as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Mr CC Graham, S.M. and Coroner, at once boarded the ship and arrangements for the inquest having been arranged beforehand by Sergeant Geerin, in charge at Port Chalmers, that proceeding was at once disposed of.

Later on the melancholy task of confining the body, which had been placed on a table on the deck, enclosed by canvas, was performed, and at quarter to six the funeral, with military honours, left the Bowen Pier. The Ringarooma bluejackets with arms reversed, led the way, then came a gun-carriage with the coffin, covered with the Union Jack, eight of the deceased's comrades acting as pall-bearers, the captain, officers, and crew, of the Discovery followed, then came more bluejackets from the warship, and the public, among whom we noticed Mr G L Denniston (Mayor of Dunedin), Mr John Mill (Mayor of Port Chalmers), and Mr E G Allen, MHR. A beautiful floral wreath sent by the crew of HMS Ringarooma, was placed on the coffin. The body was interred in the new cemetery, the Rev. Mr Kewley officiating at the grave.

The original grave work was done by Thonpson and Co who were located opposite First Church in Moray Place. They were bought out by Bingham and Co and when the Masonic Lodge decided to restore the grave the contract was given to Bingham's.