



Bob Hogan - Contractor and Company Director

A slab of natural stone in the small East Taieri cemetery marks the grave of Robert Hogan, co-founder of Dunedin-based contracting company Fulton Hogan Ltd., which emerged during the 1930s depression era at a time when the national roading infrastructure was in urgent need of development.

Bob Hogan was born in 1900. Brought up in Dunedin, he was educated at St Clair School and King Edward Technical College before completing an apprenticeship with Cooke Howlison to qualify as an A-grade mechanic. In the early 1920s he worked for the Dunedin City Corporation, initially as foreman for the assembling of two excavators for the enlargement of the Southern Reservoir, “novel devices that aroused much public interest”, and subsequently as foreman for the job itself. He was then employed at the city’s first asphalt plant, gaining experience in the chip sealing and asphalt industry, and travelled to Te Awamutu to assist in the building of a crushing plant.

Returning to Dunedin, he took a position as foreman at Shiel’s garage in Stafford Street, before setting up a garage in Manor Place in partnership with Jim Burrows. However, this venture only lasted a year before the effects of the recession led to its closure, and Hogan took a job with Neuchatel Asphalte Ltd., sealing roads near East Taieri. It was here that he first met and developed a friendship with Julius (Jules) Fulton who was also working for the company. Shortly afterwards on their own behalf

they carried out a contract repairing the sealing of the main road between Fairfield and Saddle Hill, using equipment loaned by their employer.

The two went into partnership in 1933, and Fulton Hogan Ltd. was formally established in 1935. In the pre-war period Bob Hogan was a familiar figure in the field, supervising the sealing gangs in Otago, South Canterbury and the West Coast, working with equipment borrowed, bought or hired from the Public Works Department. Many of the jobs were undertaken in remote southern areas, where the men had to endure living in tin huts, caravans or tents in freezing weather conditions. Bob Hogan was a 'hands-on' man, who got on well with his staff, was "generous to a fault", and was not afraid to "pick up a shovel himself" and work alongside his men. Gold prospecting was also serious hobby, and for many years he mined the Devonshire claim at Matakanui near Omakau. He was also an amateur geologist.

As the country recovered from the Depression, the Government's new Public Works projects served to benefit the company. From the 1950s Fulton Hogan's growth began in earnest. From small beginnings on the Taieri, the company that Bob Hogan and Jules Fulton had formed in the Depression era became a leading contracting firm and expanded nation-wide and beyond. Bob Hogan died in 1992 at the age of 92. He was a director of Fulton Hogan Ltd. and Fulton Hogan Holdings from 1935-89, the founding director from 1989-92 and chairman from 1961-66. – Helen Gilmore

Prepared for the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand (www.cemeteries.org.nz) by Helen Gilmore.

Sources: *The Fulton Hogan Story* by A.R. Tyrrell;

'Celebrating business – Fulton Hogan Ltd.' www.businessnz.org.nz

Robert Hogan obituary, *Otago Daily Times* October 1992;