



Obituary

William Arthur Hargreaves

By Graeme Carter



Bill was a carrier, and one of those larger than life characters who got things done. For most of his working life he was Managing Director of Hargreaves Transport Limited of Dannevirke, and Transport Wairarapa Limited of Masterton. Bill passed away in Masterton on Sunday 19 December 2004, aged 77.

Bill was born into a carrying family, his father (also named Bill) started carrying in Dannevirke in 1921 with a solid tyred Thornycroft. In 1951 Bill commenced as a carrier in Dannevirke on his own account with an ex-army Ford 4x4-lime sower. Later that year he purchased his father's business of four trucks. The business continued to grow and with the purchase of Dannevirke Transport Limited in 1963, Hargreaves Transport Limited became the largest carrier in the Dannevirke area.

In 1965 Bill purchased Transport Wairarapa Limited of Masterton that had a fleet of 100 vehicles. Bill shifted to Masterton and continued to grow his transport companies, servicing mainly the rural community. Ekatahuna Transport was purchased in 1979, and in 1981 the assets of Manawatu Transport of Feilding were acquired from the receivers. In 1993, after some financial difficulties, the Hargreaves businesses became part of Farmers Transport of Hastings.

Bill was an innovator, and was always willing to try new ideas. When rail restrictions on the cartage of livestock were lifted in the late 1950s, Bill began hauling stock throughout the southern North Island.

He was one of the first in the area to use three deck stock crates. In 1976 when road transport could compete with rail up to 150km in distance, Bill purchased Reliance Transport in Wellington, and also opened a depot in Palmerston North. The larch green trucks were soon hauling general freight throughout the Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay, Manawatu and Wellington regions.

He constantly watched vehicle developments and used to purchase a variety of makes of vehicles for his fleets. Bill was not one to stick to one or two brands of trucks. He was one of the first fleet owners to purchase Nissan (owning eleven at one stage), and Scania. In the late sixties Bill's businesses entered the computer age, both for debtors accounts and vehicle utilisation reports. He was one of the first in New Zealand to do so.

Bill was a practical carrier who used to be at the office by 7am each day. For the first hour or so he was in the despatch office, answering telephones, and talking with clients and drivers. He knew his business, and gave of his knowledge freely to others. For a number of years he was on the national and local executives of the N Z Road Transport Association.

Bill's passing is an end of an era, for he was a carrier who planned his work, and then worked his plan. 🇳🇿



Photo Rod Garrity collection



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Photo David Lowe