



With a unique and rich history, Hadlee and Brunton is a family-owned plumbing, drain-laying and roofing company which has grown to meet the demands of the South Canterbury community over the past 112 years. Today, the company is still owned by Ross and Shirley Brunton, along with sons David and Andrew and they are extremely proud and grateful of the support received from so many loyal South Canterbury clients and friends throughout the company's long history.

The Brunton family holds the same ethics and high quality standards exhibited by George Hadlee when he started the company in 1906. In 1910 he invited Frank Clough to form a partnership to create Hadlee and Clough Plumbers, Gasfitters and Bell Hangers. Ross Brunton laughs about the reference to the firm being registered bell hangers, but says he still has an invoice from the 1920s recording that Hadlee and Clough were employed to fix the room bells at the South Canterbury Club, on The Terrace. "We don't have much need for that service these days," he adds.

It is fair to say that the firm has invested heavily in the latest technology available over the years, to ensure it stays at the forefront of the drainage and plumbing industry but it's the day-to-day replacement of tap washers, leaking pipes, roof repairs, and blocked drains that remains the number one focus of the company, with a dedicated **24 hour emergency on call service** team which runs 365 days a year.

HOUSEHOLD PLUMBING AND REPAIRS

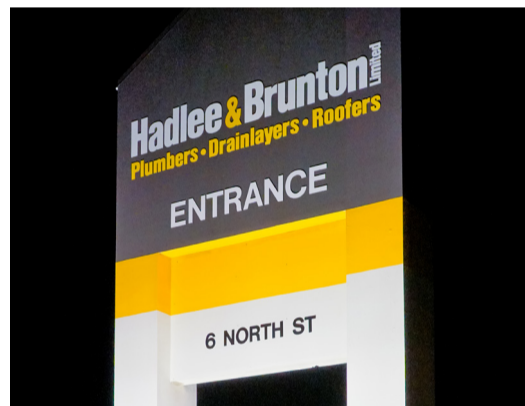
"There are many local perceptions of the company, some think we are too big to worry about the little jobs whereas others have been using our services for over 50 years and still talk directly to a member of the family when booking a tap washer repair," says David Brunton. "If someone wants to talk to or see a Brunton they can. If they need one of the family to call in and help solve a problem that's what happens."

"The arsenal of specialist equipment means that we have the ability to do a lot of jobs in a much smarter and **cost effective way** which often results in jobs **costing half the price** of more traditional methods. We can repair a lot of buried pipes now without digging them up. The fact our staff levels are low means we know each tradesman very well and their skill levels. Combine this with a hugely collaborative and innovative way of approaching jobs with everyone pooling their knowledge whether from a craftsman who has been with the firm for 20 plus years or an apprentice, everyone is encouraged to pitch their ideas in the hat. It makes for an extremely fun workplace and is the main reason that the firm is approached by companies and clients from all around the country when an unusual or extremely complex problem presents itself."



Above: One of Hadlee and Brunton's maintenance vans

Below: Timaru Herald (October 2nd, 1946)



Above: Sign at the new premise at 6 North St

Below: Hadlee and Brunton's 54T HIAB Truck



THE TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL

In 1975 Ross with great difficulty managed to convince the Hadlee brothers that buying a second hand 1954 T.E.A Ferguson tractor with a front end loader was the way of the future. They thought he was being extravagant. Over the next 20 years he invested in more advanced equipment for assisting in the installation of Timaru Council infrastructure work. In the mid 90's he had another mad scheme which resulted in the purchase of a small secondhand horizontal directional drill from America. When it arrived none of the digger operators at the time wanted a bar of it so his youngest son Andrew, who had just started his plumbing apprenticeship, drew the short straw to operate it. The salesman sold them a pallet of dishwashing liquid to help make things slippery and that was about it for training. The drills have stayed on the scene, although the dishwashing liquid has been replaced with international fluid engineers and an onsite lab testing facility. Ross acknowledges the way the Timaru District Council (TDC) has always embraced new and innovative technology over the years and has allowed the use of specialised machinery along with cutting edge products to be installed within the district. This Council was one of the first to recognise the benefits and the potential of the trenchless technology in conjunction with fusible pipework, and we have done a lot of water, sewer & stormwater mains using these techniques. It was not until we started doing larger work outside of the district for other councils that we appreciated just how far ahead of the game the TDC was. They are always willing to listen to new and innovative ideas and even once let Ross have a test run at blowing up a manhole as a demonstration. This resulted in everyone running for cover when the mattress he had covering the top of the manhole exploded and sent wire springs and stuffing in all directions.

THE UNSEEN SIDE OF THE FIRM

Going back to earlier comments regarding some public perception of the company, there is a division of Hadlee and Brunton that not many locals know about. It sees the company working from Auckland to Invercargill and everywhere in between. This separate arm focuses around "maxi rig" and specialist horizontal directional drilling works. As the company refined it's skills with trenchless technology and the Brunton brothers received ongoing specialist training from various experts around the globe the success and complexity of the projects Hadlee and Brunton were undertaking unavoidably led to the investment in larger and larger rigs and equipment until today it now operates the largest European maxi rig in New Zealand. These rigs are capable of installing pipes over 1000mm in diameter at distances over 2 kilometers in length. "The longest shot in the world at the present time is currently over 5 kilometers" says Andrew. These projects can take years to design and model prior to undertaking the physical works. Hadlee and Brunton have assistance from a specialist engineering group in London, Australia and the USA who oversee a lot of the technical designs and engineering along with the provision of specialist labour resource for the various projects.



A TIMARU & SOUTH CANTERBURY FOCUS

While they have the machinery and qualified staff to handle the big jobs, they are primarily the firm that provides the quick and professional fix on leaking taps, blocked drains, and roof or spouting problems. The motto at Hadlee and Brunton is: "No job is too big or too small" - and they provide top service no matter what the job size. "We do the bigger jobs just to test our pain threshold now and then", laughs David.

