

1946 PACKARD VEHICLE

Malcolm Dean was insistent that I write the story behind my 1946 Clipper. As the car has been modified, I was reluctant to do this. However, here is how the tale unfolds.

In 1977 I noted that two derelict Clippers were stored on a coastal section close to where I still live. I purchased the two cars which were both partially dismantled. One was very badly rusted and was eventually scrapped. Many parts from the second car were retained. Restoration of the better car commenced. The gearboxes from both cars were missing. The better car had been moved around with a front end loader.

Over the two years the body was being worked on, my search for a gearbox continued however in those days this was a slow and difficult task and I had no success. A Ford 400M engine (400 cubic inch V8) from an American LTD. with a floor shift C6 Auto became available and was installed along with a 9 inch diff.

Painting of the car was completed in a burgundy, new interior and glass followed. Bumpers, grills and the other trim were chromed. Multi lug Crager wire wheels were installed. Multi lugs were needed as the front end was Packard but the rear Ford. A new exhaust system was installed. The person who had purchased the Packard in 1965 heard that I was rebuilding the car and arrived with the original radio. The radio is still working. A new wiring loom was installed and a change made to 12 volt. The battery is in the boot.

The car was sold originally in Dunedin and had new owners also in Dunedin in 1949 and 1953. The next owners in 1954, 1957 and 1964 were all in Nelson until 1965 when the man who gave me the radio bought the car which he owned until 1976.

The mechanical parts which I did not need as spares for my car, I gave to Charlie Wellman of Ashburton who at that time was restoring a Clipper. I do not think the restoration of that car has been completed. Charlie was a member of the Club for some years.

The Clipper was completed and registered in October 1981. I used the car as my daily driver for many years. We have completed 37,000 miles since 1981. In 1994 Jane and I took the car on the Pirelli Mainland Rally which travelled from Dunedin into Southland, up the West Coast to Nelson and finished in Christchurch. At the conclusion of the Rally, Ruapuna Raceway was made available to Rally participants (mainly European car owners) for our use. I thought this would involve a gentle drive around, however crash helmets were made available with eight cars on the grid for each race. Both Jane and I had a number of runs. Great fun.

In 1996 the diff bearings were replaced, 1997 Brake Shoes relined and wheel cylinder re-sleeved, 1999 Brake Master cylinder reconditioned, 2001 Idler arm replaced and in 2003 new King Pins installed. In 2005 the rockers were replaced which involved the lifting of the body from the chassis.

The Clipper was the only Packard in Dunedin for many years until my 1920's Packards gradually appeared. The car was and still is well known by local car enthusiasts.

I used the car for a lot of weddings in the early years along with my 1946 Ford V8. The superiority of the Packard body design was most apparent when the two cars were together as the '46 Ford still had "clip-on" front and rear fenders, whereas the Packard is a fully integrated design, but I don't have to convince any of you that the Packard Clipper is a great looking car.

The car is still tight, drives very nicely and looks good in spite of the paint showing its 30 years. As the years pass, it gains more attention on the road. It seems strange to realize that the car was only 30 years old when I purchased it. I still love the car which has been part of our family for more than half of my life.

By Tony Devereux

1946 PACKARD CLIPPER Of Tony & Jane Devereux



For Sale: 1934 Packard
1101 Convertible Sedan
US\$112,500.00

Contact: Jack Passey,
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