

## HOW I BECAME INTERESTED IN PACKARDS

Initially it was our son Steven who started the Packard saga in our household, when at the age of 16 years, had a friend who had restored a 1939 Ford Coupe, and was in the process of restoring a 1947 Chrysler. This appealed to Steven and he wanted to become involved in the same way.. Fairly soon afterwards we had a 1939 six Packard in our garage which Steven completely stripped ready for restoration - *PHOTO 1*. The restored 1939 6 cylinder Packard is shown in *PHOTO 1A*.

We were keen to encourage this as a hobby, and as I had owned American cars for our daily use, a Packard seemed the right choice. Being new to this type of venture and it being the 1980s, the next question was—where do we go for parts? At this point we were to meet Mr Graeme Craw, who was the second person to fuel my interest in Packard cars. A lot of members know that Graeme was a good story-teller about his cars as they were either very rare or had been owned by famous people. I really enjoyed these stories, as well as his collection of cars and made many visits to his ex-winery buildings in the Waitakere Ranges. One particular car which I always admired was a 1939 Cabriolet Coupe painted red which I believe was built from parts of several cars.

Many months after one of our visits to the Waitakeres, as Graeme wanted to buy another Packard—I think it was a green 1950 Sedan which he called “Gentle Annie”, I was able to purchase from him a 1938 Convertible to restore - *PHOTO 2*. This car had been underneath the main building and was in a very rough state. Some of our Packard owners know the history of this car better than I. Unfortunately it was a standard car and I wanted sidemounts, the flying lady and an overdrive - *PHOTO 3*.

Although I bought an overdrive from Graeme it had come out of a Clipper with column change, so had to be modified, installed and the electrics made to work, which seemed to be beyond our modern Auto Electricians who thought they knew how it all worked, would not read any books or study any of the drawings and needless to say, it always led to a complete disaster!

However, thankfully two years ago I heard of an Auto Electrician who lived in Henderson named Ted Casley who also owned a Packard. With his help and after many visits he had it working. My grateful thanks to Ted.

Although Graeme was always very reluctant to part with anything, he did give me a rough Flying Lady which I was able to use as a pattern and make a cast from it. It is not exact but is as close as possible.

The Sidemounts: About ten years ago Val and I went for a trip to Queenstown, and while driving around, went to the Wanaka car museum. Outside the main building amongst the cars for restoration I spied a 1939 Straight 8 Sedan with sidemounts and overdrive. However the owner was not interested in selling.

About 5 years ago Steven and his wife Tracey took the convertible on a trip to the South Island where Steven met several Packard owners, two of these being Tony Devereux and Robert Duncan, who Val and I subsequently met on the Waikanae Rally last year. As Steven and Tracey were visiting Wanaka I asked him to check as to whether the car was still there. It was, and as the owner had a number of cars to restore he agreed to sell it, thereby providing me with a second overdrive and sidemounts which I removed, and put the rest of the car into a container. It was in good condition then but two previous owners had stripped the car and just tossed everything inside the car. Consequently, we discovered that a lot of parts were missing. *PHOTO 4* - this photo shows that I am achieving the completed Packard look that I wanted, and therefore had no further interest in Packard restoring.

Unfortunately, two years ago I decided to look in the aforementioned container....oh how I wish that I had never opened those doors!! Unwisely I had a look at the car—the container had leaked and the car had sweated.....what a mess!!!! At the time I was reducing my work-load and I thought the car was too good to just leave in the container—it had only travelled 25,000 miles. So I had a new lease of life and decided to restore it. With great enthusiasm I ordered new rubbers and hub caps. A new engine was needed so I bought a 1947 Clipper with overdrive. *PHOTO 5*. Now we had TWO more cars—so I took the 1939 to be acid dipped—the result of which showed that there was very little left of the car TO restore! *PHOTO 6*

As my determination was slowly changing my mind as to rebuilding this car after all, Steven came in one day and said to me “You are wasting your time—you could bring over a good car from America for a quarter of the price it will cost to restore this one. At least if you restored a Convertible it would be worth something when finished.” - Son was right AGAIN!

Knowing that the late Graeme Craw had owned a Convertible, I approached Mrs Craw and after many discussions with her and their son Fenton, purchased a 1941 110 Convertible - *PHOTO 7*. Just a shell with a six cylinder engine. As I wanted an eight I then required a new front—i.e. guards, bonnet etc.

After receiving many quotes from America I was searching on the Ebay website one day when up popped a 1941 120 Coupe....Yes!! Another car, but although I only needed the front, it was more economical to buy the whole car as it provided everything needed to rebuild the Convertible - *PHOTO 8*. Confused?.....Val is and she is typing it!!!

My thoughts are that a degree of blame should be accorded to Mr Craw for a certain amount of this, as, several years ago he and Mrs Craw gave me a beautiful book on Packards, which contained their history and many photos. In this book there is a photo of a 1941 Super Eight Convertible—my type of car—always admired them—always wanted one (although the one I was rebuilding would have been the same in time—about six years or so).

At that point in time, one, identical in colour and in every way, came up for sale. You can guess what happened!! Although quite a lot of unexpected bodywork was needed which took about twelve months, we succeeded in attending the Napier Art Deco weekend where some of our Packard members would have seen the finished article, a 1941 160 convertible coupe—*PHOTO 9*. As a footnote—There is only one problem in making this information public—my wife Val has had a little trouble over time keeping track, but now has it all in black and white!

*Compiled by Stuart and Val Flexman.*

FOOTNOTE FROM THAT VERY PERSON: The last sentence does not necessarily mean that Val is perfectly clear about it all!!!



Left: Photo 1: 1939 with Steven

Right: Photo 1A 1939 Finished



Photo 2: 1939 Convertible Coupe before restoration



Photo 3: 1939 Convertible Coupe restored



Photo 4: 1939 Convertible Coupe with it's Sidemounts



Photo 5: 1947 Clipper



Photo 6: The 1939 Sedan



Photo 7: 1941 110 Convertible



Stuart & Val Flexman at Napier Art Deco 2009 with their 1941 160 convertible coupe

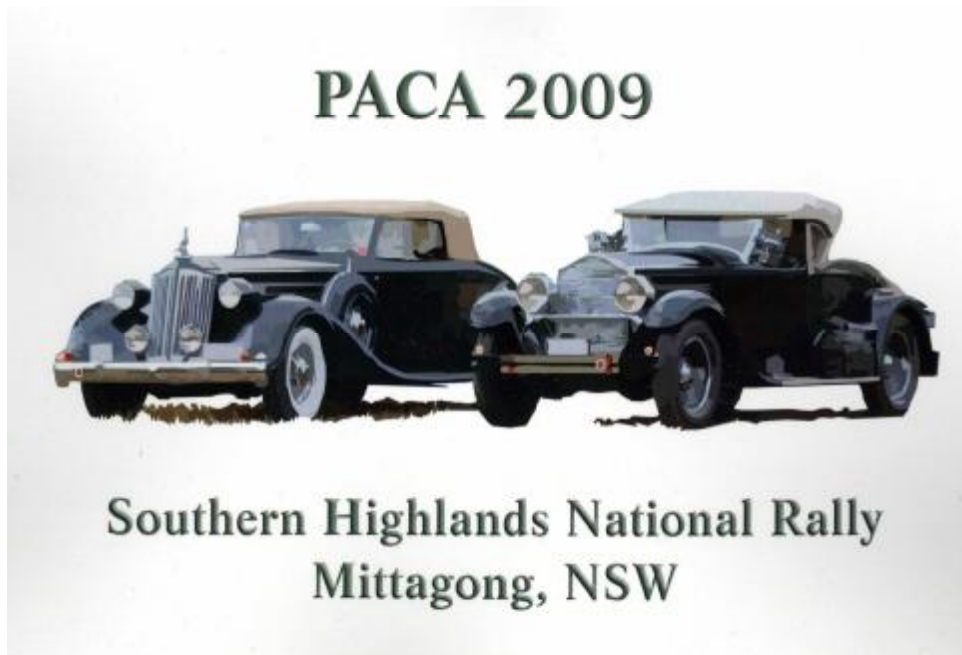
Right: Photo 8: 1941 120 Coupe



Below: Photo 9: 1941 160 Convertible Coupe



**SELECTION OF ENTRIES ON THE PACKARD CLUB OF AUSTRALIA'S  
"SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS NATIONAL RALLY—MITTAGONG, NSW"**



Lovely to see the Packards of our NZ members, Robert Duncan's 1936 1407 Coupe Roadster, & Tony Devereux' 1927 343 Roadster on the front cover of our Australian members' Rally Booklet

Photos supplied with thanks from Margaret & Brian Taylor and Dorothy & Brian Belcher



David & Veronique McCready and their 1929 633 Standard 8 Roadster.



John Lucas beside his 1934 1102 7 Passenger Sedan

Brian Belcher beside Bob and Yvonne Davis' 1929 640 Roadster - Ex Clem Ryan



Jack's 1936 120B Dietrich Bodied Convertible Ute





Brian paying homage to one of the all time greats of Cricket—Sir Donald Bradman..... or just reading the plaque.

Right—David & Veronique's lovely Roadster



Right—Brian having a drive of the 1929 640 Roadster of Bob & Yvonne Davis



Wade & Gina Hawker's 1937 Super 8 Club Sedan

The 1940 110 Convertible Roadster Coupe of Rob & Margaret Trembath.



Margaret Taylor next to 'Old Blue' the 1937 120 Touring Sedan loaned to her & Brian for the Rally, and belonging to Wade & Gina Hawker

The 'Line Up'



## Progress on Members' Packards



Theo & Michelle's' De Leeuw's 1928 526 Phaeton  
Looking really good Theo... Ed



...."son Jonathan holds the motor for Theo's 526 whilst mum gives it a final inspection"



Malcolm & Terry Dean's 1936 120B convertible coupe  
body back on the chassis with doors fitted. Only front  
guards to go.



Lovely card sent by Margaret Taylor to editor Terry accompanying the photos of the Aussie Rally. This card is available from the Packard Automobile Club of Australia—PACA