

1931 833 Convertible Coupe...restoration started

Some members may remember back at the 2000 Hamilton International VCC rally we went to see an unrestored 1931 833 Packard. This car was once owned by Alan Orr and was acquired by me not long after that rally. It has sat in a storage unit for nearly ten years but finally since the work on the 526 is over (except for the motor) I've made a start on the 833..."a boy is got to have something to do" while he waits for his 526 motor to arrive from USA.

So far, the car has been stripped out; all the body panels have been sandblasted to reveal all the "Dietrich lace" particularly in the rear quarter panels which can be seen in the photos. But over all, the guards, engine bonnet, cowling, seating structures, valances...most of the panels will only require a little work. All the chrome parts have been drip-stripped and I'm part way through the minor repairs on the headlights. The radiator grill is finished, re-plated and reassembled but the rolling chassis is still in storage. I hope to have that home prior to Xmas; the aim is to restore the chassis and mechanics prior to doing too much work on the body!

Some of the history: the car as I understand from Bryan Belcher was a Court family car, the Court family from department store fame in Auckland, then sometime just after World War II, the car ended up in Tirau where it became a.....guess what....tow truck. It was used as a tow truck until Alan Orr acquired it in the mid 70's.

The car sat in one of Alan's barns at his Matamata farm until about 1998 when Alan sold it to Colin Storey who sold it to me. I remember as a kid the 833 being a tow truck in Tirau but not much else. Just seems to me this car has done a lot of "sitting around"some 25 years with Alan a further 10 years with me, it's time to get the project under way I reckon. I do understand from a few old friends of Alan's he did drive it around the paddocks from time to time so I'm hoping I don't have the same mechanical issues as I've had with my 526.

The pictures are self-explanatory, the car on the trailer is when I collected it ten years ago, the wheels have been changed. This car will have wire wheels and the yes the car is almost complete. I have almost everything including dials, lights, knobs etc...I managed to resist the temptation of "flogging" parts from this car to put on the 526 which I think was pretty good. I'm sure there will be a few things I'll have to go hunting for over the next few years or five!!! So as we make some serious progress forward, I will send more photos through to the magazine. If any members are near Cambridge, come and have a cup of tea I'll show you over what work has or hasn't been done.

By.....*Theo De Leeuw*

A number of people have asked about how I made my drum headlights for my 526 so I might do a small story on this in a month or two....Theo



Progress Photos of the 1931 655 Convertible Coupe of Theo and Michelle de Leeuw

