

### **SAVVA Technical tips – 141 vacuum brake boosters**

This is for owners of older cars who have aspirations of fitting vacuum brake boosters to improve their vehicles braking.

I've just had a very expensive experience. The brakes on my old Buick, whilst much improved by fitting woven linings and re-sleeving the cylinders were still not quite up to the standard required by today's traffic.

In desperation, I took the car to the brake "experts" requesting they take their time and get the brakes right – just do whatever has to be done. I recall as a youngster my Dad had a 49 Pontiac with virtually identical brakes and he pulled caravans all over the country without brake problems - so something wasn't right! After having the car for nearly two months it was announced the car was fixed. They had stripped and rebuilt all the brake cylinders (again) and fitted a new master cylinder as it appears the old one was incorrect. They also fitted a vacuum brake booster behind the battery box where it couldn't be seen.

With great delight I collected the car and nearly wrote it off going home. The brakes, the front ones that is, were either off or locked fully on – no in between. I eventually got home using the handbrake. When I asked the experts what the problem could be they said the brakes must "bed" in. This was impossible as the car wasn't drivable which meant having to try and solve the problem myself or pass the problem onto someone with more knowledge.

We removed the front brake drums and couldn't see anything wrong. I was about to give up when a friend casually mentioned that he had had the same problem with his 1960 Chev truck which had a similar braking system. He suggested I disconnect the booster and see what happens. Walla! You can't believe the difference. Problem solved! For once I can drive behind taxis without risking my life. The brakes are tops!

It appears that for all the years I've owned this car the main problem has been with the master cylinder. At some time in the cars life an incorrect one was fitted. The new one looks identical to the old one but apparently the fluid capacity differs. It also appears you cannot just fit a vacuum booster to some of these old cars – they don't like them. To make the booster functional a proportional valve would have to be fitted – I'll pass on that one as the brakes are great as they are.

#### **For Sale**

One brand new brake booster

