

## Harbeck Rare Books

### Jörn Harbeck

In August last year some online trawling took me to the website of the AHA. Finding the online resources very interesting and useful, I decided to join the association.

I am a Brisbane-based collector of Australian motoring memorabilia from the earliest days up to 1969. I collect all types of material, including photographs, road maps, sales brochures, and much more. Encouraged by AHA Secretary Tony Lupton, I am now sharing two of the more unusual items in my collection.

A few years ago, I acquired an early 20th century photograph album from a dealer in the USA - an album that had presumably been put together by an American visitor to Australia. It is filled with the usual views of Melbourne and surrounds but also contains three photographs from the second Dunlop Reliability Trial in 1905. The photos were taken at the start of the contest and are all captioned. Two of them show A. M. Foster on his 50 hp Talbot, the other shows W. R. Grimwade on his 10 hp Argyll.



Tony kindly put me in touch with Jenny Fawbert, who, as AHA members will know, has extensively researched the reliability trials. Jenny very generously shared some information on the cars and competitors with me, saying that Russell Grimwade's Argyll was a well-photographed vehicle, but that Foster's big 35-50 hp Talbot had so far eluded her searches for clear photos.



To me, one of the pleasures of collecting is information-sharing and contributing to original research.



Another more out of left field piece of motoring memorabilia I acquired last year is a 1909 edition of Henry Lawson's *Over the Sliprails*. The book has the signature 'Eager' on the flyleaf and, in another hand, the signature 'F. Z. Eager' on the title page. F. Z Eager is of course Frederic Zina Eager, or Fred Eager for short, and the other signature is almost certainly that of his father Edward George Eager.

F. J. Eager.  
OVER THE SLIPRAILS

BY  
HENRY LAWSON

*Author of When the World Was Wide, and Other Verses ;  
Joe Wilson and His Mates ; On the Track ; Verses, Popular  
and Humorous ; When I Was King, and Other Verses ;  
Children of the Bush ; While the Billy Boils.*

E.G. Eager had first come to Queensland as a representative of the Overland company in 1911, and in 1913 father and son established E.A. Eager & Son, the well-known car dealership, still trading today as Eagers Automotive.

Fred Eager's motoring exploits in his 1912 Willys Overland, nicknamed Whitey, included the so-called Southport Speed Trials on the Gold Coast in 1916, as well as a new record for the

fastest run from Brisbane to Toowoomba in 1918. A full account of these events and more can be found in Murray Hubbard's *Car Wars Down Under*, published in 2021.

In the 1930s and 1940s Fred Eager was also a serious collector of rare books on Australian history, adding his artist-designed bookplate to his books. He acquired, for example, many books from the famous Edge Partington collection when it was sold in London in 1934. Eager's books were dispersed after his death in 1950, and many were acquired by Sir Thomas Ramsay of Kiwi boot polish fame and fortune. Ramsay's books in turn were sold at auction through Christie's in Melbourne in 1997, meaning books with the Eager provenance are out there to be found.