

ELFIN

OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 131 - December 2013



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ELF – IN



❖ Small, slight, and delicately - made or proportioned, quick, agile and delicate (as in movement or thought), having an otherworldly, unearthly or magical quality.

- Webster's Dictionary.



ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

EDITORIAL:

Another year is rapidly coming to a close, and it has been another good year for Elfins and their owners. Meanwhile the EODC continues to grow steadily – did you know that since the club was established in 1980 we have signed up more than 600 members! We welcome several newcomers to the EODC in this issue.

Looking back over 2013 our year got away to a good start with a fine display of Elfins at the Australian Formula One Grand Prix meeting. Many thanks to **MIKE BARKER** for organising our contribution to the carnival.

Our traditional annual Elfin barbeque attracted about 80 members and guests and everyone enjoyed the hospitality at the Elfin Heritage Centre in Moorabbin. What a great location for a gathering of the faithful!

A number of members have excelled throughout the year in competition, and some of their exploits are detailed in this issue. Win, lose or draw – everyone taking part is helping to keep the Elfin name in front of the public and add to our proud heritage.

The December newsletter begins a series of articles written by author, **BARRY CATFORD**. Barry has collected a considerable amount of fresh information since the release of his book *“Elfin Sports & Racing Cars”* written in conjunction with **JOHN BLANDEN** and he has provided this to the club for publication. Thanks, Barry. It certainly casts new light on a number of key issues and makes interesting reading. What a pity the publishers of the book haven't seen fit to reprint it with these important updates.

Coming up in late February early March next year will be the 2014 Clipsal “500” V8 Supercar meeting in Adelaide and the event organisers have contacted us to ask if the club would be interested in providing a cross-section of Elfins for a display. Unlike our previous effort years ago at the AGP when we had 40 Elfins take to the Grand Prix circuit, our absolute maximum at the Clipsal is 20 cars. Bearing in mind this event is the weekend before the Classic Festival of Historic Motor Sport at Phillip Island, several of the likely cars aren't able to participate in Adelaide. We have, however assembled a fine cross section of Elfins that will do us proud. A couple of places are yet to be confirmed, and a list of participants follows. Many thanks and commiserations to anyone who missed out – we were held strictly to our numbers – and well done to those who will be taking part in the static display and demonstration laps over the four-day meeting.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members, their families and friends a happy and peaceful festive season. Stay safe on our roads, enjoy your Elfin, and we look forward to lots of good times in the new year.

Brique

EODC DIRECT CREDIT DETAILS

Bank Account No. 5003785

BSB 633-000

Bendigo & Adelaide Bank

Make sure your **NAME** appears on the transaction so your payment can be identified.



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BITS 'N' PIECES:

TIM WRIGHT forwarded some Elfin results from the first Maryborough "Wings and Wheels" 2-day event, which included a 400m sprint on Sunday (September 15), run by David Lowe.

- **GRAHAM HOINVILLE** had his Clubman there, and sounded fast and healthy with a 17.2 sec.
- **GREG HOINVILLE** drove the twin cam Mono, which posted the quickest time for pre-'65 racing cars under 2 litres with a time of 14.0 sec

Another Elfin was John Stevenson's MS8 clubman which did a best time of 17.0.

- **GRAEME WRIGHT** in the Regah MG (painted Elfin red, does that count?) was the fastest pre-'60 sports under 2 litres with 16.4 sec
- **CAMERON WRIGHT** in the Clubman (Mk2/replica) was 2nd in the Clubman class (pushrod racing against modern engine Clubmans) with a time of 17.1 sec
- **TIM WRIGHT** in the Mallala, 2nd in pre-'65 sports under 2 litres, at 17.1. "Luckily for me the car looks good, so my lack of driving skill is un-noticed", he said.

It was a successful day and will most likely be bigger and better next year. The 2-hour lunch break gave the spectators an opportunity for joy flights in a couple of planes that were on display (the notable one being a Yak 52).

"There may have been more members there, but I had my hands too full with kids and cars to have a good look around".

TIM WRIGHT

Elfin 600 Alfa should be back on track in 2014 after having a complete rear end replacement after breaking an upright at Eastern Creek in 2012.

DAVID MEDLEY

An Elfin driven by **MIKE BARKER** took FTD at the Rob Roy Historics on November 24. "The very wet conditions on the day suited the Type 3 Elfin Clubman perfectly! I don't know, but I think that where my car won out is in its drivability. With a standard engine it has good smooth power over a wide band, coupled to a forgiving chassis, enabling me to make better use of the available power in the prevailing conditions. If the conditions had been ideal I don't think I would have seen which way the Brabham, the Mono or for that matter, Darren in the Cyclo went ", Mike said.

....More news from **MIKE BARKER**....

GEELONG REVIVAL: I was happy with my times, there was nothing left in the car - 1.1 secs quicker than last year. Looking at the results, though, I was actually a second off the time of the class winning Caterham this year. **MIKE BARKER**

(12.933s was still a very respectable time, Mike. (Ed.)

Meanwhile **JOHN BECKER** followed up last year's run in his early Streamliner with a time of 14.317.



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BITS 'N' PIECES:

ELFINS AT THE 2013 'LEGEND OF THE LAKES'

Mt Gambier, or "The Mount" as the locals call it, is a hillclimb of approximately 1.5 kms, using the public road out from the "Valley and Browns Lakes". The climb has a variety of corners starting with a twisting section with dips, crests and various cambers, followed by a fast open section (160 Km/h in fourth in an Elfin T3 Clubman). This section winds uphill to the final section which is tight with 90 and 180 degree corners. A difficult track to learn and challenging climb, but one that is well worth competing in.

The "Legend of the Lakes" is actually two separate events:

- 1) Friday's event is for Historic and Clubman cars - this year this event was a tribute to the late, and well respected, driver Peter Hall.
- 2) Saturday and Sunday - the main event of two days duration.

The EODC had three Elfin Clubmans and four drivers competing.

FRIDAY

The track was dryish on the first run then wet on run two and very wet for run three. For this event we had **MIKE BARKER**, **DICK WRIGHT Snr.** in Type 3 clubman and **MARK SCOTT**, having his first run at The Mount, in his Elfin Clubman Prototype with (I believe) a 1 litre BMC "A Series engine". This car was originally built for Dick Johnson (yes, the Dick Johnson of Bathurst fame!).



Run one determined this event and **MIKE BARKER** managed second place behind last year's winner and class record holder Paul Doube in a Kestrel. The event was called off following run three.

"By the way, the Type 3 Elfin was the fastest car outright on run three! This says a lot about its handling and general drivability, they really are a very well behaved car - or am I biased? Of course I am!!" quipped **MIKE**.

DICK WRIGHT was eighth, with five very quick Clubmans ahead of him. **MARK** was ninth in his first crack at this climb.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

The main event. Conditions started damp but improved considerably over the two days. For this event there were Dick Wright Junior (Richard) and **MIKE BARKER** in Type 3's (or should I say Richard in dad's car) and **MARK** in his Prototype.

MIKE was quickest on the first run with Paul Doube second and Richard third.

For run two it was Paul Doube, Tim Laws (Westfield), Richard and **MIKE**.

From run three to run seven it was Richard, with Paul and Tim swapping places, then **MIKE** - at one stage there was 0.1 of a second between first and third, and 0.4 of a second between first and fourth.



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BITS 'N' PIECES:

Tim took over the lead for run eight and nine, with still only 0.1 to Richard in second, with Paul third and **MIKE** fourth. In the shootout **MIKE** managed to be the fastest Clubman, which enabled him to jump from fourth behind Paul to third behind Richard.

So in the main event, after a fantastic battle between the first four Clubmans; Elfins were in second and third places - with Richard 0.2 of a second behind Tim and **MIKE** was 0.4 of a second behind Richard. And then there was **MARK**. **MARK**, remember, was having his first drive at The Mount, in an underpowered 1-litre car, and improved his times by just over six seconds to finish seventh!

"I was happy with this result as I finished a full second faster than my previous best last year!"
MIKE BARKER



(Photos of **MIKE BARKER** in action courtesy of TURN8 PHOTOGRAPHY)

2014 CLIPSAL "500"

The following cars will be taking part in the Elfin display and demonstration laps at the 2014 Clipsal "500" meeting:

MR8 F5000 (**BILL HEMMING**); 400 Sports (**BILL HEMMING**); 622 F2 (**JEFF BROWN**); Streamliner (**JOHN BECKER**); Mallala (**GRAEME WRIGHT**); 600B (**LAURIE BENNETT**); Mono (**JAMES CALDER**); Cooper Butler (**JOHN ANDERSON**); Type 3 Clubman (**MIKE BARKER**); 622 (**MARK GOLDSMITH**); Catalina (**RICHARD NITSCHKE**); F. Vee (**NOEL BULL**); 623 (**ANDREW McLAREN**); ME5 Sports (**TREVOR LAMBERT**); 300 Sports (**SAM NITSCHKE**); Clubman C3 (**DICK WRIGHT**); 630B (**MALCOLM/BLAKE MILLER**); MR5B F5000 (**GEOFF MUNDAY**); Clubman (**BRIAN REED**).

Thanks to everyone who volunteered to take part. We still have room for a modern Streamliner or a V8 Clubman if anyone is interested - but there is only provision for 20 cars maximum.

Because of our involvement at the Clipsal, our display at the 2014 Australian Grand Prix meeting, a fortnight later, has been deferred until the following year. As you can appreciate, there is a lot of work involved to make a successful display, and for next year the Clipsal invitation will take priority.

However, if any EODC members would like to display their Elfins independently it is still possible at Albert Park during the four-day Grand Prix carnival. Interested? Then contact Toby Ward at the AGP office on (03) 9258 7100, mobile 0409 177 323 or e-mail tobyward@grandprix.com.au



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ROB ROY HILL CLIMB:

We had three members competing on the day:

GRAHAM HOINVILLE - 1962 Elfin Clubman. Finished third in class with a best time of 39.3s

GREG HOINVILLE - Elfin Mono. Finished second in class to Keith Simpson in the Brabham BT16.

Greg's best run was 29.44s

MIKE BARKER - Elfin Clubman Type 3. Finished first in class and Fastest Time of Day (FTD) - though not the trophy, as this goes to the fastest Historic car - Keith Simpson's Brabham BT16. (My Type 3 finished with a best time of 25.17 against Keith's 25.96.)

MIKE said "It was more important to win the Tony Gaze Trophy than the outright trophy. It means more to me, and I've been lucky enough to win this every year since 2009".

MARK JUDD entered his Elfin Clubman Type 3 but had other commitments and didn't run.

"The track was very wet all day with one run (run three) that was dry-ish. We had four runs for the day. With the poor weather all the times were well down on the day. On the positive side the return road is now excellent!"

MIKE BARKER

ELFIN IDENTITIES ATTEND VHRR CELEBRATIONS

On 23-24 November a special occasion was celebrated at the clubrooms of the Victorian Historic Racing Register. The 1966 world championship winning Brabham Repco BT19 was located in its new resting place, along with dozens of Sir Jack Brabham's trophies and personal book collection. Representatives of Repco as well as VHRR members and special guests were in attendance to see Sir Jack himself officially unveil the display. The 84-year old triple Formula One world champion is the oldest living world champion and is patron of the VHRR. There was also a televised message of congratulations from the Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott.



Amongst the special guests were EODC members **JOHN McCORMACK** (pictured above with Sir Jack) and **ALFREDO COSTANZO** (at left), both multiple Australian Gold Star champions. Another VIP was **DON HALPIN**, a former employee of Repco who worked as part of the assembly team from 1967 to '69 on the famous V8 Repco F1 engine. The engine went on to power another Brabham F1 car to victory in the 1967 championship, this time driven by New Zealander Denny Hulme. Don was also part of Jack Brabham's team when it made its auspicious debut at the Indianapolis "500".

Sadly, in 1968 Repco pulled the pin on the project when, according to Don, the quad-cam engine didn't live up to expectations and inserts kept falling out of the heads. Repco then transferred responsibility to a subsidiary, Repco Engine

Developments to service the engines already in commission. This unfortunately only lasted four years until Repco decided "it was off again".

Don now resides in central Victoria and is the proud owner of an Elfin 620B which is currently undergoing a major rebuild.

There's a lot of history out there amongst the Elfin community!

DON HALPIN (on right).





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BITS 'N' PIECES:

Evergreen racer **GRAHAM HOINVILLE** has always been known for his practical, commonsense approach to things and this was well demonstrated at the recent Geelong Revival Meeting at Ritchie Boulevard. It was three o'clock before he was to have just his second run over the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in his 1962 Elfin Clubman. Figuring it would be close to 6pm before he had his third and final run, he loaded up the Clubman with spare wheel, tools and Esky concealed under the tonneau and finished his days racing fully laden. Meanwhile his spritely wife Dorothea clambered up the steps at Eastern Beach with the deck chairs and met Graham back at the trailer for the early getaway from Geelong.

In case you're wondering about Graham's times, his first run was 14.261s and his second 14.317s (fully loaded) which goes to show power-to-weight ratio isn't all that important when you're a demon Elfin driver in your mid-80s!

Good news is that **PETER LARNER** has acquired his old Elfin 700 back from **KEITH MORLING** and is in the process of rebuilding it. "I am going to drive it myself next year", said Peter. *(If history repeats itself it will be QUICK! Good luck, Peter. (Ed.)*



INTERESTING ADDITIONS to "Elfin Sports & Racing Cars"....

We begin the first of two instalments of **BARRY CATFORD'S** supplement to his book "Elfin Sports & Racing Cars" (not necessarily in the order they have been presented). The following article relates to the production of the Monos on Page 41.

Although the blowing end of a domestic vacuum cleaner was fed into the fuel tanks of the new Mono tubs to assist in the curing process of the sealant, to his consternation Fulvio (*Mattiolo*) was to learn that even after several weeks the atmosphere inside the tanks was still extremely volatile.

Because the rigidly mounted instrument panel on the early Mono proved detrimental to the gauges due to vibration it was agreed that rubber mounting the fascia would alleviate the problem. Garrie (*Cooper*) asked Fulvio to weld a couple of brackets to the tubular raised portion of the bulkhead. Two clamps were used, one for each bracket, while Fulvio knelt down on the factory floor, leaning against one side of the tub and with his welding hand piece in one hand and his eye shield in the other he then proceeded to strike the arc.

Suddenly there was a huge 'whoosh' and the clamps and brackets flew up through the roof and Fulvio was catapulted across the factory floor coming to rest still holding his shield and welding hand piece albeit now disconnected from the welder.

While one clamp was located, the other and the brackets were forever lost. Both sides of the tub had bulged out about 200mm rendering it useless. "I would have spent days making that tub", quipped John Webb 40 years later.



EODC MERCHANDISE

Still looking for some items to help fill the Christmas stocking? How about some club merchandise? We have Elfin key rings (\$12), lapel badges (\$8), cloth badges (\$8) and decals (\$2).

It is also possible to purchase copies of "Elfin Sports & Racing Cars" (2nd ed.) by **BARRY CATFORD** and **JOHN BLANDEN** from the Elfin Heritage Centre. Contact **BILL HEMMING** on bill@elfinheritage.com.au for your copy. Cost is \$67.50 if collected personally, or \$75 to cover packaging and postage.



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This supplementary article from **BARRY CATFORD** refers to the FJ/Catalina of Vern White on Page 22....

"The history and current owner of one Catalina/FJ that remained a mystery up until the publishing of this book was chassis #626. I (*Barry Catford*) personally wanted to track down this Elfin because I was familiar with it having housed it in my home garage over a Mallala racing weekend and also having driven it during private practice at Mallala when Vern White was the owner and Mike Fenwick the driver.

Following a reference to this Elfin in the September 2002 issue of the Elfin Owners & Drivers Club Newsletter that John Medley was the current owner I dropped him a line telling him about my past association with his car and sending him a photocopy of a proof sheet of black & white pictures I had taken of this Elfin at Mallala and another photocopy of a large print of the car taken at Templestowe Hill Climb given to me by Mike. John's reply related the extraordinary turn of events that eventually identified what, for years to John, were Elfin bits and pieces that John had acquired for possible spares for his FJ #628.

Here is John's story:

It is an amazing story, re this car. I bought the bits in 1977 w/o chassis plate or any other form of identification, and for a long time simply saw the bits as spares for FJ chassis 628 which I owned at that time. Sometime later I thought about assembling the car but, without being able to prove its history, these efforts were always half hearted. Then, about to start last year's attempt to rebuild, I was carrying a cardboard box (containing mirrors, instruments, etc., as it had since 1977) when the bottom flap of the box bumped on the bench and disgorged a sticky-taped photo cut from a magazine (which I had not previously sighted). The photo showed the rear of a car markedly modified from original but still identifiable as a Catalina! I rang Brian Lear, who as you know is a great source of Elfin knowledge, and Brian was able to locate the original magazine containing the photo with the caption, '... the Vern White car...'

After I had checked old programmes and magazines (and your Elfin book again!) noting the entrant often as 'Vern White Motors', I got onto Directory Assistance who gave me 'Vern White Engineering' and, bingo, I talked to Vern White. So 17/08/01 was a pretty important day – and it took only a few more days for Vern to confirm that the chassis number was 626, the body sides were alloy (now on chassis 628 in Tony Parkinson's hands in South Australia), the body colour had been black with a white nose ring (just identifiable through the fibreglass repairs), the accident damage to the nose happened at Calder, the seat was finished in red, rather rough vinyl, Vern had painted orange and red quadrants on the tacho, and the tail was chopped and modified (and sold with chassis 628 when I sold that car to Bob Larkin) – to mention just a few of the identification criteria that Vern could list and I could identify. The photo that fell out of the bottom of the box where it had lain hidden for 25 years was taken at Templestowe on the same day/same camera as the one that Mike Fenwick sent you and which Vern White sent me. One might say, a fairly ordinary photograph which solved a quarter century mystery!

There's more to it, though. Vern told me that my phone call to him was the first he had seen or heard of the car since he sold it w/o engine in, he thinks, 1972, to a guy in Geelong (and whose name he can't remember). I bought it in bits in Sydney on 28/2/77 with the body painted a cerise colour and white nose ring and white kiwi motifs. Under the layer of paint was a sponsors sign 'Notorove'. The sellers name was Windsor – no other information. So the car sort of disappeared – but for only a bit over 4 years. I have been unable to find any information at all about the car between Vern selling it and my buying it.

The rebuild has begun (finally!) and hopefully the car will race again early 2003 – over 30 years since it (apparently) last turned a wheel.

Regards, John Medley

Copies of the entire 13-page supplement will be sent to all members with an email address. **Members who receive a hard copy of the newsletter can request a posted copy. Please contact Cheryl 0419 581815.**



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MEMBERSHIP:

No. 608 - JOEL BROWN (VIC)

Joel competes and is the son of member **JEFF BROWN**. His father joined him up and paid for his membership whilst Joel was in Canada on holidays. A nice surprise to come home to!

No. 609 - DAVID MEYERS (SA)

Finally, we have tracked down the elusive David who slipped Cheryl \$100 at a racing meeting in 2012 for membership. We had no other details 'til now but are happy to report that David is the proud owner of the first Elfin Streamliner which is patiently awaiting some major TLC.

No. 610 - NEIL SIVYER (QLD)

Neil's Elfin Formula Vee (#6719) was previously owned (amongst others) by members **PAUL JOHNSON**, **JIM HODGSON**, and was purchased from **ROBERT FRY** in 2008. Along with three other Elfin Vees, it was sold originally to NSW agent Jack Bono in 1967. A full restoration is underway, and although Neil isn't keen on the colour, he's keeping it to retain the car's historical integrity.

No. 611 - GEOFF MUNDAY (VIC)

Originally carrying chassis plate no. 5713, Geoff's MR5 was upgraded by **GARRIE COOPER** for the 1974 Australian Grand Prix. It is therefore known as a MR5B and has a replacement chassis no. 5723. The car was rebuilt by Gavan Sala and sold to Ken Smith in New Zealand. It then went to a museum in NZ, was purchased back by Ken Smith, and then sold to the current owner. The MR5B was entered for the recent Historic Sandown meeting.

Welcome to our new members, and we hope you have a long and happy association with the club.



2014 EODC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

I, (please PRINT) Membership No

POSTAL ADDRESS..... P/CODE.....

ADDRESS P/CODE.....

PHONE ()(h) ()(w) MOBILE.....

E-MAIL.....

wish to renew my annual membership of the EODC for 2014.

☐

I enclose cheque for \$20 (no cash please)

☐

I have paid my membership via direct credit - Bank A/C No. 5003785 BSB 633-000

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SIGNATURE.....

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please tick if email details have changed in 2013

☐

tick if other details have changed

Return ASAP to Brian Reed, Box 447, AIREYS INLET 3231

email brianreed.motorsport@yahoo.com.au



ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Address

Postcode.....Fax No.....Mobile No

Phone No.....(home)(work)

Email.....

I am an owner/ex-owner/entrant/driver/mechanic/enthusiast of Elfin cars. (Please circle)

CAR.....YEAR OF MANUFACTURE.....

CATEGORY.....CAPACITY.....

ENGINE.....ENGINE NO.....

CHASSIS NO.....COLOUR.....

Any other significant mechanical details?

- HISTORY OF CAR -

EVENTS CONTESTED (include results and dates)

PREVIOUS OWNERS (and years)

◆◆◆ Please include a photograph of your car ◆◆◆

I wish to become a member of the Elfin Owners and Drivers Club, and

☐ have enclosed a cheque for \$20 - membership fee (no cash please).

☐ have paid my membership via direct credit -

Bank A/C No. 5003785 BSB 633-000 (Bendigo & Adelaide Bank)

Signed

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Box 447
AIREYS INLET 3231

or email brianreed.motorsport@yahoo.com.au

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