

# ELFIN

**OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.**

# NEWSLETTER



**NUMBER 132 - March 2014**



REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST PUBLICATION NUMBER VBH-4024

## 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:

Like Christmas in July, the Elfin Owners & Drivers Club has its March newsletter in February. Why? So that as many members and friends have maximum time to get organised for our annual Grand Prix barbeque traditionally held on the Friday night of the AGP carnival. It also helps with the organisation and catering if we know numbers attending well in advance. Further details follow in this issue.



February and March are going to be busy months for our club, especially those members who have agreed to participate in the Elfin display and demonstration laps at this year's Clipsal '500' meeting in Adelaide (February 27 to March 2). The following weekend (March 7-9) is the VHRR Classic Festival of Motor Sport at Phillip Island, and the weekend after (March 13-16) is the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, opening round of the new F1 season with our BBQ on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

It's that time of year when we announce our winner of the 'Clubman of the Year' award, an annual award that was first introduced in 1984. Read on to find out who is the 2013 recipient – someone, I'm sure you'll agree is a very worthy winner.

Membership renewals are rolling in nicely – remember it helps us with the organisation if renewals are paid promptly, and let's all try and sign up new faces for our club this year as our total membership exceeds the 600 mark. If, for instance you sell your car, please invite the new owner to become an EODC member and pay the first year's fee of \$20. This also helps us keep tabs on the ownership trail of cars in our register.

There's lots of other newsy items in our latest issue, and it's always good to receive contributions from our members. For instance, one of our club elders, **IAN BROCK** has sent us a great letter telling us of his retirement (well, semi-retirement) from the sport, and what are his plans for the future. It is inspirational to hear from people such as Ian who have been actively involved in motor racing for such a long time.

Don't forget to let **CHERYL** know if you plan to attend the BBQ on March 14, and if you will be bringing any guests. Visitors will be required to pay \$20 to help offset costs and another great night is assured at the Elfin Heritage Centre. We look forward to greeting you on the night.

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.

Please note that membership cards are made in batches of 16. Those members who pay promptly at the start of the year can be quickly forwarded with their card, however those who pay til later in the year may be inconvenienced if they have to wait.... especially if there is a race meeting coming up!

**CHERYL**



# ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

## BITS 'N' PIECES:

### GEORGE SPANOS HONOURED BY V.H.R.R.

One of our long standing members, **GEORGE SPANOS** has been awarded life membership of the Victorian Historic Racing Register for his services to the club. George has played a major part in the establishment and running of the fine clubrooms in Box Hill and takes pride in the growth in popularity of the weekly lunch gathering on Wednesdays. *Woe betide anyone who spills red wine on the carpet!*

He has also made a great contribution to the setting up of the library and photocopying facility - it's a great resource for anyone wishing to research the history of their car or just engage in some quiet reading.

As a member of the EODC, George has owned his Elfin since new. He's the proud owner of the one-off Streamliner (pictured above) known as the GTS built in 1961 - Garrie's only Elfin with a roof.

His services to the EODC were also recognised when he received the EODC 'Clubman of the Year' award in 2000. Congratulations on your latest honour, George.



### VETERAN ELFIN RACER RETIRES.... (well, sort of!)

One of South Australia's grand old men of motor racing, **IAN BROCK** has finally decided to hang up his helmet - although the sport hasn't really seen the end of him just yet.

Ian sent a nice letter at the end of 2012 in which he wished us "....another Elfin year of happening".

His letter continues:

*"I have given up racing the Elfin (Streamliner), my last race was '09 Mallala Historic Easter which was a magic meeting for me racing with 13 of my regular mates - KEVIN SHEARER was 1<sup>st</sup> and I was 3<sup>d</sup>. It was KEVIN SHEARER'S last race and Glen Dix presented the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy of "Elfins" - a picture of Glen Dix shaking hands with GARRIE COOPER just after he won the 4<sup>th</sup> Gold Star Series at Mallala. I haven't given up totally, I'm still entering the Nadger Clubman in hill climbs at Collingrove. Hoping to get to the "Historic Collingrove" next year.*

*Thanks a lot and Cheers for now,*

**IAN BROCK.**

One of IAN's trademarks was his racing number went up by one with the passing of the years. (At last count it was up around "80"). Not only was he still competing, but he was still enjoying his racing and was always a popular figure at the meetings.

The EODC saw fit to award **IAN BROCK** our 'Clubman of the Year' award in 2011 for his services to motor racing.

Once again you seem to always miss my Clubman in "the news":-

- 1 Class winner at Maryborough 15.1 secs
- 2 Winner of Clubman class in Victorian Supersprint championship 4th consecutive year
- 3 3rd in Australian supersprint championship at Phillip Island in November

**RICHARD STEVENSON** (owner of Elfin Ford Special)

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

We include another instalment of **BARRY CATFORD'S** supplement to his book "Elfin Sports & Racing Cars". The following article relates to the design of the Elfin Mono on Page 41.



"After Tony Alcock's arrival at Brabhams in the UK, Garrie's first letter (dated 9/5/64) to his friend and former employee, which, along with several others, were kept by Tony's widow Kathy and forwarded to the author, Garrie brought Tony up to date with the construction of the new Elfin Mono, including a couple of miniature sketches in the margins.





## **ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.**

### **INTERESTING ADDITIONS to "Elfin Sports & Racing Cars"**

*continues....*

*I don't know where to begin - I am not sure when you left. Anyhow it might be nippy over there but I can assure you it is "bloody" cold here! I am in the lounge with the fire on watching your favourite program "Sing Along With Mitch" - for Julie's benefit.*

*I will probably "drift" on some subjects when trying to bring you up to date. The "Mono" is still not going - some of the minor things have taken much longer than anticipated. We have been testing all sorts of adhesive-sealers for the fuel tanks and have at last come up with the ideal one. The pedals have turned out tops with a simple adjustment for the full-bore and full-closed throttle positions - I think I can best describe the car as follows Front Suspension - as when you left. Anti sway bar inboard with varying hole positions in lower W/B cantilever. The front vertical links are magnesium castings which have turned out excellent as regards weight/strength (I cannot remember if you saw the patterns or drawings before you left).*

*Rear Suspension - as before with inboard suspension units and lower W/B - the top link has been replaced by a swept back W/B which is more positive than the flared set up - there is still a trailing arm on the bottom.*

*After a further six pages, which included further minor details of the Mono and miscellaneous Elfin and local motor racing news, Garrie closed with, Well in closing I think the old FJs (Elfin) are over the hill now and if the Mono can remain competitive as long as they (the FJs) have I will be happy.*

*Garrie continued with details on the mono in his next letter to Tony three weeks later.*

*The Mono - we finished the first bath tub on Friday and started assembling some of the components on to it - the basic body chassis weighs 82 pounds and this includes everything - fuel tanks, pedal mountings, engine mounts and dural plate, seat less trim and, naturally, lower body sides. As a point of comparison Keith's tube frame (FJ) weighed 70 pounds and to bring this up to the equivalent of the Mono it requires stressed alloy panels, fibreglass sides, dash, fuel tank, and fibreglass seat. So you can see, over all it is quite a bit lighter, approx 25 pounds in all. The Mono is extremely stiff, it is impossible to twist it with what we have available at Elfins!*

*As a matter of interest our front pillars have separate steering arms - see sketch. I have redesigned the upper rear w/bones as it was too difficult to maintain accuracy of the mounting points due to pull from welding. In redesigning the set up I was able to save over 1.5 pounds in the weight of each rear w/bone. The mounting points have been simplified with a resultant reduction in weight which has been offset by the shaft which the w/bone pivots on. However this is waisted down considerably in the middle. I should be able to send you some photos soon. (The reason for the greater accuracy in the rear w/bone mountings is that the tube, which twists between the lugs and is in fact one of the three tubes of the w/b, is machined to an accurate length before the w/bone is welded up.*

*It is fitted with a flanged nylon bush each end. As a point of interest the rear dural plate is now glued and riveted on instead of bolting - a saving of a few ounces and time).*

*I am doubtful if we will have the car running for Mallala but I feel it will be pretty well all assembled - it is much easier to work on than the space frame cars. As you no doubt have gathered I am extremely pleased with the new car - it will be a real goer especially with the engines we are planning.*



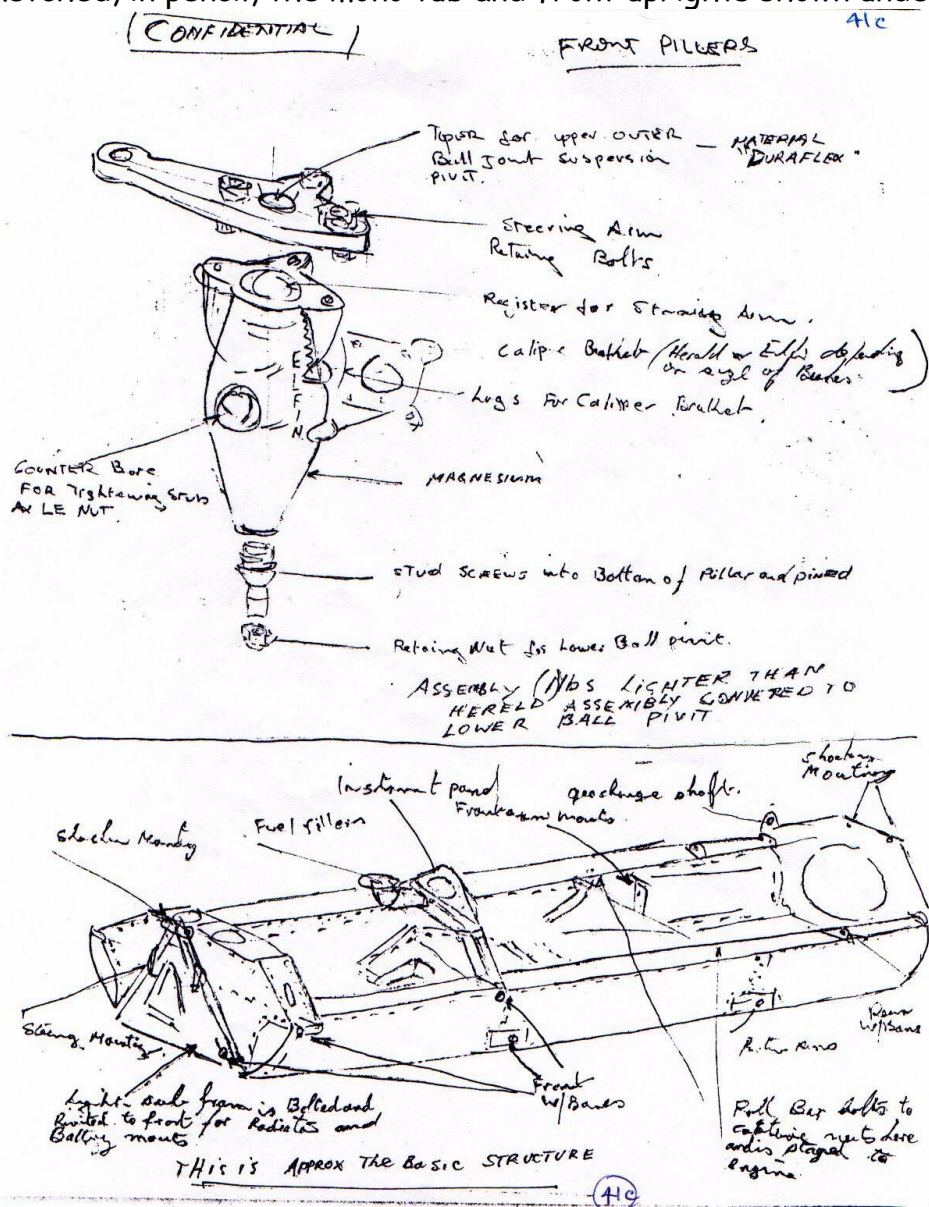
## ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

Garrie finally sent photos of the Mono, promised in August 1964, to Tony and in the accompanying letter wrote,

*Dear Tony, Find enclosed photos of the "Mono" in Melbourne Racing Car Show - they do not really do it justice. It is much smaller externally than the Lotus 27 but has plenty of room in the cockpit. The gear change is on the right and to give more room the steering is offset one inch to the left - it is not noticeable when sitting in the car but gives plenty of room. Lex Davison sat in it and was most impressed - he said it has a lot more foot room than his intercontinental Brabham and Cooper! I think he will buy one for Rocky Tresize to drive.*

Shortly after posting that letter, Garrie announced in his next missive to Tony that Elfin had acquired a lathe. *...before I forget we have at last let our heads go at Elfin's and bought - you will never guess - a lathe! It is a seven or eight inch, I'm not sure, with detachable gap - it can swing the road wheels ok and may be able to without removing the gap. It has a one and three quarter inch hole through the head and would take work three to four feet long. It is a MARS which is made in Queensland. S-hand of course. We stripped it down and rebuilt it looks like new. Large three jaw chuck and four jaw chuck + steady + face plate.*

Garrie then sketched, in pencil, the mono tub and front uprights shown under.







## ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

### THREE ELFIN IDENTITIES....

This happy photo was taken in July 2009 when a large gathering assembled at the Sporting Car Club of S.A. to celebrate Elfin's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Both ladies seem to want a share of BARRY CATFORD, co-author of our bible *"Australia's ELFIN Sports & Racing Cars"*. On the left is our patron, **LORRAINE COOPER**, who made a very competent speech on the night - something she didn't think she was capable of doing!



On the right is **KATHY McCONNELL** who was visiting from the U.K. Kathy is the widow of Tony Alcock, a highly skilled employee of Elfin Sports Cars, and a man who contributed much to the design and construction of Elfins. Tony then spent time in England working for Brabham before returning to South Australia in the early 1970s where he joined forces with **MALCOLM RAMSAY** to produce the highly successful Birrana open wheelers.

From the letters reproduced here, it is clear **GARRIE COOPER** had the highest regard for the technical skills of **TONY ALCOCK**, and we can only speculate on what role Tony may have played at Elfin Sports Cars assisting Garrie with the design of future models.

Sadly it all ended abruptly when Tony was killed in an aircraft being flown by dual world Formula One champion Graham Hill. Hill, along with four of his race team were returning from a test session at the Paul Ricard circuit in France, and all perished when Hill tried to land his plane in bad weather on that fateful day in November 1975.

On a happier note, Kathy looks forward to receiving copies of our newsletters, and it's good to know she retains a keen interest in Elfins.

I'm very pleased that Garrie's letters were so useful, I knew that Barry would find them interesting and thought that Lorraine would be interested to see them. There was a line or two of personal news tucked in at the end but I know with these motor blokes that the cars were always the main item on the agenda. I would never have disposed of them because they were part of Tony's life also.

**KATHY McCONNELL**

Good news is that **PETER LARNER** has bought back his old Elfin 700 from **KEITH MORLING** and is in the process of rebuilding it. "I am going to drive it myself next year," (2014), said Peter. A recent update is that work was progressing well at Larner Engines in Eltham and hopefully the rebuild will be finished in the next couple of weeks - (by the time everyone reads this newsletter). "We'll definitely be running at Mallala," he said.

This is the same car (see photo below) Peter drove to victory in the 1977 Australian Formula 2 Championship after being runner-up the previous year. It was the only Type 700 to be fitted with a twin-cam engine, and when the twin-cam was replaced with a pushrod engine it went on to win the NSW F2 Rothmans Series at Amaroo Park.

In recent years, Peter's son Jamie has been doing most of the driving, and driving very successfully with all the flair of his father. It will be good to see Peter reunited with his old car and back in the fray mixing it with the best amongst the Historic ranks.





# ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

## PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - VERN SCHUPPAN, AM.



For a young lad growing up in the steel and ship building town of Whyalla, the magic names of Indianapolis, Le Mans and Spa Francorchamps seemed totally beyond reach - places the young go-karter could only dream about during the 1960s. But with three State titles behind him and a basic mechanical knowledge gleaned from tinkering in his father's used car yard and panel repair shop, Vern set off for England with wife Jenny and 2000 pounds in his pocket in a van he had renovated. The year was 1969.

Arriving in the UK Vern purchased an Alexis for 900 pounds and sought advice from other drivers such as Tim Schenken and Howden Ganley who had made similar trips to try their luck in Europe. The laconic Ron Tauranac had some advice for Vern - spend the balance on a one-way ticket back to Australia!

Despite his shoe string budget, VERN SCHUPPAN'S rookie year (1971) was impressive in Formula Ford, and resulted in Ford providing him with a Formula Atlantic Palliser for the coming season. In spite of a serious lack of horsepower, the likeable Aussie won the British Championship at his first attempt. His engine supplier, BRM was equally impressed and offered him a contract in its Formula One team alongside Clay Regazzoni and Jean-Pierre Beltoise. Unfortunately along came a man with a 50,000 pounds cheque in his pocket and bought out his drive, relegating Schuppan to reserve driver status. The man's name was Niki Lauda, who soon went on to claim the 1975 World Drivers' Championship.

Schuppan's other forays into Formula One were equally frustrating - moving to Ensign in 1974 was certainly not a career boost, and his one drive for Graham Hill's Embassy team was equally unhelpful. Moving to John Surtees' team in 1977 further pointed out the problems associated with driving for former champion drivers. Vern's Formula One career never took off.

However, there were other opportunities coming his way. Vern slotted quickly into Formula 5000 racing when wealthy businessman Teddy Yip provided Vern with a Lola T332 in 1974. Immediately there were good results including a win in the final race of the European F5000 Championship at Brands Hatch. Further successes came his way in 1975, and long distance sports car racing was now occupying his busy schedule. Outright third, fifth, second and tenth places at Le Mans between 1975 and '78 showed he was on the verge of great things at the Sarthe circuit. After an impressive 2<sup>nd</sup> outright in 1982 his big moment came the following year when he won the 24-hour race for Porsche in the mighty 956. Vern later set up his own race team and won the Japanese Endurance Championship, the first time the title had gone to an Australian.

Indycar racing in the USA proved successful (and profitable!), the highlight being his brilliant drive in the 1981 Indianapolis "500". His qualifying form during the 'mad month of May' was nothing short of sensational, and his fighting third place driving one of the few non-ground effects car in the 33-car field earned him well earned plaudits. (He had previously won the Indianapolis 'Rookie of the Year' award, when he finished 18<sup>th</sup> in the 1976 Indy "500").

Back home, VERN SCHUPPAN had close associations with Elfin Sports Cars. After meeting Garrie Cooper at the 1972 Singapore Grand Prix, Vern's first official drive as a member of Ansett Team Elfin was at Calder in 1976 in the Elfin MR8-C. He qualified on the front row of the grid for the 1976 Australian GP at Sandown, and coaxed home the Elfin into 2<sup>nd</sup> place after breaking a valve spring on the first lap. He also registered the fastest lap for the race.

A second MR8-C was commenced, with the intention of taking on the US F5000 Series the following year - Schuppan believed the Elfin was easily as good as the front running Lola. This car later became the Elfin MR8A-C, a CanAm thunderer in the American sports car races, and later returned to Australia under the custodianship of **RON GOUTTMAN**.





## ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

Unlike the drivers of today who specialise in a particular discipline of motor sport, VERN SCHUPPAN was, in a sense, an old fashioned driver who achieved greatness in all sorts of cars. He returned to Australia to drive touring cars as part of the 1981 Marlboro Holden Dealer Team in the Hang Ten "400" at Sandown and the Bathurst '1000' with John Harvey. He previously competed in Australia's Greatest Race in 1976 and '77 driving a Ford Falcon GT with Allan Moffat, and after two DNFs finished a fine fifth outright with Dick Johnson in 1978. His love of Australia, and in particular his home State of South Australia has seen him take part as a celebrity guest driver in the Classic Adelaide Rally.

Vern's versatility also saw him tackle the gruelling Paris-Dakar Rally - he even tried his hand in manufacturing a road version of the mighty Porsche 962 in Japan - a project that sadly failed when purchasers of the first cars failed to come up with the money as promised.

**VERN SCHUPPAN** was made a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list on June 11, 1984 for his services to the sport of motor racing. In 2006 he was inducted into the Club International des Anciens Pilotes de Grand Prix, and exclusive organisation honouring the sportsmanship, skill and contribution of chosen Formula One drivers.

Today, Vern is still a regular competitor at the famous Goodwood Revival meeting in England and other Historic events and continues to attend motor sport around the world as a celebrity guest. We are honoured to have **VERN SCHUPPAN AM** as a member of the Elfin Owners & Drivers Club.



### PHOTOS WANTED:

This is another reminder that photos of your car(s) are required for our EODC Register. Looking through the pages of our 600 plus members it is noticeable that many members have not attended to this request. It is imperative we have at least one **CURRENT** photo of your Elfin so that our club records are up to date.

Multiple photos are a bonus, especially if they show your car from different angles. Please make sure you clearly identify your car, owner's name, chassis number and date. If it is an action shot - and these are preferable - please indicate the circuit or venue where the photo was taken. Photographic evidence of your car helps us to keep accurate club records, and this is especially important if and when cars change hands.

Hard copies are fine, but they can also be emailed as a jpeg file to Cheryl.  
reidywithchampers@yahoo.com.au

### VALE:

#### BOB SCOTT

Bob Scott, who died on 27th November, was employed by Elfins during 1966/67 as a fabricator and went on to establish his own crash repair business in Willunga. Bob purchased the prototype Elfin Clubman in 1979 from Phil Reece, Oceanside Motors and sold it to David Paxton in 1981. His son **MARK** and Bob purchased the prototype Elfin in 2006 in a half restored state. Mark completed the restoration and Bob researched its history. Bob's grandson has competed in the Elfin at Collingrove Hill climb.

Bob was a very active man who was rarely without a project. His friendliness was well known in his local town of Willunga and he supported community events. Bob prepared much of the memorabilia displayed at the Elfin 50th and made the steering wheels that were presented to some of the past Elfin employees.

**IAN HOBBS**



# ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

## MEMBERSHIP:

### 2013 'CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR'

After conferring with our patron **LORRAINE COOPER**, the 2013 award has gone to **MIKE BARKER**.

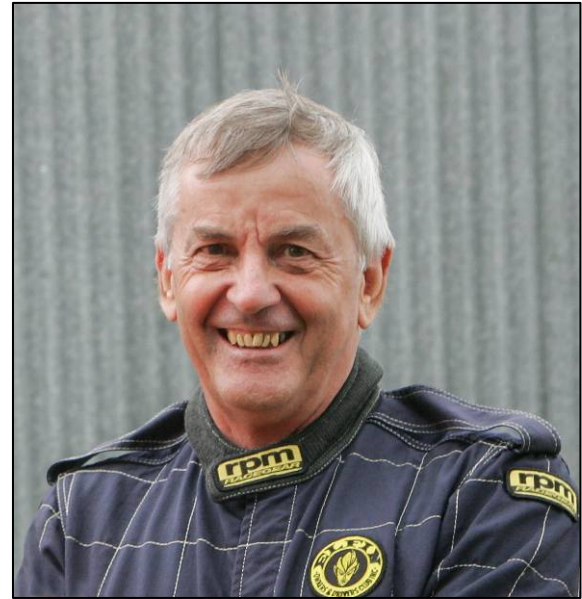
Mike is a tireless worker for the club, both on and off the track. He has enjoyed an amazing run of success in his Type 3 Elfin Clubman, especially in hill climbs where he has brought great credit to our marque. If you follow the results in our newsletters you would have noted his ongoing successes at State and National levels. His efforts are particularly noteworthy considering his Clubman is road registered. (No doubt you will see it parked outside the Elfin Heritage Centre on the night of the BBQ.)

As well as his on-course exploits, Mike has done a mighty job organising our display at last year's AGP at Albert Park, and leaves no stone unturned when it comes to getting things 'just right'.

**MIKE BARKER** is a worthy winner of our club trophy and joins an illustrious list of past winners:

1984 - **IAN HOBBS**; 1985 - **PAUL HAMILTON**; 1986 - **BOB MINOGUE**; 1987 - **HARLEY BOGGIS**; 1988 - **ALBERT MIDDLETON**; 1989 - **BARRY CATFORD**; 1990 - **STUART KOSTERA**; 1991 - **GRAHAM HOINVILLE**; 1992 - **GRAHAME WARD**; 1993 - **BRIAN LEAR**; 1994 - **ROSS WILLIAMS**; 1995 - **JOHN BLANDEN**; 1996 - **RICHARD HARRIS**; 1997 - **STEPHEN KNOX**; 1998 - **BRIAN LEAR**; 1999 - **AARON LEWIS**; 2000 - **GEORGE SPANOS**; 2001 - **BILL PROWSE**; 2002 - **IAN ROSS**; 2003 - **CLIFF COOPER**; 2004 - **BILL HEMMING & NICK KOVATCH**; 2005 - **BRIAN SAMPSON**; 2006 - **BILL HEMMING & NICK KOVATCH**; 2007 - **LAURIE BENNETT**; 2008 - **TONY PARKINSON**; 2009 - **The HAMILTON FAMILY & LAMBERT FAMILY**; 2010 - **LAURIE BENNETT**; 2011 - **IAN BROCK**; 2012 - **JEFF BROWN** and 2013 - **MIKE BARKER**.

Who will it be in 2014???



### THE ELFIN GRAND PRIX BARBEQUE:

The annual Elfin Grand Prix barbeque will take place at the **Elfin Heritage Centre - 29 Capella Crescent, Moorabbin** - on **Friday, March 14th**, commencing at 6:30 pm. For catering purposes it is important you let us know if you are attending. It's a great way to get into the Formula One spirit, and an opportunity to catch up with other members and revisit this fabulous venue.

Please email **CHERYL** - [reidywithchampers@yahoo.com.au](mailto:reidywithchampers@yahoo.com.au)  
or phone **CHERYL** 0419 581 815 by **MARCH 7<sup>th</sup>**

To find the Elfin Heritage Centre use Melways map - 78 B7  
(from the city, turn right into Cochrane Rd. off Warrigal Rd. at Bunnings).



#### PLEASE NOTE:

Due to rising costs, and the large number of visitors and guests now attending our BBQ, a fee of \$20 per head will be levied on non-members.

EODC members and their partners will continue to enjoy the night free of charge.



# 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 .....

Please return to Brian Reed  
Box 447  
AIREYS INLET 3231

or email [brianreed.motorsport@yahoo.com.au](mailto:brianreed.motorsport@yahoo.com.au)



**ELFIN OWNERS & DRIVERS CLUB NEWSLETTER**

Print Post Publication No. PP 326764/00034

If undeliverable, return to:

**Brian Reed**

**Box 447**

**AIREYS INLET 3231**

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA