

ELFIN

OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 141 - June 2016



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:

If you thought the March Newsletter was early, how about this one! Yes, June is coming early this year as Cheryl and I are off overseas soon and will be spending two weeks in Ireland and four in France.

Everyone who attended the Elfin barbeque during the Australian Formula One Grand Prix carnival had a great evening at the Elfin Heritage Centre and our thanks go to **BILL HEMMING** for making the facility available. We also had a fine display of Elfins on show at the Grand Prix, and as usual this was capably handled by our co-ordinator **MIKE BARKER** (see following reports).

This newsletter features an interesting article from the 1980s written by **BARRY CATFORD** on Elfin's venture into the Formula Holden era. The car was the creation of Tony Edmondson and was driven by Mark McLaughlin. We'll continue Barry's story from 'Racing Car News' (1989) in September as it provides an important link in the history of Elfin Sports Cars between **GARRIE COOPER's** passing and when Don Elliott took over the business in 1983.

The Phillip Island Classic Festival of Motor Sport, held the weekend before the Australian F1 Grand Prix (and our barbeque!) was a terrific meeting, and was well supported by the Elfin marque. Read about those who did our club proud – and there are some fine photos of our cars and members.

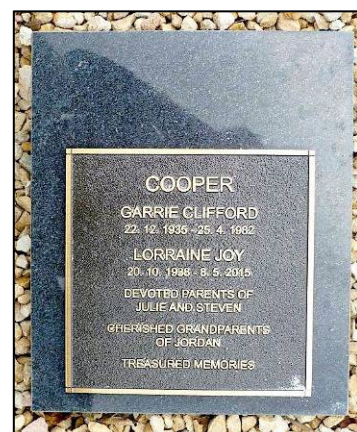
There has been a healthy increase in EODC membership since our last newsletter, including a former Australian Sports Car champion. All new members are welcomed into the Elfin family, and it is especially pleasing to have several of the great names in Australian motor sport included as part of our club.

We sadly acknowledge the passing of our first life member, **TOM STEVENS** from S.A. Tom played an important part in providing sponsorship for Elfin Sports Cars in the formative years. We include a tribute in this issue.

Until our next newsletter in September, "Au revoir" from Cheryl and me.

Brique

BARRY CATFORD, a long-time friend of the Cooper family, has sent along a photo of the plaque now adorning the grave of **GARRIE & LORRAINE COOPER**. Their final resting place can be found at Centennial Park cemetery, Passadena in Adelaide, S.A., and the location is in the Rose Garden. (A directory is located at the cemetery to enable you to find the exact position). For Elfin enthusiasts visiting Adelaide, a visit to the cemetery would be a fitting tribute to our founder of Elfin Sports Cars, Garrie, and to our club patron, Lorraine.





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

ELFINS AT THE AGP

Well, Melbourne lived up to its reputation for this year's AGP - with very changeable weather. Wednesday's Bump-In was hot as was Thursday, Friday was cold wet and windy whilst Saturday was patchy with a little bit of sun but with a cool breeze however Sunday's weather was pretty good.

The Elfin display created quite a lot of interest and having club members on the spot with the cars added interest and enabled the public to ask questions about the cars and the club. It is amazing how few people know anything about Elfins and the role that Elfin has played in Australian motor racing history - I am talking about Australians here as you would not expect overseas people to necessarily know about Elfin.

I had the opportunity of talking to a number of people from overseas and they were very complimentary about the Elfin display - the term "gorgeous" was used, more than once, to describe the cars. They were also complimentary about the Melbourne GP. Apparently you don't get the number of support races overseas or the range of cars on display (if any). Also the ability to roam around the track.

A big thank you to all those who supplied cars for, and assisted with, the display. It would have been nice to have a F5000 and/or 'big banger' sports car for the display, however we did have a good cross section of cars, laid out in 2 groups - lined up from oldest to newest models within each group:

First Group - Racing Cars:

BILL HEMMING - 1962 FJ

GEOFF VAREY - 1965 Mono (down from NSW)

SHANE HUGHES - 1972 600B FF

BILL HEMMING - 1964 Type 500 FV

LAURIE BENNETT - 1970 600B F2

JEFF BROWN - 1972 622 F2

Second Group - Sports cars:

DAN JEFFRIES - 1960 Streamliner

MIKE BARKER - 2005 Type 3 Clubman

Ken Bedggood - 1963 Clubman (Penrite car)

GRANT GRAY - 2007 Type 4 (MS8) Clubman

Also assisting with the display were **PETER BEASLEY**, **PETE FFRENCH**, **SHANE LEE**, Steve Moody and Ross Healey. A big thank you to all!

MIKE BARKER



"A great day at the F1", according to **GRANT GRAY**." Mike had done a sterling job preparing the site and providing signage for all Elfins. We had strong interest all weekend. Even battling four seasons in one day in the Friday, our team showed great commitment to displaying the cars.

By far the most popular display we thought! A special shout out to Mike for all his efforts in looking after our team and cars."

GRANT GRAY





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

POSTSCRIPT: As a follow p to this year's Grand Prix carnival Mike received a complimentary letter from the AGP Corporation Motorsport Coordinator, Adem Agushi which concluded....

".... Thank you once again for your commitment to the event, and persistence to ensure a great display provided by the club. Please extend my appreciation to each club member who provided their personal vehicle for display".

BITS 'N' PIECES:



whiskers of startling proportions, while Julie's grin said it all as she posed for a photo in Bill's MR8 Formula 5000 (above). "I'm 54, and this is the first time I have sat in one of Dad's cars", she said. A highlight of the night was the presentation of the 2015 Elfin 'Clubman of the Year' trophy to **SHANE HUGHES**. Shane is another worthy winner, and a member who has overcome adversity through sheer determination and with the fantastic support of his partner, Paula.

ELFIN BBQ

Our annual F1 Grand Prix barbeque was attended by about 70 members, friends and guests at **BILL HEMMING'S** Elfin Heritage Centre in Moorabbin on Friday, March 18. What a fabulous venue for our yearly get-together! South Australia was well represented by **IAN HOBBS** and his great Elfin photo collection, author of the Elfin book **BARRY CATFORD**, and **RON GUPPY**, a long-time friend of **GARRIE COOPER**. Also from Adelaide were the son and daughter of **GARRIE** and **LORRAINE COOPER**, Steve and Julie, as well as Julie's husband Joachin (otherwise known as 'Arthur'). Steve was sporting



NIGEL TAIT was pretty proud recently..."At the world's longest lunch (Melbourne) at the Grand Prix circuit, 1,200 people were served a fantastic lunch by Guy Grossi. My Match SR4 was one of the seven cars on display. The lunch stretched the entire length of the main straight!"

(Not an Elfin Nigel, but a fabulous car. We understand your pride and commend your effort. Ed.)

Not to be outdone, the inimitable **BILL HEMMING** was also on hand with his equally impressive Elfin 400. Hopefully Bill left something to eat for the other 1,200 guests.





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

ELFINS IN ACTION AT PHILLIP ISLAND:



It was **RICHARD CARTER**'s turn to lead **LAURIE BENNETT** here. The two stage legendary Groups M and O battles these days wherever the Mono and 600 meet. On this occasion the score was 5-0 in Richard's favour - but the winning margin was less than a total of 5seconds over the five races!

Another five-out-of-five race winner for the weekend was **JOHN BOWE** who dominated the Groups Q & R Racing events in his 1974 March 741. Best Elfin result was a 9th by Tasmanian **NOEL CLARK** (Elfin 700).

DAVID REID (the face on the poster of this year's Historic Winton) came home ahead of the field in the final event for Groups J, K, Lb Sports & Racing cars after running his Lukey T43 Faux Pas near the front throughout the weekend.

In an impressive field of 27 Formula 5000s we had four Elfins headed by **BILL HEMMING** (Elfin MR8). Others taking part were **MAX PEARSON** (Elfin MR5), **GEOFF MUNDAY** (Elfin MR5B) and **MIKE GLYNN** (Elfin MR8-BC).

'Big Banger' sports cars were also a feature of the meeting, and two of the best were **STEVE WEBB** (Elfin 360 V8 Repco) (seen right) leading **TREVOR LAMBERT** (Elfin ME5). Great stuff!

The EODC was also well represented in these Groups Q and R 'Big Banger' events with **AARON LEWIS** (Lola T163), **LAURIE BENNETT** (McLaren M1B), and **JEFF BROWN** (Chevron B16) doing us proud.

More than 50 Formula Fords took part at the 'Island - a fantastic lineup. In Group Fa (for the earliest FFs), Elfins were right at the pointy end, with **SEAN SORENSEN**

(620B) first, **CRAIG DEGOTARDI** (600) second, **MARTIN DUNLOP** (600) fourth, and **STEPHEN WELLER** (600) seventh in class. We also had **GUY MILLER** (620C) contesting the Group Fb class.

In a note from **NOEL BULL** we were proudly reminded that **BILL ROBERTS** was almost two seconds a lap quicker than any of the 10 Formula Vees taking part in the meeting. Not only that, Bill's Elfin 500 from the 1960s was by far the oldest Vee in the field. It says a lot about how good is the Elfin - and the driver does a great job, too!

Hard luck story of the weekend was an accident involving **IAN ROSS**. He planted his ex-Alan Jones Beatrice Lola into the fence at Turn 12. "I've only scraped the nose once before in 10 years of racing", said Ian. "This was my first big one - I've never come off that quick!" Small consolation, Ian - Turn 12 claimed several others over the weekend. Fortunately Ian was OK, and he is already getting repairs underway.



Also competing in the Groups M and O events was **JOE RICCIARDO** in his Brabham BT6 (right).

Other EODC members competing at the 'Island included **NORM FALKINER** (left) in the Groups M and O races in his immaculate Elfin Mono.





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

The 2015 Adelaide Motor Festival was judged a resounding success by competitors, spectators and supporters alike, especially the South Australian Tourism Commission, and much of the success goes to the Festival's chairman and EODC member **PETER WHELAN** and his hard working committee. Well done, Peter! He deserved a better run at Phillip Island but unfortunately suffered engine troubles in his Chevron B42. Son Sean had better luck and ran strongly in his Ralt RT4.

The final round of the Collingrove Challenge Trophy for multi club competition was conducted on October 25 and attracted 75 starters. There was no shortage of runs - (seven, in fact!) and EODC member **PETER BAIL** drove well to finish 2nd fastest outright in his Mallock U2, only .04s behind the winner. Well done, Peter.

VALE: TOM STEVENS

Tom Everett Stevens, our club's first life member, passed away in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on April 14 after a short illness. He was 97.

According to his daughter, Lisa, "Tom's life revolved around cars and engines", a fascination that began prior to his apprenticeship with Commonwealth Oil Refineries.

"He served in New Guinea during WW2 with the 13th Field Artillery and 31st Water Transport, and then continued on in his post war work as a fuel lubricant specialist with COR/BP, as a racing car driver, sports administrator and historian."



Tom was a great conversationalist - (Lisa says in the 1980s "...he became the World Talking Champion and was second in the World Insult Championship"), and he is credited as being one of a very select few to issue orders during the war to one Capt. Douglas Francis Hewson Packer (aka Sir Frank Packer) and survive!

Lisa said "He had unquenchable enthusiasm for cars and racing and continued to do so until the last couple of years. His memory of racetracks, events, cars and drivers was incredible," and she jokingly said "he was also the runner up in the World Writing Championships."

"There were drafts, re drafts and more re drafts before he would finally send his extremely long and detailed recollection of events. *(I know, because Tom sent pages of hand written material on his early associations with **GARRIE COOPER** and Elfin Sports Cars which were published many years ago in our newsletters.)* (Ed).

Lisa continues, "He kept copious notebooks detailing everything from different racing "brews" to all the changes that were made on the Elfin Formula Junior on its first run at Warwick Farm."

"His reputation for immaculately presented and performing cars was the stuff of legends. His ability to remember details of a race meet from the pre and post war era brought motor historians and others to his door.

"He was a champion of the Garrie Cooper Memorial Trust, working with the Cooper Family and other to ensure that there would be a suitable memorial for Garrie at the Birdwood Mill Museum.

"His life revolved around motor sport and the Sporting Car Club of SA, perhaps to the detriment of other aspects of his life. The loss of his driver's licence and his decreasing mobility meant that he became more house bound. Public Transport or a taxi was not an option.

"However, the biggest shock in latter life was not his moving into residential care, but the news of the passing of Sir Jack (*Brabham*)," said Lisa. "Lying in a hospital bed, after a serious fall, dad was shocked when I told him of the passing of Sir Jack. He paused, looked at me and then stated..."but Jack's a spring chicken". Dad was 94 at the time, Sir Jack was 88."

Lisa's tribute to her father concluded..."There has been no spectacular accident, no fiery crash, but like an old well-worn car, the body started to rust, the chassis had been repaired, but ultimately the engine seized. The final chequered flag has been lowered on a long and interesting life."

The EODC pays tribute to our first Life Member, and sends condolences to Lisa and other members of the Stevens family.



FEATURE: Elfin Sports Cars

Continuing the tradition

There were those who doubted Tony Edmondson's ability to produce a car worthy of the Elfin name, but the performances of the first Formula Holden from the Adelaide factory have eloquently answered his critics.

Barry Catford provides an insight into the '80s Elfin.

When partner in Elfin Sports Car management Jon Porter left the business, many motor racing enthusiasts thought that it would be the end of any successful new Elfin designs. But those people underestimated the determination and ability of the remaining manager Tony Edmondson to come to grips with the complex task of designing a competitive racing car. That the Elfin Formula Holden, in the hands of Mark McLaughlin, won its first race is testimony that he is well on the way to achieving this goal.

While he was still at secondary school, Tasmanian-born Edmondson obtained a job as a time-keeper at the Baskerville circuit. Don Elliott was running a Mustang at the time with Robin Pare doing the driving, but young Tony was aware of another race car Don was building – a 1600cc Cortina touring car – and the already-determined Edmondson had made up his mind that that was to be the car which would give him a start in motor racing. He quit school a week before the matriculation exams and secured a motor mechanic apprenticeship with a Hobart Ford dealership.

During the third year of his apprenticeship Edmondson approached Elliott for a drive of his still partly completed



The latest Elfin, the first fully designed by Tony Edmondson, has been a front-runner in the first year of Formula Holden, maintaining the tradition for competitive designs set by Elfin founder, Garrie Cooper. Race Press photo.



ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

Cortina. According to Tony, "Don said 'no', but I kept at him," and finally the motor racing patron agreed, provided he helped finish building the car. Once he'd completed his apprenticeship, Tony quit his job and took on a Wynns' distributorship to allow more time to devote to racing the Cortina.

In 1976 Elliott and Edmondson took over the ageing John McCormack-built Valiant Charger and two years later Edmondson arrived in Adelaide for the final assembly at K & A Engineering of what was to become one of the most successful sports sedans in Australia – the

Alfetta-Chev. At the end of 1978, Tony had become a full-time racing driver for Don Elliott, but the following year was to be a tragic one.

Clear evidence of Tony's determination was revealed during the months following the fiery Surfers Paradise crash. From being on the critical list he fought back and was racing again in 1980 in the re-built Alfetta. Porter was involved in re-building the sports sedan at K & A Engineering.

When Don Elliott bought Elfin Sports cars in 1983 following the death of its founder Garrie Cooper, Tony Edmondson

and Jon Porter became joint managers. Porter, a fitter and turner by trade, brought with him valuable racing car construction experience.

While employed at March in the UK from 1969 to 1973, Porter learnt most fabrication techniques and continued to gain knowledge and experience in this field as well as expanding his welding techniques when he arrived in Australia and commenced working for Birrana Engineering in Adelaide. After assisting with the Alfetta-Chev re-build, Jon joined Garrie Cooper at Elfin Sports Cars in 1979 during the Formula 5000 era.

There is no doubt a lot of Porter's influence has rubbed off onto Edmondson. The original Elfin AF2 car that Mark McLaughlin campaigned was "primarily Jon's work," said Tony unhesitatingly. "About 90 percent, with a fair bit of consultation with me," he added. "I lost a partner," although, according to Edmondson, the parting was amicable.

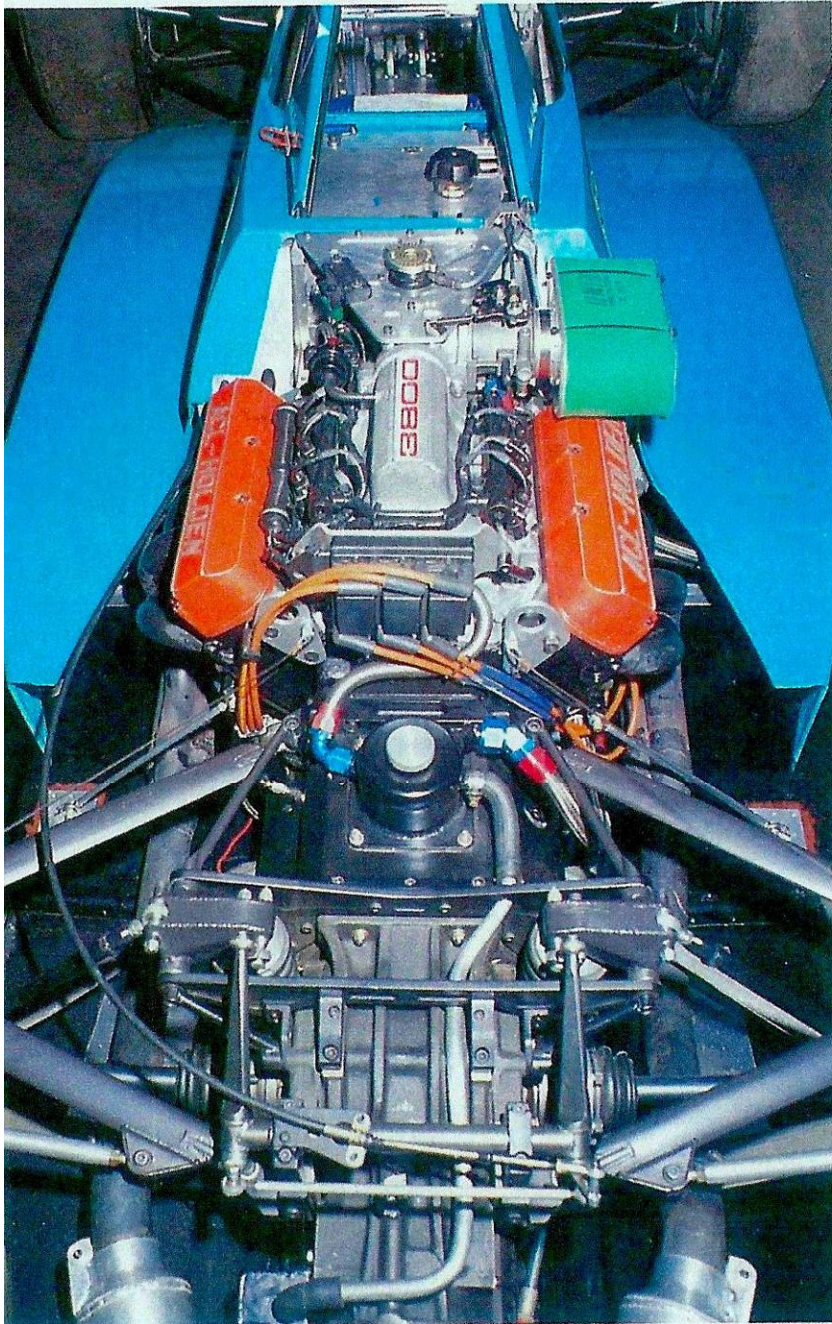
"Back in the Formula 2 days when ground effects finished and flat bottoms were introduced, I did most of the re-design (of the Elfin) in that area including the rear suspension, although Jon was still at Elfin," said Edmondson, explaining how he became involved in the complexities of race car design.

What Edmondson learnt then, and his determination and persistence, were put to good effect when he made the commitment to design and build the Formula Holden. Tony devours text books and technical magazines, mostly associated with racing car design and construction, and "I look a lot too." There is little doubt that the advent of a Formula One round in Adelaide assisted in that area. "It's amazing what you pick up from photographs in magazines," Tony continued. "Half my life I spend thinking." Does he write down his thoughts? "I don't usually write anything down, I try and remember it. When I did this (the Formula Holden), it was just a matter of doing it; I just fired in and did it. Don and I went through the whole process and discussed whether we'd do one or not. As a racing car manufacturer we can't survive in this industry unless we really have a car out there advertising our product. We have no option."

Edmondson's aim in designing the Elfin FH was that he didn't want people saying it looked like a Ralt or March for example, but found it difficult to produce a racing car that didn't look like something that already existed. "I was more interested in getting it to work than making it look pretty." Tony was being modest as the Elfin has drawn favourable comment on its aesthetic appeal.

A Hewland FGC five-speed transmission mates to the Holden V6 engine. The rear suspension is also push-rod actuated, the rockers acting on inboard spring and shock units mounted on the gearbox housing.

Peter Culley photo.



Racing Car News, August, 1989 – 79

(....to be continued in September newsletter)



ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

MEMBERSHIP:

We welcome the following new members to our club:

No. 644 - GRANT TWINING (Tas.)

Grant has made a significant contribution to the Historic Racing Car Club of Tasmania over many years. He is currently President and Treasurer, as well as Contributing Editor to the Open Wheeler Journal. Also look out for his contributions to the Elfin Facebook pages.

No 645 - ANDREW MANNING (Vic.)

Andrew has purchased a blue 2006 MS8 Clubman earlier this year from W.A. which was previously owned by Leroy Day.

No 646 - ROHAN MAY (Vic.)

Rohan is a long time Bolwell bloke and he knows many of the Elfin fraternity, so when brother in law **ANDREW MANNING** bought his car and joined the club, he thought it was high time he did too. Good move Rohan!

No 647 - DARREN HOUSE (Vic.)

Darren is a keen motor sport enthusiast and is editor of the excellent Historic motor sport magazine "Motorsport Legends" - (well worth reading).

No 648 - KEITH BERRYMAN (NSW)

Keith has a magnificent collection of Historic and collectable vehicles and good to know his discerning eye extends to the Elfin marque. Keith and his wife attended our Elfin BBQ for the first time.

No 649 - DAVID ELLIOTT (Vic.)

David emigrated to Australia in 1982 and has worked at Holden Special Vehicles (HSV) "since day one" (29 years). Although not an owner, David is closely connected with Elfin and assists **BILL HEMMING** at race meetings. "I have also rebuilt the engine and gearbox of his Clubman," said David.

No 650 - DAVID DOWSET (Vic.)

David is the author of a new book soon to appear (hopefully!) on Elfin. David conducted quite a bit of research on the night of the BBQ, and just had to join!

No 651 - HENRY MICHELL (SA)

Henry was part of a golden era when Elfins won the Australian Sports Car Championship three years in a row. It all began in 1973 when **PHIL MOORE** took the title in his Elfin 360. **HENRY MICHELL** followed in '74, also driving a 360, and to complete the hat trick **GARRIE COOPER** was victorious in 1975 driving the mighty MS7. Elfin also won the Australian Sports Car Championship in 1970 when Peter Woodwood was victorious in his Elfin 350 Coventry Climax. It's great to have past and present champions as part of our club.

A Note from **BILL ATHERTON**....

Just to let you know that there were two Elfins at the Myrniong Sprints on Sunday. **GRAHAM WRIGHT** in the Clubman with a 33.7 beat Ross Hupton in the Indcon Clubman with a 36.2, and the **BRIAN MORRELL** Streamliner (*Bill's car*) in the pre 1960 sportscar class that took 2nd with a 33.1.

Our old Elfin is finally performing like she did 45 yrs ago so Rob Roy on the 1st May should be interesting.
Thanks for a great night at the annual BBQ.



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 \$25 - 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

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