

# **“TALKING TO BARRY JOHNSON”**

*I had been looking for details for a while.... but in the wrong State. For some reason I assumed Barry Johnson, last owner of the Elfin Mono 6446 before Mel would be in South Australia, but a letter from Brian Lear that even included the phone number was a welcome surprise. Barry is a car dealer and has always lived in Sydney.*

*He remembered the Elfin Mono favourably. He was racing sports cars,,, mainly TRs in the 1970s when he saw the car advertised by David Clements. David had never raced and it had no motor and gearbox at the time but Barry wanted a new challenge and he bought the car. In those days he couldn't afford a Lotus twin cam but they were able to build a reasonable Corolla engine in their own workshops and for two or three years they competed in Formula 3 all over NSW. The car was generally in very good condition and was very competitive. One thing he remembered not so fondly was the petrol tank leaking... not so much fun when you were three laps from home and sitting in wet overalls.*

*Barry went on to race Formula 5000 and had some pretty interesting cars including the ex Larry Perkins Elfin 600E, Lola T400, and a Cheetah Mk 8. He commented that these cars were so powerful that they just won races by themselves but none of them had the finesse of the Elfin Mono which was just a wonderful little car in every respect. He recalled occasions when he actually raced against the bigger cars like Elfin 700s and won simply because the Mono was so good.*

*Why did he sell it then? He wanted to move up to Formula 2 and it was cheaper to buy a Birana than modify the Elfin. He advertised it and next thing he had Mel on the phone wanting to buy it back. A deal was done and Mel took the car without motor and gearbox.*

*Our conversation ended with Barry saying the Birana was nowhere near as good as the Elfin Mono... he should have kept it. We agreed to catch up over a beer some time and recall more old racing stories...*

*Ean McDowell*

*19<sup>th</sup> April 2007.*