

Driver Profile.....Mick Harris

Occupation....Gofer at wife's garden nursery, The Tree Garden Kent

Lives....within earshot of Brands Hatch with wife Sue Harris

Current car....Half-built Darvi 877T & borrowed Darvi 597 from my wife

As a teenager in the late 60's & 70's I used to go with my family to spectate at the Spedeworth oval circuits at the White City, Wimbledon & Aldershot. I would watch the "stars" including No 306 George Polley. Spooky how some years later I became friends with George & all his family through his supply of tyres to the 750MC & 750 Formula & through my wife's associations within the British Women Racing Drivers Club.

I left school at 16 & tried to get a job at a local racing firm in Bourne End, Motor Racing Enterprise, but they didn't take on apprentices. So I got a job at the local Ford dealership, a trade I stayed in all my working life. The chap I was "boy" to, Alan, had a friend who was building a racing car with his brother. I went to the pub one night with Alan & met Dick & Jon Harvey who were building a car called Darvi (Mk2) in the evenings & weekends. (This car is currently in restoration with Roger Saretzki).

Dick Harvey,
Mk 2 Darvi,
Silverstone.
With Mick
Harris & Jon
Harvey as
"Spanners"
& Bob Harvey



Thus started a lifelong close friendship with the Harvey family. I started to help out, getting more & more involved until it became a full spare-time hobby & I went racing with them as "Spanners" over the following years. As a reward, Dick offered me a race in his Darvi Mk2. So I paid my fee to the RAC (MSA), got my licence & I was a "racing driver"!! No ARDS in those days.

First race. Mick Harris,
Darvi Mk2. Lydden Hill.
13th April 1975



In those days there were less formulae in the 750MC & the 750's were very popular with entry numbers meaning 2 or 3 races to accommodate everyone. The fastest qualified for The Race, with "consolation" races for the others, meaning that cars could be shared on the same day by different drivers, which helped to keep costs down.

So we did.

Lydden Hill was my first ever (consolation) race in 1975 with Dick in the main race. I managed to finish 3rd, despite my first ever spin in a car. We continued over the following years to race this way sharing the Mk3 & Mk4 Darvis.



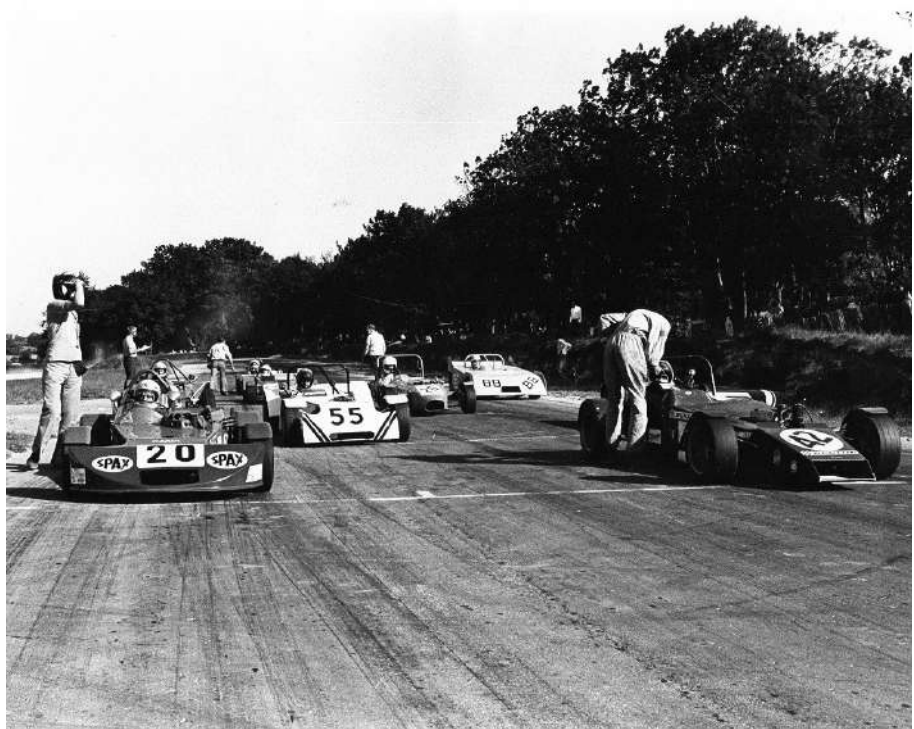
Darvi Mk3,
Mick Harris.
1976

Darvi Mk4.
Top Dick Harvey, main race.
Bottom Mick Harris, consolation race.



Both Dick & I had similar pace, but because it was his car, he would always have the main race. This led to some understandable “mutterings” in the paddock about me racing the “quick” car in consolation races & getting results.

Pic shows first ever
win....Lydden, Consolation
race. Mick Harris, No 20.
Darvi Mk3. 1977



To overcome the problem, we built the Darvi Mk5 (now in the hands of Rory Melia) & I took over the Mk4 full time which we updated to Mk5 spec & it became the Mk 4/5. (This is the car now in the hands of Simon Boulter/ex Peter Bove/Tim Cousins & others).

We now had a car each & raced with each other, normally at close quarters & often with honours split between us.

Our Darvi “team” continued with our various cars from 1978 until Dick suffered a major stroke in 2003.

Mick Harris, 6,
Mk 4/5
Dick Harvey, 3,
Mk5



Mick Harris, 4,
Darvi Mk 4/5
Dick Harvey, 5,
Darvi Mk5. Bob
Simpson cocking
his leg with Tina
Simpson (seated)





My first “proper/main” race, in the Mk 4/5, was in 1979 and I managed my first “proper” win that year.



Mick Harris, Darvi Mk 4/5, Snetterton, 1981



Close Racing.

Dick Harvey, Darvi Mk5
Iain Sclanders, DNC Mk5
Mick Harris, Darvi Mk 4/5
Snetterton 1981

More experience & confidence in that car led to my first Championship in 1982, retaining the title the following year in 1983.

Close racing.

1983. Mick Harris. Darvi Mk 4/5. With Bob Simpson & Keith Cooper (no 5). Carrying no 1....first Championship done, heading for the next in 1983.



In those days we often raced at 2 different circuits in a weekend. Life was hectic. And we still found time to pop in a 6-hour Relay during the season, not at the end of the season as it is these days!

Team 27,
Silverstone 6
Hour Birkett
Relay, 1981



The Mk 4/5 was sold to Nev Cooke at the end of 1983 and I started the construction of my new car and spannered for Dick in the interim.

3 years later, in 1987, the 877 (Darvi Mk7 in '87) took to the track at Donington for the first time.

1987. 1st year with the Darvi 877

Mick Harris. NOT Flying The Mountain.
Cadwell.

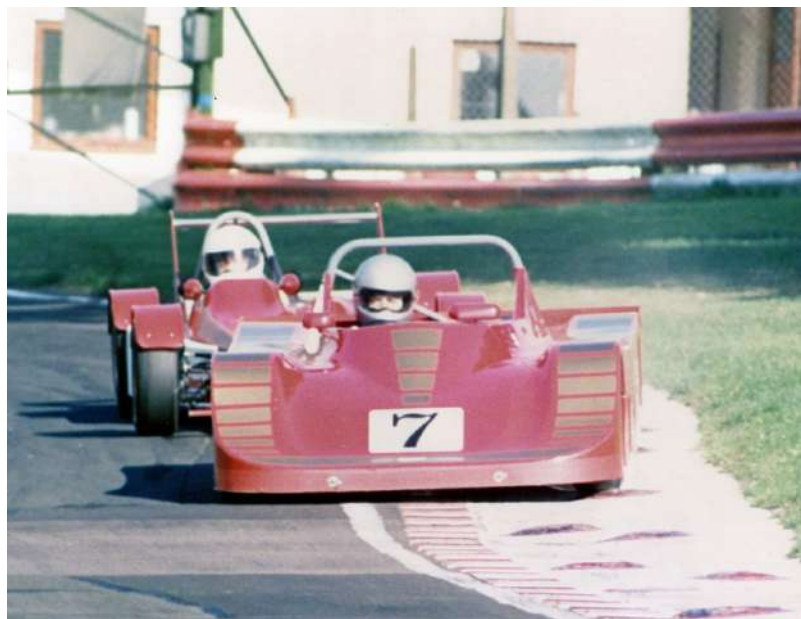


Mick Harris. Lydden. 1987

Suspension needed sorting that first year!

Sorted out the Gremlins. Added Go Faster stripes for 1988. Won Championship No3.

Mick Harris. Exiting Mallory hairpin chased by Bob Simpson in his SS Reliant. 1988. Close racing.





1988. 6 Hour Birkett Relay.
Snetterton. Darvi 877

This car has taken me to a further 7 Championships in its various guises.

1988. Close teammates way ahead of the field. Defending Champion Dick Harvey, Darvi 869 & Mick Harris Darvi 877. Mallory hairpin.



I fancied a different view of
Mallory Hairpin!

With Ernie Frost, Darvi 88EF, now the 88P in the hands of Peter Bove. And the Harrison of Kevin Smith (?), later of Steve Boother & Huw Davies.



Rear wing , rear
bodywork mods.

Rear wing & nose mods.

More CLOSE racing. Look closely &
you will see Mick, Anthony Raine &
Bob Simpson!



Win at Brands
with major
engine mods.

Now running
the FIAT 1108
Fire Engine
instead of the
Reliant 850



Darvi 877.

Flying the Mountain at Cadwell in its final form.



Dick Harvey's stroke caused his instant retirement from normal life, & in 2003 we honoured him and all the years of our joint Darvi racing by entering the "Harvey's Darvis" team in the Birkett 6 Hour Relay at Silverstone.

Peter Bove (in car), Bill Rutter, Peter Sleight, Mick Harris, Dick Harvey & Sue Buxton. 6 Hour Relay Silverstone 2003. "Harvey's Darvis" team.



My Championships came in 1982, '83, '88, '94, '96, '97, '99, 2002, '04 & '05

I have also been fortunate to win the Jem Marsh Trophy for Best Turned out 750F car in 1979, 1982 jointly with Dick Harvey, '88, '90, '94, '95, 2001 & 2011.

And the Bill Cowley Trophy for Highest Placed Driver in a car of his Own Design & Construction in 1982, '83, '88, '89, '90, '93, '94, '95, '96, '97, '99, 2002, '04, '05, '07 & 2011

I've been doing it a long time!



Young Mick Harris & Dick Harvey

Below....
not so young Mick Harris



Above....2005 Winners.

L to R

Back row Ian Allen, Martin Kemp, Roger Rowe, Bill Rutter

Middle..Nigel Saunders, Peter Bove, Anthony Raine

Front..Mick Harris, Sue Buxton

In 2001 Dick & I were spectating at Snetterton (much too cold to be out racing in the first races of the season) and as the pack left the line at the start a jink from someone on the outer edge of the circuit led to a series of other drivers aiming right. This resulted in Steve Boother & Sue Buxton slamming into the wall just at the exit of the pitlane. Steve was able to get out, but Sue was out cold for a while & the medics decided a trip to hospital was in order. Tina Simpson travelled with Sue in the ambulance to Norwich hospital as chaperone & I followed to collect them both while Dick got Sue's car on the trailer & drove it to High Wycombe as he was going to have to do a fair bit of work to do on it!

After a few hours it was apparent that there were some fractures (ribs & wrists) and I drove Sue & Tina back to Dick's. From that day on my life changed a bit. Sue & I became a couple shortly afterwards & we became 'Im 'n 'Er Racing.

My car went to live in Kent & we raced from Kent in convoy.



(No, that's Silverstone, not Sue's garage!)

Darvi Mk 5 front-engined & the 877's rear-engined configurations.

My history in a nutshell!



In 2009 we married on the quiet, much to the disbelief of some of our 750 friends who knew nothing about it & thought we were joking, & rather to the disbelief of me! From then on we became Team Harris.

In 2015 we went to Mallory.

Mick's Darvi 877,
Sue's Darvi 597,
Andrew Lake's ex Dick
Harvey Darvi 91D (no 43)



I was having a great dice with Bill Cowley when I spun at the Esses, causing another driver to T-bone the back end of my car. The race was stopped & the other driver taken to hospital. The 877 didn't look too bad from the outside, but when we got home it was obvious that the back end of the Darvi 877 was well bent. I had been stopped by the other half of Team Harris from cutting the car in half to convert it to a transverse layout for some years. Now was the perfect time for her to concede & for me to update the car again, albeit in a fairly major way.

The original concept of the 750 Formula was for amateurs to design/create a car on a limited budget & to race it. It's what I love to do. Since then I have been working to transform the car again to the Darvi 877T (transverse engine configuration).



Old meets New.

During these “building years” I’ve also been Sue’s Spanners for her 750Formula & BWRDC racing, so I’ve been busy!



Snetterton, 2018

Silverstone BWRDC Ladies only race, Walter Hayes Meeting.



Both of us in Team Harris have also become new bikers in our old age, both passing our tests 1st time at 60+, & at the same time (thankfully!). As we think of a race circuit as a 2nd home, we feel more comfortable on track than on the road! It seems whatever we do, we BOTH have to do it!



‘Im n ‘Er
Brands Hatch, Clearways



Mallory, VMCC Bike Bonanza. 1936 Norton 50

The opportunity arose to experience being a passenger on an F1 sidecar.....awesome!
Never been so quick! The phrase “Hanging on for dear life” never meant so much.



Mick with Alan Founds



Sue with Kevin Cable



After 3 busy varied years, Sue decided it was high time I got back into a race car. Problem was, we only had the one. Hers!

Sue insists that I change nothing on her car, so except for some seat mods to accommodate my longer legs, off we went to Mallory.



It had been 25 years since I raced a front engined Mk5. I was nervous, but nowhere near as nervous as Sue!



After a few laps I felt at home & happy to qualify 5th. The first race went without mishap, but I bumped into the back of Rod Hill in the 2nd which curtailed my day.

You bends it, you mends it, says Sue!



Instead of sharing the 597 for 2019, Sue decided the rest of the season was mine. So off we headed to Donington & Oulton.

I was fortunate to be on the podium at both circuits. Much to Sue's joy & envy....she blames my right foot for being bigger than hers!



Winner Peter Bove, Darvi 88P
2nd Mark Glover Racekits Falcon
3rd Mick Harris, Darvi 597



Winner David Batholemew, PRS
2nd Peter Bove, Darvi 88P
3rd Mick Harris, Darvi 597

The plan was for me to drive the 597 for 2020 while trying to finish the 877T.

We changed that when Covid came along. The plan is now for me to race in 2021 in Sue's car while she spansners, & for us both to come out in 2022.

We're working on it. Watch this space.....

