

Name: Peter Bove

Current 750 Formula Car: Darvi 88-P

How I started

November 1978 – University College Hospital – I was in for exploratory tests to discover what illness I was suffering from and, late one evening, I was chatting to the medic assigned to my case who has just seen the initial test results – “probably months rather than years” was the prognosis and it got me to thinking about all the things that I wanted to do, but never found time for. Motor racing was top of that list. A week later and it turned out that the cancer I had was Lymphoma and I had a 50% chance of survival, but in that week I came to realise that life is not infinite.

I bought an Enduro bike (my friends were also looking to compete at the time) and entered a British Enduro Championship round in Galashiels. Not the smartest move for someone still on Chemotherapy and having had 18 months of treatment, but I started and made it to the first checkpoint (around 30 miles from the start) at which point I was violently ill and retired. But I’d made my start.



Four years later, I decided to sell the bike and move to something safer. I’d read a series of articles about a 750F car being rebuilt and raced in CCC. I went to some race meetings, had a chat to various people and it all looked doable so I bought a 750F Hague rolling chassis which was advertised in Autosport for £400. I then went to a race meeting at Mallory Park and I swear that the cars had doubled in speed by then...Hmm.

The Hague hadn’t been raced for some years so needed a full strip down and rebuild – which had to be accomplished from a lock up garage with no light or power. I bought an engine from Jonathan Salem and entered my first race at Snetterton, having never driven the car or, indeed, having driven on a circuit. Practice was eventful, with a huge rocker box oil leak (I didn’t know the correct sealing process) so I only got in three laps and a very oily leg.



Being on a tight budget, I was using cut slicks for both dry and wet running but they were not really up to the torrential downpour that we had for the race and I managed three spins, including one full 360 on the main straight.....ho hum!

Anyway, I survived and finished 13th, but importantly, not last.

The Hague was a great little car and now lives in the USA with Alan Collard. It took me to a number of top four finishes in but after two years I decided to move to FF2000. I sold the car to Rick Goodyear and bought a Crossle 41F which I managed to write off testing it at Brands Hatch, breaking both my legs and ankles in the process.

After two months in a wheel chair I decided that I needed something safer, but it needed to have an engine. I looked at lawnmower racing – nahh, couldn't run, power boat racing – more dangerous, flying – too tedious, gliding, fabulous, but not for me and sailing. None really grabbed me and in 1992 I bought another 750 Formula car – the blue, white and yellow ex-Ernie Frost Darvi 88-EF from Bob Warren.

It had a blown engine when I bought it, so I got the engine repaired by Mr Harvey, acquired a Pi System2 Data Logger from formula stalwart Mike Holmes, rebuilt the chassis and entered a race at Donington.



Results were not that exciting. I do recall leading a race for the first time in 2000 and, in my Monday morning chat with Dick I was bubbling with "Dick, I led half the race" to which he replied, "yes, the wrong half"..... he had a way with words our Mr Harvey!



At the start of the 2001 season Dick built me a new engine out of a lightly used bottom end and the head I'd been using previously. This was both quick and completely reliable and took me to both my first win (on the Donington GP circuit) and, later in the year, my first championship.

I continued to develop the, now orange, Darvi 88-P and managed to scrape a second championship in 2006. I'd been testing springs at Mallory Park and found that going from 200lb to 900lb on the front and 90 to 300lb on the back made the car more

responsive.....My first race with the stiffer setup was at Mallory and I sat on the grid in streaming rain wondering what the stiffer setup would be like in the wet..... I won by 21 seconds, so it went OK.

The following year I won 10/14 races for my third championship and in 2008 7/14 for my fourth.

I recall times over the years when we would be in the paddock speculating about who was going to finish second on the day, due to one driver (typically Mr Harris) being so dominant. I now found that I was that driver and thought that it was unhealthy to continue. Robin Gearing had thought about building a car, so I lent him the Darvi and, eventually, he took it to its fifth championship win.



My new ride was ADR shaped and it proved to be a big change from the Darvi –my main



claim to fame being beating Mick at Brands Hatch to win in front of my work colleagues. Sadly, they were not able to attend every race so it was my only win in the ADR. I wanted another Darvi and contacted Tim Cousins about the Mk 4/5. A deal was done and I converted the car to Fiat power in 2012.

Sadly, 2013 I was struck down with a heart issue and couldn't race so Jon Lee debuted the car at Silverstone. There were lots of issues, but over the following three years, I gradually improved it to the point where, in 2016 it was really competitive with fastest laps, albeit, my best finish was 2nd.

I faced a choice when Robin retired and was drawn back to the 88-P although, the Mk 4/5 was unfinished business for me. I'm really pleased that Simon has acquired the car and I think he will have a lot of success in it. The final chapter was getting back on to the top step of the podium in 2019 with wins at Brands and Donington.

So here I am, 39 race wins, four championships, first driver to win 10 races in a season, only driver to win three straight championships (partly due to Mick taking a year out after most of his). It's been a great journey, greatly aided by Dick Harvey, Jon Lee and Rod Hill, all of whom I owe a significant chunk of my success.



The Car

Darvi 88-P– one of two built in 1988 by Dick and finished by Ernie Frost.

Engine by Ant Denham, Polestar ignition, carb manifold and setup by Jon Lee.

Quaife QBM1M 4 speed sequential gearbox.

Aim data logger and steering wheel.