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Age: 52

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Location: Charlton Village, Andover, Hampshire

Current 750 Formula Car: Darvi MK5

Motorsport Background

My interest in motorsport started many years ago, my father had been a co-driver in club rallying for as long as I could remember so there was already racing in the blood.

I worked in the motor trade until I was 29 (1997) at which point the opportunity arose for me to join the growing family business selling software to the scientific industry. My father and I were introduced to the 750 Formula by my Uncle, Colin Boother and Tony Batten who invited us to a race meeting at Thruxton in 1998 with a view for our company Autoscribe to become the formula sponsor. We met a great bunch of people, had a ride in the course car to lead the pack around to the grid and the 750MC provided us with lunch. At the end of the 750 Formula race I presented Mick Harris with a bottle of bubbly and a presentation plaque - see below.



The decision was made to become the 750 Formula sponsor for the 1999 season, and we were looking forward to being involved at the sponsor level. It was shortly after this that we became aware of a couple of cars that were for sale and we decided that we would be racing drivers as well as sponsors. An ARDS course was done at Thruxton and the purchase of the Harrison MK5 from Carl Bustin finalised. Car pictured below at Cadwell Park.



So, this was the start of my motorsport involvement at a driver level.

I did two years of 750 Formula racing winning the highest placed new-comer award in 1999 and clinching 3rd in the Class B championship in 2000.

My father, John, raced the Harrison in an all-comers scratch race at Silverstone in 1999 and had a great battle all race with an MG Midget. I have to say I was worried because most of the grid were much larger cars than the 750 but he got through unscathed but had no clutch left at the end.

Sadly, in the first race of 2001 at Snetterton I was involved in an accident that damaged the Harrison and sent both Sue Harris (Buxton as it was then) and I heavily into the Armco before the first corner on the first lap. Just to clarify this was neither of our making as it was a succession of punting off the start line that ended with Sue and I being pushed off. The damage to the car was mainly at the front end and the chassis went off to Dick Harvey to be repaired.

It was an interesting moment in 750F history as Mick Harris accompanied Sue in the ambulance to hospital after which they became partners and ultimately married; I can claim to have had a hand in that 😊.

At this time my partner was heavily pregnant with our first child and so I decided that it was not the time to continue circuit racing and put the pile of bits up for sale once the chassis came back. Huw Davies did a great job of re-building the car, but the chassis was never quite right, and Huw decided to start from scratch on a new chassis. Apparently, part of the Harrison lives on in Huws' car, the inlet manifold I believe.

We did buy another 750 Formula car during the two years racing the Harrison which was an RS750. This car was refurbished by Adrian Daniels and purchased by us. I drove it once on a Silverstone test day and then sold it on.



Missing the thrill of motorsport, I bought a Lotus Elise S1 and proceeded to start sprinting at many locations across the south of the UK and had quite a bit of class success with it. I still have the car today and keep it gently wrapped up in the garage for the odd sunny day out.



My next venture was into single seater sprinting and hill climbing with a MK1 Jedi 600. When I bought the car, it was a 500cc 2 stroke triple and sounded incredible, but it needed a team of people just to start the thing, so I had the engine swapped out for a Honda 600. Car pictured below at Lydden Hill.



I had some fun with the Jedi for a couple of years but it was outclassed by the 1100 machines and so I upgraded to an OMS 2000M Kawasaki 1100cc powered hill climb car in 2010. This car was a massive step up in power and precision. Hill climbing in one of these is an experience that cannot really be put down on paper, you need to try it. Having said that, the power of acceleration with the clutch less upshifts is something to behold. Not having to lift off to change up, excellent.

Car pictured below at Shelsley Walsh.



Date: 4th June 2020

I had a lot of success in this car with many FTD's (fastest time of the day) and three Class championships in the ASEM.C.

I do still have the OMS at the time of writing, I have advertised it for sale but to be honest I am not disappointed that it has not found a buyer yet 😊.

During my time sprinting I became friends with Simon Boulter who also went down the Jedi and OMS route before leaving the series to go circuit racing. It was only after he purchased his next car that I became aware that he had bought an Historic 750 Formula car and I suddenly felt the draw of 750 racing again myself. Simon has had a great success in re-building and racing his historic 750 and I must say I was tempted to join them if the right car was to be found but slicks and wings are for me and so I jumped at the opportunity of buying Lynfel Owen's Darvi MK5 when it came up for sale. I had raced against this car back in the day in the hands of Peter Sleight, so I knew it fairly well. Paul Collins had owned it before Lynfel racing in the familiar Yellow and red team colour of Rhubarb and Custard. The car is a race winner in the formula, Brands Hatch in 2000 driven by Peter Sleight if I remember correctly.

I spent the winter of 2019/20 stripping the car and cleaning it up. I made the decision to paint the car in the original Team Darvi colours with support from Mick and Sue Harris and I hope Dick is looking down on me with approval. Although this car was never painted in these team colours, I felt it was the right thing to do.

I took the car to the 2020 Silverstone test day for its first run out with the help of Simon to shake it down. It ran very well first time out so very little to change at this point. I was pretty much ready for the start of the season and then the virus pandemic hit us all. Hoping we will get out at some point this year, Mallory is looking promising. May have to update this at some point.



Why 750 Formula?

The 750 Formula for me is a great community of like-minded people interested in having fun in a competitive racing environment, willing to share experiences and ideas for improvement in both in racing technique and car preparation. I personally do not think there is more value for money in slicks and wings racing that you can have in 750 Formula. Cars are affordable and easily maintainable even for those who are not so mechanically minded. The formula offers an environment from car designers and builders to people who just want to buy a car and get involved. I think the fact that there are some people in the formula who have been racing within it for literally decades speaks volumes. A great place to be racing.

What could we do to improve?

There is already a good community on the 750 Formula forum who regularly post interesting information for the benefit of all. For me there does seem to be an issue with grid numbers which does need to be addressed for the future security of the formula and has been a discussion point for many years. Perhaps we need to think of new innovative ways of making the formula known to more people, social media does help but it needs continually feeding with new info. I think there are a limited number of people who will invest in designing and building new cars themselves, Martin Kemp has contributed greatly to this as a manufacturer of 750 cars and this has brought new people to the grid who may well have otherwise gone elsewhere. There are a huge number of pre-existing cars out there that are just not being used and these do need to be tracked down and either the owners tempted back to the track or to make the cars available either by sale or the arrive and drive option which does seem to be viable given what has been said on the forum.

A bit of work to do but I think by pulling resources together we can make a difference.