

Pat Stride was born in London in 1928 and from an early age had a passionate interest in planes and cars which led him to serve apprenticeships in airframe fitting and Rolls Royce aircraft engines.

He left the airforce in 1948 but the following year rejoined to complete his training as a qualified pilot initially flying Meteors but then spending three years in Germany during the cold war flying Vampires to be followed by time in the Sabre F86 jet.

All this time he was a regular spectator at race meetings but it wasn't until 1961 that Pat started competing having sold his Triumph TR2 to buy an early Lotus Seven which he raced for a year at circuits such as Goodwood ,Silverstone ,Mallory Park ,Snetterton and Oulton Park.

In 1963 Pat moved to Australia to take up a position in Melbourne as an air traffic controller before being posted to Launceston in 1964.

About this time Pat was keen to get back into the sport but with limited funds to go racing he needed something that was simple but cost effective.

Formula Vee was proving to be very successful in America with its simple triangulated space frame construction and utilisation of the standard VW 1200 cc engine, gearbox and suspension components.

Pat designed the chassis jig and together with Mike Bessant they built what are believed to be the first two Formula Vees in Australia with the cars making their race debut at Symmons Plains in October 1965.

Known as Scarabs the cars were built in a small shed at Evandale with a further four cars built by others using the Scarab design.

Pat and Mike enjoyed considerable success often finishing first and second with Mike the driver to beat due his

lighter weight and a slightly better tuned engine

Local enthusiast Mary Jolliffe then commissioned Pat to build a new car called a Gremlin, which Pat raced with success but never one to stand still Pat had plans to build a Formula two car based on the American Super Vees which ran the larger 1600cc engines.

While awaiting the arrival of components from England, Pat gathered up some surplus bits in his Kings Meadows garage and constructed the Ford powered rear engine Gremlin sports car which has since been restored by Launceston enthusiast Randall Langdon.

Pat raced the car with success before the VW powered Gremlin F2 arrived on the scene in November 1970.

This car featured a chassis designed by Pat utilising a number of lotus suspension components and a highly developed engine that was run up to 9000 rpm.

Pat raced the car until 1973 before purchasing the ex John McCormack Elfin 600c rolling chassis into which he installed a Fiat engine.

Unfortunately the engine blew up on the back straight at Symmons Plains in 1974 and with the costs of competing spiraling Pat decided it was time to retire.

Pat was the secretary/Manager of the Tasmanian Motor Racing Club which ran Symmons Plains for about a year but maintained his involvement in the sport as an official in various capacities well into the 1980s.

Profile by Barry Oliver.



## PROFILE

*Pat Stride*



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