



Frances and Keith Parker

Frances and Keith Parker were totally immersed in the drag racing scene throughout two decades. Frances was the first to get drawn in when in the 1970s she replied to an advertisement seeking a membership secretary working from home. That advertisement was placed by the National Drag Racing Club (NDRC) and after being interviewed by Alan Wigmore, Cliff Jones and Chris Urlwin she got the job.

She was pretty good so, as is the way in drag racing, it wasn't long before she was asked to be the race secretary as well. She asked husband Keith if he would like to attend drag race meetings to help out and so the Parker's involvement in drag racing stepped up a gear. Before long their children, Linda and Stephen became part of the scene as well. Frances carried on in her secretarial roles, whilst Keith, after starting out on gate duty ended up being the NDRC Vice-Chairman.

They became even more involved during the latter part of NDRC Race Promoter Clive Skilton's European Dragways era. As sponsorship dwindled it was decided that the club would organize and promote its own meetings at Blackbushe, Wroughton and Snetterton. They managed to survive doing this for a couple of seasons but financially the club was struggling and, as the number of venues available around the country was drying up, it became clear that a permanent base was needed – hence the project of Long Marston Raceway. This turned out to be a mammoth task during the Winter of '79-80 when the club members, volunteers, friends and families virtually lived on the site - turning it from 1/8th mile strip with no facilities, to a fully Armco ¼ mile drag racing venue that opened on May 10th 1980.

The NDRC continued to operate until 1987 when financial pressures and the vagaries of the British weather became too much. Keith and Frances left the sport at this time. But by then they had played a major role in bringing drag racing to the public and establishing a permanent drag strip that still operates today. Keith was also involved in taking the sport into Europe. Their joint induction into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame recognizes two decades of total commitment to the sport.