obviously pretty similar (both drivers are leading contenders in the class) but the later car just felt that little bit more precise; it seemed to go exactly where you put it. I did detect a little bit of understeer when turning in at Shaws Hairpin, which I hadn't observed in the Mk18. But then I was probably growing in confidence by then, and pushing a little harder in fact. It was most acute if I turned in too fast, or tried to accelerate too soon. The Mk27 (and the Mk18 for that matter) would slide the tail under power, but neither had enough of it to kick the tail all the way round. So getting round the hairpin was a matter of turning in at exactly the right speed, then hitting the throttle at just the right moment. Get it right and it was very satisfying. Get it wrong, and you had understeer, then oversteer... sometimes both at the same time!

Possibly because of the firmer suspension, the Mk27 felt very quick and stable at Gerrards. According to Rod Hunter, in a dry race in the middle of summer, he (and, one assumes, the rest of them) would be going in to Gerrards flat - no braking, no lifting. But the disadvantage of firmer suspension manifested itself in one way: the Mk27 didn't much care for being asked to ride the kerbs, especially at the Esses. Rod Hunter also had a bit of a squirt in the Mk18, and found it similar to his own Mk27, but a little vague to drive, not quite as precise or responsive.

And then came the moment I had really been looking forward to, as I lowered myself easily into the roomy cockpit of the Mk2, evocatively turned out in British Racing Green... as all 'proper' race cars were in those days, of course. Johnny Street's Mk2 is one of the oldest cars known to be still in existence: the dash-mounted chassis plate proudly bears the legend U2/2! It is still actively campaigned in US historic racing, and was brought to the UK especially for Arthur Mallock's 75th birthday celebration, which is a measure of the esteem in which he was held. In fact, U2/2 was the last car ever raced by The Major, at Laguna Seca, California, in 1991.

It is turned out in historic Formula Junior spec, with a Geoff Richardson-prepared 1100cc Ford engine producing a claimed 130bhp at 8600rpm. It drives through a Ford 2000E gearbox (a later addition, one suspects) to a BMC A-series live axle suspended on leaf springs at the rear. Up front one finds a Ford swing axle of the type that was very popular (read cheap and readily available) on specials at the time. Oh... and drum brakes!

The complete car weighs just 400kg, and with no wings or other aerodynamic appendages, a narrow track and minimal frontal area, the Mk2 is very quick in a straight line, having been clocked at 135mph on occasion, with acceleration to match. Indeed, that was the first thing I noticed as I accelerated out of the pits for the first time, and the incredible straightline performance continued to surprise me - not to mention the drivers of more modern machinery I was sharing the track with - throughout my few laps. There was little power under about 7000rpm, but from there round to 9000rpm, it *flew*. Driving it, the Mk2 gave one the curious feeling that there was no hindrance to acceleration, almost as if The Major had somehow discovered an antidote to friction!

The 12in-diameter steering wheel - large by modern standards - needs a lot of input, such that the steering feels a little vague at first: you need to turn the steering wheel much more than expected to effect any given degree of turn to the front wheels. At the same time, the steering feels very light, which all takes a bit of getting used

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| 1947 | First Mallock-built special, based on Austin Seven, supercharged. |
| 1949 | Austin Seven Special WJ1515 (Ford-powered from 1950-59) |
| 1958 | Mk1 U2 prototype: won Ford championship of Ireland (Arthur Mallock); swing-axle front suspension |
| 1960-62 | Mk2 Production U2 eligible for Formula Junior, 1172F and 1000cc sports: won Formula Junior race at Nurburgring (John Harwood) and 750MC 1172F championship (Arthur Mallock) |
| 1963 | Mk3 Sports and Formula 3: won 1172F championship (The Major again); coil spring rear suspension |
| 1964 | Mk4 Sports |
| 1965 | Mk5 Clubman sports and 1172 Formula: winner inaugural Clubman sports championship (Dave Wragg) |
| 1966-67 | Mk6/6B Clubman sports and Formula 2 |
| 1968 | Mk7 Formula Ford 1600: wishbone front suspension |
| 1968-70 | Mk8/8B Clubman sports |
| 1969-71 | Mk9/9B Formula Ford 1600 |
| 1969 | Mk9DD Works FF1600 with deDion rear axle. Mk10 road car(!) |
| 1971 | Mk11 Clubman sports: winner of 22 races from 23 starts (Ray Mallock). Mk11B Formula 3 |
| 1972 | Mk12 Clubman sports and Formula 3: won Clubman sports championship (Richard Mallock); deDion rear axle. Mk14 Clubman sports (Mk14E with experimental rear-mounted radiator). Mk15 Clubman sports; deDion rear axle, first use of aerofoils. (Mk13 Not allocated) |
| 1975 | Mk16 Clubman sports. Mk17 Clubman sports: last short-wheelbase; deDion rear axle (Mk17B - narrow track version). Mk18/18B Clubman sports: long wheelbase (Mk18B - Watts linkage). Mk18C Clubman sports; Watts linkage incorporated into frame (Mk18E - Formula Ford 2000 version) |
| 1977 | Mk19 Clubman sports: long-wheelbase version of Mk17 |
| 1978-79 | Mk20/20B Clubman sports: also eligible for F1300, FF1600, FF2000, and Formula Atlantic, with suitable modifications |
| 1980 | Mk21 Clubman sports: stiffer chassis; upright rear dampers; low-mounted rear anti-roll bar. Mk22 Clubman B sports and FF1600 |
| 1981 | Mk23 Clubman sports: ground effects; computer-designed front suspension |
| 1982 | Mk24 Clubman sports: ground effect; monocoque front bulkhead (Mk24B - no ground effect; shortened tail) |
| 1984 | Mk25 'Works' Thundersports car: semi-monocoque chassis. Mk26 Clubman sports: one-off with side radiators to achieve low polar moment of inertia |
| 1985 | Mk27 Clubman sports: as Mk26 but with conventional front radiator |
| 1986-88 | Mk27SG Clubman sports: short wheelbase; ground effects rear end; fibreglass tail; TAM (trailing arm magic) rear suspension |
| 1989-90 | Mk28 Clubman sports: first Vauxhall Supersports version (won championship with Vernon Davies); all-enveloping nose plus venturis (also available as Sports 1600 version) |
| 1991 | Mk29 Clubman sports: shortened tail section; carbon fibre wing stays; improved venturis |
| 1992 | Mk30 Clubman sports: enclosed rear wheels (found to be worth 5bhp in MIRA wind tunnel!) |
| 1993 | Mk30PR Clubman sports: as Mk30 but with pull-rod rear suspension |