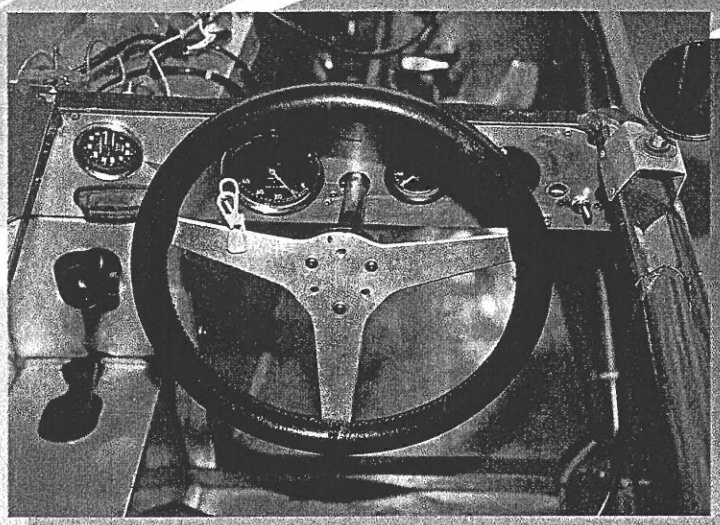
to at first. The brakes have quite a lot of travel. And the gear lever travel is quite long. Indeed, the heavily cranked lever is almost reminiscent of a Citroën 2CV-type umbrella handle gearshift, albeit that the action is not quite the same, of course. So the Mk2 demands large inputs to all the controls, far removed from the flick-of-the-wrist inputs of its antecedents.

In deference to its age, historical significance and potentially fragile BMC A-series rear axle, I used second rather than first gear at the hairpin, and treated the throttle with a great deal of respect. I'm sure 100 yard's-worth of wheelspin would have been achievable otherwise!

Unlike the other later cars, which are glued to the road by wings or ground effect bodywork, the Mk2 needed a good dab on the brakes at Gerrards, where it occasionally produced a slightly disconcerting weave. Whether that was a vagary of the swing axles, a smidgen of bump steer, or just the drum brakes pulling slightly I couldn't be sure. At the hairpin the brakes felt a bit soft but very easy to modulate, and surprisingly effective. There is no doubt that disc brakes (which were just becoming more commonplace and readily available at the time the U2 was built) are superior to drums, but the difference is not as great as people tend to assume, especially in a car as light as the Mk2.

Indeed it is instructive, but far from easy, to try to put this car in some sort of historical perspective. It dates from the time before racing engineers had really twigged to the importance of cornering speed in racing car performance, a process which began a few years later in the mid-sixties, when wheel and tyre widths rose rapidly. Up until that era of rapid tyre development, the emphasis was generally on straight-line speed. In order to make a given car faster, race engineers of the day would usually look to an increase in power, better 'streamlining', or a reduction in weight. That is all readily apparent when you drive the U2. It is only fair in cornering and under braking - although common sense and the



● **Richard Mallock (left in top pic) looks set to continue the family tradition. Left: They don't build 'em like that any more - cockpit of U2/2. Below: Braking for Mallory's hairpin in the Mk30PR proved to be a test of Our Man's bottle**