

## **Arthur Mallock, 'Bren', 'Bombsk' and U2**

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Major Arthur Mallock is one of the most important personalities of British motor sport.

Born in 1918, he was by 1938 a regular officer in the Royal Corps of Signals, and until 1980 an electronics engineer at Hanslope Park, the Government communication centre, living in nearby Roade just a few miles from Silverstone.

As a boy, he built Meccano racing cars, bicycles and simple valve radio sets until a visit one day to Lewes Speed Trial brought him into life-changing contact with John Bolster's 'Bloody Mary' with its Austin Seven front corners, Arthur planning his own Seven Special as he cycled home.

At 17 he bought his first Austin Seven for £3, followed by a Gordon England Cup, then built his first Special on a 1932 van chassis, lowered with a Williams' kit, and with rudimentary tuning, he entered Hartlepool Speed Trial in the short summer of 1939.

Volunteering for pilot training, he met Jack French in 1942 and began an immediate friendship, and post-war built a trials car 'Bren' which was almost the equal of an ex-Works Grasshopper at a 1946 Trial.

The car which followed was 'Bombsk' built by Jack and Arthur in Jack's soon-to-be-famous green shed, on a road legal Austin Seven chassis WJ 1515, with an almost standard engine plus a Marshall Supercharger, and minimalist bodywork.

This skimpy device created a sensation at the 1947 Northern Experts Trial when Arthur beat Ken Warton, at the time acknowledged as being the supreme Trials exponent. Unbeknown to those present however was that shortly before, Arthur with the car in race spec, had already won two races at the Tolthorpe Yorkshire secret 'race meeting that never was'.

With the bodywork tidied up by Jack, Arthur was at 'the black market sprint' at Luton Hoo where police took names and (still rationed) petrol samples of the runners, a hurried switch of Arthur's twin fuel tanks saving the day!

WJ 1515 was equally at home at hill-climbs, sprints, races and trials, and after a brief and dismal attempt at 500cc racing in a CRM, the old Austin based car had an 1172cc Ford engine from Arthur's road car fitted for the 1953 1172 Formula inaugural season.

By this time, sons Raymond and Richard had been born, both to become influential in the motor sport world, and Arthur continued to use WJ 1515 in evolving forms in 1172 Formula racing. Ever quicker and almost catching the Lotus Elevens, Arthur shared his experiences and expertise in writing for the 750 Motor Club Bulletin and motoring magazines.

Finally in 1958 the running gear from the car was transferred from the Austin Seven frame to a purpose built space frame christened 'U2' after a bodybuilding advert of the period, to run in 1172 Formula and various other categories.

The 'Mallock U2' name was shortened to Mallock and the cars built under this name have shaped British amateur motor sport from the 1960s onwards in Clubmans and other categories driven by

luminaires like Hugh Chamberlain, Max Mosley, Frank Sytner, Andy Priaulx and Harvey Postlethwaite.

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With Arthur's passing, Richard and Sue Mallock now head Mallock Sports and Racing, and Ray Mallock RML Motorsports with wide-ranging international facilities and services including BTCC, Le Mans and Group 1.

The Mallock effect on British motor sport is incalculable and without Arthur, his example and encouragement the UK would not have enjoyed the same vibrant post-war club racing scene.

Before Arthur sadly passed away, the author had the honour to organise with the Mallock family the 1993 celebration of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday at Silverstone, Arthur leading the parade on track of U2s and Mallocks for one last time.