

John Harold Streets

1933 Stickney Lincoln, UK – 2025 Redwood City, California.

John passed away on Friday, March 21, 2025 age 91. ¹

An appreciation compiled by Marcus Bicknell (marcus@bicknell.com www.dmtgr.com)

John Streets was remarkable in his straightforwardness, an engineering and race boffin delighted to express himself in the real world. He is enormously respected on both sides of the Atlantic for his race car building and race driving experience. In the UK he is well respected for his post-war work with Arthur Mallock, one of the greatest and most innovative race car engineers never to play in the Formula 1 scene.

John and his wife Maggie emigrated from the UK to the USA in 1959 aged 22; he continued to balance his engineering professional life with motor-racing... driving and building cars. Although John never conceived and built a car entirely of his own making, his name resonates in the USA alongside the great specials builders like Baldwin, Curtis, Hagemann, Hanssen, Manning, Parkinson, Sorrell, Tatum and Von Neumann because of the 1952 Schaghticoke Streets Manning Special which bears his name and which lights up the grids at historic race events.

John Streets in the UK – with Arthur Mallock and the U2 - 1951

The U2 racing car was the creation of Major Arthur Mallock. Arthur decided to call it the U2 based on the Charles Atlas advertising campaign of 'You too can have a body like mine.' Up until that time, racing had been predominantly a rich man's sport, and Arthur's concept was to design a stiff and lightweight spaceframe chassis to which was added low-cost production car running gear and powertrain to bring motorsport to the impecunious engineering/racing enthusiast. Arthur's engineering passion and background ensured that the key performance principles of chassis stiffness, suspension geometry, lightweight, and aerodynamics were prioritized over aesthetics and following the lead of others.

There are some wonderful insights into **John Streets'** early racing activities given in *The Lone Furrow*, the biography of Arthur Mallock by Paul Lawrence (1997, ISBN 09530005208, out of print). Arthur was the creator of the U2 racing cars and the long running range of Mallock front-engine sports cars which remains so successful and popular in Club racing in the UK, Sweden and Australia. We are most grateful to Paul Lawrence for his permission to quote from this book. The excerpts add to the tribute to John Streets. Here are two examples... **John Streets** was a 17-year-old engineering apprentice. 'I was dead keen for motorsport. We were the penniless enthusiasts; we couldn't even afford to buy a book'. In these excerpts Streets also remembers another piece of Mallock ingenuity. 'The Veritas had huge tanks because it was a long distance race and the real trick was to go and get it filled up because Shell gave free petrol for the race cars. We got enough gas to get it home'. Read the full excerpt from *The Lone Furrow* at https://dmtrg.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/John_Streets_post-war_with_Arthur_Mallock.pdf.

¹ <https://obituaries.neptune-society.com/obituaries/belmont-ca/john-streets-12308347>

U2-2 was campaigned successfully by John Harwood throughout Europe in the early sixties. Including an extraordinary victory in the wet at Nürburgring in October of 1960. After a period of use as a sports car, including by commentator and Journalist Bob Constanduros, the car returned to the Mallock family in early 1980 when Arthur owned it and converted it back to Formula Junior specification. www.arthormallock.com

John Streets on the East Coast 1955-1959

Little is written about John's first sortie from the UK to the USA except that he studied at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute² in Troy NY from 1955 and lived in Quebec thereafter. One magazine does report "John Streets is a builder, racer, and a renowned Formula Vee and Formula Ford racer and Regional Champion. The Streets Manning was built through the teamwork between Manning and Wally Chapman, as they worked on it in Schaghticoke, New York, in an upstairs back bedroom of his grandmother's house. At the time, John Streets was a young engineering student that hailed from England, and he helped to finish the car. Streets also raced it in Eastern Canada and New York."³ John said in an interview "In time I moved to Canada, and as circumstances did not allow Wally to race, I bought the car and entered it in Quebec and upstate New York through the 50s".

Wheedling an invitation to the ball – the 1958 Bahamas Saga

The story as told by John Streets in Feb 2016.

"The 58 season of races in Quebec was closing when we got word of a possible invitation to the Bahamas⁴. This was surprising because our race activities were on a very low level. It was mostly production sports cars, usually just as street driven, at old airfield circuits and hill-climbs. When we ran the Manning there were only a couple of real race cars, like a Lotus Mk8 etc.

"But we learned that the Bahamas organizers were anxious to build up the international entries and had offered free entry to two Canadian cars. 'Free' meant that once you got to Miami the boat, the hotel, the parties and the race were free. What not to like! So we put up our entry and were surprised to be invited. Only two Canadian entries applied, ourselves from Montreal and The Sadler Mk111 from Toronto. Bill Sadler had KLG sponsorship and had Bob Said to drive.

"We had to hustle to prep our car to FIA specs. This meant a proper windshield, fenders that joined to the body and a roll bar. We were still running on Montgomery Ward tires and I think we had but two new ones. Then I had to get an international license. For about \$10 it was a full unrestricted FIA license and it did not have an expiry date! I was still able to use this when I came to CA and was driving the Erskine Staride Formula 3 car."

However John did not make it to the Bahamas; they lost their tow car in Georgia.

² A private research university in Troy, New York, United States. It is the oldest technological university in the English-speaking world and the Western Hemisphere

³ <https://sportscardigest.com/descendants-of-pebble-beach-drivers-take-on-the-track-this-august/>

⁴ The Bahamas Speed Week was an annual motor racing meeting held at Nassau in The Bahamas from 1954 to 1966.

John and Maggie emigrate to the USA in 1959

Jay wrote in 2020 "Although John had studied at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute⁵ in Troy NY from 1955 and had lived in Quebec, he only definitively emigrated from the UK to the United States in April of 1959. He brought with him his new bride, my mother Maggie ([photo, right](#)) and a Norton Manx powered 1953 Staride Formula 3 car.



"He raced with SCCA on all the West Coast tracks and airfields. In 1962 after my younger brother was born, he put the F3 car in the rafters of our garage and that is where it stayed as we were growing up. In 1974 when Steve Earl announced the 1st Monterey Historics, the car came down from the rafters and was refreshed for the event. My father became very active in West Coast vintage racing on many different levels. He bought, sold and raced many many cars over his years with vintage racing. He always drove, prepped and transported his cars to and from the track and he often prepped cars for his friends. I grew up coming to the track with my father and he taught me not only how to prep race cars but how to be a good racer, on and off the track. He was always there to help any other driver with anything he could, be it a spare part, a cold drink, and a sandwich or mechanical know-how. Often we would leave the track late because my father was working on not his but a friend's car. When I think of what vintage racing is about for me, it is prepping your car to the best of your ability, showing up to all the races, helping everyone you can any way you can, eating well, enjoying yourself and staying to the end."

<https://www.norwestff.com/new-blog/2020/3/5/the-1000-john-streets-garagiste-prize>

The Manning was sold and "it was almost immediately destroyed on a quarter-mile circuit. Some of the special engine and speed equipment was salvaged and saved."⁶

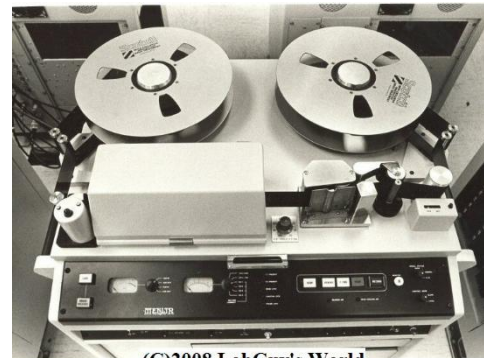
Jay wrote in April 2025 "When my father married my mother in April of 1959 he had a job offer in California working for Ampex Corporation. He brought with him the Ersky Starride F3 car with a Norton Manx that he had bought from the father of his boyhood friend, John Fenning, who would later create Willans Race Harness. They landed in New York and came across the country in a used 356 Porsch that I am sure was bought at a heavily discounted price, my father never bought himself a new car and our family never had one until 1974 when he bought a Fiat X19 on euro delivery for my mother.

⁵ A private research university in Troy, New York, United States. It is the oldest technological university in the English-speaking world and the Western Hemisphere

⁶ Source; flyer from John Streets' Zephyr Enterprises (Paolo Alto) flyer in the mid-90s.

“At Ampex⁷ my father was on the team that developed a head that could read modern video tape and held a number of patents related to video recording. In 1970 he a friend Marty Siegal started their own engineering firm, Quest Engineering. After few years the partnership broke up and my father on his own founded Merlin Engineering Works⁸ in Palo Alto named in honor of the Rolls Royce motors that powered the Spitfires of his youth. On his 60th birthday (1993) I got him a ride in a Merlin powered P52 and I had never seen him more excited in his live then when they landed.

A Merlin Engineering ME68 in 1977



(C)2008 LabGuy's World

“He raced the F3 car in the early 60’s at local airfield tracks and Laguna Seca but put the car in the rafters of our garage shortly after my brother was born. It sat there until 1974 when Steve Earl started the Monterey Historics. He brought it back to life and ran the very first event in Monterey. The second year of the Historic, he had every intention of going back but Steve Earl had decide that he would not accept open wheel cars. We had to sit out year two. Fortunately in 1972, My father had found a cache of cars for sale in a barn, he bought thee for \$1000. A road worthy Lotus elan, that was later sold to my Uncle for \$1000, a Lotus Elite Project and a Lotus 12 F2 car that was sold years later and became the down payment for my house in SF. We began work on the Elite to race prep it for The Monterey Historics year 3. He then went on to build a few more Elites and teamed up with an ex Pro driver Ron Grable being extremely dominant to the point of getting banned more than once. My father would often quote Arthur Mallock "The event begins when the rules arrive". Sometimes they would change the rules.

“He owned many different significant cars over the years, at one point he owned 30 races cars in various states of repair and often made then available to his friends for a drive. My father was a true *Garagista*⁹; he would be working on the car the night before an event even after it was loaded on the trailer. At the track he was always there to lend a hand, a

⁷ In 1956, Ampex Corporation of Redwood City, California, introduced the first practical videotape recorder for television stations and networks to produce and time-shift broadcasts, replacing impractical "kinescope" movie film previously used to record TV. The Emmy-award-winning Ampex "VTR" analog-video standard ruled broadcasting and video production worldwide for twenty years. https://www.labguysworld.com/Merlin_ME68.htm

⁸ Merlin Engineering Works, founded by two former Ampex employees, John Streets and Al Sturm, offered upgrades, modifications, refurbishment and other services for quadruplex VTRs including rebadged Merlin version of Snell & Wilcox standards converters. Source Facebook *Ampex Old timers*. Merlin Engineering maintained a reputation of excellence in delivering custom solutions to customers in the video and television industries. One employee in 1975 writes “I was in charge of modifying Hitachi HR-200 one inch type C VTRs for 1000 line medical video recording on contract with Philips Medical Systems. While there, I also got to do my first bit of official engineering when I developed a ten channel stereo audio switcher for a Panasonic commercial server system based on M Format VCRs.”

⁹ In the media in 2020... “In the early 60's, Enzo Ferrari coined what he thought of, as a derogatory term for the little "shed in the back" upstart British Teams, who massively challenged him and the rest of the Formula 1 establishment. In our world, the term is now a point of pride for someone who does it on their own, through grit, hard work, consistency, and efficient use of resources. One of our very own Garagistes, Jay Streets, is enjoying his time in the Crossflow Program and decided to add to the fun, by creating **The John Streets Garagiste Award**... inspired by and named after his dad, John Streets. Jay sees in the massive, and sometimes un-recognized commitment his fellow Garagistes make to the sport, much of what his dad taught and inspired him about life, hard work, commitment, generosity. So, huge thanks to Jay and his family, this kind of thinking is what makes this program and this community so special. The award is a \$1000 cash prize and trophy that will go to the self-supporting Crossflow Driver that completes the most laps (Friday if there is a timed test session, Saturday and Sunday) in the 2020 season. To be eligible drivers need to be, self-supporting at the races, need to enter 4 out of 5 races, can't have any black flags, contact or other issues. In the event of a tie, the prize will be divided. The award will be presented by Jay and the man himself, his dad John, at the 2020 Charity Challenge Podium Party.”

<https://www.norwestff.com/new-blog/2020/3/5/the-1000-john-streets-garagiste-prize>

wrench, or sandwich to a fellow competitor and more than likely was the one laying under their cars to get them back on track.

“Though he lent his cars to his friends, he had told his kids that if we wanted to drive a race we had to buy our own. He did give me my first street car; when I was 8 he gave my brothers and me a Morris Minor that was in need of a paint job. He then gave us a few cans of old house paint and some brushes. We painted that car and put a for sale sign on it selling for \$25 in spite of the paint. When we did get race cars of our own, my father was extremely supportive of our hobby; the better our results the more support we got. That is why every race car I have ever driven has a sticker on the back “Thanks Pops”

“My father stopped driving at about 66 years old (c. 1999) mostly because my brother Skip was faster than him. My father’s first passion was building cars, but his second was to win! He loved to beat cars that he wasn’t supposed to, with technology that may not have been more sophisticated but was superior. He was a car builder

John Streets with a Mallock 20B in the USA - 1979

John never forgot his early days with his good friend Arthur Mallock; John imported two Mallock race cars to compete with in the USA.

John’s first Mallock race car turned out to be one of the fastest and most successful Mallocks ever built. The Mallock 20B was shipped to the USA when built in 1979 and John Streets raced it in a few limited events. He shipped it back to Mallock Sports in the UK in about 1995. It was rebuilt by Mallock Racing and raced by Rodger Walters in 1996, won Championship. Raced on 2000 and won Championship outright. The only B Sport car to win a Classic Clubmans race outright (Lydden Hill 2002, in the hands of Dan Gibson). It has been running since 2005 as an A-sport car, the mount for multi-race-winner and series champ Mark Charteris... in HSCC, Classic Clubmans and Clubmans ([photo](#), [right](#)).



Mallock	Mk20B, year 1979	Number	9
Livery	Black (was Silver in 2004)	Engine Tuner	Philspeed

John Streets and the Mallock U2-2 in the USA – 1985-2011

While the Mallock Mk20B was in John’s hands, he imported another Mallock, a much earlier one. From the mid-1980s until 2011, John raced Mallock U2-2 in America. At John’s invitation, Arthur Mallock raced the car at the Monterey Historic event in 1990, and this turned out to be Arthur's last ever circuit race as he passed away in 1993. Arthur’s son Richard Mallock and Clubmans stalwart Chris Hart also raced the U2-2 at Laguna Seca at John’s invitation.



[Slim Pepperdene, John Streets and Terry Buffum in 2011](#) (photo courtesy of Steve Knoll)

Since 2011 when John shipped U2-2 back to the UK, the car has been owned and raced by Arthur's other son Ray Mallock, who oversaw its preparation to the original 1960 specification, including the very stubby nose cone used by Harwood in 1960 only.¹⁰

Family snap with the Mallock U2-2



Mallock Chassis #U2-2. FORMULA JUNIOR – 1960 U2 MK 2,

Engine – Ford Anglia 2 valve 1098 cc

Rear Axle – BMC A Series – leaf spring

Front Axle – Ford Popular E93A crossover swing axle¹¹

Gear Box – BMC A Series

Brakes – 8” drum front and rear

“Streets Ahead – a reunion in 2017”

Race car design which endures 60 years is exemplified by two machines from different ends of the earth but with the same objective; keep it simple and purposeful, go fast.

At the Rolex Monterey Historic Reunion at the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in California in August 2017, Ray Mallock's Formula Junior Mallock U2 Mk.2 came together with John Streets' creation, the flathead V8 Streets Manning Special, for the first time in years. The link? John Streets was the owner of this Mallock U2 Mk.2 car and raced it in California in the 80s before Ray Mallock bought it back in 2011 and they share the rectangular nose look.

The similarities between these two cars go well beyond their shared rectangular nose shape. For both, the design objective was to create a competitive low cost sports racing car for the impecunious racing enthusiast. The elements for success were a rigid light weight chassis and the use of readily available production car running gear and engines. Major Arthur Mallock (Ray's father), Chuck Manning and John Streets shared this vision of a competitive sports racing car that could be built and raced by regular enthusiasts.

John Streets designed and constructed, with Wally Chapman, the Manning Special in 1953, complete with the rectangular nose cowl (photo above, Ray Mallock and Rob Manson, the Streets Manning's owner). Sometime later, Major Arthur Mallock, race car pioneer of the 60s and founder of the Mallock marque, created this Mk.2 Mallock, also called a U2, with a rectangular radiator cowl. Did John buy this car because of a passion for the rectangular nose? The Streets Manning Special was competing in the 1947-1955 sports racing car group



¹⁰ <https://www.conceptcarz.com/z28256/mallock-u2-mk2.aspx>

¹¹ <https://clubmans.org.uk/classicfiles/oldsite/Driver%20Profiles/Profiles/charteris.htm>

(which includes the Del Monte Trophy group of car types which raced at Pebble Beach till 1956) and was placed 5th in both races in the hands of Marcus Bicknell, behind 3 other California Road Race Specials belonging to Rob and a Jaguar C-type. Ray drove the Mallock Mk.2, for the first time at Laguna Seca, in the Formula Junior races and finished 2nd overall and 1st in class.¹²

At Laguna Seca in 2017, John Streets and Ray Mallock were re-united for a photograph



Epitaph by Skip

Dad was a fantastic role model to his three sons and his grandchildren... he was a great father, amazing husband, good brother, uncle, friend, employer, and mentor.... He touched so many people.

A close friend to all of us shared this weekend that he was searching for a single word to help describe what Dad meant to him... he came up with Touchstone.... Dad was always available and ready to help and he connected so many people across all walks of life and the connections made everybody's world better together... he was the two way connection or a touchstone in all areas of his life, but probably most impactful as the touchstone in the racing community that he embraced so passionately

Dad was brilliant, adventurous, very generous, super supportive / encouraging and deeply grateful... this gratitude shown bright all the way to the end, thanking us all for taking such good care of him, and reiterating this gratitude through his final hours... poignantly, all his life... Dad had been taking such good care of all of us.

John's 80th at Thunder Hill Sept 2023

Brilliant: I know a bit about some things... Dad knew a lot about a lot of things.... If we had a question, he had a way to solve it or to find the answer... His first Job in CA was working as an engineer at AMPEX, on the team tasked with creating a way to record video... Back in the day there was only LIVE TV, no recording... He and a friend are on the patent and credited with the invention of the "air bearing" a feature that enabled video tape to work across temperature and humidity changes.... This bearing was in every VCR or Camcorder you ever touched and ever made across the globe. Dad worked with Francis Ford Coppola helping to capture movement in new ways... his work also had impactful applications in medical and aerospace that are still significant to this day.

Adventurous: In 1959, he was doing some studies and working in Canada when he got a job offer that required relocation to CA... he returned to England, found my mother Maggie, who he had not seen for at least two years, asked her to call off her engagement to



¹² Source: INFO RELEASE 11 – 3 September 2017 - www.dmtgr.com

another man, marry him and move to CA... She said YES, and within two weeks, he had bought a racecar, married Mom, and landed in NYC to drive a 356 Porsche across the US and set up residency, in Silicon Valley, before it was Silicon Valley.

Generous: When you look up “the shirt off his back” in the dictionary, there is a picture of John Streets and Speed Racer.... If you were at the racetrack with a broken car, he was at your side making sure your car was ready to compete, if you were in business, he was looking for ways to help you succeed... if I wanted to travel, he helped make sure we had the funds and the connections... He always went above and beyond... he would give you the shirt off his back and there was never any strings attached or expectations... he was glad to be able to help you.

Supportive/Encouraging: Dad always wanted us to be our best selves... he encouraged us to achieve and become what we wanted to be.... He was my biggest fan!

Fun: When we were very little, Dad built us a helicopter, a real spinning helicopter in our own back yard... think a really big sit and spin built on a truck axel, in the shape of a helicopter that we could all climb on and spin with our friends. He taught us a lot, we camped, we rode horses and motorcycles, and we raced cars... Dad had an immense passion for racecars... especially for building the most successful car out of the most basic of ingredients... he loved an Underdog / Cinderella story.

The last few hours Pops was with us... Simon, Tomiko, Traci and I were sitting with him as he dozed off.... Simon was saying how generous Pops was... the idea of giving you his last dollar... and he shared an Episode of Speed Racer... when Speed Racer’s competitor had stopped by the side of the road, Speed Racer stopped to help, and offered him the gas he needed... as the competitor sped off, Speed Racer realized his own gauge was on Empty... Simon said Dad would give his last gallon of gas to a competitor... Dad was listening and the last thing Dad said to us, and as clear as day, was.... “ Not Quite”



John passed away just a week after his beloved wife and mother of his children...

[Maggie Gweneth Streets - January 30th 1935 – March 14th 2025](#)

“It was just a few short weeks back that we celebrated her 90th birthday with Champagne & fresh Dungeness Crab from Half Moon Bay.”

Timeline

- 1933 born in Lincolnshire UK
- 1951 Met Arthur Mallock in south-east England
- 1955 Came to the USA to study engineering at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy NY. Helped build the Manning Special in Schaghticoke NY with Wally Chapman and Chuck Manning.
- 1958 Quebec and an invitation to race in the Bahamas
- 1959 John Streets marries and moves to California to work with Ampex.
- 1970 John left Ampex and started Quest Engineering
- 1974 1st Monterey Historics: John in the F3

- 1975 (approx.) John Streets sets up Merlin Engineering Works in Palo Alto
- 1979 John Streets ships a new Mallock 20B to the USA
- 1985 John Streets bring the Mallock U2-2 to the USA... till 2011
- 1990 Arthur Mallock raced U2-2 at the Monterey Historic event
- 1991 John Streets and John Buddenbaum rebuilt the Manning Special and it competes at the Monterey Historics.
- 1995 John ships the Mallock 20B back to the UK
- 1997 F3 car prepped for sale
- 2002 Built the Double Dub twin-engined VW bug with John Buddenbaum for the 2002 UK TV show Junkyard Challenge. Jay Streets would be the driver.
- 2008 Retired from Merlin Engineering https://www.labguysworld.com/Merlin_ME68.htm
- 2011 John ships the Mallock U2-2 back to the UK
- 2017 A reunion with Ray Mallock and the U2-2 at Laguna Seca
- 2025 RIP

