

# SERVICE Bay



## Toyota MR2



**JONATHAN CRAYMER** finds Toyota's mid-engined sports car surprisingly easy to work on for such a compact car.

**Easy job**

**Straightforward enough – but needs a little know-how**

**Access awkward and/or needs time**

**Skills, patience and/or special tools needed**

**Arrgh...**

This much-loved line of mid-engined sports cars first appeared in 1984, with rumours flying about at the time that it incorporated a lot of Lotus design expertise. As Toyota was then a major shareholder in Lotus, there could be a lot of truth in this.

However, it's ironic that the origins of the MR2 family began with Toyota's desire as far back as 1976 to create a very fuel-efficient car, which was fun to drive – but definitely NOT a sports car. Design work on

the new project started in 1979 and by 1981, with the engine now mounted amidships, it presumably became obvious what it was destined to be, and required just a few flicks of a designer's pen to

complete the process of turning it into a very attractive sports car.

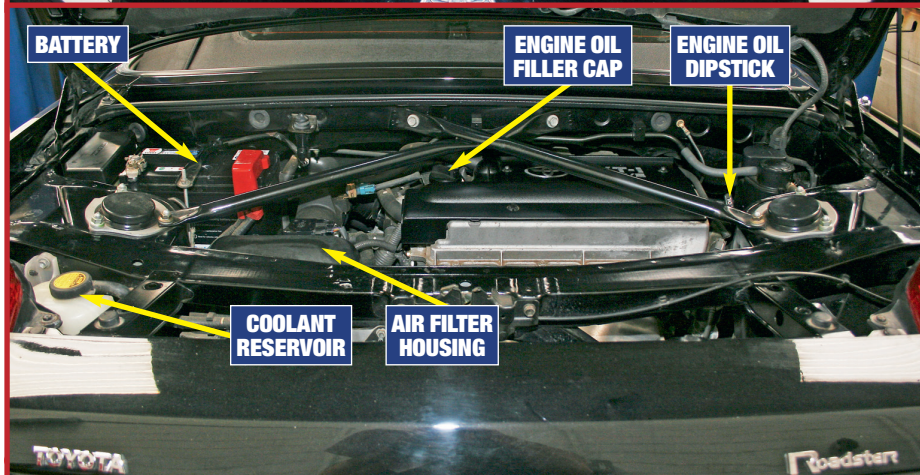
When the first-generation MR2 appeared, it raised a lot of eyebrows, as Toyota had a reputation for producing 'practical' cars, and this two-seater was anything but! However, its popularity is legendary, and after the initial years of production it was obvious to all concerned that it had to be kept going with a face-lift – so in 1990 the line acquired a new look and an altogether heavier body/chassis.

The car we're looking at here is one of the very pretty third generation cars, produced from 2000-2006, which marked a return of the true soft-top (in place of the 'T' top) and the disappearance of the pop-up headlights from the MkII.

The MkIII MR2s also benefited from a new, all-aluminium, 1794cc engine, which still retained the MR2's dual overhead cam and 16-valve spec.

'Our' car is a 2005 model, which we assume is something of a pampered 'weekend' car, due to a fairly moderate mileage and the good condition in which we found everything. Here, we're carrying out a 40,000 mile/48 month service. Because of the mid-engine, it goes without saying that some operations – which you'd usually do all under the bonnet – take place at the front and some at the back. The order presented here seemed easiest in our particular workshop, but you may find a different way of working preferable.

### UNDERBONNET LAYOUT



TOYOTA MR2 MKIII