Early signs of an engine mounting wearing on the inner wing cut outs

Bob Smith from Gloucestershire has a Sebring bodied MGBGT built as dual purpose road legal and track day car with a 300bhp V8 engine. Here he relates how he traced a problem to weak engine mounts – a useful reminder for RV8 members and a few MGBGTV8 owners with inner wing cut-outs for the exhaust.

A recurring problem which I had never been able to figure out was a strange rumbling noise when pulling away. After fitting the new 300mm vented/grooved 4 pot caliper brakes and "run" them in, I was out on a Sunday morning joy drive with a friend in his "Red Sports Car". He was giving it some stick and not to be out done I followed suit and at one particular bend I noticed I was going a little too fast and applied the brakes in a very forceful manner, probably the hardest I had used these new brakes. The car slowed brilliantly but made a noise which sounded like someone had thrown an anchor out at the back and ripped off my front suspension. This was something needing urgent attention and after driving home very carefully and being unable to find any brake or suspension problem I started looking for other causes when I got home.

I noticed that the offside exhaust manifold was rubbing against the holes let into the inner wing, to the extent that the exhaust had chipped paint of the edge of the body where the manifold passes through into the wing. Then during a closer inspection I found the engine mounting rubber bonding had become detached from its mounting plate. This was difficult to spot but from underneath the car with a tyre lever on the block it was obvious.

I felt this engine mount failure was likely to have been caused by the high torque and probably it had been made worse because I had been supplied standard V8 engine mounts and not uprated ones. So these were changed and hey presto the exhaust was no longer rubbing and the strange noise when pulling away stopped - so RV8 and V8 owners take note, if you hear this sort of rumbling noise when pulling away fast and or see the paint around the body where the manifold passes through on the inner wing on the driver's side has evidence of rubbing and or paint chipping, then check the engine mounts.

However while I was looking around the car to solve this problem I came to be looking at the front engine pulley clearance to the front anti roll bar. This was always tight at about ½ inch because there were six lugs sticking proud of the crank pulley and with the engine mount gone on one side it would not have taken much for the engine to move forward and for the lugs on the pulley to make contact with the antiroll bar. This proved to be the case because after using some gaffer tape on the roll bar adjacent to the pulley it showed after a trial run there was still a little movement as the gaffer tape was showing signs of chaffing.

So when the water radiator was removed I took the opportunity to remove the engine pulley and cut down the lugs that protrude farther out than the bolt heads. These lugs are for the Rover SD1 air conditioning drive and are not needed in my application, so they were duly cut off and more care was taken with the location of the antiroll bar and clamps before the securing bolts were tightened and hey presto the clearance is fine and again and no more strange noises under braking.

To make this even more secure in terms of engine movement from the torque, I also fitted a Clive Wheatley **front engine steady bar**. This, together with up rated V8 engine mounts, has prevented any movement in this respect, so it should not happen in the future.