

# The Invisible Car

by Rick Astley

When, back in 1897, H. G. Wells wrote his novella *The Invisible Man*, he had no way of knowing how his book would endure in formats of which, at that time, even he couldn't have imagined. For more than a century, TV series, dozen of movies and countless comic books have used his invented character to intrigue new audiences.

How about an invisible car? From World War 1, camouflage has been used to try to make armored vehicles blend into the background and since then paint or LEDs have been applied to give the illusion that vehicles disappear by covering their surfaces with a detailed image of their background, all with limited success. However, I'm suggesting here that, if your experience is anything like mine, you already own an invisible vehicle: it's your little British sports car.

Whereas Wells's hero becomes invisible by a process that makes light pass right through him — which, incidentally, others have since pointed out would have made him blind because light would pass right through his retinas — modern scientist have been experimenting with specialized objects which force light to bend around them. We, on the other hand have discovered a wholly different kind of invisibility, selective blindness on the part of the observer.

I notice it every year. If I'm in my regular modern American vehicle, other drivers wishing to turn in or out of junctions will slow down or stop, look and make a reasonable judgment as to whether they can make their intended maneuver without impeding me or worse, forcing me to brake hard or take evasive action. Not so in either of my MGBs. Other drivers still slow down or stop but then, as if my car weren't there, pull out in front of me! What is going through there minds, do they think that being hit by a small car has no consequences for them or me?

I've tried to make my MGs more visible than their red coloring already makes them. Both operate with daytime running lamps, I've installed louder horns and I even added a center high mounted stop lamp in the rear window of my rather larger GT, yet still someone driving a Honda Pilot ran into the back of it while I was stopped at a light. The driver had a valid excuse of course, he was from out of town and how could he possibly be expected to see me while also reading a map?

I seem to remember one comic book story in which an invisible person could be seen if viewed in a mirror. Not so for our little cars, someone backed into Rich Wagner's MGB at a gas station, the offending driver swearing that he'd checked his mirrors first.

The hero of H. G. Well's story had a big problem; having become invisible, he was unable to reverse the effect. Like him we are going to have to live with the affliction and take the appropriate precautions. In addition, because I drive a regular car too, so I'm going to make a special effort to ensure that I too don't become selectively blind to small vehicles like MGs and motorcycles.

