



LAM BUNKER NEWS

Edition 10



SACCADIC MASKING by Grahame Ottewell

Have you heard of the term "SMIDNSY"? The term is often used by Motorcyclists or cycle riders. What does it mean?

Very simply it means "Sorry mate I did not see you".

How many of you have perhaps had a collision or a near miss when pulling out of a side road onto a major road? You looked and saw nothing coming. You were positive that nothing was coming so you pulled out onto the main road only to be confronted with a motorcycle or cyclist right on top of you. How did that happen. You end up saying "Sorry mate I did not see you" (SMIDNSY).

Unknown to most, thousands of times each day we momentarily lose sight of the world around us. Known as **saccadic masking**, it is a function of the brain protecting us from suffering through blurred images that would otherwise be produced when our eyes move or shift.

A saccade is a rapid eye movement between the places where the eye rests (called fixation points). When scanning a scene, we don't actually see everything in a continuous, smooth stream; rather, although we are unaware of the phenomenon, we actually view it as a series of discrete images (when the eye pauses at fixation points), each separated by a period of blindness (during the saccade) when the eye moves.



Basically your brain will not allow you to see a blurred image as you move your eyes.

As a result the brain selects those periods of blindness and then fills in the gaps created by those blurred sections with what it thinks should be there. That means the motorcyclist or cycle rider is removed and replaced with a vision of a clear road.

In order to avoid this happening to us we need to scan down the road using three points, distance, middle and near. Instead of scanning the road fast we need to just pause for a fraction of a second on these points. That will help us to avoid those blurred gaps that the brain fills in for us. So instead of just doing a quick look right, then left and right again just take a fraction of a second to scan those three points.

As for those motorcyclists and cycle riders, try moving diagonally as you approach a junction where a vehicle is waiting to pull out. Your movements from the side of the road to the middle of the road and back will help that driver to pick you out easier.

Take the Saccadic Masking test for yourself. Look into a mirror. Move your eyes from side to side. Go as slow as you like. Can you see your eyes moving? You will not because your eyes are blocking out the moving blurred image created by your own eyes. If that had been a motorcyclist or cycle rider then you might now be saying "SMIDNSY".



£20 million investment for roadside electric car chargers

Plans for an 'electric vehicle revolution' were boosted recently when the Transport Secretary pledged £20 million towards adding new charge points across the UK.

The investment could see the number of government-supported electric vehicle chargers double to nearly 8,000.

The Department for Transport (DfT) encouraged local authorities to take advantage of the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), which has already benefitted more than 140 projects.



Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: "With a world-leading charging network, we're making it easier for more people to switch to electric vehicles, creating healthier neighbourhoods and cleaning up our air as we build back greener."

The ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 has increased the need to improve charging infrastructure.

Motorists without access to off-street charging – 40% of people in England and Wales* – will be particularly pleased by the DfT's latest announcement.

Although Mr Shapps believes "drivers across the country should benefit from the electric vehicle revolution we're seeing right now", others are less optimistic.

Research published on Monday (2 February) suggests that the UK will need another 365,000 chargepoints in time for 2030's petrol and diesel ban.

Think tank Policy Exchange said the annual rate at which new chargepoints are being installed must increase five-fold from around 7,000 over the past three years to 35,000 over the next decade.

They recommend that the Government issue contracts to private firms to install chargepoints in areas where they are sparse to avoid creating 'charging blackspots' – this would mark a switch from the existing policy of offering grants.

Report author and Policy Exchange senior research fellow Ed Birkett said the Government should focus on areas where it "isn't delivering enough public chargepoints, including the north west of England, Yorkshire and Northern Ireland".

He went on: "Companies are rolling out chargepoints at a record rate, but there's a risk that some areas of the country won't get enough chargepoints and will be left behind.

According to Zap-Map data there are more than 37,000 connectors in the UK (as of 3 February), the majority of which have been installed by private companies.

RAC spokesperson Rod Dennis said: "It is vital we have a network of ubiquitous, reliable and easy-to-use public chargepoints.

"Without a big increase in the number of chargepoints right across the UK, certain parts of the country risk getting left behind as 2030 approaches.

"Everyone remembers what happened when broadband started to be rolled out and some areas were left with poor connections.

"It would be a major policy failure if something similar happened in the next few years with communities missing out on good charging provision."

Top Tip No5: Here Comes The Sun JOHN WATSON, Chief Observer

On winter and early spring days it can be heartening to see blue sky and the sun shining, but particularly in the mornings and late afternoons the sun is so low in the sky it becomes a serious hazard. While dropping the visor down could well help, a very low sun might still be directly in your eyes. Good sunglasses - optically corrected if necessary - then become helpful, perhaps vital. But what if you wear ordinary glasses for driving? You can't possibly take them off and replace them with sunglasses while driving. Go round a bend or into a shaded area, and you'd have to swop them again - obviously, out of the question for advanced drivers. I use clip-on sunglasses over my standard specs, and mine are a hinged design which I can flip quickly up or down when lighting conditions change. Good for low winter sun, but a useful safety aid all year round too, for driving into shaded areas on sunny days, and through underpasses. But if you are dazzled, SLOW DOWN

Automated tech could take control by summer

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced plans to make Britain the world's first country to let motorway drivers take their hands off the wheel. The Department for Transport (DfT) suggested that Automatic Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS) could steer vehicles in stop-start traffic of up to 37 mph. Use of ALKS – which has been approved by United Nations regulations that came into force in Britain recently – is confined to roads where traffic moving in opposite directions is physically separated and no pedestrians or cyclists are allowed. The decision follows a call for evidence in August on how automated technology could make driving "safer, smoother and easier for motorists".

New Teslas and a Mercedes S-class due to arrive this year are expected to be among the first eligible vehicles capable of safely driving themselves, as government legislation put it, "in at least some circumstances or situations"*. Motorists could soon be using their phones, watching films on tablets, or even reading books behind the wheel, in accordance with The Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018.

Car safety expert have voiced concerns about ALKS technology, which it points out is unable to make a vehicle change lanes to avoid trouble, instead simply slowing them to a halt. Although entertainment systems turn off in the event of an accident, distracted drivers may also struggle to react in time to hazards on the road.

While Mr Shapps has made it clear that he wants Britain to be the first country to benefit from ALKS, some insurance professionals are calling for tighter regulations. Rather than objecting to drivers using the technology they believe a human should be in charge at all times until the arrival of fully autonomous vehicles.

The DfT said: "We have sought views on the use of the automated lane-keeping system to pave the way towards introducing it safely on UK roads. No decision has yet been made on whether to allow ALKS to operate up to 70mph. The "dangerous misconception" of a truly self-driving car spurred Thatcham research to devise a first-of-its-kind Assisted Driver Grading system

Partnering with Euro NCAP, the safety specialist hopes to better equip motorists to understand assisted driving features on modern cars.

REMINDER - Our next end of month online meeting is on **Sunday 28th March 2021. 10.00am** After the success of our online February meeting and the inclusion of a guest speaker, we welcome all LAM members to join us on the above date for a similar format. An email has been sent to all members with the Zoom invitation.

Alternatively please contact lichfieldadvancedmotorists@gmail.com for details on how to join by telephone.

We would like to hear from you: If you have anything you would like to contribute to the Bulletin then please email to: lamjohnwatson2020@gmail.com