



# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down Advanced Motorists (Group 8199)

Helping to Improve The Standard of Driving and Riding on the Roads in Northern Ireland and the Advancement of Road Safety



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**Congratulations this month go to -  
Robert McElhinney  
on becoming a Member of the Institute.  
Good luck and safe driving to any Associate(s)  
approaching their test.**

This month we would like to welcome, as new members, Kat Butler, Neil Lee, Daniel Mahood, Catherine McCartney, Ryan Regan and Brian Whittle. We hope that they will not only gain from being members of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers. We usually meet (unless otherwise stated) at the Boathouse, which is situated in the harbour carpark, at Groomsport at 7.00pm on the second Tuesday of each month (except July). For more details of our programme please see the section entitled "Dates for Your Diary".

If anyone has recently done their test, don't forget to contact John (07967 010443) for a debrief. Observers, please keep John acquainted with the progress of your Associate(s).

## January Group Night Two Wheel Talk

Tuesday, 13th January, 2009

On our first Group Night of 2009 we were given a talk by Lynn (aided and abetted by William) and Keith on the particular perspective of two-wheeled road users.

Lynn, who is a motorcyclist, started off by giving a breakdown of the headings her talk would consist of. These were Observation, Riding Plan, Scanning, Observation Links and then a Review.

Using a very professional presentation she focused our thoughts on her Five Senses - Sight, Hearing, Smell (e.g. diesel), Feeling (e.g. road grip) and 'Instinct'.

She then looked at the 'Riding Plan'. This first of all consists of 'Observation', which allows one to 'Anticipate' (gives you time to react to a hazard), then 'Prioritise' the dangers to be dealt with so that you are in a better position to 'Decide what to do' and then 'Act' accordingly.

Lynn completed her part of the evening by concentrating on scanning and observation and using helpful little signals she called 'Observation Links' e.g. a lone sheep or a school bus.

Keith, a cyclist, then took over. He started off by giving some of the benefits of cycling. He then looked at some of the challenges of cycling and related how to deal with these by adapting the 'System of Car Control'.

He then went on to stress observation and also the ability to be seen (using Hi-Vis coats and vests). He stressed the use of mirrors and also looking into drivers faces to see if they have seen you. Keith then stressed positioning on the road as an important factor in cyclists' thinking as well as the hazards that car drivers don't usually notice like potholes and the difference between road surfaces.

Both speakers answered the many questions that the audience posed before Trevor called an end to the discussion. He thanked them all for their preparation and their interesting and informative talks.

## Lethal rural roads need Intelligent Speed Adaptation treatment first says IAM

Potentially large reductions in road deaths and injuries - thought to be as dramatic as 29 per cent - could result from a widespread adoption of the new 'Intelligent Speed Adaptation' (ISA) proposals put forward today, said the IAM, the UK's largest independent road safety charity.

The IAM, contributors to the government's Motorists' Forum, has backed the scheme but would like to see new digital speed maps at the heart of the ISA system prioritise potentially lethal rural roads.

IAM Director of Research and Policy Neil Greig cautioned that motorists may well resist initially a system that dictates how fast they can drive.

"ISA may be able to ensure that all cars observe speed limits, provided that critical safety conditions are met and tested. However, even with these assurances, an understandable deep-rooted concern about 'Big Brother' will have to be overcome."

Mr Greig said that the report today showed that fleet managers showed a general lack of support, as they did not believe that exceeding speed limits necessarily reduced a driver's safety.

Like an in-car navigation system, ISA uses global satellite positioning (GPS) and a digital map to establish a car's location and what the speed limit is at that point on the road. This information can be used to:

- \* tell the driver the speed limit through a display on the instrument panel (Advisory ISA)
- \* control the speed of the vehicle, if the driver so wishes (Discretionary ISA) or
- \* automatically control the speed of the vehicle (Controlling ISA).

Once ISA is set to keep the car to the speed limit, it does not allow the driver to accelerate beyond it. The system may apply the brakes lightly if the limit is exceeded by a certain amount (for example, while going downhill).

The IAM believes that certain safeguards need to be built in before extensive ISA trialing, including a very high standard of reliability of equipment and speed limit data.

"Drivers could keep their foot firmly on the accelerator, secure in the knowledge that they cannot exceed the maximum permitted speed - so they could fail to drop their speed to below the limit when conditions require it," said Mr Greig. "That abdication of driver responsibility would not be helpful to road safety in the long run."

Mr Greig said that drivers may adopt ISA devices if they promised that speeding fines, penalty points and loss of licence became things of the past.

## Hazardous driving conditions - advice from the IAM

With perfect timing, winter has arrived on the same day as most of us will take to the roads returning to work or school, leaving the roads slippery and the journey treacherous. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has reminded drivers that hazardous weather conditions need particular care. If you must drive, prepare for the conditions.

**Allow longer** for journeys and drive more slowly and above all smoothly. Adjust your driving to the conditions. Skids are generally caused by harsh acceleration, steering or braking.

**Visibility is key.** Clean all windows screens before you start; don't be tempted to just scrape the front screen and leave it at that. Use your headlights to ensure you can see and be seen. Keep lights and mirrors free from snow and ice, not just the windows.

**Leave bigger gaps.** Slippery roads need longer braking distances, so leave much more room between you and the vehicle in front.

Finally take with you a charged mobile phone in case of emergencies, but don't use it while driving.

## Dates for Your Diary

3rd Feb, 2009	STAC 17/1 - Boathouse, 7.15pm. First in a series of talks and drives for new Associates.
10th Feb, 2009	Group Night - 10-Pin Bowling at the Dundonald Ice Bowl.
12th Feb, 2009	Road Safety Group Quiz in Bangor Marine Court Hotel at 8.00pm. All welcome.
24th Feb, 2009	STAC 17/2 - Boathouse, 7.15pm. Second in a series of talks and drives for new Associates.
3rd Mar, 2009	STAC 17/3 - Boathouse, 7.15pm.
10th Mar, 2009	Group Night - Damien Coll Forensic Talk Part 2.

The views expressed in the 'Road Observer' are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Group or the Institute of Advanced Motorists

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