



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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Good luck and safe driving to any Associate(s) approaching their test.

This month we would like to welcome, as new members, Bill Bradford, Jonathan Neilly, Noel Speers and Derek Stockdale. 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).

Slot Car Racing - Tue 31st March 2009

Due to the facts that our usual 2nd Tuesday in April was going to fall on Easter Tuesday and that there was an "extra" Tuesday in March it was decided to arrange a night at one of our favourite venues - Slot car Racing - on the last Tuesday in March.

Twenty-four intrepid 'racers' turned up on the now usual chilly evening. We were honoured to have with us as one of our guests Councillor Jim Fletcher, Mayor of Ards Borough Council. He had been invited by Norah and Trevor and he showed great interest in, not only the slot cars but also the work that we do trying to prevent collisions on our roads. He circulated among the group members and guests and introduced himself and talked with each person for a while.

Getting back to the racing it never ceases to amaze me how peoples' personalities change when they grab hold of that trigger grip to control the slot car. I am talking about people who normally don't raise their voices when speaking - even when they are cross; they do not get angry when another driver barges out in front of them; they even sit back and let taxi drivers out of side roads. Imagine these people, who, as soon as the second 'bleep' goes signifying the start of the race, transmogrify into someone totally out of character. Their outward appearance is much the same (except maybe for the horns and the tail) but the facial expressions do give some evidence of the total personality change. Their eyes taking on a hard, glazed look, the brow is furrowed with the added concentration but the most interesting feature is the tongue. Some people clamp the tongue tightly in the right or left and side of the mouth (nearly to the point of tissue being torn) but there are those who give free rein to its movement. I thought at first these movements were random but now it can be seen when they want the slot car to go round a left hand bend the tongue is firmly gripped in the left hand side of the mouth and when they want the car to go round a right hand bend - yes you've guessed it- the tongue is quickly switched to the right hand side. A series of s-bends can be very tiring for the tongue's owner.

Some 'drivers' even seem to hold their breath for the entire period of the race and then when they finish all that is to be heard is the heavy, deep breathing as they try to repay their oxygen debt.

It's also really funny to watch these same people suddenly try to act normally again at the end of the race. The transition from being a character in a 'Diehard' movie to one of total nonchalance takes just a couple of seconds and it is as if they have just awoken from some deep sleep and have found themselves talking in their sleep. They look around to see if

anybody has noticed them acting strangely and within milliseconds they are their 'old' selves again.

The racing itself was very good this year and it is obvious that people are gaining from their experience of coming every year. The crowning glory of the evening was not the person winning the 'A' final (sorry John) but to hear Sinclair state that at the end of one of the races that it was years since he had seen a full race complete its course with all six participants finishing. John won the top prize overall -well done- with Gerard coming second. Another good night's entertainment.

AMNI Karting Challenge

Saturday, 25th July, 2009

On Saturday 25th July, all Northern Ireland based IAM groups are being invited to attend the first in what we hope will become an annual regional karting competition. The event this year is being managed and run by Senderon, the organisation that looks after the AMNI website in order to promote what the IAM has to offer within Northern Ireland.

The day will consist of two separate competitions but all IAM members are invited to attend in the morning with friends and family to compete in a friendly head to head competition.

The venue is Eddie Irvine Sports in Bangor and cost per head is currently to be £30 maximum.

Further information on this and online booking will be available from Friday 1st May on the AMNI Website (www.amni.org.uk/kartingchallenge)

The afternoon session will consist of a team competition with each of the 7 Region 8 IAM groups challenging a number of other motoring organisations from around the province. North Down Advanced Motorists will be putting a team forward, so if you think you have what it takes, and are up for the challenge, let us know at your next group meeting or STAC night, or email northdown@amni.org.uk.

Further information on this will be available both on the AMNI site and the dedicated www.kartingni.co.uk site which is also due to go live shortly.

Finally, if you would like to ensure a club or organisation you are involved with receives an invite, please email info@kartingni.co.uk with contact details.

Prizes will be awarded in both sessions, and there will be other entertainment throughout the day, including the chance to race Eddie Irvine himself on an F1 Racing Simulator!

Thanks for your support and we look forward to seeing you on the day.

TableTop Navigation Exercise

Tuesday, 12th May, 2009

This exercise is to prepare everyone for the Navigation Exercise and Barbeque on Tuesday 9th June, 2009.

It is held in the Boathouse, Groomsport.

You will need -

soft pencils (2B should be about right),

an eraser,

a NDAM Romer if you have done one of these exercises before,

a magnifying glass might be a good idea,

a sense of humour - essential!

Dates for Your Diary

5th May, 2009 STAC 17/7 - Boathouse, 7.15pm

12th May, 2009 Group Night - Tabletop Navigation Exercise

26th May, 2009 STAC 17/8 - Boathouse, 7.15pm

2nd Jun, 2009 Additional driving practice

9th Jun, 2009 Navigation Exercise and Barbeque

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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