



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

December 2008

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**Congratulations this month go to -
Barbara Drzw, Gerard McKown
and David Patterson
on becoming Members of the Institute. Well done!
Congratulations are also due to Frank Robertson and
David Harcourt for passing their Senior Observer's
qualification.
Good luck and safe driving to any Associate(s)
approaching their test.**

This month we would like to welcome, as new Members, Rhoda and Andy Lawrenson. 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).

***A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year to all the Members and
Friends of the North Down Group***

Road Traffic Collision Investigations

Tuesday, 11 Nov 2008

Trevor welcomed everyone to the Group Meeting and in particular, he greeted Damian Coll, a senior scientific officer with Forensic Science Northern Ireland who was to speak on Road Traffic Collision Investigation. Damian started his talk by giving a few illustrations of reasons people have given as to why a collision occurred e.g. "Coming home I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have" or "The telegraph post was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of it's path when it struck my front end."

Damian then got down to the serious business of the evening by asking us to look at a few graphs and taking note of some statistics. He stated that it is estimated that about 1 million people are killed worldwide per annum. Looking at the figures for Northern Ireland it can be seen that the majority of road users killed are, as expected, drivers. But what was more worrying was that there appears to be a trend developing where the number of fatalities appears to be rising. He then introduced a statistic that quite surprised a number in the audience. This stated that in Europe there are seven times the number of deaths from road accidents as there are from murders. Damian's next slide in his presentation was about factors which have caused road deaths. The graph was drawn from the results of a survey done by the Dept of Transport of nearly 150,000 collisions which included just over 2,600 fatalities. By far the factor which caused the greatest percentage of deaths was 'Driver Error/Response' (66%). Where 'Speed' was the only factor involved this only accounted for 5% of the total. Damian did explain, however, that there are very few collisions where only one factor is involved. Another slide showed a Venn diagram which portrayed the fact that Human Error is involved in between 91% and 95.9% of road crashes. Damian then showed another slide which showed that alcohol and drugs are involved in around 25% of all crashes involving either drivers or pedestrians.

Another statement that Damian made was that all collisions where someone is killed will be treated as Unlawful Killings until the contrary is proven. He noted that in the past where a Reserve Constable might have been in charge of investigating a collision, lately this has been in the hands of an Inspector. However from the end of November this has been changed so that it will be a Sergeant in the Road Policing Unit who will be responsible for it. A scene of a collision where someone has been killed will, in future, be treated as a murder scene initially until it can be established that it is a 'straightforward' road traffic collision. He then gave a brief run-down of his role in the Forensic Science section.

They offer a 24 hour, 365 day service and they expect to be at the scene of an RTC (road traffic collision) in less than 90 minutes. They attend all RTCs where someone has died or is likely to do so. They examine the scene and carry out various tests and investigations. They gather all this information and, in conjunction with the Investigating Officer from the PSNI, issue a report. They can then end up giving evidence in court. He then went into quite a bit of detail on the examination at the scene and on the tests they do on tyres and brakes etc..

Damian then switched from describing his job in general to looking at case studies where we saw how his department had investigated particular RTCs. This gave us opportunities to see the problems and complexities involved in his job.

Unfortunately the time went so quickly. We all found Damian's talk so interesting and enlightening we hope to have him back sometime in the very near future.

Trevor then thanked Damian for his presentation and then wished us all a safe journey home.

Marie Curie Ladies Driving Challenge

Saturday, 25 October, 2008

Many thanks to all the marshals who turned up on such an atrocious day. It was much appreciated by Norah and the staff at Marie Curie. The wind blew and the rain fell but that did not deter us in our efforts to raise £31,000 pounds for Marie Curie. A bit down on last year but still a good result. Thank you all for your help and support hope to see you all again next year. (Ed - thanks Norah)

Christmas Dinner

Please note - this replaces our normal group meeting in the Groomsport Boathouse.

You are invited to the North Down Advanced Motorists Christmas Dinner at 7.30pm for 8:00pm on Tuesday 9th December 2008 in Daft Eddy's Restaurant, Whiterock, Killinchy. Cost £20.00 per person. To decide menu choices, make a booking and arrange payment, please contact Wendy, 4 Brookvale Park, Bangor, BT19 7ZR

Tele No - 028 9145 7684 or by email

wendymccormick145@yahoo.co.uk before 4th December.

Getting to Daft Eddy's

This route starts at the roundabout in Comber at the end of Killinchy Street where it joins the bypass from Belfast and the bypass from Newtownards. Leave this roundabout on the A22 to Killinchy, Killyleagh & Downpatrick and follow this road for 5.6mls to the crossroads at the Balloo House Restaurant. Turn left here and go 2mls towards Killinchy and Whiterock where you will come to a very bad left-hand bend. From this bend just follow the road around the coast until you see a causeway on your right (after about 0.7 mls). Cross the causeway (if it is not underwater) and proceed more or less straight up the hill to our hostelry for the evening. Hope these comments are of some use. If you still need some help finding your way there contact a member of the Committee.

Some Seasonal Smiles

- As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"
- Christmas is a race to see which gives out first - your money or your feet.
- Every year you're bound to hear some youngster say "I wish that Christmas would last all year." What they don't know is that it does. Wait 'til they grow up and have to pay off the credit cards.
- May you hear those three little words at Christmas: No Assembly Required!
- Christmas is the time of year when you realize how many people you know and how many sizes you don't.

Dates for Your Diary

9th Dec, 2008 **Group Night** - Christmas Dinner in Daft Eddy's, Whiterock, Killinchy.
13th Jan, 2009 **Group Night** - STAC 17 Enrolment
Guest Speaker - TBA
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.

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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