



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 2009

<http://www.amni.org.uk/>

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**Congratulations this month go to -
Noel Spiers & Peter Surgenor
on becoming Members of the Institute.
Good luck and safe driving to any Associate(s)
approaching their test.**

We usually meet (unless otherwise stated) at 7.00pm on the second Tuesday of each month (except July) at the Boathouse, in the harbour carpark, at Groomsport. 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).

December Group Meeting - AGM

8 December 2009

Seven-thirty saw a hungry horde of North Down Advanced Motorists & Honda Gold Wings plus their wives and friends converge on Whiterock's well known watering hole and eatery for our 3rd Annual Christmas Dinner. We sat down to what turned out to be, in my opinion, the best meal we have had so far. I had the traditional Christmas Fayre and was extremely satisfied with it and others who had requested the beef or the salmon were as well pleased.

Wendy, who had organised a ballot, took over after the meal. Each person had been given a ballot ticket and as numbers were called people came up and claimed their prize. As it turned out most tables had at least one winner.

The evening was a total success and thanks go to Frank, Wendy and all who helped organise it.

Forward Programme

If you look carefully at the Dates for your Diary you will see that the Committee have been working overtime to provide a number of activities that are both fun and informative for the New Year and the spring months. Graham will be talking to us on 12th January about how the big car manufacturers go about developing and testing new technology. This is also the night for enrolment of the new STAC.

On 26th January we are visiting a new venue for the NDAM - the "Room 2 Race" which its own website says is "Ireland's premier race simulation centre". We have booked the whole place from 8.00-10.00 pm. It has 20 'pods' so we are looking for 40 drivers. It costs £5 per hour. It sounds like a good night so be sure and get signed up on the 12th January, 2010. It is to be found at 68, High St, Bangor, County Down, BT20 5AZ.

On the 2nd February there will be the first STAC meeting with both classroom and driving sessions.

We are going to return to the Tudor Cinema on 9th February for a film related to the Ards TT. The charge will be £5 and refreshments will be available. Please bring along friends and family for a 7.30pm start. The Tudor cinema can be found at 22A Drumhirk Road, Comber, County Down, Northern Ireland. (Further directions can be found at www.anotherfinesite.com/Directions%20to%20the%20Tudor.htm)

The second STAC meeting will be on 23rd February followed by the 3rd meeting on the 2nd March, 2010.

As yet we have no speaker confirmed for our Group night in March (9th March, 2010) but there will be the 4th STAC meeting on 23rd March.

Because Easter Tuesday falls on 6th April this year there will be no STAC on this night. Our Group Night is also going to be different - it will be held on **Wednesday, 14th April** at the Slot Car Racing Track Unit 6b, La Mon Estates, 149 Glen Road, Gransha, Comber, BT23 5QU

Also in April is the AMNI Conference which we will be hosting. There will be more about this in future newsletters.

May's subject has yet to be finalised but June will see us have our Navigation Drive and barbecue before we take our summer break.

The dangers of low sun and dirty windscreens

15 December 2009

Low winter sun and dirty windscreens mean there is more risk of dangerous dazzle at this time of year than any other, says the IAM.

Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, said: "Dirty windscreens make it even more difficult for drivers to see in the low winter sun we get every morning and late afternoon at this time of year. Your heater is often on demist, blowing traffic fumes, suspended oil and smoke onto the inside of the screen which quickly builds to a film of grime which is a major cause of glare".

"The wet roads mean more dirt on the other side of the screen, too, and a low sun highlights scratches and grime making it even more of a problem," added Mr Rodger.

"The best solution is to clean your screen inside and out, with water or glass cleaner at least once a week, drying with paper or leather."

More low sun advice from the IAM:

- Always keep a good pair of sunglasses in the car – they really help.
- If you can't see, do the obvious thing and slow down accordingly, keeping an eye on the vehicle behind, in case the following traffic doesn't see you against the sun.
- If the sun is behind you, it's in the eyes of drivers coming towards you – be aware they might not see you.
- Low sun behind can dazzle you through your mirrors so be ready to dip the mirror and check over your shoulder for vehicles in your blind spot.
- Keep your washer bottles topped up with a good quality screenwash.
- Change your windscreen wipers every year.

Winter Weather Driving Tips from the IAM

17 December 2009

With snow and ice affecting many parts of the country the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has issued advice for safe winter driving.

Skidding on ice is the main concern for those driving in freezing conditions.

Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner says: "When driving in snow, get your speed right - not too fast so that you risk losing control, but not so slow that you risk losing momentum when you need it – and brake, steer and accelerate as smoothly as possible."

"Start gently from stationary, avoiding high revs. If you get yourself into a skid the main thing to remember is to take your foot off the accelerator and steer, never use the brake."

More winter driving advice for the IAM:

- Double or even triple your normal stopping distance from the vehicle in front.
- Plan your journey around busier roads as they are more likely to have been gritted.
- On motorways stay in the clearest lane where possible, away from slush and ice. Keep within the clear tyre tracks if you can.
- Stay in a higher gear for better control.
- As conditions improve make sure your foglights are only on if necessary – they can dazzle other drivers.
- In falling snow use dipped headlights to make yourself visible to others (especially pedestrians)

Preparation

- Check the weather in advance – don't ignore police warnings about closed roads.
- Make sure you have an emergency kit so you are prepared in the event of a breakdown. This should include a torch, food for energy, water and a blanket. On longer journeys always let someone know you have set off and tell them your planned route.
- Ensure your mobile is charged up so you can make a call in an emergency – but don't use it when driving!
- Do a proper winter check of your vehicle, looking at washer fluid, de-icer/scraper and tyres.

Dates for Your Diary

12th Jan, 2010	Group Night - Graham on "How manufacturers test new technology" Also STAC 19 Enrolment
26th Jan, 2010	Extra Grp Night - "Room2Race"
2nd Feb, 2010	STAC 19/1. Classroom and Driving Practice Session
9th Feb, 2010	Group Night - "Night at the Movies" - Comber Cinema
23rd Feb, 2010	STAC 19/2. Classroom and Driving Practice Session
2nd Mar, 2010	STAC 19/3. Classroom and Driving Practice Session
9th Mar, 2010	TBA

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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