



# 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, Brian Cole, Matt Donaldson, Stephen Johnston, Adam Nesbitt and Hugh Warden. 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).

## **May Group Meeting**

12<sup>th</sup> May, 2009

After the very essential and important Observed Drives and the even more essential and important refreshments the group settled down to a short introduction to the vagaries of six-figure grid references. Some had heard it before but most were new to it and in no time the members had picked up the idiosyncrasies and quirks of this method of navigating around a map.

The group split up into 4 groups with most groups having a quartet of navigators. Having received their route instructions for the first part of the course heads were lowered, spectacles adjusted, romers were twiddled and sharpened pencils were poised ready to draw round route points and mark roads to be traversed.

After an initial period while romer operators were elected and maps were flattened to the tables an atmosphere of quiet productivity prevailed. As points were plotted it became apparent that the groups were becoming more confident in their mapreading skills. The first route instructions were traded in for the next set and so it continued. Sometimes there came an element of unrest from a group where it was noticed that the instructions did not seem to be valid. After a quick comment about the course-setters Machiavellian tendencies and his predisposition towards the conniving, cunning, and downright devious the problems were usually solved.

Due to the constraints of time the exercise had to be curtailed but not before the groups had navigated around at least 20 points. The general consensus of opinion was that it was a very enjoyable night and it was just a pity that only 21 members were present for the 'craic'.

The eventual winners were the group named inappropriately "I Am Lost" whose navigators were Norah, Dee, Leslie, Rodney and John. It was a very close contest and the winners were only ahead of their closest rivals by two points. Well done! These then are the ones to watch at the Navigation Exercise and Barbeque to be held in June (see later).

## **IAM backs move to crack down on uninsured drivers**

The UK's estimated two million uninsured drivers face an instant fine should the latest Government proposals go ahead. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has backed the move, claiming it will protect the vast majority of law abiding motorists - as long as databases are reliable.

Under new proposals from the Department for Transport, using the 2006 Road Safety Act, vehicles and motorists will have to be continuously insured, whether the vehicle is kept and used

on a road or not. The DVLA will send reminder letters to motorists whose insurance is soon to expire. If they ignore this letter and don't renew their motor insurance, they will be issued with an automatic fine.

IAM chief examiner, Peter Rodger, said: "The proposal will help reduce the numbers of people who had genuinely forgotten their insurance was up for renewal. However, those who deliberately flout the law are unlikely to be fazed by the new proposals as they will continue to find ways to work the system. It's worth remembering that a crash involving an uninsured driver is particularly fraught. A worst case scenario is when the uninsured driver will be in an unregistered vehicle, untaxed and without a current MOT - there are a host of road safety issues when some drivers choose to simply drop below the radar.

"These illegal motorists not only represent a threat to other road users, but also place a financial burden on the remaining 94 per cent of law abiding motorists."

The proposal entirely depends on the accuracy of both the DVLA keeper records and the Motor Insurance Database (MID). The IAM is concerned about their reliability.

Mr Rodger added: "There are regular instances where the MID has provided inaccurate information to police enforcement units, leading to mistaken action against drivers and vehicles which are in fact insured. It would be unfair for a motorist to receive a fine if the database is incorrect. We also recommend that a check against the Police National Computer is carried out, so the victim of a crime, such as theft, does not have to prove to the police that they already hold a report."

The IAM would like assurances from the DVLA that these accuracy problems will be addressed before placing unnecessary concern onto law abiding motorists. Enforcement measures such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and road traffic policing are crucial for any new scheme to be effective.

## **Navigation Exercise & Barbeque**

Tuesday, 9th June, 2009

This will start from the Scout Camp Crawfordsburn at 7.15pm. To get there from Bangor travel west along the B20 through Crawfordsburn village and after a further 0.2 mls turn right down Bridge Road towards Helen's Bay. Go down Bridge Road about 0.3 mls and then turn right into a tarmac roadway. Continue on for about 0.3mls (you'll probably come to a gate) and then turn sharply uphill to the left. Follow this lane for a hundred yards to the Scout Camp.

Like at the TableTop Navigation Exercise 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!

a torch might also be a good idea.

Don't forget £3 per person to pay for the barbeque.

Good luck!

## **DON'T FORGET NO JULY GROUP MEETING**

### **Dates for Your Diary**

- 2nd Jun, 2009 Additional driving practice
- 9th Jun, 2009 Navigation Exercise and Barbeque**
- 23rd Jun, 2009 Additional driving practice
- 30th Jun, 2009 Additional driving practice
- 25th Jul, 2009 AMNI Karting Challenge
- 11th Aug, 2009 Group Night & STAC Enrolment

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