



# 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

March 2010

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

Vol 13.03

**Congratulations this month go to -**

**Alan Hamill**

**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, Melanie Ware and David Williams. 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).

## March Group Meeting - AGM

9th March, 2010

Unfortunately we were unable to have a guest speaker this month. However the demo and observed drives continued as normal and people got a chance to have a yarn with fellow members. Ivan did however have a few announcements -

- A Bike Safety Awareness Open Day is being held at Comber Fire Station on Sunday, 18th April from midday to 4.00 pm.
- We are hosting the Northern Ireland Groups annual conference in the Signal Business Growth Centre, 2 Innotec Drive, Bangor, BT19 7PD starting at 6.30 pm. The speakers are Ronnie Trouton, former Chief Road Safety Officer for Northern Ireland, and Dave Shenton, IAM Groups Support manager.
- Our April Group Meeting will be held at the Slot-car Racing Venue on the road between Comber and La Mon hotel. **The important thing to remember is that our Group Night is NOT on the Tuesday night but instead it is on the WEDNESDAY night, the 14th April, 2010.**

This usually starts at 7.00pm in order to get a good night's racing.

## How to Get to The Slot Car racing.

Grid Reference - Sheet 15 1:50000 Discoverer Map Series 420½ 691

Take the Comber Rd out of Newtownards until you reach the roundabout near Comber on the Comber Bypass. Take the third exit (signposted Comber Town Centre) at this roundabout and go for 0.8mils along Copeland Link, the Newtownards Road and then Bridge St stopping at the Traffic Lights in Comber Square. Turn right along Castle St and travel for 0.3mils along this street and then Mill St until you come to a mini-roundabout. Take the first exit and go under the bridge and stop at the T-junction with Railway St. Turn right and then immediately left and go up the Glen Rd. Go along the Glen Rd for 2.1mils until you come to a large group of wooden huts/warehouses on the right. Take the 2nd entrance in through some gates. Look for the 3rd building on the right labelled Block E, Unit 6b. There is parking just slightly past the hut on the left.

For those coming from Belfast along the Ballygowan Rd take the road off the Ballygowan Rd (Gransha Rd) that leads to La Mon House Hotel (0.9mils). Travel on past La Mon and come to where there is a road to the right (Glen Rd)(0.3mils). Take this road to the right and follow it for 0.3mils (past the Ballyrussell Rd on the left) until you see a large group of wooden huts. Take the first entrance and look for the hut as described above.

**Remember to bring £8, and some loose change for the refreshment machines. Enjoy yourselves.**

## How to save on fuel this Bank Holiday

Businesses will be mindful that the chancellor has announced an extra 3p rise in fuel duty over the coming months. The IAM has responded to the fuel hike by putting together some tips to help motorists reduce their bank holiday fuel bills.

Many Bank Holiday round trips can be up to 500 miles long, the equivalent of driving from London to Strasbourg, but there are many opportunities to make each litre last longer with good journey planning and forward thinking.

IAM Chief Examiner, Peter Rodger, said: "A rise as little as 1p per litre will quickly add up. Simple measures such as looking well ahead and slowing down earlier instead of always using the brakes to slow down can make a real difference.

"A smoother driving style is the single best eco-driving tip we could offer. Good eco-driving starts with safer driving and anticipation."

Other money saving tips from the IAM:

- Sticking to 70mph, instead of 80mph, can save around four pence per mile.
- A smooth driving style as opposed to an aggressive one has been estimated to save 15 per cent fuel consumption.
- An empty car roof box can increase fuel consumption by 20 per cent on a motorway – if it's not needed, don't take it.
- Correct tyre pressure reduces wear and helps fuel economy. Under-inflated tyres are unsafe, need replacing more often (an environmental problem in itself) and can increase fuel consumption by five per cent. Check the pressure is right and that they are damage-free.
- Remember to switch off the air con and heated windows when they aren't needed. Used together these can increase fuel consumption by 15 per cent.
- Take the unnecessary baggage out of your boot – the added weight will affect your fuel efficiency.

## Cyclists: claim your lane, says IAM

The IAM has urged cyclists to make themselves seen and to "claim their lane", moving out into the middle of the lane when approaching a junction or parked cars.

Duncan Pickering, IAM Cycling Development Manager, said: "There has been some debate as to whether cyclists should stick to the kerb or push out into the road when riding in built-up areas. Our advice to cyclists, based on a comprehensive study, is to stay near to the kerb on long even stretches, but to assert yourself when approaching a junction, pushing out into the road and putting yourself in the direct view of drivers.

"Sticking to the kerb where drivers are not necessarily looking means they are less likely to see you."

Studies have shown that drivers primarily pay attention to the major stream of traffic when navigating a junction, paying little attention to auxiliary roads which are more likely to have cyclists on them.

"Drivers are more likely to notice bikes travelling in the same direction as the oncoming traffic and, when turning left, mainly focus their attention on cars coming from the right, as they don't see the left as posing a particular threat. This means they fail to see cyclists from the left early enough," added Mr Pickering.

The IAM, the UK's largest independent road safety charity, recommends cyclists:

- Take up a primary position around 75-100m before reaching a junction, in the centre of the lane, providing it is safe to do so. This move will mean that drivers exiting the junction will be more likely to see the cyclist as they are in the same traffic flow as more hazardous vehicles.
- Take the "secondary position" when cycling along a straight stretch of road which is clear of junctions and parked cars.
- Keep a sensible distance, about half a metre, from the kerb to avoid hazards such as slippery drain-covers.
- Remember it is not always sensible or appropriate to take the centre of the lane especially if traffic is heavy.

While a lack of awareness on the part of some motorists is no doubt a huge factor in car/bike collisions, it pays for the cyclist as the more vulnerable road user to ride to be seen where possible.

## Dates for Your Diary

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 14th Apr, 2010 | NB - This is a Wednesday Nt. Group Evening - Slot Car Racing 7.00pm 149 Glen Road. BT23 5QU |
| 18th Apr, 2010 | Fire & Rescue Service at Comber Fire Station 12.00 - 4.00pm                                 |
| 22nd Apr, 2010 | Region 8 Conference at Bangor Signal Centre 6.30pm - 10.00pm                                |
| 27th Apr, 2010 | STAC 19/6. Classroom and Driving Practice Session   |
| 4th May, 2010  | STAC 19/7. Classroom and Driving Practice Session   |
| 11th May, 2010 | Group Evening at Boathouse. Talk on Offroad driving.  |
| 25th May, 2010 | STAC 19/8. Classroom and Driving Practice Session   |

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