



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 a new Member, Linda Wycherly. We hope that she will not only gain from being a member 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).**

October Group Meeting - 14th Oct, 2008

After our Observed Drives and refreshments Trevor got the meeting started. This was our 18th Annual General meeting and to start it off went through the usual business of the apologies from members unable to attend, the minutes from the last AGM which were proposed and seconded. He then welcomed everyone to the meeting especially our Divisional Council member, Robin Mair from Scotland, and our Regional Coordinator and Staff Examiner, Jim Cameron. He started his Chairperson's Report by saying that the Group was doing well. He recounted the various activities and meetings we had had throughout the year and then finished by thanking all those who had helped run these events during the year. He then thanked all the Office-bearers and members of the Committee for all their help and support over the previous 12 months.

In Franks's absence Ivan had 'volunteered' to give Frank's Membership Report. The main thrust of this report was that we are a very healthy Group as far as this aspect is concerned with 82 Full Members and 37 Associate members. The report also noticed a trend of steady growth in the numbers in the Motorcycle Section, thanks to Lynn. Frank concluded his report by encouraging members to do their best to recruit new Associates.

Adrian then gave the Treasurer's Report which was not yet quite completed but again the overall assessment was that the Group was healthy this time in a fiscal way.

Robin then presided over the Election of Officers followed by the Election of Committee Members.

He then gave a brief talk on the Conference and in particular, he mentioned the recent proposal to increase Members dues.

Trevor then asked Robin to present the Mervyn Bates Trophy. This is a model figure of two jaguar cars which is presented to the member who has contributed most to the Group. This year it was presented to Tony Ablett who has contributed to the Group over many years. He passed his test in 1975, was a founder member of the Group and is looked upon as a Group stalwart. Well done, Tony!

Trevor then reminded Members, Associates and friends that all would be welcome at the Marie Curie Ladies Driving Challenge on Saturday, 25th October.

Jim Cameron then was asked to speak to the Group. He thanked the Group for his invitation. He also mentioned the increase in membership fees and he stated that the IAM could survive for only 18 months if the proposed increase does not go ahead. He encouraged members to vote by proxy using forms which he had brought with him. This meant that the Chairman could use our votes to help keep the IAM in existence.

Trevor then thanked Jim and Robin for coming and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Save fuel - don't crash during the crunch

IAM News 2nd October, 2008

With motoring costs up by nearly 20 per cent, or £277 since 2007, the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) offers the following advice – taken from its Advanced Driving Course – which is guaranteed to save fuel and reduce wear and tear on vehicles.

Don't crash: having an accident leads to fuel spills, traffic jams and crushed vehicles. Simply staying safe saves not only your no claims bonus, but significant costs and emotional tragedy.

Anticipate road conditions and drive smoothly: avoid sharp acceleration and heavy braking to save fuel and reduce accident rates

Stick to the speed limit: edging over the motorway speed limit to

80mph saves very little time, but it will cost typically around three or four pence per mile more. Sticking to the speed limit saves money as well as penalty points.

Check your revs: change up so that you use the most efficient safe gear – for many cars this will be before 2500rpm (petrol) and 2,000rpm (diesel).

In a jam: when stuck in traffic, turn off the engine to save fuel and stop emissions.

Reverse park to drive off straight away: a cold engine uses more petrol than a warm one. Reversing slowly or shunting back and forth with a cold engine delays the warming up; reversing into a space enables a motorist to drive straight out. A car used for work and weekend shopping can save £50 a year by doing this.

Buttons cost money: air conditioning and heated windows drain power; keep the windows clean and they'll rarely mist up. Use air conditioning sparingly but do switch it on for about 10 minutes a month to keep it in good condition.

Shed the load: remove empty roof racks and excess loads from the boot.

Track the trip: set on-board tracking computers to 'actual' mode to track miles per hour and miles per gallon/litre expenditure. Don't watch the meter while driving; wait until the end of the journey to monitor fuel consumption.

Plan the route: plan the route carefully before setting off to avoid congestion, prevent getting lost and wasting valuable fuel. Take the most direct route and go at off-peak times if possible to save fuel and time. Consider car sharing, Park and Ride schemes or public transport.

Service vehicles regularly: inefficient, under-serviced engines can reduce fuel economy by more than 10 per cent. Under-inflated tyres are dangerous, wear out prematurely and can increase fuel consumption by up to three per cent.

Don't Be Dim This Winter

Driving Tip Number 40 3 October 2008

Being able to see the road ahead to avoid danger and stop safely in an emergency is a necessity for all drivers, especially when driving in the hours of darkness.

With winter looming, the IAM offers the following tips on how to check and use vehicle lights in preparation for the short and dark days to come.

Check the lights - Regularly check that all lights work. While someone observes the lights around the car, switch on each light one-by-one: headlights, sidelights, fog lights, indicators, brake lights, reverse lights, hazard warning lights and number plate lights.

If alone, park by a reflective surface such as a garage door, illuminate all lights in sequence and look for the reflections.

Use the lights - When away from street lighting, visibility is limited to the range of the head lights. This varies greatly between dipped and full-beam; slow down when driving on dipped head lights.

Lights give motorists an early warning of each other's presence. Look for approaching lights when driving around corners, adjust the position of the vehicle accordingly and dip your own headlights to avoid dazzling other motorists.

If oncoming drivers forget to dip their lights, slow down and give your eyes time to adjust to avoid blindness. Never stay on full-beam to retaliate.

It is difficult to judge approaching speed in the dark so take extra care when making a manoeuvre and always allow traffic to pass when waiting to pull out at a junction.

The weather will also dictate when to use headlights and fog lights. Use fog lights sparingly; switch them on only when visibility is below 100 metres. Leaving them on after fog has disappeared is an offence and a danger to other motorists.

A general good rule of thumb is to switch on dipped headlights during heavy rain and poor light.

Never use lights to dazzle or cause discomfort to other road users – this is against the law.

Dates for Your Diary

4th Nov, 2008 STAC 16 - Boathouse, 7.15pm. Sixth in a series of talks and drives for new Associates.

11th Nov, 2008 **Group Night.** Guest Speaker from the Forensic Dept

25th Nov, 2008 STAC 16 - Boathouse, 7.15pm. Fifth in a series of talks and drives for new Associates.

9th Dec, 2008 **Group Night** - Christmas Dinner in Daft Eddy's, Whiterock, Killinchy. See Frank soon to book!

13th Jan, 2009 **Group Night** - STAC 17 Enrolment

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