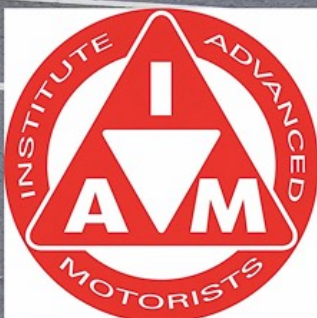
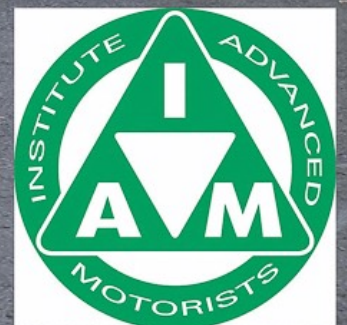


The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



April 2018





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The Newsletter of the North Down Advanced Motorists Group (Group 8199)

Helping to Improve the Standard of Driving and Riding on the Roads in Northern Ireland and the advancement of road safety

April 2018

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New Members

This month we would like to welcome, as new car members of the Group, Richard Gray and Martin Watterson. We hope you not only gain from being members of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers.

Test passes

No test passes this month but congratulations to

David Jackson

on passing the National Observer test for bikes.

March Cover Picture

The March cover picture was the approach to a downhill bend around the corner of a house on the Lower Balloo Road just before it meets the main Groomsport to Donaghadee Road at Orlock. I had thought that this would have been an easy one especially for car members as this may have featured on an observed drive. However only Angela Bell and Shaun McKittrick managed to identify it.

Back to an urban scene for this month's cover. Can you identify it? No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the Road Observer.

Dates for your Diary

24 April - STAC 5 - Roundabouts and junctions
1 May - STAC 6 - Overtaking
8 May - Group Night - car detailing - Mark Sloane from Polished Pursuits
22 May - STAC 7 - Motorways and dual carriageways
29 May - STAC 8 - Manoeuvring
5 June - Additional driving practice
12 June - Group Night - a driving event details to be announced
26 June - Additional driving practice

STAC - Short Term Associate Course. Associate Members should ensure that are familiar with the relevant section of the "Associate Handbook" before each STAC night so that you can get the most benefit from the theory session as well as your observed drive.

April Group Night



We made our way to the Excelsior Cinema near Comber for our April Group Night which took place on Wednesday instead of our usual Tuesday because of a clash of dates at the cinema. We were made very welcome by owner, projectionist, film maker and all round film buff Roy Spence.

If you haven't been, it's a cosy little cinema, proper red cinema seats, red plush wall coverings etc. Everything you would expect of a cinema, including the usherette delivering choc ices. Angela was excused this duty this year in favour of Sheila who carried it off with great style and grace.



The film choice was ours and this year the main request was to watch again “C’était un rendezvous” loosely translated as “It was a meeting”. What is it? In August 1976, the French film director Claude Lelouch adapted a gyroscopically stabilised camera in the front of a car to make a trip in the heart of Paris in the early morning at the highest speed he could to the Basilica of Montmartre to meet a girlfriend. The plan was to film the whole journey in one take. It was initially thought that the car was a Ferrari 275 GTB but it was later revealed to be a Mercedes 450 SL 6.9 (below) and the sound track of the Ferrari was dubbed on afterwards. The choice of car was determined by the self-levelling hydropneumatic suspension which helped stabilise the camera.



Credit: Frank Schwichtenberg

First impressions are that the film is speeded up but closer study shows other vehicles and pedestrians travelling at normal speeds. We lost count of the number of red lights the car went through and perhaps the scariest parts were emerging from the tunnel at the Louvre at high speed with no visibility for traffic coming from the right, taking the wrong side of a traffic island to avoid a bus and a VW Beetle, causing pedestrians to press themselves against the buildings as he passed a bin lorry on a narrow street and the narrow cobbled streets leading up to Montmartre itself. It was well worth watching again.

The main feature was Bullitt starring Steve McQueen, chosen for the spectacular car chase in the middle. In a cinema of IAM Observers some lapses in continuity were noted - the VW Beetle that appeared in several shots, wheel trims falling off and mysteriously finding their way back on in the next shot etc. However, this didn't take away from the drama of the chase. The film was made in 1968 and while the pace of the film might appear slow by today's blockbuster standards it was nevertheless very enjoyable. For next year, what about “The French Connection” with Gene Hackman (car chase under the railway track), “The Driver” with Ryan O’Neill (wreck a Mercedes in an underground car park) or “The Italian Job” (the original with Michael Caine)? Other suggestions welcome.

Many thanks to Annie for organising this visit.

Advanced driving Modules

Fancy improving your driving skills from the comfort of your own armchair? Want to find out how even the smallest of distractions can cost you more than just a harmless prang?

IAM RoadSmart has devised a series of seven e-learning modules which will improve your knowledge and abilities before you even set foot outside your door.

Each e-learning module costs just £5 and offers up to 20 minutes of interactive tuition. Topics covered are:

- Motorway driving
- Parking and manoeuvring
- Driving on country roads
- Driving in towns
- Managing distractions
- Managing speed
- Managing overtaking

IAM RoadSmart says the e-learning modules focus on specific aspects of driving that many drivers find challenging, and the modules' interactive nature, with pictures and animations help make the key points easily memorable.



Buying an e-learning module is simplicity itself. All you have to do is head over to iamroadsmart.com/e-learning, click on 'access modules' and follow the instructions.

Each module costs just £5 and can be purchased and completed online, either on a desktop computer or mobile device, in around 20 minutes, making them ideal for anyone with only a little time to spare.

Until 30 April there is a 50% discount for family and friends of IAM Members by using the discount code **MEM18** at this link:

<https://iamroadsmart.interactyx.com>

and following the instructions at this link:

https://www.iamroadsmart.com/docs/default-source/inform-documents/iam-roadsmart-elearning-modules_user-guide_discount.pdf

Prepare for summer

The clocks have gone forward and days are longer than nights for the next six months; it's time to get your car hale, hearty and 'beach body ready' in preparation for the spring. This week's tips give advice on getting your car ready for the warmer weather, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

- **Lose weight;** clear out those coats, boots, scarves and bags that took up permanent residence during the winter months. They add weight as well as taking up space, and surplus weight means wasted fuel.
- **Cut down on the salt;** modern cars are much less prone to rust than their forbearers, but corrosion-causing salt from gritted roads can build up under the wheel arches and the suspension. Use a hose pipe to flush the wheel arches clean; if you have a pressure washer, even better. If not try washing the arches after driving on wet roads – the mud and grit will have softened. The neighbours might think you're peculiar but you'll reduce the risk of expensive repairs.



- **Test your vision;** the demister puts a film of grime from traffic fumes on the inside of the windscreen which can spread bright sunshine into a blinding glare. Get the screen squeaky clean with water and detergent, dry with a microfibre cloth and crystal clear vision will be restored. Don't forget the other windows; clean screens rarely mist up so you'll need the heated rear window far less – another fuel saver.
- **Keep hay fever at bay;** most cars have pollen filters, but they need changing periodically to remain efficient. Look in your handbook to find out how to get to the filter and if it looks bad, change it now. Some very good after-market filters are available online, often with a charcoal layer to filter out pollutants as well as pollen.
- **Don't get hot and bothered;** air conditioning is a boon as the temperature rises, but it contains a special gas which can slowly leak away. If it gets too low, the air-con will blow warm instead of cold. Test it by turning the heater control to minimum, the heater fan to maximum and make sure the air-con is turned on (i.e., not in "eco" mode). If you don't feel an icy blast after a couple of minutes, the system may need "re-gassing"; a simple job which most garages have the equipment to do.



Richard said: "Treat your car to a spring clean. The efforts to wash and polish it will last a bit longer now the winter salt has gone. Now is a good time to spend a therapeutic weekend tinkering and **on our May Group Night we will find out how the professionals do it.**"

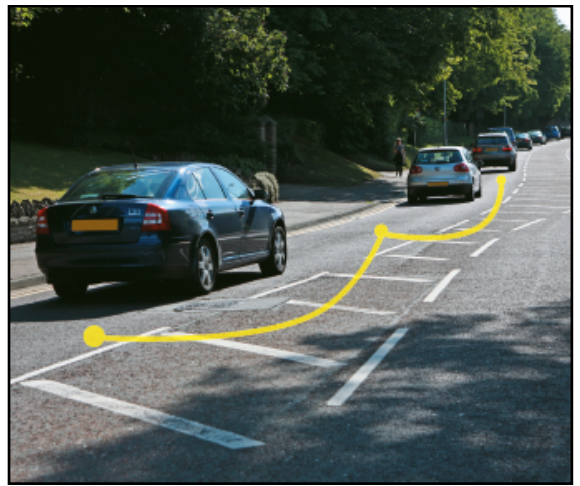
Filtering safely on a motorcycle

IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, has provided tips about how to filter through traffic safely on a motorcycle. No matter if you're a new rider who's nervous about filtering, or an experienced motorcyclists, it's always good to be reminded of the following key tips:

- Only filter when the surrounding traffic is moving at less than 20mph, and then only exceed that speed yourself by 10 to 15mph maximum (if safe and legal to do so).
- Scan for side turnings and entrances to both sides of the road, and try to keep a car door's width away from the vehicle you are passing.
- Obey all 'keep left' bollards and also be aware that temporarily stationary vehicles at traffic lights, pedestrian crossings etc. are not classed as parked for the purposes of solid white lines, and therefore you cannot cross a solid white line to filter.
- Can you see the driver's face through the window or wing mirrors? Does he look like he's about to pull out? Always look for evidence that the driver has seen you and comprehends that you are passing them.
- If you are filtering between lanes, you need to look out for other motorcycles which could possibly be changing lanes or approaching you from the rear.



- When filtering to the right side, consider using the 'stepping stone' method (see opposite). Whilst you don't actually have to move into the spaces, consider which one would be suitable.
- Filtering takes a lot of concentration, so make sure you take short breaks if you're travelling for a long period of time.
- Ride at a speed that allows you to react to the movement of other road users and always have an escape route planned in your head.
- Filtering can sometimes come as a surprise to the person driving behind you, so remain courteous by giving a polite wave of the hand to the driver behind.
- Think of the size of the vehicle in front of you. Just because there's a gap, it doesn't mean you should move into it. For examples, HGVs will need more space and time to manoeuvre than a car would.



Richard says: "One of the biggest advantages of a motorcycle is the ability to make progress through traffic. Despite thoughts to the contrary, it is not illegal and the Highway Code references it in a number of areas. Staying safe must be your main priority and understanding where planned filtering becomes dangerous overtaking will help with this. The best motorcycling advice ever is just because it fits doesn't mean you should put it there."

And finally.....

On recently acquiring a car from a popular German manufacturer, Angela was very keen to point out that their owners don't all park like this:



The views expressed in the "Road Observer" are not necessarily those of the Editor, the North Down Advanced Motorists Group or the Institute of Advanced Motorists.