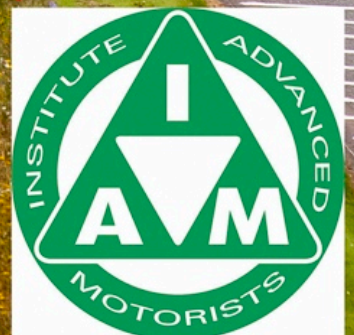


The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



January 2017





Official Provider



The Road Observer

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

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

January 2017

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New Members

This month we would like to welcome existing motorcycle member Belinda Duignan as a car Associate Member. We hope you not only gain from being a car member of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers.

Advanced Tests

No test passes to date this month

Good luck and safe driving or riding to any Associates approaching their test.

Congratulations also to

Leslie Ashe, William McAteer (cars), Simon Beckett, Gareth Cross and Paul Moore (bikes)

on gaining the IMI accredited Local Observer qualification

Cover picture

The December cover picture was the A22 Downpatrick to Killyleagh Road just before the Quoile Bridge. Congratulations to Guy Thomson for correctly identifying it.

Can you identify the location of this month's cover? No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the Road Observer.

Dates for your diary

7 February - STAC 1

14 February - Group night - A photographic journey - Leslie Ashe

28 February - STAC 2

7 March - STAC 3

14 March - Inspector Rosemary Leech, Roads Policing PSNI

28 March - STAC 4

4 April - STAC 5

11 April - Group Night - Cinema evening

18 April - Easter Tuesday - No meeting

2 May - STAC 6

9 May - Group Night - TBA

23 May - STAC 7

30 May - STAC 8

6 June - Additional driving practice

13 June Group Night - TBA

STAC - Short Term Associate Course. Associate Members should ensure that are familiar with either “How to be a better driver” or the new “Associate Handbook” before each STAC night so that you can get the most benefit from the theory session as well as your observed drive.

Winter driving

Earlier this month Northern Ireland had a brief spell of real winter although here in North Down it didn't amount to much apart from temperatures dropping to what used to be the norm and a few sleet showers. However, conditions in other areas were a bit less benign with some snow cover. Winter has a bit to go yet and we could be faced with further cold snaps and winter storms.



IAM RoadSmart brings you expert advice on driving in snow from its head of driving and riding advice Richard Gladman.

Best advice is to avoid travelling in extreme weather. If no one is moving, you just add to the problem - so listen to travel advice.

If you do have to travel in bad weather, plan your journey thoroughly. Think about where you are going and what it will be like all the way along the journey. If you can, avoid travelling on less-used roads or country lanes as these are less likely to be gritted.

Before setting off, clear all your windows, mirrors and lights fully. Clear off snow piled on the roof of your car and the bonnet too, as it can fall and blow on to the windscreen. Don't leave anything obscured.

Start your car gently from stationary and avoid high revs. If road conditions are extremely icy and you drive a manual car, you should move off in a higher gear rather than first gear. You should stay in a higher gear to avoid wheel spin.

It's important you get your speed right when travelling in snow. Never drive too fast that you risk losing control, and don't drive so slowly that you risk losing momentum for getting up a slope.



It helps if you can levitate and avoid the icy conditions!

Increase your following distance from the vehicle in front of you. It may take up to 10 times as long to stop on snow or ice build this into your following distance – this will give you more time to slow down using engine braking which is less likely to induce a skid.

Make sure you slow down sufficiently before reaching a bend so you have enough time to react to any hazards that appear as you go round it – and so you do not skid as well. You should have finished slowing down before you start to turn the steering wheel.

If you break down or have to pull over on a motorway or dual carriageway, you should leave your vehicle and stand to the safe side of it - ideally well over the armco to the nearside of the road, but not in front of it, when waiting for help.

Richard said: "Many of the problems associated with travel during snow could be avoided if people planned in advance. People routinely travel with only the minimum of safety equipment, without realising their journey could be a lot longer than expected.

"At the very least you should have a shovel, torch, blanket, jump-leads and tow rope. You should ensure your mobile phone is fully charged, and the number of your recovery organisation is saved into it. A bottle of water and a snack may also prove useful and don't set out without knowing the locations of petrol stations on your way.

"This all might sound obvious, but too many of us forget to do any of this. Don't be one of the ill-prepared, and listen to the weather forecast for the whole length of a winter journey to help you prepare for it."



In case you weren't aware, North Down Advanced Motorists now has it's own dedicated Facebook page. Here you will find information about forthcoming events including, for bikers, details about the next ride-out. It also features regular advice, tips and blogs from IAM Roadsmart. You will find us on

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthDownGroupIAM/>

Pay a visit to the page and give it a like. Better still, add it to your bookmarks and visit it regularly for updates.

And finally.....Winter travel (part 2)

I took the advice about travelling in snowy conditions:

- I had warm clothing - extra coat, a hat, gloves, scarf, a blanket etc
- I packed de-icer, jump leads, a tow rope
- I had a shovel and a bag of grit
- I had food and a warm drink....

And I looked a right fool on the bus!

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