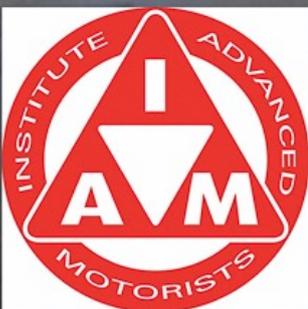
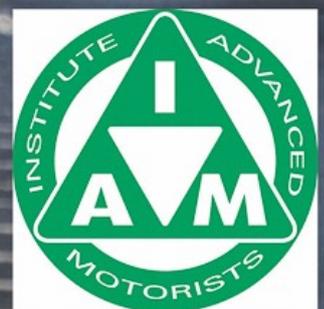


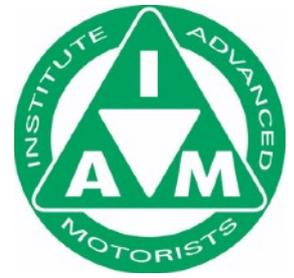
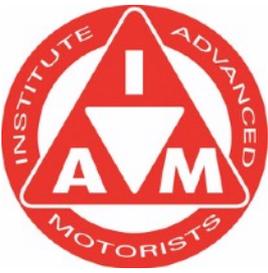
# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down  
Advanced Motorists Group



March 2019





## The Road Observer

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

March 2019

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

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Group Contact - David Harcourt

Tel No 07760 578444

[e-mail: david.harcourt@gmail.com](mailto:david.harcourt@gmail.com)

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### New Members

This month we welcome to the Group car members Molly O’Kane and Pamela Wilson. Also motorcycle member Brendan Dempsey, and two bike transfers - Achim Gloger from London and Bruce Steele from Lisburn Advanced Motorcyclists. We hope you not only gain from being members of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers.

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### Test Passes

Congratulations this month to car member

**Paul Bradley**

**who achieved a F1RST pass.**

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

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### February Cover Picture

The February cover was College Square East in Belfast looking towards Millfield. The “Black Man” at the Inst gates is visible in the centre. This one was correctly identified by Shaun McKittrick, Norman Shearer, Ivan Greenfield and Annie McFarland.

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

## Dates for your diary

26 March - STAC 4: Bends and cornering  
2 April - STAC 5: Roundabouts and junctions  
9 April - **Group Night** - Visit to Excelsior Cinema, near Comber - See covering email for details  
23 April - no meeting (Easter)  
30 April - STAC 6: Overtaking  
7 May - STAC 7: Motorways and dual carriageways  
14 May - **Group Night** - Visit to Crumlin Road Gaol  
28 May - STAC 8: Manoeuvring  
4 June - Test preparation and additional driving practice  
11 June - **Group night** - TBA - possible driving event  
25 June - Additional driving practice

STAC - Short Term Associate Course. Associate Members should ensure that you 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.

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## New Car Observers

Congratulations to **Lisa Carson, Ivan Greenfield and John Seawright** on successfully completing their car Observer training following an intensive Saturday morning session.

Becoming an Observer is a great way of keeping your own driving up to standard and of giving something back to the Group. If you are interested please contact our Chief Observer Colin Hay.

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## Bikesafe

While the February Group Night was mainly one for the bikers it was also of interest to the car side. Jacky McDowell made the journey to Groomsport on a filthy wet night to talk to us about Bikesafe.

Bikesafe is an initiative run by police services across the United Kingdom, with support from motorcycle industry partners, aimed at reducing the number of motorcycle related casualties. It offers motorcyclists the opportunity to take part in a free Bikesafe Assessment designed to enhance the skills of riders who have already passed their test.

By passing on their knowledge and experience, police motorcyclists can advise you on how to become a safer, more competent rider and help riders avoid some of the most common causes of accident and death.

BikeSafe workshops include a two hour classroom session looking at the key aspects of Motorcycle Roadcraft, followed by a two hour, on the road, assessment by an advanced police motorcyclist.



These workshops can help you become a safer, more competent rider and help you avoid some of the most common causes of collisions. They can also help you to increase your ability and confidence, so you can get even more enjoyment from riding your motorcycle. The workshops are open to all qualified motorcyclists from experienced bikers to those returning to motorcycling after a

few years absence (born again bikers) and are especially useful for those who have only recently passed their test.

For more information follow this link: <http://www.bikesafe.co.uk/locate-a-force/police-service-of-northern-ireland/workshop-content/>

Jacky is one of 7 police officers in traffic branch involved in Bikesafe and in addition to the workshops he is involved in speaking to car cruises, companies and to year 13/14 pupils in schools. He also speaks to those in Maghaberry Prison who have been given custodial sentences for road traffic offences. Not surprisingly, he said that he would much prefer to hand out penalty points than attend serious or fatal collisions.



He showed some statistics about fatalities which showed that while there were two MC fatalities in 2017 and 1 in 2018, proportionately motorcyclists were at greater risk than car drivers when you take into account the number of motorcyclists and car drivers on the roads.

He made the point that speed limits are not a target, for example passing a school at getting out time the appropriate speed might be as low as 15 mph. You cannot defy the laws of physics and these can decide whether you live or die if involved in a collision.



Hard-hitting road safety videos are shown in two places worldwide - Northern Ireland and in Australia. We've all seen examples of the NI videos on TV so he showed us a couple of the Australian ones which were so well made they made you wince.

He played a video showing teenagers talking about their own mobile phone use when they are driving and their subsequent emotional reaction when faced by someone who had life-changing injuries after being involved in a collision where the other driver had been using a mobile phone. Food for thought, not just in relation to mobile phone use, but for other distractions while driving.

He also showed a video of 2 motorcyclists negotiating a series of downhill bends. Neither were taking the correct line round the corners and to add insult to injury they were passed by someone on a pedal bike who was taking the correct line. That was lesson number one but lesson number two was in relation to the reaction of the motorcyclists, one of whom appeared to become annoyed at having been passed by a push-bike and was competing with him for road space. The lesson was about how things can escalate very quickly. We all have to interact with other road users and in order to keep both them and ourselves safe the correct correct attitude is required when on the roads.

*Pictures courtesy of Bikesafe*

# Rain

IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, has put together some crucial advice to help you drive safely in the rain.

## Heavy rain:

- Heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and the vehicle in front of you should be two seconds when driving on a dry road, and at least four seconds in the wet. It is even longer on icy surfaces. IAM RoadSmart recommend up to 10 times the braking distance when driving on ice.



- Your windscreen should be clean, wipers effective and the jets positioned correctly and aimed at the screen. It is sensible to clean the windscreen, make any necessary adjustments and remove anything from the main area before you start your journey.
- A good rule of thumb is that if you need windscreen wipers, then you need your headlights. Automatic light settings will not always activate in bad weather conditions, so it is up to you to make a sensible decision as to whether these need to be turned on.

## Aquaplaning:

- If the water is standing in puddles on the road surface, your car is at risk of aquaplaning. Aquaplaning is where a wedge of water forms in front of the tyre and lifts it up off the road surface. This is caused by the tread not being able to displace the amount of water present. To recover from aquaplaning, ease gently off your accelerator, have a firm grip of the steering wheel and be sure not to make any sudden steering actions. The car will eventually regain its grip as the water clears.

## Floods:



- First ask yourself - can you take another route? If not, then you need to identify how deep the flood is. If the standing water is more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. If you are familiar with the road, you can judge the flood in relation to the kerb.
- If heavy rain was not the cause of the flood, then what was? And what impact on the road does it have? For example, if it is a burst water main, the standing water may look like a normal flood but the road surface beneath the water may be completely broken up. If you are unsure how the flood has formed, then avoid it altogether.
- Are there other vehicles similar to yours that are safely driving through? From this, make a judgement

call as to whether it is safe to travel through or not.

- If the water is fast flowing, do not attempt to drive through it, as there is a real danger of your car being swept off the road.
- If you have taken everything into consideration and decide to drive through the flood, be sure to do so slowly. The best approach is to press lightly on your clutch and add gentle pressure on your accelerator to increase your engine revs. Do so without increasing your speed, in a similar way to how you would undertake a hill start. This will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you are in an automatic car, accelerate slightly but control the speed with your brakes. When you have passed the flood, test your brakes to make sure they are dry and working properly.
- If you are in the slightest doubt, then turn around and don't go through the flood. Often modern saloon cars have the air intake in the wheel arch, which may be below the water level. If your engine should take in water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop.
- Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians. If this is done accidentally - even when causing splashed when driving through puddles at the side of the road - you could receive a fixed penalty and three points on your license for driving without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other road users. If deliberately done, it could be a public order offence, a court appearance and a fine.



Richard said: "With the British weather the way it is, we should all be well practised at driving in the rain. Keeping your car maintained and the rubber (wipers and tyres) in good condition will help you stay safe. In the recent extremes, we have seen that standing water and floods are becoming more commonplace, so take extra care and if possible avoid driving through standing water. If you're in any doubt about the depth or surface underneath a flood, then it's best not to take any chances."

## Geneva Motor Show



NDAM Members Colin Hay and William McAteer make an annual pilgrimage to the Geneva Motor Show. Exclusive to NDAM here are some words and pictures of the exotic and sometimes quirky at the show courtesy of Colin.

First up meet the Bugatti La Voiture Noire, a one-off 'hyper coupe' and probably the most expensive car in the world! While Bugatti is famed for producing over the top sports cars, I think that they have even outdone themselves this time! This Bugatti costs 11 Million Swiss francs or circa £9.5 Million.... before local taxes!! It is based on the running gear of the Chiron but apparently it was built for one of the company's special collectors, with rumours that it might be VW grandee Ferdinand Piech.



How about this Danish 'Envo TSR?' This fantastic looking weapon is described as a: "Street legal, track focussed hypercar!" I would say 'hyper' is accurate with some 1177 horses and 1100nm of torque from its 5.8 litre, V8 twin supercharged engine and 2.8 seconds to 0-62mph!



The last Toyota Supra rolled off the production line in Japan during the summer of 2002. Now the legend is back with a European debut of the GR Supra. The Supra is a joint venture with BMW and the production of the new Z4. It will come as no surprise then that this new GR Supra is powered by a 3.0 cylinder, in line 6 cylinder with twin-scroll turbo, producing 340 hp. That BMW parts bin is being stretched widely.



Or what about a Lamborghini:



Here we have the new Morgan 'Plus Six' which is deemed the sportiest new technology Morgan yet revealed.



Morgan's proud claim to be the largest remaining British car manufacture, alas is now no longer true; Morgan has recently sold a significant stake to an Italian venture capitalist firm Investindustrial. MD, Steve Morris told journalists at the Geneva show that this move will facilitate expansion and serious investment for further model development.

The 'Plus Six' is powered by a BMW 3.0L, 6 cylinder direct injection with twin scroll turbo and speed auto (for some rear wheel drive fun). The chassis is an all new bonded aluminium chassis (what, no wood?!) £64, 995 to own the British, er German, come Italian machine!

Now for the more affordable:

Next up is the new Skoda Scala. This car replaces the Skoda Rapid model. The Rapid didn't quite have the expected sales success and was pitched initially at the VW Golf sector but looks and quality may have let it down although pricing was always very keen.

This new Scala has moved up market, with improved interiors and additional rear passenger space and boot space, with a whole 10 centimetres longer than the class leading Golf. Skoda wants to challenge not only the Golf but other competitors such as the Hyundai i30 and Renault Megane.



You could be forgiven for initially thinking this Scala was a Seat Leon or Audi A3 as the design language across the VW Audi Group has familiar handwriting.

The Scala will be released in Europe this June, making its way to the UK soon after. It will be interesting to see how the move upmarket has impacted price competitiveness.

**And finally.....**

For the eco warriors:



Many thanks to Colin for the pictures and words (PS he was not sponsored by NDAM!).

**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**