

# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down  
Advanced Motorists Group



March 2020





## 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

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### Test Passes

No test passes this month

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

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### February Cover Picture

This was an easy one. The location was High Street, Hollywood looking west. The maypole is just out of shot on the right. Leaving it in the picture would have made it much too easy.

Congratulations to Annie McFarland, Angela Bell, Norman Shearer, John Seawright, Gareth Hughes and Guy Thomson.

Can you identify this month's cover? It's a place I'm sure many will have visited. No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the Road Observer.



## Dates for your diary

**Please note change of venue for 24 March.  
We will be in the Marquis Hall off Abbey Street in Bangor - see below**

24 March	STAC 4 - Bends and cornering
31 March	STAC 5 - Roundabouts and junctions
7 April	<b>Group Night</b> - Visit to private cinema
28 April	STAC 6 - Overtaking
5 May	STAC 7 - Motorways and dual carriageways
12 May	<b>Group Night</b> - Bikes in the car-park postponed - to be decided
26 May	STAC 8 - Manoeuvring
2 June	Test preparation and driving practice
9 June*	<b>Group Night</b> - ice cream at the Rhinka, Islandmagee
23 June	Additional driving practice
30 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.





## March Group Night

Valerie Millington, our guest speaker for the March Group Night, is a former Member who did her advanced test with us some years ago. Outlining her background, she attended agriculture college in Dublin and while working on a farm was invited to come home to NI to manage a pig unit. Vehicles available for her use at the pig unit included a Land Rover, a Beetle, and a 1928 Austin 7 now known as *Miss Prim*.

In 1958 she had the opportunity to take over the pig unit and after discussions with the bank she acquired the necessary funding. On enquiring about the car, she discovered the owner had not included this in the sale of the pig unit so she had to go back to the bank for further funding to cover the cost of the car £61! Later after joining the WRNR at HMS Caroline she met Jack Frazer who had sold on the car in 1932 and got the back story to it which included the addition of a 4 speed gearbox and an aluminium cylinder head.



Later she was asked to drive the car in a rally organised by the Ulster Vintage Car Club (UVCC) which started at Stormont and thus began a long connection with vintage car rallies with the UVCC and the Irish Veteran and Vintage Car Club (IVVCC). She was a founder member of the IVVCC and in the early seventies became a Board Member. This latter role required attendance at monthly meetings in Dublin which meant travelling home across the border in the dark when it wasn't the safest.



Initially rallies in the Republic attracted only a dozen or so entries and by the 70's cars from England were being entered including Bugattis, Lagondas etc, a number of which had been maintained to a very high standard. Numbers were increasing and on a particular weekend rally on Achill Island up to 60 cars took part.

Valerie mentioned two trips in particular. One was to Le Mans and having watched footage of the Le Mans 24 hour race and in particular the famous Dunlop Bridge over the track she couldn't believe that she was actually driving under it. She mentioned a couple of memories from that trip. One was meeting the two Miss Overends each of whom brought a housekeeper with them, and one of whom was given a 1920s Rolls Royce for her 21st birthday! The

other was while driving back they came across one of the cars sitting at the side of the road and they stopped to see if they could lend assistance. The driver was working at a piece of balsa wood with a knife. No assistance was required as the driver was carving the wood to make part of a carburettor. The second notable trip was to New Zealand in 1996 for a 50th anniversary rally organised by the NZ vintage car club. 6 cars were shipped out from Ireland in 2 containers after meticulous cleaning as

New Zealand is an agriculturally clean country. However one car failed the cleanliness test as the wooden box normally attached on the back had been removed during the cleaning and was overlooked. It contained woodworm with the result that the car had to be cleaned again. The rally took place on the South Island over the course of a week with some 1600 cars taking part. Miss Prim was number 1269. Valerie remarked on New Zealand's uncrowded roads but that during the rally week you could arrive at a crossroads and the only vehicles to be seen were vintage cars.



Valerie and Miss Prim making progress

Credit - Martin Taylor

She recounted some stories about the car. Once she removed the back axle to do some work in the week before a rally and when she re-installed it she found that she had 4 reverse gears and 1 forward gear. She made it to a mechanic on her only forward gear and got it sorted in time for the rally that weekend. Valerie told us how the car came to be called *Miss Prim*. It was away to replace the hood and the tonneau cover. Valerie went to collect it with a Land Rover towing a trailer used for transporting pigs. When the car was unloaded from the trailer Valerie's mother remarked that it was looking "prim and proper" giving rise to the name.

These rallies are competitions rather than just get-togethers. Opposite I have included a picture from a road book which shows the route instructions and includes a regularity section over which an average speed of 24 mph has to be maintained. Marks are lost for arriving early or late at controls. Just by chance I noticed that the regularity section was over roads which I drove a couple of summers ago when on a trip to the Comeragh Mountains and I have to say that averaging 24mph over these roads in an Austin 7 is some going. The rallies also include autotests where you are timed carrying out manoeuvres round bollards and in and out of garages. A look at the Autumn 2018 IVVCC magazine article about Valerie and Miss Prim revealed that with her niece Kathryn they did the Malin to Mizen Challenge (398 miles) in just over 15 hours - an average speed of 26.5mph.

This was a fascinating evening and we wish Valerie and *Miss Prim* all the best for future rallies. Long may they both keep going.

IRISH CENTENARY RALLY			
Saturday Route - 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2001			
DUBLIN TO DUNGARVAN			
ROUTE DETAILS		Miles	Cum Miles
Buncloody, Right, SP Killealy R746	1.14	4.5	62.3
Stop sign, Right, SP Killealy 1 1/2	1.2	5.7	68.7
Killealy, Right, SP Kilkenny R702	1.5	0.3	69.9
Left, SP Thomastown, R703	1.6	2.3	75.8
Yield sign, Straight, SP R703 (caution)	1.7	3.6	78.5
Graiguenamanagh, Y Junction, Left, SP Thomastown, R703	1.8	2.4	80.9
Thomastown, Yield sign, Straight, SP Kilkenny R702	1.9	1.1	90.0
Thomastown, T Junction, Stop sign, Left, SP R703	2.0	0.4	90.4
Stop sign, Left, SP Waterford N9	2.1	1.0	95.2
Malinavat, Right, SP Pittown 11 1/2	2.2	0.7	102.9
Over bridge, Left, SP Pittown 10 1/2	2.3	0.2	103.1
(narrow road with an occasional bump and a view that should compensate)			
Follow SPs for Pittown. If no SP for Pittown keep on road indicated as main road on the yellow and black sign prior to each junction.			
Yield sign, Right, (derelict house)	2.4	0.6	110.2
Yield sign, Left, SP Pittown 1 1/2	2.5	0.7	110.9
Pittown, Stop sign, Left, SP Waterford N24	2.6	1.2	112.1
Right, SP Kilmacartin R690 Overbridge and stop at marshal	2.7	1.7	113.8
Stop sign, Right, SP Carrick on Suir 7 1/2	2.8	0.3	114.1
Stop sign, SP Dungarvan R676	2.9	3.8	117.9
SP Dungarvan	17.2	117.9	132.3
Start Reg. No. 1	17.3	132.3	132.9
SP Comeragh Mts GB Control	17.4	132.9	133.3
SP Comeragh Mts Finish Reg. No. 1	17.5	133.3	134.7
SP Mahon Falls	17.6	134.7	135.0
SP Lemybrien	17.7	135.0	135.4



## All change at IAM RoadSmart



CEO **Mike Quinton** has announced his decision to step down from his role, due to family commitments. He will be leaving the organisation at the end of August. Mike has been at the helm of IAM RoadSmart since April 2018.

Announcing his decision, Mike said: "I know we have the best team dedicated to making a positive difference to road safety, day in, day out. The work you all do contributes to making our roads safer for all. I thank you all for your passion, commitment and friendship during my time here."

A recruitment process is being finalised and will be led by our chairman, Derek McMullan, supported by our trustees.

### Recent CEOs

Simon Best: January 2008 - September 2014

Sarah Sillars: 5 February 2015 - 4 May 2018

Mike Quinton: 23 April 2018 - 31 August 2020

### Paul Woosley

IAM RoadSmart thanked everyone who has written such kind and supportive messages and good wishes for Paul on his resignation as Head of Membership. The high regard in which Paul has been held and how much he has done over his 10 years in post to support groups and promote advanced driving and riding is clear from them all. The messages have all been passed to Paul.

### New Trustees

Nick Lomas, John Jenkins, Nick Stein and Stuart Donald, QPM join existing trustees Dr Gina Bromage, Dr Catherine Lloyd and Elizabeth Coyle-Camp, under the leadership of recently appointed chairman Derek McMullan and chief executive officer Mike Quinton.

For information about the new trustees click on this link: [www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2020/03/03/iam-roadsmart-appoints-four-new-trustees](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2020/03/03/iam-roadsmart-appoints-four-new-trustees)

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## Urban driving

Driving in urban areas presents a unique set of challenges, but IAM RoadSmart is here to help you through them in our latest set of driving tips.

Traffic can sometimes be heavy and slow-moving; it isn't uncommon to find yourself in a maze of one-way streets, and it's important to consider that we need to share the road with cyclists and pedestrians.

Reading the roads and understanding all road signs and lines will also protect you when driving in an urban setting.

Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards at IAM RoadSmart, has come up with a set of tips to help you be prepared.

## Hazards

Early identification of hazards is an important aspect of safe driving. Knowing the type of hazards that are likely to appear on urban roads enhances the power of anticipation. They include heavy traffic, congestion, stop-start traffic, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

## Reading the road

Understanding the meaning of warning signs and painted lines on the road can help you share the road safely with others. Some warn of fixed hazards and others indicate restrictions. Whether they are red lines, controlled parking zones, zig-zag white lines, bus lanes, congestion zones or triangle warning signs giving advance notice of hazards that may include schools and junctions, they can all help you identify upcoming problems.



Be mindful that when driving on unfamiliar urban roads, it is very easy to not see restrictions such as driving in a bus lane or exceeding a 20mph speed limit. This is simply because there is a lot of information to take in when you are navigating and dealing with a dense traffic. Therefore, minimise distractions when driving in unfamiliar areas, drive proactively and look at how other drivers respond.





## Dealing with vulnerable road users

Urban environments can present high risks, especially when vulnerable road users are sharing the same space. If you're driving alongside pedestrians and cyclists it's important that you give them the time and space, and always remember that they might be distracted from their surroundings. Always remember to give plenty of space when passing a cyclist and slow down, their stability might be affected if you drive too close.



## Complex junctions

Turning right at a traffic-light junction is often the most complex manoeuvre when oncoming traffic is also turning right. The usual convention is to turn at the rear of the oncoming cars; however, some junctions are marked to turn in front. Often local habits have been adopted and you will have to follow the precedent set by other road users. If you are turning in front be extra vigilant for oncoming traffic as this is now obscured by the turning traffic.



## Buses and trams

Buses and trams often use dedicated lanes. Bus lanes may be shared routes after a certain time of the day so you need to be aware of when you can and cannot use them.

Trams are restricted in movement by tram lines and overhead electric cables. Therefore, these lanes are not shared. Tramways are often indicated by lines, dots or a differently coloured road surface. Never stop or park on the tram route.

Further hazards are presented by pedestrians boarding. Trams and tramways use specific diamond-shaped road signs and white-light signs that need to be understood by all road users.

Richard said: "Driving in town can be a challenge. If you are using a sat-nav use the volume setting so it gives directions without you looking at a screen. If you do take a wrong turn; don't panic, stay safe and find somewhere to turn around."

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## How well do you know your Highway Code?

For those who haven't kept up to date with your Highway Code here are the differences between PELICAN, PUFFIN, TOUCAN and PEGASUS crossings:

A PELICAN crossing is activated when a pedestrian presses a button with the red/green man on the post on the other side of the crossing. After a period of time the red light for traffic changes to a flashing amber (you can proceed if no pedestrians are on the crossing) before changing to green.

PUFFIN stands for Pedestrian User Friendly Intelligent Crossing. The major differences between PUFFINS and PELICANS are that PUFFINS have the red/green man on the push button unit beside the pedestrian; there is no flashing amber signal to drivers, they are held on a red signal until



pedestrians have completed their crossing and the time for pedestrians to cross the road can be extended by sensors which detect people still on the crossing.

Drivers also benefit from PUFFINS when a pedestrian pushes the push button and then moves away, the demand for the green man is cancelled so drivers do not experience an unnecessary delay.

TOUCAN crossings are similar to the PUFFIN with the inclusion of a green 'bicycle' displayed next to the 'green man' to advise when cyclists and pedestrians are permitted to cross.

PEGASUS crossings are similar to TOUCAN crossings but allow horse riders to cross as well. There are two sets of buttons - one at normal height for pedestrians and cyclists and another at a height of 2 metres for horse riders.



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And finally.....

Regular naps prevent old age, especially if you take them while driving.....

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