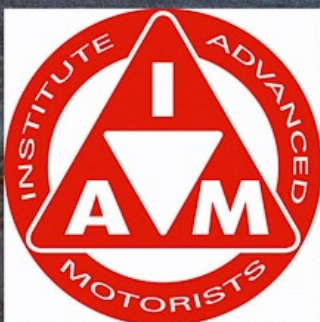


# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down  
Advanced Motorists Group



September 2018





## 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

September 2018

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

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### New Members

This month we would like to welcome to the Group car members Andrew Adair, Kellie Liddle and Justin Patty and motorcycle members Len Clay, Martin Fell, Derek Kane and Aaron McConnell. 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

**Tom McVeigh**

and

motorcycle member

**Stephanie Angus**

who achieved F1RST passes

and to motorcycle member

**Ralph Magee**

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

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### Cover picture

The summer cover was the Ballywalter Road approaching Greyabbey. Congratulations to Simon Beckett, Shaun McKittrick and Norma Shearer.

The cover picture for this issue should be an easy one. No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the Road Observer.

## Dates for your diary

25 September - STAC 2  
2 October - STAC 3  
9 October - Group Night Group Night - Speaker Andy Day - surveillance vehicles  
23 October - STAC 4  
30 October - STAC 5  
6 November - STAC 6  
13 November - AGM Guest Speaker: Pat Doughty IAM  
27 November - STAC 7  
4 December - STAC 8  
11 December - Christmas Dinner

Please note that the AGM has been moved to November from its usual October date.

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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## September Group Night

This session is the one for changes to the programme before it even started.

As well as having to move our AGM from its traditional October slot to November (see dates for your diary) our plan for a speaker for September fell through. However, instead we had a quiz with two rounds to test observation skills and a round on the Highway Code. The first round was satellite images of well known landmarks including Ballycastle, Buckingham Palace (even Ward Park in Bangor!), but the one which fooled a few was of the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas which has a small version of the Eiffel Tower. Round two on the Highway Code was where members should have excelled. However, some of the questions were a bit obscure such as

What is the maximum speed that a powered mobility scooter may travel at on a footpath

- a. 4 mph
- b. 6 mph
- c. 8 mph

Answer: a

Delivery drivers are exempt from wearing seat belts when driving not more than

- a 100metres
- b 150metres
- c 50 metres

Answer: c

It was good fun and I think we all probably learned something new from the Highway Code.

The final round was photographs used for the cover picture of the Road Observer. Some were easy such as the Devils Elbow on the A2, whereas a few foxed many members, for example the B178 Hillsborough Road at Moneyreagh - opposite.

The evening finished with a quick slide show of Leslie's recent trip to Iceland's Westfjords



## Vision

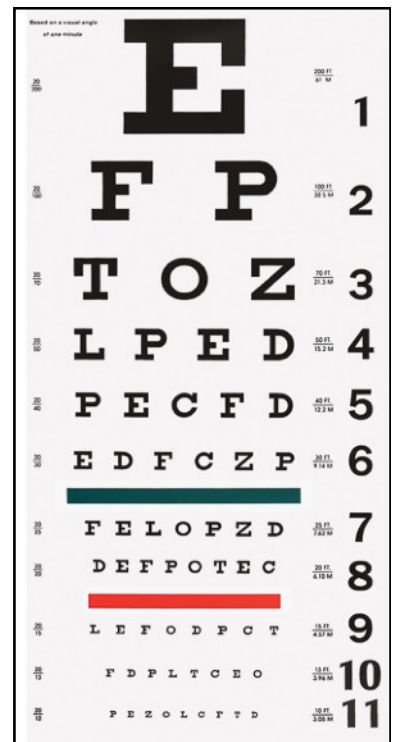
On the subject of observation, how well can you see?

Over time our eyesight deteriorates and previously strong vision can become poor. If eyesight problems are left unaddressed they can often lead to poor reaction times to unexpected hazards or the behaviour of other road users. Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards provides advice on eyesight and driving.



- Book regular check-ups. Eyesight can deteriorate over time without you noticing. If you are having to move closer to the television to read the titles clearly or have noticed even a slight deterioration with your eyes, we recommend a visit to the optician for a check-up; this should be done on a regular basis (every two years) and it's free for the over 60s
- Take a break: eyes get tired too. If you are travelling for long periods of time, you should take a break every two hours or every 100 miles, whichever is sooner. This will refresh you and your eyes, keeping you alert.

- Driving at night can be the most problematic area as our eyes age. No matter how eagle-eyed we may think we are, it is a scientific fact that as we get older our eyes become less sensitive to light. Avoiding night time driving is a wise precaution if you are starting to struggle to see clearly after dusk.
- Keep a pair of sunglasses in the car in all seasons; low sun on a wet road will make you wish you hadn't packed them away after the summer.
- Know the law. You must be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary) a car number plate made after 1 September 2001 from 20 metres. To find out more information on this visit the government's driving eyesight rules page [here](#).
- Use this to test yourself, if you struggle to read it get checked out straight away.
- Stay hydrated. Water is very good in keeping you hydrated and is also good for your eyes. With the added bonus of helping you maintain concentration while driving and riding.



Richard said: "Deteriorating eyesight can often be a sign of other health problems so a check-up is a good idea. If you do have eye correction prescribed for driving make sure you use it, not having your glasses is a poor excuse when you have had a crash. And how often do you clean your glasses? Even a pristine windscreen will seem dirty if the lenses are covered in fingerprints."

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## The demise of the VW Beetle

You will probably have heard that VW is to cease production of the Beetle. The last one will roll off the production line in Mexico In July next year after some 80 years since its inception. Largely designed by Ferdinand Porsche a small number were built before the war intervened when production turned to military vehicles. After the war the factory was in the British sector and Major Ivan Hirst persuaded the military to order 20,000 cars for use by military personnel. And as they say, the rest is history.



The original car was commissioned in 1933 as designed to be an affordable form of transport for the German people and was dubbed the peoples car. In its original form it had a 995cc air cooled flat four rear engine producing 25hp driving the rear wheels and with a top speed of 100kph (62mph). It was a four seater with luggage capacity was under the bonnet and in a space behind the rear seats (only accessible from within the car).

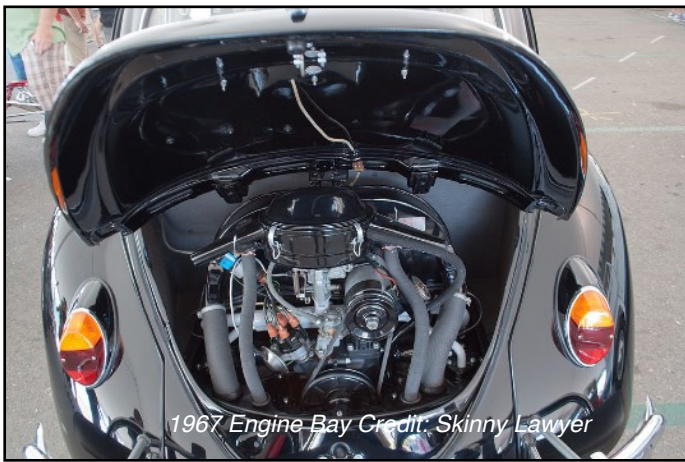


By March 1946 10,000 cars had been produced rising to one million by 1955. By this time the engine capacity had increased to 1200cc producing 30bhp with a top speed of 68 mph and a 0-60 time of (wait for it) 27.5 seconds. In 1953 the split rear window had been replaced to provide great visibility. In 1960 output increased to 34bhp. In 1967 there was a 1500cc engine with 44bhp, front disc brakes and 12v electrics (up from 6v). By 1970 there was a range of engines for the 1302 model from 34 - 44 BHP and a 1302s model with 50 bhp from a 1600cc engine.



Over this time various changes were made including to the body to accommodate larger engines, provide larger areas of glass, more luggage space, revised suspension systems, new lights and various upgrades to the cabin and controls. Some changes worth noting were the introduction of a pressurised windscreen washer system in 1961- the reservoir had a Schraeder type valve which could be pressurised from a garage air-line. This was later replaced by system which pressurised the washers from the spare wheel. And in 1971, as a first sign of things to come, and now ubiquitous on all cars, a diagnostic socket was fitted. Does anyone remember the Beetle advertising slogan around that time "If you want to close the door open the window" based on the watertight nature of it's construction?

Production was moved from Germany to Mexico and Brazil in 1978. The Detroit Auto Show of 1994 saw a concept version of the new shape Beetle which was introduced in 1999. However, this time it was water-cooled, front engined (from the Golf), and front wheel drive. A further version emerged in 2012 with a lower roof line.



In Ireland the first dealership opened in 1949 and in 1950 Beetles arrived in crates to be assembled in Ballsbridge in premises which still house a VW dealer. Beetles were also popular in motorsport - Kevin Sherry from Co Monaghan won the Circuit of Ireland in one in 1959. Robert McBurney and others kept the Beetle alive in rally for many years although as the pictures show, not always successfully - see below! Note the 1976 position of the oil cooler on the roof which by 1977 had made its way into the bonnet with just two big holes.

Only time will tell whether there will be the same affection for the front wheel drive model as for the older model. However, I'm sure we will continue to see the occasional old one, lovingly maintained by an enthusiastic owner, on the roads for years to come.

*The new Beetle:*



*Robert McBurney rallying a Beetle:*



*Circuit of Ireland 1973*



*Ulster Rally 1976 (note the oil cooler mounted on the roof)*



*Bushwacker Rally 1977 - losing the back end and ending up in the ditch (the oil cooler is now under the bonnet behind 2 very big holes)!*

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**Now that the schools are back, remember:**



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### **September bike run**

Despite a poor weather forecast 15 bikes took part in what was a dry run to the Sperrin Restaurant in Omagh. 110 miles over a variety of roads from Sprucefield to Omagh. Thanks to Kyle for leading the route and Simon as tail end Charlie.



**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 Motorist**