

The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



August 2023





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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

Summer 2023

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New Members

This month we welcome new motorcycle member Brian Ewart and car members Tina Lannin and Giorgia Thorneycroft. We hope you not only gain from being a member of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers.

Test Passes

Congratulations this month to car Member

Richard Walker

who achieved a F1RST pass

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

Summer 2023 cover picture

The cover picture from the last issue was the A2 approaching Glenarm from the north. Congratulations, in order of receipt, to Brian Gillies, Gareth Hughes, William McAteer, David Harcourt and Norman Shearer.

Do you know where this months picture was taken? No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and of course, you will get a mention in the next Road Observer. Submit your answers to: leslie.ashe.LA@googlemail.com

Dates for your diary

In addition to the regular STAC nights for car Associates and the regular bike runs (notified by email to bike members and also on Facebook) we have a varied programme for the Group Nights. All meetings will take place in the Boathouse at Groomsport Harbour car park unless otherwise stated.

- 5 September - STAC Session 1
- 12 September - Group Night - Presentation about tyres by a representative from Michelin
- 26 September - STAC Session 2
- 3 October - STAC Session 3
- 10 October - AGM Guest speaker from the NI Air Ambulance
- 24 October - STAC session 4
- 31 October - STAC session 5
- 7 November - STAC Session 6
- 14 November - Group Night - Visit to NI Aviation Society
- 28 November - STAC Session 7
- 5 December - STAC Session 8
- 12 December - Christmas Dinner

STAC - Short Term Associate Course for drivers. Car 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.

Accident statistics

A number of reports of recent fatalities in road collisions included the comment that no other vehicle were involved and on a recent drive down the Portaferry Road from Newtownards I saw a car on its side on the shore some 10 feet below the road level. This made me have a look at the PSNI statistics.



The picture above was taken in 2016 just after the ambulance had left. The police officer there said that it was a single vehicle collision and one person in the car. The road was straight and dry. Note the R plate. The serious damage to the car was caused by it colliding with a line of concrete posts and a metal gate (which was open) at the entrance to the field.

Up to 23 August there were 46 fatalities on Northern Ireland's Roads. This contrasts very poorly with previous years:

Year	Year to 23 August	Full year
2021	27	50
2022	28	55
2023	46	??

The age profile for these 2023 fatalities up to 23 August:

U16	16-24	25-64	65	Male	Female
2	7	24	13	36	9

Full year figures for 2022 showing the principal factor in collisions:

Principal Factor	Number of collisions	KSI* casualties	Slight casualties	Total casualties
Inattention or attention diverted	924	116	1202	1318
Driving too close	562	22	941	963
Emerging from minor road without care Crossing or entering road junction without care Turning right without care	397	65	552	617
Impairment by drugs or alcohol - driver/rider Wrong course/position	300	64	460	524
Overtaking on offside without care Changing lane without care	295	62	417	479
Emerging from private road/entrance without care	262	81	322	403
Inattention or attention diverted	224	85	317	402
Driving too close	183	56	273	329
Emerging from minor road without care Crossing or entering road junction without care Turning right without care	168	16	239	255
Impairment by drugs or alcohol - driver/rider Wrong course/position	155	22	210	232

*KSI - killed or seriously injured

These statistics reveal the poor state of driving and riding on our roads and reinforces the need for us to actively promote the road safety message and advanced driving/riding as well as keeping our own driving and riding up to advanced standard.

Source: PSNI statistics

Back to school

Each year the risk of an accident becomes significantly greater as the school run brings with it a 20 per cent growth in rush hour traffic.

While much has been said about watching out for youngsters on their way to school, the IAM warns that a greater risk comes on the way home from school – where under 16's are more likely to be distracted by playing with their friends, listening to music or interacting on social media on their phones.



Technology has moved on at such a pace, it is clear that youngsters are being distracted by the myriad of portable entertainment devices available to them.

Research has shown that while there were naturally peaks in casualties between 7 and 9am (15% of child pedestrian casualties being in this two hour period), there was an even greater peak between 3 and 5pm (nearly 23% during these times) suggesting that while children may be driven to school, they make their own way home in the afternoon – making this a more crucial time for drivers to be aware of young pedestrians.

The IAM also urged drivers to be more vigilant in rural or remote areas, as the findings showed 70% of child casualties were injured on sections of road not at or near a pedestrian crossing.

The IAM has offered a series of tips towards ensuring everyone remains safe during rush hour as the schools return.

- Don't compromise your concentration and the safety of other road users by being in a hurry. Leaving the house five minutes earlier changes the nature of how you make the journey.
- Take extra care to compensate for the fact that children won't always be paying attention, especially when approaching the school gate.
- Never stop on the yellow "zig zags" by the school gate, and always ensure you let your passengers out on the pavement side.
- Roads surrounding schools are often 20 mph - it's essential that you slow down and keep an eye out for children crossing the road and emerging from between parked cars.
- New starters in reception class are unlikely to understand the dangers that the road outside their school presents – bear this in mind when driving nearby and keep your eyes peeled for children wandering into the road alone.
- If your children are walking to school on their own, make sure they are aware of potential hazards such as crossing busy roads – encourage them to always use the pedestrian crossing if there is one.

And finally A statement to a police officer: "I didn't think the speed limit applied after midnight."

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