

The Road Observer



The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



December 2021





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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

December 2021

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November 2021 cover picture

I thought the November cover might have been a harder one but not so. It was Main Street, Clogher looking westwards in the direction of Enniskillen. Congratulations (in order of receipt) to Tom McVeigh, James O'Brien, Ralph Magee, Norman Shearer, David Harcourt and David Hughes.

This month's cover is a bit of a departure from the normal type of scene in that there is no road in it. However, it is still transport related. Do you know where it is? There are some clues. No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the next Road Observer. Submit your answers to: secretaryndam@gmail.com

This picture is an opportunity to think about cyclists on our roads. The couple in the picture were struggling with getting their bikes and left me wondering how they would cope in late afternoon traffic if they took them onto the roads. As advanced drivers/motorcyclists we all know to allow at least 1.5m distance between you and the cyclist but if you see someone on one of these city bikes remember they may not be an experienced cyclist, they may not know the road layout or even where they are going so give them a bit of extra space and consideration.

Dates for your diary

11 January - STAC enrolment and demonstration drives
1 February - STAC session 1
8 February - Group Night - TBA
22 February - STAC session 2
1 March - STAC session 3
8 March - Group Night - TBA
22 March - STAC session 4
29 March - STAC session 5
5 April - STAC session 6
12 April - Group Night - TBA
19 April - no meeting - Easter Tuesday
26 April - STAC session 7
3 May - STAC session 8
10 May - Group night - TBA
24 May - Test preparation and driving practice
7 June - Driving practice
14 June - Drive/ride for ice cream at the Rhinka, Islandmagee

STAC - Short Term Associate Course for drivers.

Christmas dinner

After a break last year because of Covid restrictions we were back to Carnalea Golf Club for the 2021 dinner. Understandably because of ongoing concerns about possible covid transmission, numbers were down on previous years. Nevertheless, 30 members and guests attended for a good meal and a great night's craic.

With the new restrictions on hospitality venues coming into operation the previous day we produced our covid passports or vaccination certificates to get in and masks were worn apart from when we were at the table. It all felt secure covid wise and there were no reported infections. One or two did forget about the need to produce evidence to get into the venue and had to make a hasty return home to pick it up. We won't name names here but you know who you are!

This year Chairman David had a rival in the Hawaiian shirt stakes with Kyle also sporting one.



Because it was all organised a relatively short notice we hadn't time to acquire the usual large range of ballot prizes but we had a couple of prizes to ballot.

As a repeat of what we did in 2019 we played heads and tails. Everyone was asked to stand and put their hands on their head or on their tail. A coin was tossed and the losers had to sit down. Those left standing went through the same process and it was repeated several times whittling down the numbers until only two were left. The “star” prize of a set of screwdrivers went to Angela who said it was exactly what she needed and would make good use of them.



Heads or tails



Angela clearly delighted with her screwdrivers

Some more pictures:



Hopefully by next year Covid will not pose the same threat and more of us can get together. Many thanks to Ronnie Brown for co-ordinating numbers and menu choices and to David for his personalised laser engraved menu cards.

Tales of woe.....

Bike run by Kyle Thomson

On Sunday 19th December 5 bikes took part in the bike run out to Castlewellan to Nana's Kitchen which went smoothly and a lovely brekkie was had by all. The journey home was different run as I suffered a puncture and had to get the bike recovered - a 5 inch nail entered through the tread of the tyre and exited through the sidewall so the tyre was scrap. The craic was might between Ivan, Guy and myself out in the sticks and thanks to both for staying and giving a helping had to get the bike into the garage at home. Apart from this incident it was a good steady, safe ride. Thanks for all who attended.



Corroded brake discs

Suffering from brake shudder William McAteer, with the help of Colin Hay, decided to change the front discs on his Subaru BRZ. The pictures show that while there was little wrong with the outside faces of the discs, the inward faces were badly corroded. No wonder there was brake shudder. A cautionary tale that while discs might look good on the outside, the inside where there are hidden by the back plate may tell a different story. William reckons that lack of use during the Covid restrictions gave the rust an opportunity to take hold. If you experience brake shudder, please get them checked.



And finally, to round off the year

Motoring memories my kids laugh at

- Running different oil grades summer and winter
- Changing the oil every 6000 miles
- Checking the oil level manually, regularly
- Checking the tyres weekly
- Putting cardboard in front of the radiator to help the engine warm up
- Putting a square of plywood under the battery
- Setting the engine air intake summer / winter
- Scrubbing fly-splat from the windscreen
- Engine braking to save the brakes
- Buying fuel by the gallon
- Paying 72p per gallon
- Being smugly satisfied with 30mpg
- Adjusting the points
- Replacing the spark plugs and cables before the next service
- Double-declutching on a down-change
- Travelling with a flask of coffee and travel blanket in case of breakdown
- Planning the journey on a paper map
- Filling up with 4-Star for a special occasion
- Buying fuel before 9pm because 24 hour service didn't exist
- Cleaning the carb needles with acetone
- Getting one-shot at starting on a cold morning because the battery was weak
- Parking on a hill, facing the right direction
- Bump-starting
- Jump-starting
- Being the mate who would give a jump start at 3am

Thanks to David for this list. Your Editor has more of these for another issue, do you have any others that reflect how motoring/riding has changed over the years?

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