

The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



December 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

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Test Passes

Congratulations this month to motorcycle Member

Roger Clegg

who achieved a F1RST pass

and to car Member

David McFall

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

November Cover Picture

The November picture was of Cushendall. Congratulations, in order of receipt of answers, to Guy Thomson, Gareth Hughes, Angela Bell, Norman Shearer and David Harcourt.

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 plan a varied programme for the Group Nights. All meetings will take place in the Boathouse at Groomsport Harbour car park unless otherwise stated.

The Committee is in the process of putting together the programme for the first half of 2024 and further details will be available when Group night activities are confirmed.

9 January	STAC enrolment for new car Associates. Observers and trainee Observers on the car side should attend for demonstration drives and possibly Observer training.
6 February	STAC session 1
13 February	Group Night - to be announced
27 February	STAC session 2
5 March	STAC session 3
12 March	Group Night - to be announced
26 March	Stay session 4
2 April	Easter Tuesday - no meeting
9 April	Group Night - to be announced
23 April	STAC session 5
30 April	STAC session 6
7 May	STAC session 7
14 May	Group Night - to be announced
28 May	STAC session 8
4 June	Additional driving practice
11 June	Group night - ice-cream run to the Rhinka, Islandmagee

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.

Group Christmas Dinner

Carnalea Golf Club was once again the venue for the Group Christmas Dinner. Almost 40 Members and guests attended. The food was very good and service was quick and efficient, helped by Chairman David (in his usual surfing Santa shirt, who had once again provided everyone with a card with their menu choices laser cut into it. We had a prize draw and at the end of the evening David thanked everyone for attending and those who donated the prizes. We are already booked for next year!

A selection of pictures from the dinner follow:



Driving through floods

In recent weeks heavy and persistent rain has led to flooded roads in many areas. As I write this heavy rain is once again battering against the window. On a recent observed drive my Associate came across 3 places where water had flooded right across the road when driving between Comber and Dundonald.

Great care needs to be taken when driving through water and the following tips are intended to help you negotiate any floods you may encounter.

Before driving into a flood stop and try to assess how deep the water is, watch other vehicles driving through it. Assess the angle of the road surface - it may not be as deep on one side of the road, or the shallowest area may be in the centre of the road. If it looks too deep or if you see other vehicles getting stuck the best advice is to turn and try to find another way.

If the water is deep enough to come halfway up your wheels there is the chance that water could enter your engine's air intake or exhaust which could result in an expensive tow out, transport to a garage and potentially serious engine damage.

Also there is the chance that your car could start to float in which case you have lost control. Is the water still or flowing? Deep flowing water has the potential to carry your car along with it.

Consider, is it worth the risk? In the pictures below taken recently at Orlock on the A2, the BMW didn't make it safely through and is sitting where the water is deepest. Note the bow wave created by the Mercedes. In this instance the shallowest water was on the right in the pictures and the safest option was to take to the hard shoulder as the red Jaguar has done and which I also used.



If you decide to negotiate a flood bear the following in mind:

- Wait for other vehicles to clear the flood before entering it.
- Drive as slowly as possible in first gear, slipping the clutch if necessary to keep the revs up and prevent water from entering the exhaust. Don't be tempted to change gear once you are in the water as this could result in water being sucked into the exhaust.
- In an automatic select the lowest manual gear.
- Don't create a bow wave which could swamp the electrics or get into the engine air intake.
- Be aware that you cannot see potholes or other obstacles (eg a raised manhole cover) under the surface of the water.

- If you successfully negotiate a flood test your brakes as soon as you emerge from the water. Dry them by applying slight pressure on the brake pedal with your left foot as you drive along until they return to their normal effectiveness.

For entertainment have a look at the video in the link below which shows drivers negotiating a ford in England with varying degrees of success and failure:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1HHFXFN788>

Of course, if you regularly have to negotiate deep water invest in a vehicle with a snorkel which means that the air intake is well above the level of the water - see picture below. If the water level gets up to the snorkel intake you really are in trouble.



Credit: Vetatur Fumare

And finally

The worst thing about parallel parking is witnesses.

And, with apologies, a couple of Christmas cracker style “jokes”:

I wanted to buy a new electric car. But their prices are just too shocking.

Who can drive all their customers away and still make money? Taxi drivers.

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