

# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down  
Advanced Motorists Group



March 2024





## The Road Observer

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

March 2024

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

Vol 24.3

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthDownGroupIAM>

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### Test Passes

No test passes to report this month.

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

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### February cover picture

February's cover picture was taken at Malin Head in Donegal, the most northerly point in Ireland and one of the waypoints on the Wild Atlantic Way. The tall grey derelict building in the picture, known locally as 'The Tower', was initially constructed by the British Admiralty in 1805 as a Napoleonic lookout tower to help defend against a possible French invasion. It was later taken over by Marconi as an important signal station for news between America and Europe though modern technology has since made it redundant.

Congratulations this month (in order of receipt of responses) to Brian Gillies, Norman Shearer and David Harcourt.

Do you know where this months picture was taken? It's local. 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](mailto: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

26 March	STAC session 4
2 April	Easter Tuesday - no meeting
9 April	Group Night - Talk by Peter Muir: living with a Rolls Royce
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	Visit to the Ulster Aviation Society

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

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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### March Group Night

The March Group Night was a talk about archery by Member Ivan Greenfield. He began by outlining his introduction to archery and how he progressed. He started in 1971 using a flat bow which is a shortened form of an English longbow and in that year won competitions both indoor and outdoor.

In 1972/73 he was part of an Ulster team competing against Scotland but were beaten (their opponents included British squad members). At that time there were about 200 archers participating in Northern Ireland compared to some 20,000 in Great Britain. In that year Ivan achieved a FITA Gold Star which is awarded for a score of 1000 achieved with a specific number of arrows at different ranges in recognised competitions.

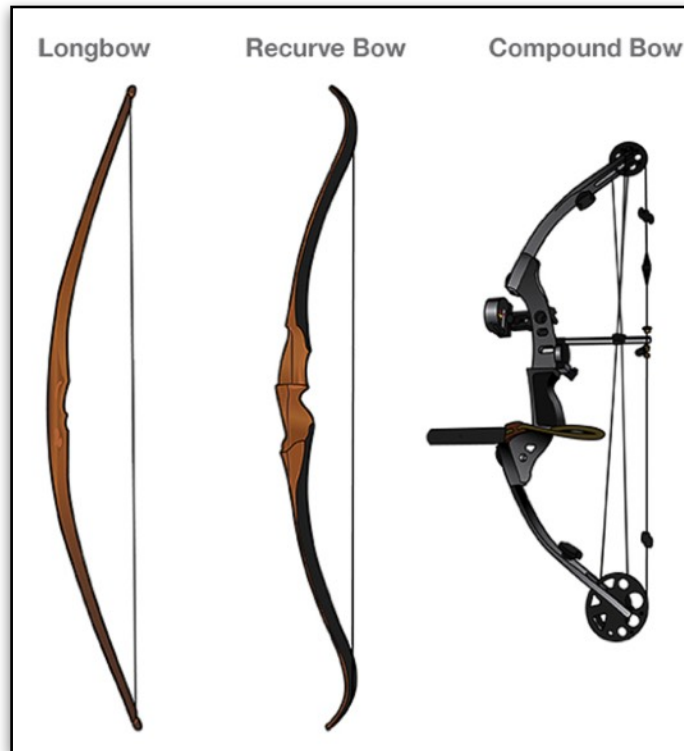
Ivan helped scores to improve here and to bring archers up to national standard. He represented Ulster at the British Open Field Championships. He became a local coach initially and then a County Coach. His daughter Lisa became the British under 13 junior ladies champion.

Ivan went on to outline the history of archery. The earliest arrowheads are estimated to date back 71,000 years and samples on Europe to between 8,000 and 10,000 years. They are thought to have been used for hunting and for battle.

At its height archery played a significant role in battle. The battle of Crécy during the 100 years war was a decisive victory by an outnumbered English army.



English longbow men played a significant part in achieving victory. The French also had archers but these were mainly crossbows with a much lower rate of fire (3 arrows per minute compared to 12-14 arrows per minute by the English longbow men). The longbow men also played a critical part in winning the battle of Agincourt where some estimates are that the English were heavily outnumbered by 5 to 1. Many arrows had metal bodkin points up to 3 inches long which had the ability to pierce mail.



Ivan went on to talk about the detail of the different types of bows and arrows. In relation to arrows he said that where feathers are used (as opposed to plastic there are goose feathers and in an individual arrow they come from the same wing of the goose.)

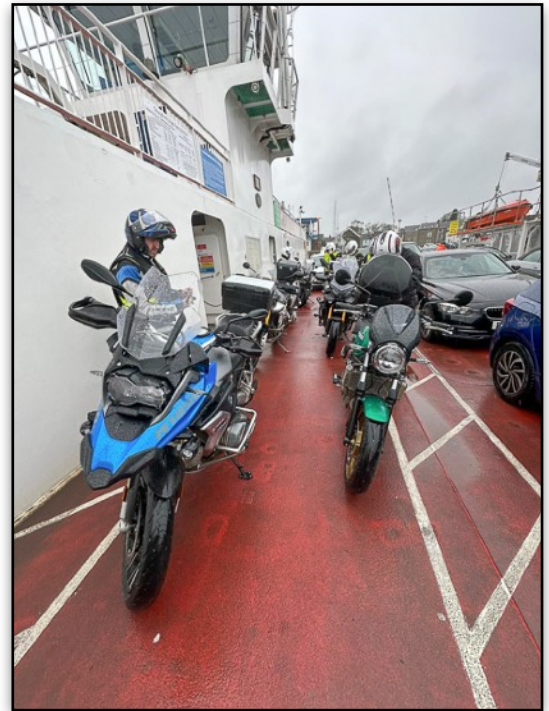
Like most interests, archery has its own language and terms. I hadn't realised it was so complex, especially the different types of bows, and associated equipment including stabiliser bars (to reduce vibrations when the string is released), sights etc. Ivan showed some videos including arrows shot in slow motion which showed the arrows flexing as they flew through the air towards the target.



There were many questions from the floor and we could have gone on long after our 10pm deadline. Many thanks to Ivan for a fascinating and informative presentation.

## March Bike run

This was a round the houses run to Strangford via Derryboye and Crossgar. Across on the Strangford Ferry to Portaferry and back up the west side of the peninsula. Thanks to Ivan for the pictures.



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## Headlight glare

Bright LED headlights are leaving motorists dazzled and dazed at night, and now the government is under pressure to act. In a survey for IAM RoadSmart, 83% of respondents agreed that headlights are much brighter in modern vehicles.

Other potential factors for the dazzling displays include badly aligned headlights and a rise in the number of cars sitting higher on the road, such as SUVs. A petition has been launched to strong-arm Number 10 into commissioning an independent study into the contentious subject.



**IAM RoadSmart has some tips to help reduce the nighttime dazzle.**

**Keep your speed down at night.**

If the glare from an oncoming vehicle at night is so bad, gently slow down and avoid sharp braking. This will help reduce the risk of an impact if your vision is affected.

**Make sure your windscreen is clean.**

Dirt and road debris can leave your windscreen looking mucky and can increase light glare. Give your windscreen and wipers a good clean before you embark on any journey, and if your windscreen has any damage at all, get it fixed. Also, ensure your own headlight covers are cleaned to reduce glare from your own vehicle.

**Adjust your rearview mirror.**

While some cars have self-dimming mirrors or tinted rear windows, most require you to manually adjust the mirror.

**Consider anti-glare glasses.**

Speak to your optician if you feel it is becoming a problem. There are anti-glare glasses that may be able to mitigate the problem.

**Keep the roads lit.**

Where your route allows, it may be better to stick to well-lit roads, as street lighting can help reduce the impact of dazzling headlights, while unlit rural roads can make headlight glare feel far more pronounced.

**IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Standards Nicholas Lyes said:** "Drivers are increasingly telling us they are concerned by modern headlights, and some are now even limiting the amount of time they spend driving during darkness to avoid glare. Being dazzled by headlights has a worrying impact on road safety, and we need policymakers to take this matter seriously."

**Editors notes:**

Try to focus on the left hand side of the road when meeting oncoming traffic at night as your dipped headlight beam has greater reach on the left side - see pictures below.

Many roads have white edge lines (see below), although with reductions in road maintenance many have become obscured.

Don't look directly towards the oncoming headlights as it will take your eyes longer to recover when the vehicles have passed.



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## Parking on hills

Rule 252 of the Highway Code states:

If you park on a hill you should

- park close to the kerb and apply the handbrake firmly
- select a forward gear and turn your steering wheel away from the kerb when facing uphill
- select reverse gear and turn your steering wheel towards the kerb when facing downhill
- use 'park' if your car has an automatic gearbox.

Do not do it like this spotted in Central Avenue in Bangor as it will weaken the sidewall of the tyre and over time could lead to a bulge and the risk of a blow-out. On a similar note, take your time over speed bumps as again, over time hitting them too hard, could weaken the sidewall.



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**And finally.....** Dogpower: how much Pedigree Chum to the mile?



**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 Motorists**