

The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



May 2017





Official Provider

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

May 2017

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New Members

This month we would like to welcome to the Group motorcyclist Michael Wood. We hope you not only gain from being members of our Group but will also enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of our get-togethers.

Advanced Tests

No test passes to date this month

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

Cover picture

Not even one guess at last month's cover picture. It's the Mulroy Bay Bridge in Donegal which opened in 2009 and connects the Rosguill Peninsula (Rosapenna/Atlantic Drive) to the Fanad Peninsula saving having to travel all the way south to Milford.

This month's cover picture is much closer to home. No prizes, just the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, a mention in the Road Observer.

Dates for your diary

23 May - STAC 7

30 May - STAC 8

6 June - Group Night - (note date change) Visit to interesting car collection. As we can only cater for limited numbers we may need to hold a ballot to decide who may attend. The deadline for getting your name on the list is 23 May. Information about timing and directions will be issued to attendees selected in due course.

13 June - Additional driving practice

27 June - Additional driving practice - the Boathouse will not be open - meet in the Boathouse carpark.

STAC - Short Term Associate Course. Associate Members should ensure that are familiar with either "How to be a better driver" or the new "Associate Handbook" before each STAC night so that you can get the most benefit from the theory session as well as your observed drive.

May Group Night

Whether it was the fantastic weather or the fear of the intense competition in table-top rally, or both, we had a poor turn-out of members so it was decided to hold the table-top rally over until the Autumn.

In the meantime here is a picture of (hard working!) Observers catching the last rays of the sun outside the Boathouse on a warm Tuesday evening.



Stephen, Colin, Gareth, Angela and Annie

Car taster sessions

IAM Roadsmart is currently running a promotional event offering free motorcycle taster sessions which has proved extremely successful in driving enquiries and membership. They are proposing to extend this initiative to include cars over the period 1 June to 31 August 2017 and North Down has agreed to take part.

The sessions will be like observed runs in the applicants car and will last around 90 minutes, including briefing / debriefing.

Each participant will receive a concise briefing and an overview of IAM RoadSmart driving principles, followed by an on-road session and ending with a debrief. The tone of the session is a low-pressure introduction on how to make driving enjoyable, stress-free and fun. Anyone who took part in providing the sessions to Castlewellan GAA will be familiar with the arrangements.



We don't anticipate being inundated with requests.

Each request will be forwarded to the Group and we will contact our Local and National Observers to see who is available to carry out the session.

Anyone who subsequently wishes to sign up for an advanced course will receive a code to enter on the IAM website to receive a 10% discount.

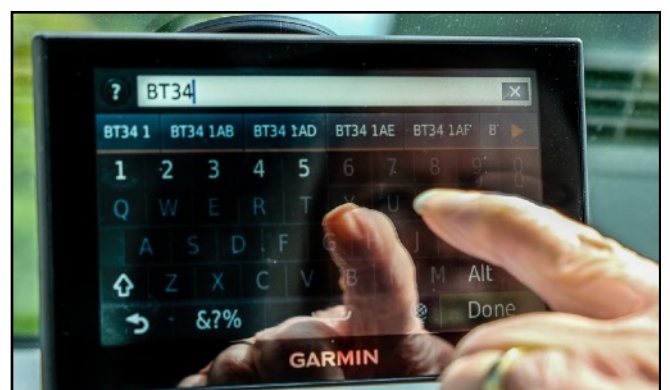
If you know anyone who might be interested in having a taster session please ask them to get in touch:

leslie.ashe@btinternet.com
07790 167555

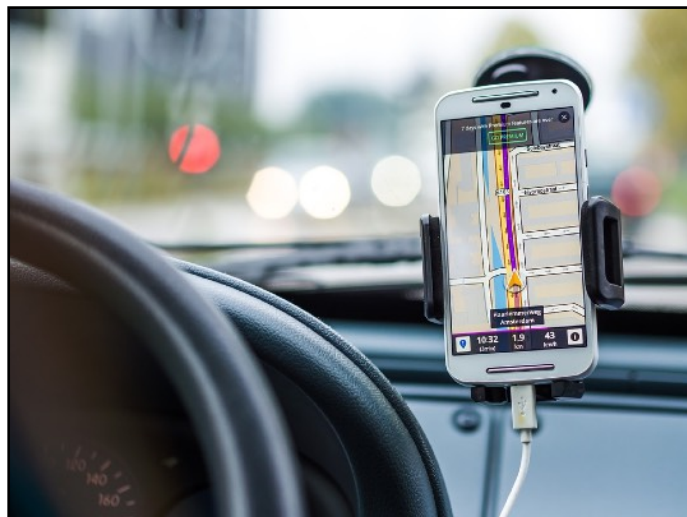
Satellite Navigation systems

Satellite navigation systems (sat navs) are a must have these days but many road users fail to use this travel companion in the correct or safe manner. In a recent simulator study looking at a variety of distractions, programming a sat nav had the biggest negative impact on driving standards. This week's tips give advice on riding and driving with a sat navs, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

Programme your journey before you set off. Looking at your sat nav system to make changes to your destination is a distraction and may prove to be dangerous. If you need to make an alteration find an appropriate place to stop.



- Get to know your system; being able to mute or activate voice commands without having to look at the system will be useful. Features such as live traffic updates and road works warnings will help in planning your arrival time. A state-of-the-art system will offer route changes where time savings are possible.
- If you are buying a stand-alone unit or picking up your new car with a built in sat-nav ask for a demonstration of the features. It can be frustrating trying to 'educate' a different system to your way of working.
- If you are using your phone as a navigation device make sure it is securely mounted and programmed prior to departure. Being a mobile, notifications, message alerts and calls can pop up. Do not be tempted to respond or touch it as you may fall foul of mobile phone legislation.
- Don't attract thieves. Remember to take off your sat nav and pop it in the glove compartment and wipe down the window so there is no tell-tale ring marks pointing a thief in the direction of your car.



Richard said: "Satellite navigation can be a fantastic tool if you use it to help you plan and conduct your journey. A tale of caution though it is always a good idea to have an idea where you are going.

And if your sat nav fails it's a good idea to have a paper map as a back-up.

Car technology by Nigel Mansell

With the Formula 1 season now underway, all eyes were focussed on all the technological changes that have been brought in for the 2017 season. Many were worried in case the changes reduced the quality of the racing or made running a Formula 1 team too expensive.

The other concern people have had is whether driving a Formula 1 car has become too easy; has the technology made it as much of a challenge as it used to be? Some say if a teenager like Max Verstappen can win a Formula 1 race age 18, how hard can it be?

Yes Formula 1 has changed a great deal since I raced in the 80's and 90's. But Formula 1 always demands the very best from a driver; you have to find the skill, stamina, concentration and commitment – and realise the best is never enough. It is something technology can never replace.



And the same goes for road cars and the drivers out there each day. We see terrific technological advances designed to help us: parking sensors, reversing cameras, lane avoidance warnings, autonomous emergency breaking, and even more to come in the future.

Some are worried it's making drivers lazy; that they don't have to be as skilled as before. I would say that technology can work hand-in-hand with driver skill and dovetail very nicely.

As IAM RoadSmart President for 10 years, I have seen first-hand just how much becoming an advanced driver cannot only just make driving more enjoyable, but could potentially save lives. Technology will take us part of the way – and improving driving skills will complete the jigsaw.

Why not take advantage of everything technology can offer to assist us? But also realise that the human eye, brain and perception is the best supercomputer money can't buy! Put the two together, and we have a real force to be reckoned with.

So embrace the change, but realise the man or woman behind the wheel can also become improved for a modern era.

Nigel Mansell CBE, IAM RoadSmart President and 1992 Formula 1 World Champion

New Group Handbook and Guidelines

IAM RoadSmart has announced that the revised edition of the 'Group Handbook and Guidelines' is now available on the Group Management dashboard of the IAM RoadSmart website.

By keeping the Group Handbook and Guidelines on the website as a digital document, HQ is able to ensure the latest version is always available whilst complying with IAM RoadSmart Sustainability and Environmental policies.

We have put a copy on our Group website. Click the link here:

<http://www.amni.org.uk/resources/pdf/dcms/1047/grouphandbook2017.pdf>

To navigate easily through the Guidelines, click on the Section titles within the Contents pages; this will take you to the relevant page. To return to the Contents page simply click on the word 'Contents' in the bottom right hand corner of each page. Any changes or additions made to the handbook will be detailed in an Inform article with version control being updated accordingly.

While primarily aimed at Group Committees, there are sections on complaints procedures, risk assessments and anti-bullying and harassment policies which Observers and trainee Observers should be aware of.

And finally, more from insurance reports.....

- Three women were talking to each other, and when one stepped back and one stepped forward, I had to have an accident.
- I saw the slow moving, sad faced old gentleman as he bounced off the roof of my car.

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