

The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down
Advanced Motorists Group



Summer 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 car members Andrew McKenzie and Fred Harris. 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 Members

Jacqui Keery

and to

Stewart Campbell and Mark Patterson

who both achieved F1RST passes

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

May Cover Picture

Last months cover was looking down Bradshaw's Brae towards Newtownards. Associate Members will be familiar with this road as we often use it on observed drives for positioning for left and right hand bends.

Congratulations, in order of receipt, to James O'Brien, Norman Shearer, Ivan Greenfield 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@goolemail.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.

- 8 August - STAC enrolment for new Associates
- 5 September - STAC Session 1
- 12 September - Group Night - Presentation about tyres by 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.

Annie McFarland

After a short illness Annie passed away peacefully at Marie Curie Hospice on 23 June. Driving was a big part of Annie's life and looking for a driving related activity she joined the Group in January 2010. In due course she passed her test, then trained as a car observer, becoming fully involved in all aspects of the Group she became a Committee Member in October 2013.

Also in October 2013 at the AGM she was presented with the 2 Jags trophy awarded to the Member of the year by Simon Best, then Chief Executive Officer of IAM RoadSmart.

Her commitment to safe driving couldn't be faulted. As an example, recruiting young people to the Group has always been difficult and Annie made a point of visiting secondary schools and the FE college to provide leaflets about the advanced test. She also got one over many of the rest of us by becoming a Fellow of IAM RoadSmart.



Being a Fellow involves retaking the test every 3 years and Annie did so achieving the highest standard by getting a F1RST.



Annie was a very regular attender at STAC nights, Group nights and Committee meetings and in addition, in recent years she took over the role of looking after tea and coffee for the STAC nights and Group Nights in the Boathouse and in recognition of this capacity David laser-etched a Catering Executive mug specially for her. She was also a regular successful participant in the monthly Road Observer cover picture question.

The banter with her was always great - she was always ready with a quick response and gave as good as she got. That Annie was a well liked and respected member of the Group was witnessed by the number of members who attended her funeral. A comment from one member on hearing the sad news was that she was a lovely lady and I can't say anything to top that. She will be greatly missed.

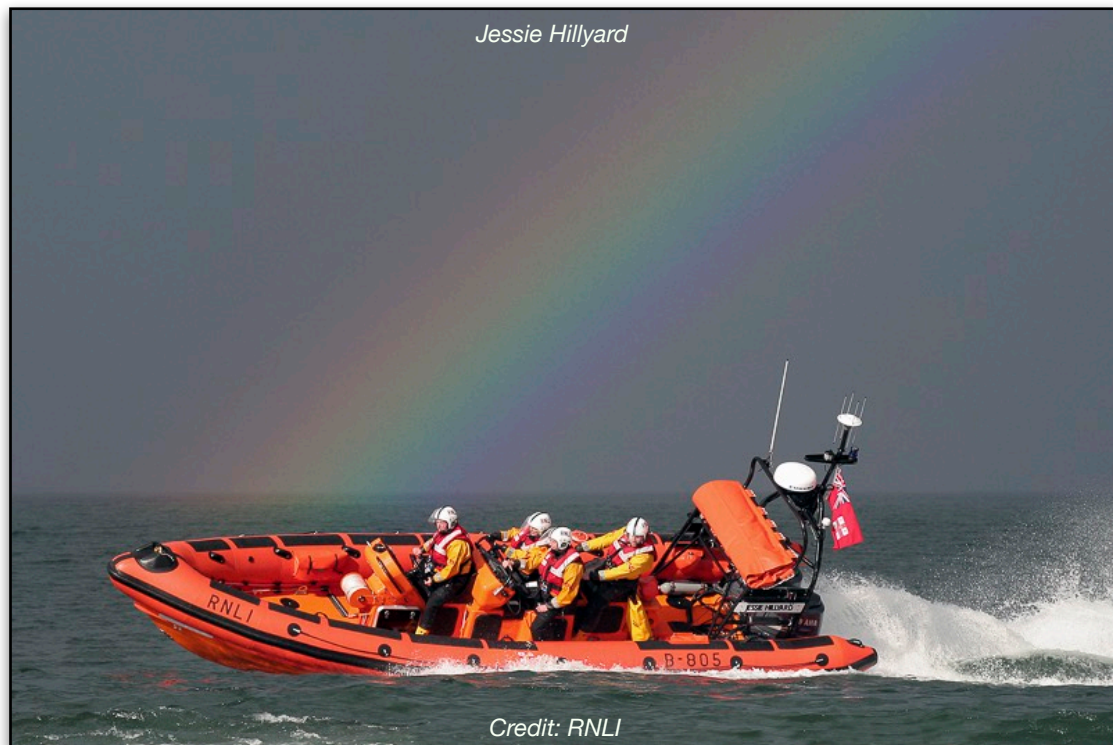
Visit to Bangor Lifeboat Station

The June Group night was a visit to the RNLI inshore station in Bangor. Between them John Montgomery and John McGowan gave us a grand tour of the history of the Bangor lifeboat in the form of a presentation and followed by the opportunity to see the lifeboat close-up.



The RNLI was founded in 1824 by Manx resident Sir William Hillary who had witnessed many shipwrecks around the Manx coast. His published plans for a lifeboat service for Great Britain and Ireland manned by trained crews fell on deaf ears in the Admiralty but was eventually founded as an organisation supported by donations and annual subscription. Currently there are 238 lifeboat stations around the UK and Ireland run at an annual cost of £175m, two-thirds of which comes from legacies.

The Bangor Station was established in 1965 based in premises at the back of the Tower House which is the current tourist information centre. Launching the then lifeboat (D class inflatable) involved trundling it across the road to the slipway. In 1988 the D class was replaced by an Atlantic 21 capable of a speed of 32 knots (37mph) and in 2006 this was in turn replaced by the current lifeboat (Jessie Hillyard) an Atlantic 85. This has two 115hp outboard petrol engines giving a top speed of 35 knots (40 mph) and has an operating limit of 3 hours. It cost £300k and annual running costs are £100k.



We watched a couple of short videos showing how the Atlantic 85 lifeboat self-rights and showing examples of actual rescues taking place. Inshore lifeboats are open to the elements and crew members may end up in the water themselves and we had a talk on the safety equipment worn by crew members. We were reminded of the days when the maroons went up to summon the lifeboat crew but these days it is all done by pagers and the time taken from the pager message going out to the boat launching is 6 minutes! This explains why all the survival gear they wear is held in readiness.

Finally, some advice about how to survive if you fall in. If you found yourself struggling in the water unexpectedly, your instinct would tell you to swim hard. But cold water shock could make you gasp uncontrollably. Then you could breathe in water and drown.

The key to survival is not to try to swim but to “float to live”:

1. Tilt your head back with ears submerged
2. Relax and try to breathe normally
3. Move your hands to help you stay afloat
4. It's OK if your legs sink.

Watch this 60 second RNLI video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgASxPh-xqU>



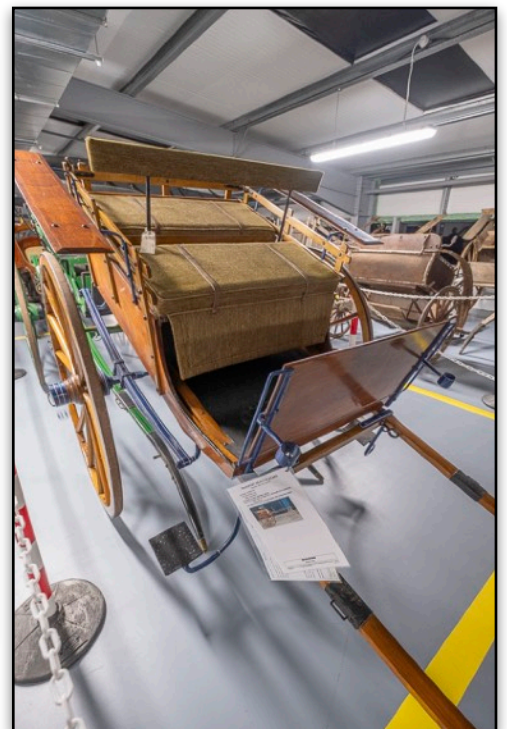
Transport Museum Storage Facility

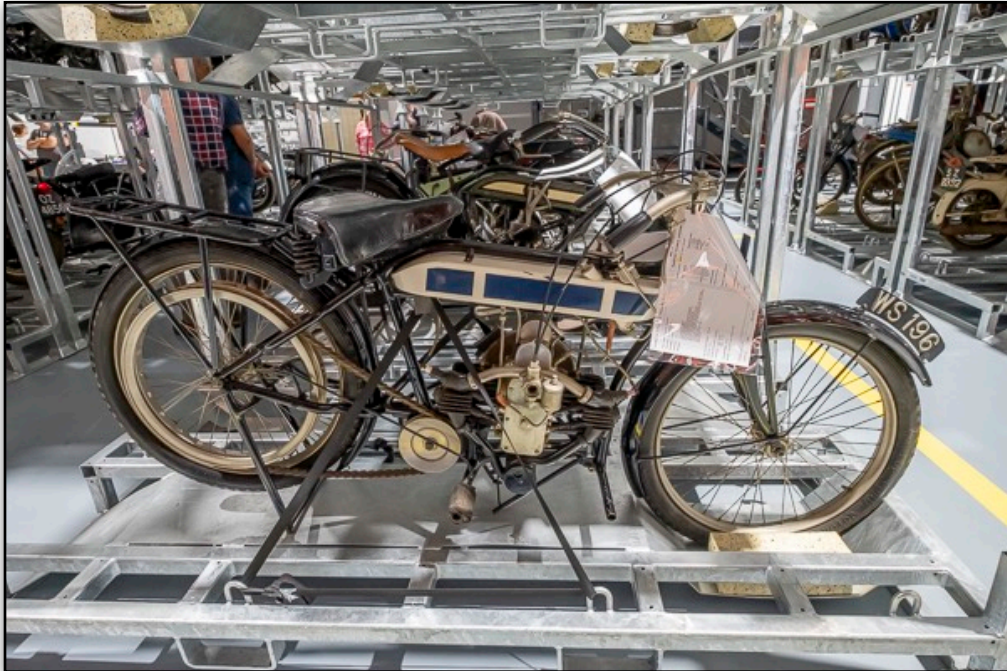


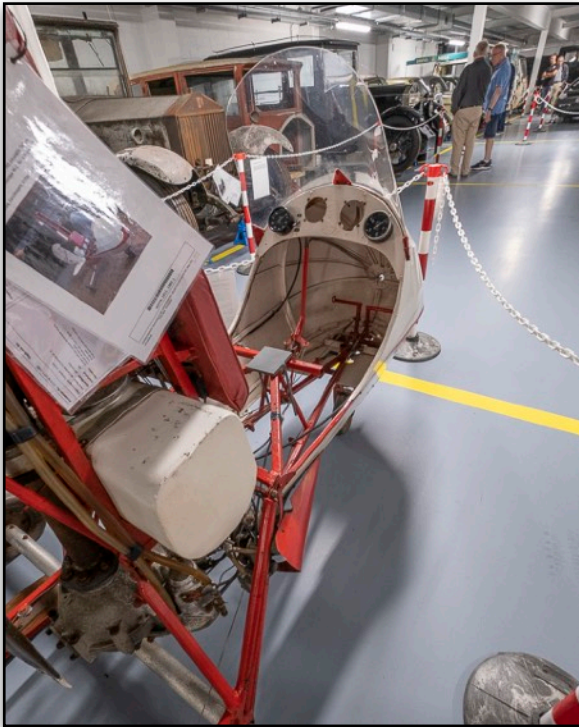
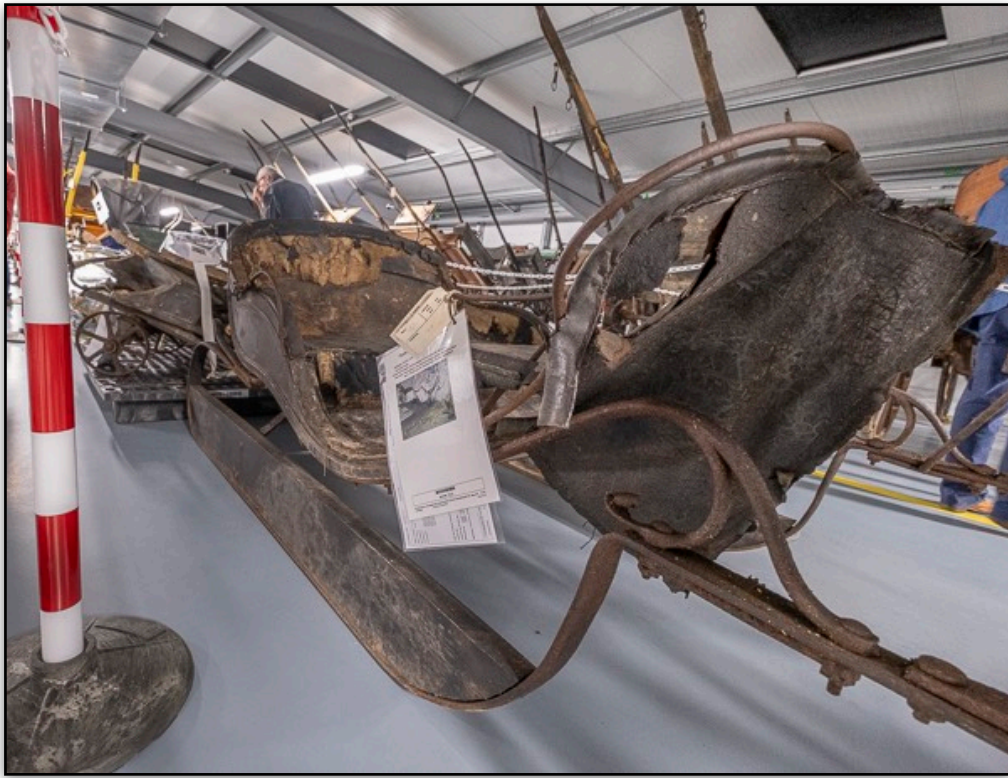
In May we visited the storage facility for the Transport Museum. We were restricted to 20 participants but we were oversubscribed. As a result, through our good relations with Curator Claire Ablett and the good behaviour displayed by the group eg following the rules about numbers, no touching the exhibits etc we had the opportunity of a further visit for those unable to visit the first time.

The report on the previous visit can be found at this link: [March 2023](#)

Below are some more pictures taken at the facility showing some of the very wide range of exhibits:







And finally - from accident claim reports.....

I had been driving for 40 years when I feel asleep at the wheel and had an accident.

I had one eye on a parked car, another on approaching lorries, and another on the woman behind.

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