

# The Road Observer

The Newsletter of the North Down  
Advanced Motorists Group



December 2025







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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 2025

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### Test passes

Congratulations to motorcycle member

**Martyn Griffiths** who achieved a F1RST pass.

and to

**Gareth Hunter**

who passed the Masters car test with distinction.

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

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### New Members

This month we welcome new motorcycle Associate member Robin Reeves and car Associate members Andrew Blair and Spencer Hay. 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.

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### November cover picture

The November picture was of Edward Street in Lurgan. Congratulations and well spotted to David Harcourt, David McFall, John Seawright and James O'Brien.

Do you know where this month's picture was taken? Its more local than last month's. There is a prize to aim for as well as the satisfaction of good observation and, of course, getting a mention in the next Road Observer. The prize is a year's Group membership to the Member who gets the greatest number of correct answers in the year to October 2026. 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 have a varied programme for the Group Nights. All meetings will take place in the Boathouse at Groomsport Harbour car park unless otherwise stated.

13 January	STAC enrolment - introductions for new car members and demonstration drives
3 February	STAC 1
10 February	Group Night - Road Traffic policing
24 February	STAC 2
3 March	STAC 3
10 March	Group Night - Guy Thomson "The Northern Isles"
24 March	STAC 4
31 March	STAC 5
7 April	No Meeting - Easter Tuesday
14 April	Group Night - TBA

STAC - Short Term Associate Course. 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. **And remember to bring your logbook with you.**

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## Christmas Dinner

Our NDAM crew gathered at Underground Dining, which last month won the Good Food Ireland Food Lovers Choice Award - Northern Ireland. The restaurant was serving peak winter vibes: cosy, warm, twinkly, and just the right level of, "Is it Christmas yet, or are we all just delirious?" The place felt like someone bottled December and poured it over the tables — in a good way.



Despite the weather doing its best impression of a wind tunnel, the staff were absolute stars, gliding around with plates of delicious food and delivering them quicker than you can say, "Is that my turkey or yours?"





And now... David.

Not only did he arrive with good cheer, but he also hand-delivered laser-engraved place cards for every single attendee. Yes, personalised with your actual menu choice—because Santa came early for him and left a shiny BMW on the driveway, and that festive energy clearly spilt over into full-blown arts and crafts excellence. A round of applause for David and his precision-engineered Christmas magic. 🙌

Then there was the raffle, organised by our very own Christmas Elf-in-Chief, Colin.

Not only did he coordinate the whole dinner (Christmas was basically **powered** by Colin), but he built a raffle so generous that almost everyone waddled home with something. Alcohol? Gone instantly. Biscuits? Vanished. Chocolate? Vultures couldn't have cleared it faster.





And then we were left with...

### **The car-wash kit.**

This was the **only** prize that no one — not a single advanced motorist — wanted. We had a room full of people who adore their cars and bikes, but ask them to wash them, and suddenly everyone develops a deep fascination with the floor tiles. That lonely little prize sat there like a Labrador waiting to be adopted... but alas, there were no quick takers. **Not tonight, Satan.**

All in all, it was a fantastic night with a wonderful atmosphere, full bellies, plenty of laughs, and a festive spirit that could've lit the tree at Belfast City Hall.

Roll on the next NDAM gathering... and someone please give the car-wash kit a loving home before it starts developing abandonment issues.

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## **Christmas bike run**

Our Christmas run had one simple, noble mission: ride a bit... and eat a lot more. The plan was a festive mini-tour of the Ards Peninsula, complete with winter miles and well-earned calories. Mother Nature, however, had other ideas and served up a day that could politely be described as character-building.



Dodgy weather aside, we had a brilliant turnout of 11 riders, proving once again that NDAM bikers are made of sterner stuff (and waterproofs). With spirits high and visors mostly clear, we decided to tack on a few extra miles and reward ourselves with a later breakfast stop at Tim Hortons. Hot food never tasted so victorious.

### **Festive MVPs**

A special shout-out must go to Brian and Lorraine. Lorraine became our first pillion passenger in a while, and she did it in absolute Christmas style. Their bike was decked out with Christmas lights and a teddy, instantly winning the unofficial Best Dressed Bike award.

Somewhere between Comber and Ards, however, lies a very squashed and extremely soggy elf hat. Sadly, the duct tape turned out to be less waterproof than advertised. Lessons were learnt. Mostly about aerodynamics.

What's Next?

Our next outing kicks off the new '1st Sunday of the month' run series, starting on Sunday 4 January. Fresh year, fresh rides—keep an eye out for details very soon.

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## All our yesterdays

Christmas and the New Year is often a time for nostalgia in front of the fire, perhaps over a beverage of your choice.

Here are a couple of pictures courtesy of the **Northern Ireland Historical Photographic Society** which the more mature members of the Group might appreciate.



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