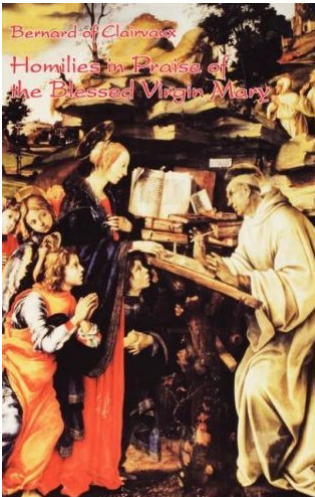


This year's Christmas Message comes from Canon Bill Fraser of the Diocese of Argyll & The Isles, who is the Religious Adviser to ACROSS.

"You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us.

The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life.

Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word." (From the homily 'In Praise of the Virgin Mary' by St. Bernard.)



Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153) was a French abbot. He was the first Cistercian monk placed on the calendar of saints, and was canonised by Pope Alexander III in 1174. Pope Pius VIII bestowed upon him the title 'Doctor of the Church'.

It is not always easy to respond to all that God asks of us and we can fail to do His will out of fear – fear of letting go of our habits or what others may think, fear of what God may ask of us. Yet if we truly loved God then we would know that "His love drives out all fear" (1Jn 4:18) and that He will never ask more of us than we are capable of giving. And that His grace is sufficient for us.

We can look to Lourdes for our example. Our Blessed Lady came to Bernadette because she was sent by the Father. Her message was from the Father. She chose well in Bernadette – a simple country girl but one who was strong enough to withstand the scoffing of those about her when she talked of her visions and one who managed to go to her priest to do what was asked of her by Our Lady in spite of being afraid.

She trusted in her Lady. She was strengthened by the prayers she said with The Blessed Virgin. It is one lesson we are taught – the need for real prayer in our lives. She prayed with Our Lady to God.

But Our Lady also calls us to repentance – a turning away from all those things that hinder us having a real personal relationship with God. It was the call of Jesus in His first sermon – "Repent and believe the Good News" (Mark 1:14-15). The Good News is that God loves us so much, He sent His Son to us to set us free from sin and enter a real relationship with Him.

Are we ready to make our "Yes" to God this Advent?

When I was reflecting on St. Bernard's sermon on the Annunciation, I began thinking on how much God waits on us to respond to Him. Jesus had said His "Yes" to the Father and to mankind.

But now the Trinity was waiting on Mary's "Yes". A "yes" that would change the history of the world. The Creator was waiting on his creature so that he could fulfil His loving plan for all of us. What a God we have! What love He has for us!

As we enter Advent it is good to reflect on how often God waits for our "yes's" – "yes" to turning to Him and making him the centre of our life for all too often we make so many other things our gods - our goods, ambitions, the TV, sometimes our friends and families; we cling to our habits and sins.

He calls us to make Him the centre of our lives just as we are centre of His. It is easy to think that we do enough by going to Mass and saying our prayers but is God the centre of our Mass and our prayers or are we doing them out of duty or routine?

Message from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

My daughter Emily recently asked me: "what is an ACROSS pilgrimage like?" I quickly discovered that despite travelling with ACROSS for nearly 24 years, this wasn't an easy question for me to answer.

I talked about how groups work, what sort of people join a group, what we do on the journey and in Lourdes, how we spend our time, and more. Emily quizzed me on certain details – I think she may have been weighing up whether she should join a group when she is a little older! She listened patiently as I talked, and when I finished, she said "So, it's a bit like a big family, really." She walked off, her attention turning to something new, and I was left pondering how my nine year old daughter had brilliantly expressed the essence of ACROSS in one short sentence, something I had clearly failed to do!

She is right of course; we have long talked of the ACROSS family and every ACROSS group is a snapshot of a family experience. It starts with the journey (possibly with echoes of "are we there yet?"). The interests and characters are diverse; we all have our preferred, and less favourite activities – there are always some things some of us don't want to do. Occasionally we struggle to settle in and, to be frank, we don't always all get on... but we usually find a way through. Sound familiar??

And yet we are bound by a common thread; a love of Lourdes, the call of Our Lady, and the eternal sense that we all return home more blessed, more privileged in some way, than when we left. As we all know, we also come home closer than before, our shared experience reinforcing that special bond of love and friendship that a Lourdes pilgrimage creates.

So as we complete the 10th season of ACROSS, and close to 40 years of Jumbulance travel, I give thanks for my extended ACROSS family; the many friendships forged during long nights in a Jumbulance kitchen, the unwavering support for the work of ACROSS and unflinching dedication to Our Lady and Lourdes. I know that the coming year will be filled with more special moments – not least the latest in a long line of "love buses"! – and I look forward to sharing the year with friends old and new, and seeing the ACROSS family grow a little more.

Marianne Wainhall

New Jumbulance

As we write, our new Jumbulance has arrived in the UK and is undergoing its regulatory inspection tests, with the external livery then to be added.

The new vehicle will have a similar internal layout to JP02, with eighteen reclining seats, three hospital beds and four bunk beds, attached two on two.

However, in line with the latest design of most UK coaches going to the continent, the emergency door will be on the right-hand side, along with the seats, lift and toilet, so the beds will be on the left-hand side.

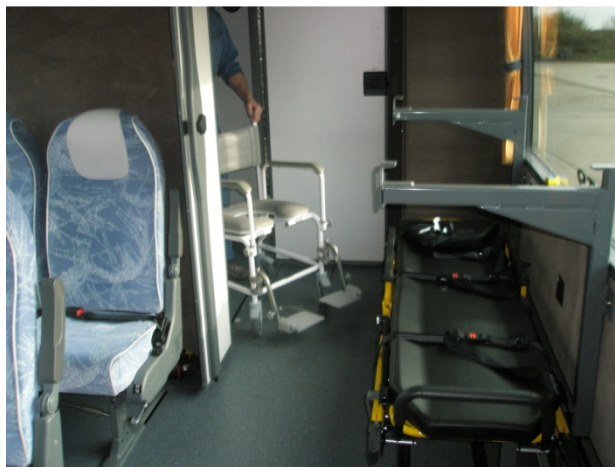


The new Jumbulance at Van Hool's Wellingborough depot. Note position of emergency door (near the rear) and the lift door near the front. The external 'ACROSS' livery was still to be added.

There will be the usual generous kitchen and the slightly greater length of the new vehicle enables the kitchen area to be closed off (without disturbing those working) during access to the toilet.

In the following picture, the larger toilet door is open backwards, closing off the kitchen area, and the smaller toilet door is open forwards. The lower bunk bed is in position (the picture shows the supports for the upper bunk bed).

Extensive tests (with a large Van Hool's man sitting on the commode!) established that the commode can be easily manoeuvred into the toilet.



Further tests at Van Hool's Wellingborough depot

For the technically minded, the vehicle is just over 14 metres in length (JP02 is 13.8 metres), with two rear axles and rear wheel steering (for demonstration, watch JP02 or the new vehicle entering the Shuttle!). There is a MAN engine.

The new Jumbulance will be on display at various locations before the start of the 2012 season when it will replace JP02 on the regular weekly run to and from Lourdes. JP02 will be used when we have double groups, for Diocesan groups and for holidays taking place during the season.

The two older vehicles have been retired after ten years of faithful service with ACROSS, following earlier service with The Across Trust, and we are now in the course of disposing of them.

New Jumbulance blessing and dedication

We are delighted to report that the blessing of the new Jumbulance will be carried out by Archbishop Vincent Nichols on **10th March 2012**, when it will be dedicated to the memory of Saint Bernadette.

Make a note of this important date in your 2012 diary!

This exciting event will take place outside Westminster Cathedral and will be followed by Mass in the Cathedral and subsequently light refreshments in the Cathedral Hall. The ceremonies will start at 2:00pm, and all are invited.

If we have anyone who would like to take part in the Mass – readers, musicians, etc – please e-mail: debbiehourihan@virginmedia.com

A reminder and full particulars will follow nearer the time, by e-mail to all on our e-mailing list, on our website and on our Facebook page.

Thanksgiving Mass dates

12th February 2012: The first of our Annual Thanksgiving Masses will be held at St Peter's Church (Leicester Road, Hinckley, LE10 1LW) at 2:00pm on Sunday, 12th February 2012. The Hinckley group very kindly provide refreshments after the Mass, and the new Jumbulance will be on display.

13th May 2012: The second Annual Thanksgiving Mass will be held at the Carfin Lourdes Grotto, Carfin, Motherwell at 2:00pm on Sunday, 13th May 2012, when we again hope to have the new Jumbulance on display.

2011 facts and figures

National group 3198 brought the 2011 season to a successful conclusion. It also marked the completion of the first decade of Lourdes pilgrimages since ACROSS took over the work originally started by our predecessors, The Across Trust, in 1973.



*Group 3198
enjoying the
Autumn
sunshine*

An ACROSS group made the pilgrimage each week from Holy Week to the end of October, with two separate groups in one of the weeks and a double-sized group in another.

In addition, ACROSS assisted two Diocesan groups with their pilgrimages.

In total, there were 715 pilgrims, comprising 264 VIPs and 451 helpers.

Many of the VIPs and helpers were regular travellers with ACROSS, and we are grateful for their continued support and the confidence we obtain from the fact that

people come back, often year after year. But we need to continue to attract new helpers, and of course the provision of pilgrimages to VIPs is our prime purpose.

'Word of mouth' is the answer we usually receive when we ask new VIPs and helpers how they came to hear of us. We thank all of you who have passed on words of encouragement to potential VIPs and helpers, and ask all our travellers to take any opportunity to make our services known.

Group Leader Development Program

As we continue to develop plans to support a thriving, successful future, we have identified that a key part of our success will depend on being able to increase the number of groups that we run. And to run successful national groups, we need more successful group leaders.

With this in mind, we are launching a 'Group Leaders of the Future' development program in 2012. The program is aimed at anyone who may be interested in leading an ACROSS group at some point. We are especially keen to encourage younger helpers in taking this next step, to create a secure future base of leaders, but the program will be open to anyone who expresses an interest, or as a refresher course for any existing leaders. A fundamental part of the program sees existing group leaders supporting the program as mentors to potential new leaders.

The program would consist of:

- A workshop in early 2012, comprising an introduction to group leadership, team building exercises, addressing specific topics, with input from leaders, staff and trustees.
- Matching each potential new leader to an existing leader mentor.
- Apprentice leader travels with his/her mentor on a group in 2012. The mentor is the official leader, but allows the apprentice to shadow their role, providing ongoing feedback and input throughout the group.
- In early 2013, a second workshop, to address any key topics or issues our apprentices have come across.
- In 2013, the apprentice is the leader of a group, with their mentor travelling with them.
- The apprentice 'graduates' as a fully qualified leader.

We hope that this will result in the development of some excellent new leaders, who can continue the good work of our expert long-standing leaders – and even allow them to take a well-earned rest from the responsibilities of group leadership at some point!

If you think you have what it takes to be a future ACROSS leader and are interested in this opportunity, please e-mail: marianne@across.org.uk

Dates and location for the workshops will be announced soon.

Scottish Jumboball 2011

The 22nd Scottish Jumboball was held on 12th November at the Holiday Inn, in East Kilbride. This was preceded by a late afternoon Mass in the hotel celebrated by Canon Bill Fraser.

A record attendance of over 160 guests, with many from far afield, greatly enjoyed the evening at which the music was provided by the St Roch's Ceilidh Band.



Looks like a highly organised dance routine!

We were greatly honoured by the presence of Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, who immediately on arrival volunteered to help on the tombola stall.



The Cardinal hard at work, attending to a tombola prize winner.

At the dinner, the Cardinal spoke warmly of the work of ACROSS. We really appreciate his many acts of support for us over the years and his constant encouragement.

Thanks

Our grateful thanks to:

The Friends of ACROSS who, with their regular standing orders, provide the reliable base of our annual funding requirement, with contributions totalling £30,000 each year. Thanks also to those Friends who were able to increase their standing orders following our Summer appeal, recognising the effect of inflation on standing orders taken out some years ago.

The numerous other donors, of whom many have enjoyed coming with us to Lourdes and have recognised that the contribution we request is well short of the cost of taking each pilgrim.

Members of our 200 Club for their continuing support, and congratulations to all who have won prizes.

All who have been involved in fundraising and for their support at our fundraising events.

An anonymous donor who contributed £1,500 to purchase Repose mattresses and cushions for the new Jumbulance.

Moseley Distributors Limited, our vehicle distributors, for their generous donation to the new Jumbulance fund.

The Friends of L'Astazou who have donated the final balance of the funds they raised, £21,568, with the request that this be used to support young helpers. This was made at the Jumboball and follows donations made in earlier years, which have been invaluable in providing this support.



Marianne Wanstall and Cardinal O'Brien with Mary Madden and Patrick Gormley (trustees, Friends of L'Astazou) following cheque presentation.

This latest donation completes the work of The Friends of L'Astazou, which is now in the course of winding up.

Merchandise

Thank you to everyone who took part in our survey of possible future merchandise. Your input was really helpful, and from the survey results we drew the following conclusions:

- Clothing - keep doing t-shirts, polos, fleeces (both with and without hoods), with a simple ACROSS logo, and some new colours each year.
- Ensure we have adequate stocks of larger sizes.
- Include a lightweight waterproof – possibly one or two colour choices.
- Introduce new gifts for 2012, starting with pens, ruck-sacks, USB sticks.
- Add postcards and Mass cards.
- Keep existing items such as holdalls.
- Re-introduce a metal or enamel logo badge with safety pin for supporters to buy.
- Review the name badges we provide to all travellers.
- Introduce Christmas cards.
- Consider having an online shop.
- Produce a merchandise leaflet that can be sent with travel documents or invoices, to facilitate ordering pre-travel.

We may not achieve all of this in 2012, but your feedback has certainly given us real insight to ensure that our merchandise continues to be appealing to our supporters. Thank you!

Snippets from letters

The following are just a small selection of comments from letters received at the Office (sometimes adapted to provide anonymity).

From a deceased VIP's sister

"Thank you so much for your message of sympathy and for the Masses offered at Pluscarden for my brother. Many thanks too, to all at ACROSS who made his trip to Lourdes so memorable. I was so thrilled he was able to go. God's blessing on the wonderful work you do."

From a deceased VIP's nephew

"I am just writing to let you know that my uncle has died after a sudden deterioration in his condition.

It was a miracle he made the trip in 2009 having only had his second amputation a few weeks earlier and was discharged and driven straight to the Jumbulance for Lourdes. We had an amazing trip and I truly believe a miracle happened for my uncle.

He found the trip exhausting and uncomfortable and yet was great company, graciously received care and support from others and never moaned (he was always one to speak his mind!). I also felt he contributed to the overall enjoyment of everyone in the group. Thank you ACROSS for your hard work, for keeping going and for making the impossible possible."

From a deceased VIP's daughter

"Wanted to thank ACROSS again. Some years ago my Dad, who was disabled, travelled with ACROSS and they looked after him wonderfully – you do special things to make others feel special. Thank you again."

From the mother of a VIP to another charity, which helped with her daughter's funding

"She has just returned from a 10 day pilgrimage with the ACROSS organisation and I cannot thank them or yourselves enough for giving her this opportunity.

She had a really good time and words cannot express how she felt whilst she was there; it was a truly beneficial experience, and without your help this would not have been possible. The care she received during her journey and stay was absolutely exemplary and without the care of the leader, the doctors, nuns and nurses this would not have been possible. She has talked about nothing else since her return.

It also gave our family much needed respite after a traumatic six months. Once again I would like to thank your organisation for giving her this once in a lifetime opportunity."

Rome revisited

Rome used to be popular with ACROSS travellers. Now, thanks to pioneering work by Tony Murphy, leader of the Liverpool and Chester groups, we hope to re-establish Rome as a pilgrimage destination.

Tony has researched accommodation in Rome and also for an overnight stop in the Austrian Tyrol. He will report back on the pilgrimage, and hopefully other people will be encouraged to travel to Rome, and possibly other

destinations, as well as taking part in our regular pilgrimages to Lourdes.

Tony is organising a major fund raising dinner and demonstration of the new Jumbulance in Liverpool in February 2012, which no doubt he will be advertising in due course!

Joy and sorrow from Chingford

Chingford Group have brought us a joyous announcement but also some sad news.

Dr Michelle McCreesh travels to Lourdes with the Chingford Group. In June this year she met Shiraz Lalani, a first time traveller.



Shiraz not only fell in love with ACROSS, after a whirlwind romance he has proposed to Michelle and they are getting married next year. We wish them all the best for their future together as husband and wife.



But it is with great sadness that the group have to report that Terry Piper, the Chingford Group Jester, has suddenly died at the age of 62.

Terry had travelled with the Chingford Group to Lourdes since 2000 and always brought a laugh and smile to

everyone who travelled with him.

He will be sadly missed and we ask that you pray for his family.

Modifications at the Med

The Hotel Méditerranée is currently undergoing extensive modifications and improvements, which will be completed in time for the 2012 season.

Facilities for disabled guests will be extended to a greater number of rooms on our floor. It is likely that the rooms we use will have high quality lino floors instead of carpet, which facilitates cleaning as well as making it easier to manoeuvre both wheelchairs and equipment. We may also see the addition of one or two more inter-connecting rooms but this isn't guaranteed as it depends on the structural work required.

Other changes include the renovation of the entrance foyer and bar. The first floor mezzanine will also be changed, the main impact being the extension of the front terrace which will become easier to access and more spacious.

We look forward to these and other changes and will take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of the Méditerranée for their unfailing hospitality and friendship and the welcome our groups always receive.

Obituary

We have heard of the deaths of the following friends and supporters of ACROSS since the publication of the Summer 2011 newsletter. May they rest in peace.

Sr Theresa Aylward, Holbeach
Mrs P Blunden, Essex
Joyce Clements, Cornwall
Mike Dillon, Preston
Mr AJ Douglas, London
Thomas (Joe) Doyle, Luton
Robin Edwards, Leckhampton
Jacqueline Ellmer, Northants
Rita Firth, Shotton
Jasinthia Fitzgerald, London
Ada Gardner, Northampton
Margaret Gillies, Troon
Sr George Gornall, Romsey
Alan Grist, Warminster
Fr Gerry Haney, Sheffield
Canon Paddy Healey, Cheshire
Jane Hubbard, Great Yarmouth
John Jessop, Manchester
Christopher (Tim) Johnson, Manchester
John McNamara, St Helens
Theodora Munro, Paignton
Mary Nicholson, Morpeth
Ivy Niven, Glasgow
Terry Piper, Chigford
Doris Reid, Essex
John Russell, Glenrothes
Jimmy (Sir James) Savile, Leeds
Isobel Sheerin, Paisley
Margaret Turner, Plymouth
Tommy Walsh, Liverpool
Stella Wolstenholme, Wilmslow
Ralph Revill, Whitby
John Waller, Canterbury
Netta Waller, Canterbury
Kevin White, Cirencester

Please remember them and their families in your prayers.

In memory

Mary Nicholson RIP

Mary was born in 1928 and lived at the same house in Morpeth until the devastating flood in 2008.

She had one brother Edward who was five years older than Mary. He died in 1964 and had asked that Mary would look after Nora his wife. Mary took this responsibility very seriously until Nora's death in 2008. The only other family that Mary had were very dear cousins.

She was a member of several clubs and societies including the Catholic Women's League and the WI. She enjoyed her trips to Lourdes and held HCPT and ACROSS close to her heart.

Mary died in October 2010 and left much of her estate to charities, including ACROSS, which received a substantial legacy. We are grateful to Mary's Executors for these notes about a lady for whom service to others was clearly paramount.

Phillip Bennett RIP

Many ACROSS travellers will remember Phillip Bennett, who died on 13 December 2010. The Order of Service at Phillip's Requiem Mass started with these fitting words:

'Since Phillip was a baby in his Mother's arms she called him the Champ. And never has anyone earned the right to be called the Champ more than Phillip Bennett, he has fought and won every battle through his short life, until his last battle when I am sure he agreed with the Lord on his own terms that he would join Him in Heaven and so just like Phillip he turned his last battle into a win.'



*Phillip Bennett 'The Champ' 5th April 1980
– 13th December
2010*

Following Phillip's death, his mother, Irene Bennett, has been able to send ACROSS the many donations received in his memory and has also been very active in fundraising for ACROSS in Phillip's memory, for all of which we are very grateful.

Jimmy (Sir James) Savile RIP

Jimmy (as we are sure he would like to be called) was a great friend and supporter of The Across Trust and subsequently ACROSS.

Born in Leeds in 1926, he was the youngest of seven in a Catholic family. He went to the local St Anne's RC School, where he learnt 'the 4 Rs' (as he defined them): 'reading, riting, reckoning up and the difference between right and wrong'.

In 1964 he presented the first 'Top of the Pops', and continued to host it for the next twenty years. This and 'Jim'll Fix It' made him one of the best known and loved TV personalities.

Jimmy was present at the launch of the first Jumbulance in June 1973 and made sure that this was well advertised in the press. He was also involved with many subsequent launches.

Back in 1973, he also introduced The Across Trust to the Green Shield Trading Stamp Company, which donated 60p to charities for every complete book of stamps. Many thousands of pounds were raised for the Trust in this way.

After the launch of the first Jumbulance, Jimmy agreed to be the Patron of The Across Trust, providing his image on promotional posters and his voice in films and videos, until his retirement at the 25th London Jumboball in 1998, having attended all the London Jumboballs since their inception.

Throughout that time he allowed the Trust to use his name and his influence to obtain the support of the media, the public and, through 'Jim'll Fix It', the schools and schoolchildren.

With the appeal in 2001 by Across Scotland (now ACROSS) for funds to enable the Jumbulance service to Lourdes to be continued, Jimmy was a generous donor. He was prominent at the launch of JP02 in April 2007, joining in the ceremony in his inimitable way and making a short speech at the Mass, extolling the work of ACROSS.



The Cardinal and his colleagues seem to be taking Jimmy's antics in good part!

Jimmy's support for ACROSS was mentioned in his obituaries in the national and Catholic press. ACROSS was represented at Jimmy's Requiem Mass, in Leeds Cathedral on 9th November, which was a national event.

Our Lourdes team

ACROSS pilgrims this year will have been delighted to meet Libby Frank, or more likely renew acquaintances with her, Libby having taken over as our Lourdes representative.

Libby's many talents do not extend to coach driving and so, to spread the driving workload, we called on the help of Lasbareilles, a Lourdes coach operator, who provided drivers for us. We are grateful to Fabienne and Nigel of Lasbareilles for their help during the season.

Libby has contributed the following thoughts on her return to the ACROSS organisation, having previously worked for our predecessors, The Across Trust.

When I was approached earlier this year with the opportunity to work for ACROSS in Lourdes again, although I didn't need too much persuasion to say yes it was nevertheless with some apprehension that I awaited the arrival of Group 3171 in April. All my previous experience had been at Chalet and L'Astazou ACROSS and I felt very much the 'new girl' at the Hotel Méditerranée. Now we have waved goodbye to Group 3198 and I am left wondering where the last 28 weeks have gone and reflecting on my season with ACROSS.

Needless to say many things have changed in my nine years away, not least new Jumbulance design, new accommodation and many new faces. However despite all these changes what was so apparent from the start was that the spirit remains unchanged. Our new

Jumbulance design without doubt affords a greater level of comfort to the travelling pilgrim. The Hotel Méditerranée and staff offer a very different pilgrimage environment to the one I was used to, however times have changed and although some of the facilities available to us are different or perhaps not always ideal, with effort/imagination and support most hurdles can be and are overcome.

To see and meet new fresh faces was a real pleasure, their enthusiasm and commitment is our future. But more important than the vehicle and the accommodation are our travellers – both able and unable alike. They are the 'spirit' and the true essence of ACROSS, their desire and willingness, to be an active part of something that changes lives, to bear witness to the real meaning of faith, to actually make a difference is what will hopefully allow ACROSS to thrive and continue.



From the ACROSS family album! Libby third from left, front row, Nigel (now with Lasbareilles) extreme left, back row

At the end of my 'first' season thank you to everybody whose path I have crossed this year. Thank you for your advice, your support, your friendship and perhaps most of all to the 'old faces' thank you for the 'welcome back' which you extended to me week after week, it meant more than you will ever know. It has been a privilege to again be an active part of ACROSS, the organisation which I first became associated with in 1982, worked for previously for 17 years and will hopefully continue to be a part of for years to come.

Fundraising idea

Have you been running out of ideas for fundraising to send money to ACROSS? Paul Fisher sends the following: 'Why not do what we at the Coventry Fundraising Group do and collect aluminium drinks cans, which are then collected by a local man who gives us 40p/kilo. Alternatively they can be taken to the local Alcan Depot, who will exchange them for cash (amount unknown).'

Last year we raised over £200, and we are well on the way to raising another £200 this year, most of it from cans, although some of it does come from selling items donated to us for ACROSS! If you want more details, contact the Office who will put you in touch with me, and I will try to help you out.'

2012 charges

For 2012, the trustees have decided that the contribution from pilgrims should be £710. Nurses on national groups will still be eligible for a £150 discount.

Our operating costs exceed our income from contributions by over £150 per pilgrim. However, the trustees are anxious to keep the contribution to a reasonably affordable amount, which is not out of line with the amounts charged for pilgrimages of the same length and the same hotel standard, even though the facilities and support we provide is substantially greater than that available from a 'packaged pilgrimage'.

Remember that our pilgrimages are all inclusive and include the cost of travel insurance, which is specially tailored to the needs of our travellers. Also, it covers the cost of all travel with our own vehicle within Lourdes and visits to Bartres.

If helpers on national groups – priests, doctors, nurses and general helpers – have difficulty in making this contribution, we do have access to separate funds that might be able to help. We are also sometimes able to obtain financial support for VIPs, with help that comes from separate charities. If you need to know more, as a helper or as a VIP, please speak to Liz or Julie.

Christmas greetings

"Greetings for a Happy and Holy Christmas to all who have travelled with me, the ladies in the Office, Jumbulance drivers and all the staff in Lourdes." (Maureen Duffy)

"Wishing you the blessings of the season and all the best in 2012, to trustees, ACROSS staff and all those who have travelled with me." (Phyllis McLeay)

"Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you all." (Annie Gill)

"Best wishes and good health to all my friends." (Teresa Steel)

The trustees and staff of ACROSS send best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all the friends and supporters of ACROSS and all who travel with us.

Grand Jumbodraw 2012

This year's first prize is £500. Second prize is £250 and there are many other prizes. The draw tickets must be returned by 1st April 2012 and the draw will take place on Easter Monday, 9th April 2012. After the winners have been notified, their names will be listed on the web site.

The income from the Jumbodraw is most important to us, realising £5,000 annually. We have enclosed two books of tickets, costing 50p each, with each newsletter unless you have previously notified us you do not wish raffle tickets to be sent to you. If you need more tickets, please contact the Office.

Web site

Don't forget to visit our website: www.across.org.uk on a regular basis.

Facebook

To keep up to date, and add your own comments, simply register for Facebook at www.facebook.com and then search 'ACROSS' in the search box and look for 'ACROSS to Lourdes by Jumbulance' and click on 'become a fan'.

Become a Friend of ACROSS

The Friends raise over £30,000 each year through regular monthly donations, many of which are 'Gift-aided'. Why not join us? Please tick the box on the enclosed form or contact the Office.

200 Club

The 200 Club has been providing over £7,000 annually to assist with the work of ACROSS. Membership costs just £4 per month, payable either by monthly/annual bank standing order or by an annual cheque. There are two monthly prizes of £150 and £50.

Every year, at the Scottish Jumboball, a major prize is drawn, and this year the prize was again £1,000. This was won by Dr Jo McGettigan of Denny.

If you wish to join the 200 Club, please tick the relevant part of the box on the enclosed form or contact Julie at the Office.

Legacies

With the arrival of our new Jumbulance, we will have been able to purchase two brand new vehicles – JP02 in 2007 and now the latest vehicle.

The funds for these purchases have been substantially helped by legacies. By their nature, legacies are unpredictable in size and frequency but are ideally suited for the large outlays that occur when we commission a new vehicle. So please remember ACROSS when drawing up or amending a will.

Donations in memory

Many suggest a donation to a favoured charity, rather than flowers, in memory of a loved one. Please think of ACROSS in these circumstances.

Please help promote ACROSS

The office is happy to supply you with literature which you can use to promote the work of ACROSS in your parish, workplace or club. Please contact Julie or Liz.

ACROSS

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