



Irish Trust Talk



**GUEST
APPLICATION
FORM**
Scan QR Code

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Galway
+353 91 796622 www.irishpilgrimagestrust.com
Charity Registration Number 20009953 CHY (Revenue) No. 5992

Issue 109
Spring 2025



The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

President & Board of Trustees

President
Bishop Donal McKeown

Chairperson
David Whitty

Vice Chairperson
Caitriona Cannon

Honorary Treasurer
Karl Goulding

Trust Doctor
Dr. Zelig Daly

Trust Chaplain
Fr. Michael Murphy

Honorary Secretary
Ann Marie Rossiter

Trust Nurse
Eileen Doyle

Trust Safety Officer
James Foley

Deputy Designated Liaison Person / Safeguarding
Eadaoin McAnulty

Chaplain
Mons. Dan Carroll

Trustee
Carmel Drinan

Trustee
Aidan Curley

Trustee
Donal Burke

Charity Registration Number
20009953

CHY (Revenue) No. 5992

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust



The Trust was established in 1972 to provide special pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes for children and young people with special needs. The Trust also provide special summer holidays for people with special needs to Hosanna House in Lourdes and at our purpose built holiday home - Kilcuan in Clarinbridge, Galway



Check out our website on www.irishpilgrimagestrust.com for more details or call +353 91 796622
The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is a Registered Charity - C.R.N. 20009953; Revenue Chy. No. 5992

In This Issue -

Cover
Lourdes & the Trust

Page 2
Trust Information

Page 3 - 4
A WORD from the CHAIR
David Whitty

Page 5 - 7
Fundraising Events

Page 8
A Special Space

Page 9
Easter Date

Pages 10
Lourdes 2024 - our 50th

Page 10
Cycle to Lourdes 2026

Pages 11
Memories from Easter 2024

Page 12 - 13
Trust Training

Page 14 - 15
Memories from Easter 2024

Page 16
YOUR LASTING GIFT

Irish Trust Talk
*is the newsletter of
The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.*

Editor - James McHugh

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust Safeguarding



**Designated Liaison Person
Bernadette Connolly**

Person Designated with responsibility for the safety, welfare and protection of our guests

Please consider DONATING to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

You can DONATE online by visiting our website
www.irishpilgrimagestrust.com/donate
or
email to info@irishpilgrimagestrust.com
or
Contact us by 'phone on +353 91 796622

You can support your local Group by simply pressing the DONATE button on our website and make your Donation on Just Giving and note the Group No.

Bernadette Connolly, National Co-ordinator,
Kilcuan Clarinbridge, Galway, H91 W596
Phone (091) 796622
bconnolly@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

James McHugh, Facilities Manager & Cycle Organiser
Editor, Irish Trust Talk
Ph (091)796622 jmchugh@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

Zoe O'Dea,
Administration Ph (091)796622
zodea@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

Celine O'Loan
Administration Ph (091)796622
colan@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

A Word from the Chair

David Whitty



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Irish Trust Talk!

As always, the year is flying by, and we now find ourselves at the start of our busiest and most exciting season. Easter, Summer, and Friendship Week pilgrimage holidays are fast approaching, and as the evenings grow longer and the weather brightens, it's time to pull out the group gear, dust off the banner, and get stuck into the final preparations!

I know the past few months have been full of activity for everyone. Since our last edition of Trust Talk, our wonderful Guests for the Easter pilgrimage holiday have been selected, and by now, each of them will have been visited by their Groups. For these young people and their families, the anticipation is building. As someone recently put it, Easter is their chance to experience the school trip abroad they may never have had – a truly special and transformative opportunity.

A New Chapter for the Trust

You will have noticed some exciting developments within the Trust recently, from our strategic branding project to our new volunteer

training programme. Perhaps the most significant change ahead is our new name. From June 2025, we will officially be known as the Rise & Shine Trust.

This change is the result of extensive research and reflection on how we best communicate who we are and what we do, ensuring that our mission remains strong and relevant in Ireland today and into the future. While change can be challenging, we firmly believe this new name will invigorate and strengthen the Trust, allowing us to continue offering pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes and Friendship Weeks for many years to come.

Some may feel a natural attachment to the name we've known for so long, and that is completely understandable. But rest assured, what truly defines us will never change — our purpose, our values, and the deep bonds of friendship that make this Trust so special. This is simply the next step in our journey to ensure we continue growing, welcoming new volunteers, and reaching as many Guests as possible.

Over the coming months, you'll see gradual updates, including a new website, refreshed literature, and



A Word from the Chair, cont'd

enhanced social media. Our Trust gear will also transition to reflect the new name and logo, but this will be a slow and careful process to ensure financial resources are managed prudently.

Strengthening Our Training & Support

Another major step forward is the new training programme for volunteer carers, designed to equip all of us with the knowledge and skills to provide the best possible experience for our Guests. It has been heartening to see such a fantastic turnout at the first training sessions, in Cookstown, Co Tyrone, with volunteers from across the Northern Region coming together to learn and share their experiences.

A special thanks to Eadaoin McAnulty (Safeguarding Officer) and Eileen Doyle (Trust Nurse), whose dedication and tireless work have brought this programme to life. Thanks also to our incredible office team—Ber, Zoe, Celine and James—who have coordinated everything behind the scenes to make this happen.

Looking ahead, we will be inviting volunteers from each region to help deliver this training next year. This is a key part of keeping our ethos strong and ensuring that what we do remains true to our values. If you're interested in being part of this, please do get in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

Looking Forward to Lourdes

This year, some Groups will be travelling on non-charter flights for the first time—thank you to those embarking on this new adventure! For those travelling on the Easter Saturday flight, I look forward to joining you, and I'm sure we'll be well looked after by Aer Lingus!

Of course, fundraising remains an ever-present challenge at this time of year. The Board is fully aware of the enormous effort required to meet the target each year, and I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you for your dedication. The commitment you show ensures our Guests have an experience they will treasure for a lifetime.

But above all else, remember why we do this. We give our time, our talents, and our energy—and in return, we are enriched in body, mind, and spirit. Now is the time to embrace the joy of what we have worked so hard for. Whether you are in Lourdes at Easter, over the summer, or taking part in a Friendship Week, soak it all in, enjoy every moment, and cherish the friendships you make along the way.

Thank you for everything you do and for the kindness, care, and love you bring to the Trust. I look forward to seeing many of you in Lourdes soon—please stop by and say hello! Our medical hub will be in the Solitude this year—huge thanks to Dr. Zelig Daly for coordinating this. The Trust staff and I will be based in the Alba, and if you need anything at all, just shout!

In friendship

David



FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Raising money to finance the Trust is a mammoth task. But like the old Chinese proverb says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one small step".

And so, each year throughout the country, our wonderful Trust volunteers set about the task of organising their annual fundraising program. In the end, they will raise enough money to provide the holiday experience of a lifetime to almost 400 deserving young people with additional needs.

This is just a flavour of the fundraising work undertaken by our Groups and the support they receive.

In recent times, the Trust is having to work even harder to raise the much-needed funds required to provide our services. The Trust is financed by fundraising events and receiving voluntary donations. This is our only means of raising money as the Trust is not a publicly funded charity. Our organisation relies on generosity of spirit from people, communities and businesses in so many ways.

The funds we raise are used to provide free pilgrimage holidays to children and young people who are ill or have additional needs. This is our mission. Accordingly, the young people whom we serve become our Guests. They are cared for and supported by our teams of Volunteer carers

and medical volunteers while in our care.

Our Volunteers come from all walks of life, teachers, carpenters, carers, doctors, nurses, chaplains, plumbers, cyclists, engineers, parents, lawyers, accountants, students etc. Separate from the fundraising, our Volunteers give generously and freely of their time and skills to help enrich the lives of others. Significantly and uniquely, ALL Trust volunteers pay their own fares to travel to Lourdes. This ensures that funds raised are fully used to cover the costs for our young Guests.

Easter 2025 will see almost 400 young Guests joining our teams of 600 volunteers on the trip of a lifetime to Lourdes, in the south of France. They will receive VIP treatment, stay in hotels and will experience a week filled with celebrations, excursions, fine dining, entertainment and fun activities, all specially designed to compliment their abilities and meet their needs.

below we bring you a number of examples of some fundraising activities undertaken by our volunteers or by communities / organisations / clubs etc. that contributes to the Trust reaching its annual target.

Group 135 – Kerry

Group Leader Pat Doody

Over the past 30 years Group 135 has been very lucky to receive support from the local Swimming Club in Caherciveen. The Swimming Club organise an annual Christmas Day swim. Traditionally, the club shares the money raised on Christmas Day with a number of local Charities. The Irish Pilgrimage Trust Group 135 normally received between €500 and €1,000. 2024 was the 60th Anniversary of the annual swim. In a change, the Committee selected 3 charities to benefit and Group 135



Gr Leader Pat Doody, 2nd from right, being presented with a cheque for 3,000 from the Swimming Club in Caherciveen, money raised on the 2024 Christmas Day Swim

was lucky to be one of the three.

On the 14th February last, Group 135 was presented with a cheque for €3,000.

Pat Doody, Group Leader 135 stated – “we will be forever grateful to the Committee, past and present, for all the support from the swim and wished to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support received over the years”.
Mile,mile buiochas

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Group 67

A PANCAKE Morning at Rangers Club in Crossmaglen. This is a great example of the local club facilitating our local volunteers and Guests to raise funds for the Trust.



Group 174

An 80's - 90's DISCO Night is an annual fundraiser for Group 174 and this event is well supported and also promotes the Trust in the Kilkenny area.



Group 308

Group 308 is a Jet Set group based in the South East. They hold their annual SPINATHON that has become their major fundraising event each December, in the run up to Christmas. The event involves setting up two stationary Training Bikes in the Bull Ring in Wexford town centre.

The event has the support of the local business community and formal permission is obtained from Wexford Bourough Council and Gardai.

turns cycling for an hour. This event raises over € 7,000 as well as providing a high profile for the Trust.



Over the two days this well organised event is supported by local Cycling clubs whose members take

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Group 113 - Family Group

Group 113 received great support for their fundraiser "SANTA CLAUS is coming to Roundstone Beach" in Connamara, Co Galway. The fundraiser is the brainchild of local businessman Pat Mullen who kindly co-ordinated the event with Group 113. Once again, this was



spearheaded by the local community and was supported

GROUP 164

Group Leader Mary Clancy was presented with a cheque for €700 from the Rosskillmanor Wren-boys. This support was through Mary's sister-in-law Barbara Byrne a volunteer carer with Group 164 and Friendship Week 7

Mary availed of the occasion to inform the crowd about the work of the Trust. The Wren-Boys were delighted to support a local Trust Group and their work for Lourdes and FW in Kilcuan.



by local people and visitors to the area during December.

There was great excitement on Sunday afternoon, 8th December when a large crowd gathered and children



waited in anticipation as SANTA arrive. Santa suddenly appeared in his boat as it sailed around the headland and came to shore. Afterward Santa sailed away into the sunset to the cheers and waves from everyone there.

Pictured above is Helen McGourty Gr 113 (centre) being presented with a cheque for € 4,780 by Pat Mullen, his daughter-in-law Maeve and her son Fionn.

This is truly a local community effort with lots of people involved in helping to organise, promote and support the event for the work of Group 113 and the Trust.

MORE EXAMPLES

GROUP 129, Wexford

A Table Quiz night raised € 7,000

GROUP 113, Family Group

A donation from the Taughmaconnell Wren Boys.

Cyclists, Athlone

A Table Quiz for Cycle 2026 - € 1,500

Cyclists, Athlone

Bag Packing, Supermarket for Cycle 2026 - € 2,325

Church Gate Collections

Many groups and regions are very active in organising Church Gate Collections. Over the past 12 months, these have proved to be very successful.

Donations

Many groups have been successful in obtaining generous donations from local businesses, from schools No Uniform Day, and Community Clubs. Easter Egg Raffles, Tractor runs and Park Runs arte also successful.

A SPECIAL SPACE



Chapelle de l'Adoration (Adoration Chapel)

Our Easter week in Lourdes is busy. From the time we arrive on Easter Sunday until we leave to return home on the following Saturday, we have a full program to keep us busy. Each Group has organised events, excursions, and activities for each day. Added to this, we have our

Irish Trust Mass on Tuesday morning and the international Trust Mass on Thursday morning.

Our week in Lourdes is unlike any other week during the year. As a group we care for each other, support each other and make sure everyone is safe and rested for the days ahead. We also try to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to slow down, rest and recharge the batteries.

If you are seeking a quiet place, why not visit the Adoration Chapel. It is located on the prairie side the Church of Saint Bernadette, and may be accessed from the outside or from the Chapel of St. Bernadette.

You can find the entrance by going around to the left of St Bernadette's Church (where we hold the Irish Trust Mass).

The Adoration chapel is a sacred space and a quiet and peaceful place to visit, to reflect and pray.

How to Apply to be a GUEST with the Trust?

Its SIMPLE - we're ONLINE !



You can SCAN the QR Code below for a GUEST APPLICATION Form



- OR - Go to **The Irish Pilgrimage Trust** website

www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com and click **Guest Application Form**

- OR - Contact our office by phone on +353 (0)91 796622 or email

info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

Applications must be received by 15th October

Selected Guests notified in early December

You can apply for a fully supported and fully funded pilgrimage /holiday to Lourdes in the south of France if you are a young person with physical, medical or social additional needs up to the age of 30. Terms and condition apply.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE SELECTION

EASTER DATE

Our annual Easter pilgrimage holiday trip to Lourdes changes date each year. Why is this and how did it come about that the date changes for Easter.

Easter is late this year! Easter Sunday 2025 falling on 20th April, seems quite late. This brings to mind discussions that often take place regarding why and how the most important date in the Christian calendar changes from year to year.



Christmas Day is always celebrated on 25th December, regardless of the day in the week. In Ireland we celebrate St. Bridget's day on the 1st of February each year. Also in Ireland, and all over the world, St Patrick's Day is celebrated on the 17th of March, and St. Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14th February.

So, why is Easter always on a movable date? Well, one obvious answer, in part, is because Easter Sunday is always celebrated on a Sunday. Due to the method established to determine the date for Easter each year, it is possible that Easter Sunday can fall on any date between 22nd March and 25th April.

Since October 1582, the Gregorian calendar is the calendar adopted and in use in most parts of the world. The name derives from Pope Gregory XIII, whose papal bull (a decree or charter) introduced it to replace the Julian calendar (named after Julius Caesar). The four-year space for a leap year was the principal change, that more accurately aligns with the solar or tropical year, determined by the Earth's revolution around the Sun.

How does all this impact on deciding the date for Easter Sunday? Well, in 432 BC a Greek mathematician

and astronomer called Meton discovered that the phases of the Moon recur on the same days of the same month on a 19-year cycle.

The rule for deciding the Easter date was set to coincide with the first full moon after the Spring equinox which is 21st March. This established that the earliest Easter Sunday can occur is 22nd March. Without getting further into the methods of calculation, the latest date for the first full moon after the Spring equinox is 25th April. To add a little more confusion, the Orthodox Christian church continues to observe the Julian Calendar, thereby often celebrating Easter Sunday on a different date from the Catholic Church, e.g. 5th May 2024, 20th April 2025 and 12th April 2026.

While some regard Easter Sunday 2025 as "late", it is interesting to note that, under the Gregorian Calendar, the most common date for Easter Sunday is 19th April!

In our modern busy world, society, business, school exams, and countries like



certainty in dates for public holidays. Hence, the movable dates for Easter holidays can cause some friction in the public sphere. It is known that Pope Francis has been engaged in reviewing proposals to fix the first or second Sunday in April for Easter in agreement with the Eastern Christian churches, but this work remains incomplete.

Happy Easter.

CYCLE to LOURDES, 2026

CYCLE 2026

James Digney, Chairperson of the Cycle to Lourdes Organising Committee gives us an update on the work of the committee and the preparations in hand for the next edition of the fundraising Cycle to Lourdes that takes place in 2026

The brighter days and the emergence of the daffodil signals that Spring is upon us. Some of us may even look into the corner of the garage and contemplate checking if there is air in the tyres of that trusted companion that has carried us in the past over French roads on route to our final destination Lourdes!

For those that have signed up for the challenge of cycling to Lourdes for the first time, there is undoubtable a sense of fear that in twelve short months you will be embarking on your very own "Tour de France". Fear not, for with sufficient preparation everyone will be capable of completing the cycle.

Work is well underway in preparing for Cycle 2026. From our starting point in Chartres, just south of Paris, we will be cycling through beautiful countryside as we head south westerly towards Lourdes. Large cities have been avoided (even Bordeaux!). Hotels have been personally visited by James McHugh and Ber Connolly to check that they meet our needs. Our route crew have been planning and constructing the detailed route which we will cycle.

In the Autumn we will meet in person at Kilcuan to begin our series of practice cycles. We will reacquaint ourselves with old friends from previous cycles, and look forward to meeting those that are taking part for the first time. New friendships will be

forged.

The special young Guests of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust are about to embark on their Easter pilgrimage holiday in Lourdes and it brings into focus primarily why we cycle to Lourdes. We do so to help assist in funding their week away. A week of joy, love, friendship and lifelong memories. Everyone in our cycle group, be it the cyclist or



the backup team, are fundraising to assist in bringing these young people to Lourdes on Easter Sunday.

I want to personally thank you for all your hard work in fundraising and for all the hours of training that you will endeavour to do in preparation for cycle 2026. Finally, safe travels to all the volunteer helpers and young guests as they make their way from all corners of Ireland to Lourdes on Easter Sunday. May you all have a special week in the presence of Saint Bernadette and Our lady.

James Digney



Memories from Easter 2024



TRUST TRAINING 2025

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

During the past year, the Board of Trustees worked hard reviewing and enhancing training for our volunteers. Following on from this work, the Trust has rolled out a comprehensive training program that is being delivered to volunteers in preparation for the 2025 Lourdes Easter pilgrimage, Summer Hosanna House Pilgrimage and our Summer Friendship Week program.

The next training event will take place in Kilcuan on 22nd March, following our National Pre-Pilgrimage meeting. This event will serve the Western and Midlands Regions. The final event before Easter takes place in Gorey, Co. Wexford on 9th April to serve the Southeastern and Eastern Regions. The training is open to ALL Trust volunteers. Trust volunteers are welcome to attend in any region, as may suit them.



Cookstown, Co. Tyrone - Training being delivered to volunteers from the North and Northwest Regions of the Trust



The Trust Volunteers Training is being delivered by our Trust Nurse, Eileen Doyle and Deputy DPL / Safeguarding Trustee, Eadaoin McAnulty. Venues have been set up around the country and the Training program is now in full swing.

Before going to press, the first two Training events took place in Cookstown, Co Tyrone for the North and Northwestern Regions and in Killorglin, Co Kerry for the Southern Region. Both venues were fully attended. Attendees included experienced volunteers and new volunteers, and the training was enthusiastically received by all.

The comprehensive Training program is divided into three principal sections. In summary, these include -

- **SECTION 1** Understanding the Trust, it's Mission, Vision and Values, Code of Practice, roles within the Trust and your role and responsibilities as a carer,

- **SECTION 2** Deals with the Trust group and what makes a team. This section outlines preparation and getting to know our guests, our time in Lourdes, night duty requirements, advance planning and providing necessary supports.

TRUST TRAINING 2025

Subjects covered include visual aids, behaviours of concern, how to handle challenges and practical tips to help deal with situations that can arise. Other subjects include assisting with feeding and eating, personal hygiene, wheelchair etiquette.

- **SECTION 3** Covers Trust Policies and Procedures. Safeguarding, Child protection, welfare and protection of our guests, creating a positive environment, explaining the 2 to 1 ratio. It also outlines the means of dealing with a Safeguarding concern, the 5 R's, recording, confidentiality, and scenarios.



Kilorglin, Co. Kerry - Training being delivered to volunteers from the South Region of the Trust



- **RECAP** and review, additional safeguarding around social media, use of mobile phones and protecting children.

To date, the feedback from attendees, including seasoned members and new volunteers alike, has been very positive. Many of our new volunteers have expressed satisfaction at being informed on their roles and duties while serving the Trust. Reports also complimented the Training Course presenters on their delivery of the training and the level of information provided at each event.



Memories from Easter 2024



Memories from Easter 2024



YOUR LASTING GIFT



Please remember us in your Will

You may have supported our work in the past by contributing to our fundraising to bring young people with additional needs to Lourdes at Eastertime or to Kilcuan for a summer break with our Friendship Weeks. Or you may have volunteered and travelled with us to Lourdes and experienced at first hand the joy and happiness of the young people who join us as our guests for that wonderful week. Or you may have simply heard about The Irish Pilgrimage Trust for the very first time recently. Please be assured that your involvement is always remembered and appreciated.

One way to ensure your enduring support is to leave a gift in your Will. A gift means that The Irish Pilgrimage Trust can continue to serve future generations of special young people and give them the experience of that unique trip to Lourdes or to our holiday home in Clarinbridge, Galway, Ireland.



The value of your gift is immeasurable for many reasons, for example,

- Maximum benefit is gained from donations and fundraising as our Volunteers pay their own fares.
- Our Nurses and Doctors are Volunteers who also pay their own fares.
- Our Volunteers fundraise every year to raise the money to pay fully for the costs of the young people.
- Our Trust is run by a Board of Trustees who are unpaid volunteers and do not receive expenses.
- The precious memories of our guests are treasured for a lifetime and invaluable.

Thank you for taking time to consider us and our work in supporting young people with additional needs.

If you wish to leave a gift to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, please contact your Solicitor to make the arrangements.