

# Bishops in running for charity race

BISHOPS have gone on the run to help people in third world countries. Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund president Bishop Joseph Toal teamed up with fellow clergymen yesterday to promote the charity's race on June 2.

He was joined on the starting line by Archbishop Leo Cushley and bishops Brian McGee, John Keenan

BY MICHAEL PRINGLE

and William Nolan to launch SCIAF's 6k Family Fun Run. Toal urged others to participate, saying: "You can raise money to help the poorest survive and thrive and show solidarity with people fleeing conflict around the world." The run takes place at Strathclyde Park in Motherwell.



PROMOTION Bishop Toal

## Builders' fear over asbestos

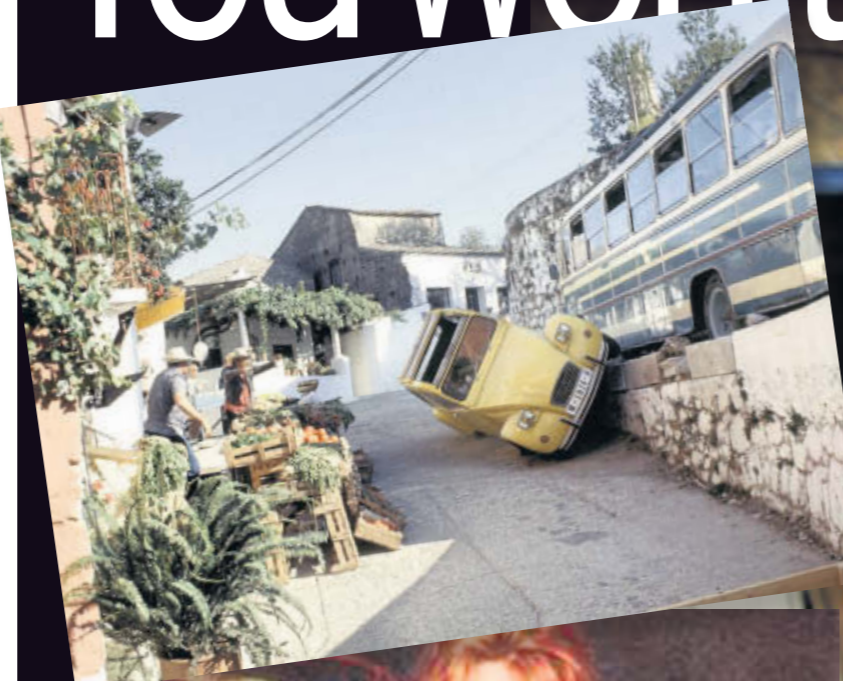
ONE in four builders fears they have been exposed to asbestos. Research also showed one in five would not know what to do if they found the substance.

## Expiry dates could be axed

A PATCH which detects when food goes off has been developed by scientists. It could replace best before and expiry dates currently used on products.

# SCOTS FAN JOE MARKS 70 YEARS OF FRENCH CLASSIC

# You won't catch me without a 2CV



**STAR TURNS**  
Actress Brigitte Bardot meets a fellow French icon. Above, in the 1981 Bond film For Your Eyes Only



**SMALL CAR, BIG HEART**  
Joe shows off his latest 2CVs. Pic: Mark Anderson



**MEMORIES** A younger Joe and wife Zara with their first 2CV



WHEN Joe Cent drives his Citroen 2CV around Glasgow's west end, children stop to stare.

In a world where cars with built-in Bluetooth park themselves, they can hardly believe that this primitive metal snail is still on the road.

The 2CV is 70 this year. It was designed for French peasants in the 30s. Production was abandoned during the war but in peacetime, it was marketed as the alternative to the horse and cart.

To appeal to the cautious, thrifty farmer, the 2CV's suspension was gentle enough to carry a basket of eggs across a ploughed field without breaking any. The roomy back seat had plenty of space for livestock on their way to market.

The domed roof meant a tall driver could wear a hat and the canvas sunroof rolled down if extra height was required.

The two-horsepower, air-cooled engine that gave the car its name back in 1948 was so simple that it could be fixed by the local blacksmith.

It was built neither for comfort nor

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speed. With a 602cc engine, owners joke it's possible to go from 0-60mph in a fortnight.

Opening the windows was a fiddly, finger-threatening chore. And forget listening to the radio. Motorhead could play live in the back seat and still be drowned out by the engine.

Joe, now 81, got his first 2CV in 1970. It was a much earlier model, built in Slough in the 50s. He wanted something zippy and impressive but ended up with a three-gear mechanical duck.

He recalled: "I was looking for a sports car to take my wife to Yugoslavia for the summer. I wanted a sports car but all the ones that were available in 1970, such as the MG, were quite expensive."

A pal suggested a Citroen. Joe said: "I'd never heard of a 2CV. My friend told me it was just like a sports car, it had a soft top."

Joe went to see a second-hand 2CV. It

wouldn't start. He told the seller that, as soon as it was actually working, he would return for a test drive.

He said: "When I went back he had got it started. I bought it for £45, which was quite a lot in those days."

Joe drove it back home to Kelvindale, Glasgow, and then took it to bits. By the time summer came it had been lovingly painted and rebuilt.

He said: "I got it all shipshape and we set out for Yugoslavia. And we made it, although the friend who first put us on to it said we'd be lucky to reach Beattock."

That holiday was the start of a lifelong family affair with the 2CV. Joe's wife Zara drove one. As soon as their two sons passed their driving tests, they were behind the wheels of their own 2CVs.

The earliest models driven by the Cents had semaphore indicators. These mechanical flags that popped

in and out when the driver wanted to turn were quaint but dangerous.

Joe said: "The high vehicles behind didn't see you were indicating. In the end, we decided we were better off selling these on and buying ones with flashing indicators."

There were plenty of 2CVs around in the 70s and 80s. Joe would pick up what he calls "a runner" for £50. Once its roadworthy days were over, it would be cannibalised for parts.

He said: "If they were broken, I'd scrap them for pieces. Parts were hard to come by here. Citroen garages would send people who were looking for parts to me. I had more parts than the Citroen agent at St George's Cross."

Unlike today's models, with their flashing lights and fob-activated ignitions, a 2CV needs a firm hand. Joe called it "driving a real car".

He added: "They are simple to drive. You're not enclosed in a cocoon, you are very much aware of other traffic."

These tin snails, usually in dreary shades of green, grey and beige, were once a common sight in university car parks and outside schools and health food shops.

Cheap to buy, cheap to run, they were usually accessorised with Nuclear Power No Thanks stickers and crochet rugs on the back seat.

Even James Bond couldn't make the 2CV glamorous. He drove a yellow one in For Your Eyes Only in 1981. Citroen launched a special edition to coincide with the film. It had "007" on the front doors and fake bullet hole stickers to be arranged artfully on the bodywork.

Comedian Jasper Carrott poked fun at 2CVs, describing them as upturned corrugated prams on wheels. And he noted that, if a 2CV hit a rabbit on the road, the car would be a write-off.

He also said that only the French

could make a car like that - and then sell it to the British.

The last 2CVs were manufactured in Portugal in 1990. Nearly 30 years on, the sturdy workhorses that once transported livestock around the lanes of Brittany are coveted classics.

Joe's first 2CV recently turned up at a car show. He said wistfully: "It was totally renovated and restored. Now it's worth thousands. I sold for £200."

"People are doing them up and storing them. They only come out for big shows and events."

"Even in France they're rare, although you do see the occasional person driving them."

"They are a genuine old classic now and are starting to go up in price. Today you are looking at £5000 to £6000 for a basic car. If it's rare and fancy they go for much more."

Even Joe keeps his current 2CV for good. "I don't drive much these days, although I do have a van I use. But I'm in my 80s. If I'm going into town I use my bus pass."

**GAME CHANGER** Testing a 2CV in 1948

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**“ We made it all the way to Yugoslavia. A friend said we'd be lucky to reach Beattock ” JOE**