

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **British showbiz and sports stars turn Giving Tuesday into “Giving Shoesday”**

*Helen Mirren, Joanna Lumley and Dermot O’Leary join other top celebrities to donate their shoes for charity auction.*

COLCHESTER, ESSEX – A glittering cast of British screen and sports celebrities have put up their favourite footwear for a novel charity auction for one of the world’s leading leprosy charities, Lepra.

The “Shoesday” auction begins on 30<sup>th</sup> November to mark the annual Giving Tuesday campaign held globally to raise tens of millions of pounds in aid of good causes.

The charity, whose patron is Her Majesty the Queen, has attracted shoes donations from a star-studded line-up. They include Jo Brand, Martin Clunes OBE, Dame Judi Dench, David Flatman, Colin Jackson CBE, Joanna Lumley OBE, Dame Helen Mirren, Dermot O’Leary and Sir Tony Robinson.

Funds raised by the auction, to be held online, will provide custom-made footwear for people affected by leprosy, preventing further damage and injury to feet, and restoring independence and dignity.

Left undiagnosed or untreated, leprosy causes nerve damage leading to disability and in some cases, amputation. More than 7 million people across the world are estimated to be affected by leprosy and 600 new cases are diagnosed each day.

Dame Judi Dench, who played ‘M’ in the James Bond franchise, has donated a pair of the size 5 Hobbs black suede court shoes that would turn the head of any MI6 boss. The lot also includes a signed photograph of the BAFTA and Oscar Award winner.

Ex-England rugby star and TV pundit, David Flatman has donated his size 12 Asics trainers; well-used and well-travelled, they definitely belong to an active sportsman!

The size 6 Karrimor hiking boots of Sir Tony Robinson, complete with a short hand-written note have seen some history in the making, having been worn during the filming of Time Team.

The auction will be hosted by Dawsons Auction House and runs until 12<sup>th</sup> December. The familiar online auction format allows potential bidders to view the lots online [here](#) and place a maximum bid, then all they need to do is wait and see if their bid is successful! The auction house has kindly waived their selling fee meaning that 100% of the sale price will go to Lepra.

Commenting on the auction, Geoff Prescott, chief executive of Lepra, said: “Leprosy is one of the world’s oldest diseases; curable with a course of antibiotics yet devastating if left undiagnosed. Providing custom-made shoes is life-changing for people affected by leprosy; people who face extreme prejudice and discrimination. I am grateful that so many much-admired and recognised personalities have rallied to our cause by supporting our Shoesday event.”

Lepra, established almost a century ago, has provided custom-made but simple footwear to people affected by leprosy for decades. Dating back to 1959, we produced the first made-to-measure shoes to protect ulcerated feet and protective footwear continues to be a critical part of our work to this day. Each pair of shoes are free to the person affected and are created by highly-skilled, local shoe technicians.

Last year Lepra's shoe-technicians travelled over 24,000 miles and created 25,308 pairs of shoes; with delays caused by lockdowns they anticipate even greater demand next year. A pair of custom-made shoes costs just £6 to make and yet has the power to transform a life forever.

For more information, take a look at our "Giving Shoesday" videos [here](#) and [here](#).

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### About Lepra:

Lepra aims to provide early diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation for people affected by leprosy. From raising awareness at a local level through to national advocacy, Lepra works to strengthen healthcare systems and ensure that people affected by leprosy can lead normal lives; free from the damage the disease causes to their health, livelihood and future. You can find out more here <https://www.lepra.org.uk/>

From the development of the 'double-rocker' to prevent ulceration (a design used in cutting-edge running shoes today) to the use of multi-cellular rubber to cushion damaged feet on uneven surfaces, the protective footwear made by Lepra has come a long way since its first iteration.

### About Giving Tuesday

In 2020, Giving Tuesday raised over £20.2 million in donations, the equivalent to £14,000 per minute; Lepra's auction aims to tap into this global day of giving by combining their ninety-seven years of expertise with the power of social media.