

Halmer End Methodist Church 2024 Shoebox Appeal

The annual Christmas Shoebox “fill” went very well, and the faithful Shoebox Team filled a final total of 374 shoeboxes as follows:

BOYS	AGES	GIRLS
52	3 – 5	54
55	6 – 11	58
53	12+	58
160	TOTALS	170

We also filled 44 home boxes for the mums. Grand total: 374



This photograph shows the room in the process of being set out with the contents we have collected and had donated over the year. We begin filling the tables during the week before Remembrance Sunday as there is a lot to sort out. The tables at the far right of the room by the wall are for the 3 – 5 year olds, the middle tables are for the 6 – 11 year olds and the lefthand tables are for the 12+ children. Boys’ items are at the far end and the girls’ items in the foreground of the photo. The covered, empty shoeboxes are lined up in the background. The Homebox contents are not in view but are on the opposite wall to the 3 – 5 year olds.

The team concentrates on filling one particular age group and gender; the filled boxes are sealed and stored under the relevant tables until they are packed into their correct age and gender cartons on Remembrance Sunday. The filled cartons are moved into the front of

Church to await a blessing and then collection by Clive Lawton, who is the Burton-upon-Trent warehouse manager/Coordinator.

We are always eternally grateful for any donations of small toys and games, stationery items, cuddly toys, toiletries and knitted goods. There is a video available in the 2023 Shoebox article which gives an indication of the contents we collect and use to pack as varied a shoebox as possible. Ann Moore is a dedicated member of the team and explains the contents of a shoebox for a boy aged 12+.

We have a fabulous team of 'knitters' who provide us with amazing hats, scarves, mittens, knitted toys and little knitted bags which are filled with appropriate jewellery items and hair accessories for the girls. We had a large quantity of knitted soft toys from one of my friends which were unexpected, but very beautifully knitted and very gratefully received. Clive Lawton also supplied about eighty cuddly toys from a house clearance warehouse contact he has, which were very gratefully received earlier in the year. These were all washed, sorted and repaired where necessary by the Shoebox Team – our conservatory resembled The Repair Shop for quite a while and at least the weather was reasonable at this particular time to hang a lot of the washed cuddlies on the washing line in the garden! Otherwise, they were pegged onto clothes maids and dried by the radiator! They then had a few minutes in the tumble drier to fluff them up and they were also groomed/brushed with a toothbrush.



The filled cartons were moved from the front of Church after they had been blessed and then.....

..... they were loaded into the Teams4U trailer along with spare contents for the Burton Shoebox filling team.

This is Clive Lawton after loading the trailer with Phil Potts who packs the cartons for us and moves them into Church for the blessing.



I contacted Clive Lawton to find out the number and destination of the Burton warehouse shoeboxes and was advised that 4,080 all went to Ukraine on 7th December and arrived there on the 10th December. Interestingly, the Burton team were able to make 400 boxes for local children and food parcels in conjunction with another local charity. They do this side of the work through their separate charity which is for local children's gifts during the year or at Christmas. They have the warehouse all year and respond to any agency who need help with families struggling to cope. Social services in particular.

Clive also advised that Teams4U's partners in Ukraine told him they had distributed cards to soldiers on the front line asking for their family's address in the refugee camps. The idea was to ensure their children have a shoebox and a home box for mum at Christmas. I saw this on the Teams4U Facebook page: "Teams4U The Charity is in Ukraine dated 6 January 2025 'Shoeboxes Bringing Smiles to Ukraine's Children'." It certainly gives a feel for how important these shoeboxes are to the children and their families.

Thank you to everyone who contributed a box, contents and money to help us buy contents to put in the boxes. We would especially like to thank the Audley Community Gospel Choir for their generous donation which enabled us to make sure that we could replenish our stocks of the most useful and needed contents i.e. SWEETS! These are purchased from a local wholesaler but still work out an expensive outlay around £200+ in November.

We would therefore especially like to thank:

- Our dedicated 'knitters' – we'd be stuck without you
- Audley Ladies Choir
- Audley Community Gospel Choir
- Mothers' Union
- Halmer End Church Members
- Ena Smith collections from friends and members of Audley Church
- Betty Machin, my friend and ex-work colleague
- Madeley Church
- Halmer End Methodist Church for allowing us to use space to store the stock and then filling the shoeboxes in November

We are so grateful for the time given in different ways by the main Shoebox Team, especially

Ann, Dorothy, Eileen, Joan and Mary. It wouldn't happen without you.

Thank you everyone.
Anne