

Sweet surprise awaiting troops

STAFF at digger manufacturer JCB have donated more than 150 boxes of treats to be sent to British forces serving in Afghanistan over Christmas.

Workers at the Rocceter-based firm donated the boxes in response to the Support Our Soldiers parcel appeal.

They have been filled with goodies including sweets, chocolates, snacks, toiletries, games, books, magazines, sun cream, insect repellent and throat lozenges.

They were handed over to Randy Conteh, a Stoke city councillor, who is co-ordinating the charity's appeal in North Staffordshire - he secured JCB's support through a friend, Andrew Brindley, who works for the company.

Due to the global economic downturn, JCB staff have had to take pay cuts and work reduced hours - but this did not stop them helping the charity.

Mr Brindley said: "The response from the workforce was magnificent at a time when there is a shortage of money because of the recession."

£5m invested to improve houses

A HOUSING association says that 95% of its properties will be meeting a Government target by the end of the year.

In 2000, the government pledged that every council and housing association property in the country would be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2010.

Since the pledge, Long Eaton-based Three Valleys Housing has spent nearly £5m on fitting 341 new kitchens, 76 bathrooms and 1,400 boilers, as well as many other external and internal improvements.

It means by the end of the year, 95% of its properties will be meeting the standard. Last December, the figure was 81%.

Teenager is cut in street attack

A 17-YEAR-OLD youth needed hospital care after being attacked in a South Normanton street.

The incident took place in Market Street at 3.30pm last Sunday and he was taken to hospital with swelling, a cut lip and a shoulder injury.

Alfreton police are investigating reports that one youth was seen taking off his jacket before punching the teenager. Another youth was said to have kicked out.

An 18-year-old was arrested by police on suspicion of theft and bailed while inquiries continue.

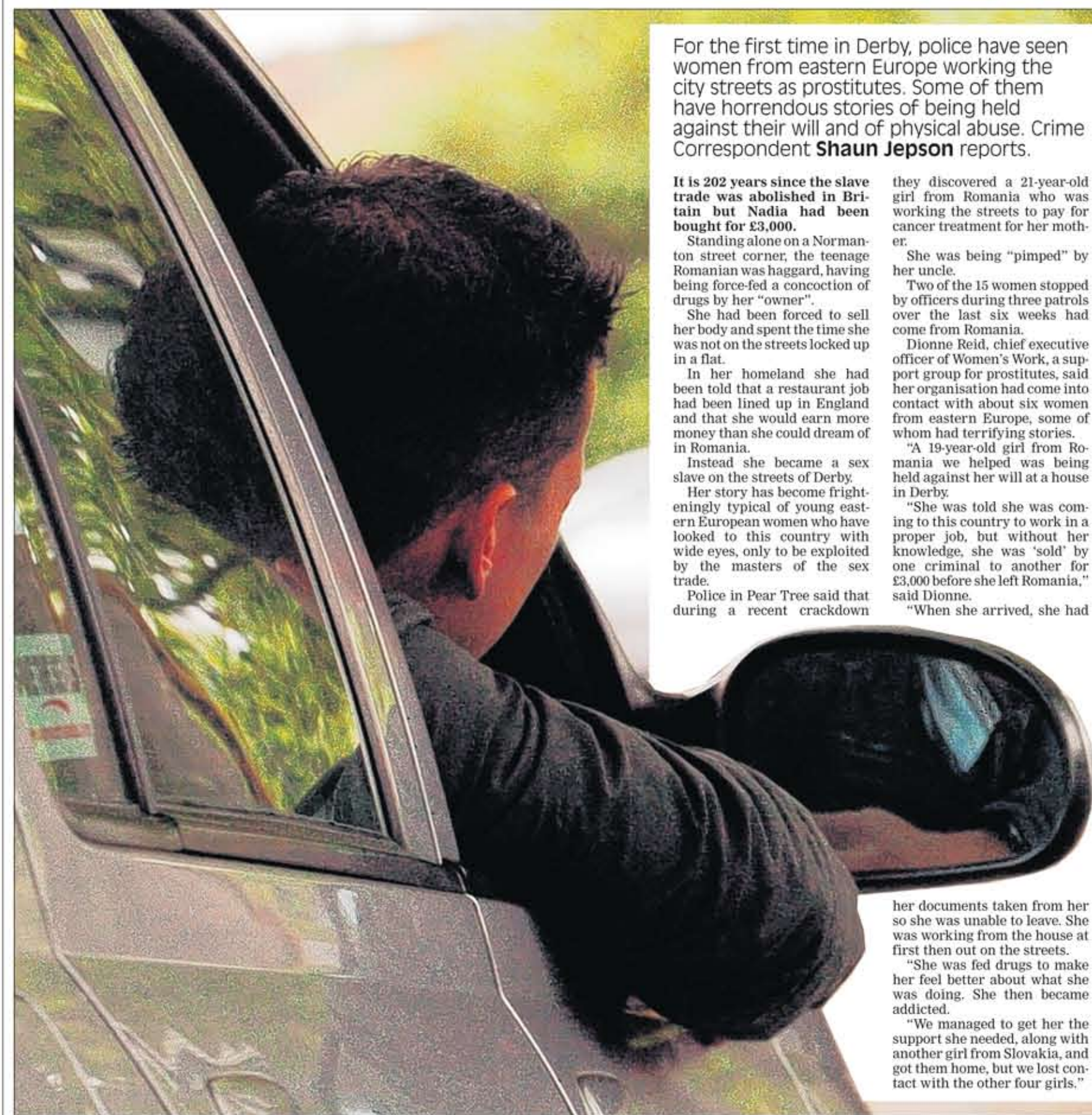
Window forced open by thieves

THIEVES forced open the window of a South Derbyshire home before climbing inside and burgling the property.

It is not yet known what was stolen during the break-in which happened in George Street, Church Gresley, between 10am on Saturday and midnight on Sunday.

Witnesses are asked to call Derbyshire police on 0345 1233333.

How helpless sex slaves are being forced on to streets



For the first time in Derby, police have seen women from eastern Europe working the city streets as prostitutes. Some of them have horrendous stories of being held against their will and of physical abuse. Crime Correspondent **Shaun Jepson** reports.

It is 202 years since the slave trade was abolished in Britain but Nadia had been bought for £3,000.

Standing alone on a Norman street corner, the teenage Romanian was haggard, having been force-fed a concoction of drugs by her "owner".

She had been forced to sell her body and spent the time she was not on the streets locked up in a flat.

In her homeland she had been told that a restaurant job had been lined up in England and that she would earn more money than she could dream of in Romania.

Instead she became a sex slave on the streets of Derby.

Her story has become frighteningly typical of young eastern European women who have looked to this country with wide eyes, only to be exploited by the masters of the sex trade.

Police in Pear Tree said that during a recent crackdown

they discovered a 21-year-old girl from Romania who was working the streets to pay for cancer treatment for her mother.

She was being "pimped" by her uncle.

Two of the 15 women stopped by officers during three patrols over the last six weeks had come from Romania.

Dionne Reid, chief executive officer of Women's Work, a support group for prostitutes, said her organisation had come into contact with about six women from eastern Europe, some of whom had terrifying stories.

"A 19-year-old girl from Romania we helped was being held against her will at a house in Derby.

"She was told she was coming to this country to work in a proper job, but without her knowledge, she was 'sold' by one criminal to another for £3,000 before she left Romania," said Dionne.

"When she arrived, she had

her documents taken from her so she was unable to leave. She was working from the house at first then out on the streets.

"She was fed drugs to make her feel better about what she was doing. She then became addicted.

"We managed to get her the support she needed, along with another girl from Slovakia, and got them home, but we lost contact with the other four girls."

Mrs Reid said her organisation had not noticed any increase in the number of eastern European women they dealt with this year.

She said: "We had a problem in that we had to bring in interpreters so we could understand a little bit more about the girls. That is something we have not had to do before."

Bish Wojcik, chairman of Derby's Eastern European Migrants Advice Committee, said interpreters from his organisation were aware of women from countries such as Latvia, Romania and Slovakia working the streets of Derby.

He believes that more women from eastern Europe living in Derby will turn to the sex trade because of the recession and the fact that, if they are made redundant from a legitimate job, they can only access benefits if they have worked in Britain for 12 months.

Mr Wojcik said: "A lot of the women we have encountered through our surgeries have

She was fed drugs to make her feel better about what she was doing.

DIONNE REID

come here, worked for two or three months and then lost their jobs because of the recession.

"They have not been here long enough to access Jobseeker's Allowance or benefits, so will turn to the sex industry to make money for themselves and their family.

"People are desperate for money. They have come here because of the lack of jobs and opportunities in their own countries and will not face going back.

"Some will turn to selling their bodies if they have to and I think it is something that we will see a lot more of in the future."

Sgt Simon Adams, from the Pear Tree Safer Neighbourhood Team, said that, between 2002 and 2008, officers dealt with 131 women, only one of whom was from eastern Europe.

He said: "Prostitution is a priority problem for us. It is something residents complain about because it is

not nice for them to see women working on the street outside their homes.

"With the eastern European angle, it is new and is something we need to understand more about. We are policing the problem but also looking at getting them the support and help they need."

Derbyshire police also has a specialist team that looks at and investigates trafficking in the county.

Mrs Reid said that, having spoken to some of the women who her organisation had helped, she believed there was a network of criminals trafficking women for profit.

She said: "The girls have their passports and identification taken when they arrive, so it is difficult for them to get out. These girls are essentially working on the streets to put food in their mouths. They are working for their survival."

A spokesman for the UK Border Agency said human trafficking was a "horrendous" crime and that the organisation was determined to make the UK a no-go zone for traffickers.

He said: "Work between the government, police, the UK Border Agency and the UK Human Trafficking Centre has seen 113 convictions for trafficking since 2003.

"The centre continues to work with police and other agencies to tackle trafficking and assess the scale of the problem.

"Our overall aim is to make the UK a hostile environment for trafficking and protect victims and potential victims from this abhorrent crime."

Nadia is one of the women saved. She was given support by Women's Work so she could return home. Police are now working to crack down on the traffickers to make sure her story is not repeated.

OFFER OF SUPPORT: Dionne Reid, chief executive officer of the group Women's Work.



Alfreton Sunday school built by US oil tycoon is to get a £1m facelift

A SUNDAY school at a church built by an ex-Derbyshire man who became an oil tycoon in America is to be rebuilt at a cost of £1m.

Amber Valley Borough Council has given permission for the project at Watchorn Methodist Church, in Alfreton.

The Derby Road church was built in 1929 by Alfreton-born Robert Watchorn.

A collier, like his father, he went to night school and eventually emigrated to America.

He later became chief immigra-

tion officer on Ellis Island and, as a civil servant, was active in pushing through US laws which prevented factory-owners from employing children under 14 on 12-hour shifts.

Making a fortune from gas and oil, he built churches in the US and endowed colleges before clearing houses in an area of Alfreton, in honour of his mother, and building better homes at the same rents for the people who lived there.

Watchorn was 86 when he died in 1944.

Members of the council's planning board were told the church's Sunday school building was damp,

Lord Baker to see academy progress

FORMER education secretary Kenneth Baker will visit the £22m JCB Academy tomorrow.

The development at Roceter, currently under construction, will take in engineering students from both Derbyshire and Staffordshire when it opens next year.

Lord Baker was a Conservative MP from 1968 to 1997 and was the first minister for information technology, responsible for introducing computers into schools.

After leaving the Commons in 1992, he joined the Lords in 1997.

Lord Baker will tour the JCB Academy, which aims to bring on the next generation of engineers and is funded by JCB and the Government.

Digital Hero Gill scoops £5,000 prize

A COMPUTER teacher has won £5,000 for giving IT lessons to older people.

Gill Farrington, of Swadlincote, is a Digital Hero for the East Midlands.

The awards, run by internet and phone provider TalkTalk, looked at people who work to improve community understanding of technology.

Mrs Farrington, 66, won the award for setting up and running Swadlincote & District 50+ Forum, which runs classes to educate older people in technology.

For winning in the East Midlands category, Mrs Farrington was awarded £5,000 to improve the forum.

Along with 11 other regional winners, Mrs Farrington has been invited to attend a House of Lords ceremony in November where an overall winner will take home £10,000.

The winner will be decided on November 24.

Mrs Farrington said she was very happy to have been chosen for the award.

She said: "The grant will enable me to further my work by funding more intergenerational projects which are currently working brilliantly in the area."

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Chamber chief says firms need aid during recession

A LEADING Derbyshire business figure has called on the Government and the Bank of England to do more to get the country out of recession.

The recent publication of preliminary Gross Domestic Product figures for the third quarter of 2009 by the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK economy contracted by 0.4% between July and September, meaning the country is now in its longest ever recession.

George Cowcher, chief executive of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber, said: "It's clear from these disap-

pointing figures that continued intervention - including help for businesses to access finance, and incentives to promote investment - is still needed to support enterprise.

"The figures strongly support our assessment that the Bank of England must increase the stimulus provided by quantitative easing and take action to boost bank lending.

"The Government must act more forcefully to remove the obstacles hampering the productive capacity of the economy, in order for businesses to be able to respond when demand eventually increases."

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Telegraph

Team could win award for helping to make city safer

AN organisation which supports police in tackling crime in Derby has been short-listed for a national award for helping to reduce alcohol and violent offences.

Derby Community Safety Partnership will find out tomorrow if it has been successful at an annual ceremony organised by the licensed trade's professional newspaper, The Morning Advertiser.

The partnership, which is funded by Derby City Council, has been short-listed in the category of Local Authority of the Year. It has been recognised for introducing a number of

schemes to the city to help tackle alcohol-related violent crime, including Taxi Marshals and Street Pastors.

The marshals stand at taxi ranks to reduce conflict while the pastors help ensure late-night revellers get home safely, by helping them into taxis and handing out flip-flops to women who have discarded their shoes.

Nick Daines, head of crime reduction at the partnership, said: "We are delighted that the partnership work in the city has been recognised by being short-listed for this prestigious award."