'When we arrived at the first soup kitchen there were 500 elderly people waiting in the bitter cold'

For 15 years Christine Metcalfe has been handing out vital aid in Bulgaria. **Danny Longhorn** reports on her latest trip

on 0844 543 9775 between the hours of

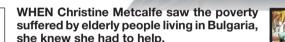
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found themselves in need, living on a pension in the region of 150 lev (£65) a month and unable to feed themselves properly.

among elderly people," said Christine, who co-founded Cottingham-based Bulgarian Aid. "Most of them women – widows – usually live alone in a two-roomed flat in a concrete block.

"They have to pay rent, water and electricity bills every month or they are cut off. "Travelling over there for weeks at a time, shopping in the markets, we were very aware of for special needs children in Varna.

the price of foodstuffs.

bread and yoghurt.'

While residents in this region were celebrating Christmas, Christine was out distribaids and tables. uting donations to poor people in Bulgaria.
It is a campaign which started when she sent a two orphanages in the Bulgarian city of humbling.

poorly dressed, badly fed and with little hope for to help them again.

It was all part of a fact-finding mission after but are working to help those less fortunate.' hearing about the plight of people in the country from Bulgarian Rotarian delegates at a



The items in the container handed out last These elderly people have no chance of sup- month – filled in part by Market Rasen Rotariplementing their income and are only living on ans – included 20 pallets of food, 550 boxes packed with medical equipment, more than 1,000 nurses uniforms, clothing, toys, walking

"It was a very different Christmas for me but was a very fulfilling one," said Christine, who load of aid in 1998, after she was shown around described the gratitude of all the recipients as "They were grateful for so little in comparison

She was surrounded by hundreds of children with what we have in Britain, it makes you want

'The helpers are not well-off by our standards While in Bulgaria, Christine also helped dis tribute food to vulnerable old people and served food at the soup kitchens.

VITAL: Elderly people queuing at the soup kitchen



Christine Metcalfe when she witnessed first-hand the poverty in the country.

On a visit to two orphanages and girls, mostly teenagers. who were begging for something to eat.

As a parent and grandparent, she couldn't walk away from that plea and arranged for food to be brought immediately and for a Greek Rotary Club to send more later in the year.
Christine then had the idea of

knitting a warm sweater for each child and bought the wool and persuaded friends to

Along with the help of Rotarians, the project grew and in spring 1998 a group they took a lorry, but in the years since aid has been sent by sea in containers.

of clothing and shoes for all ages, cutlery, toiletries. educational and soft toys, the disabled

Bulgarian Aid has also sent across woodwork and gardening tools, sewing machines, computers, musical instruments, prams and baby clothes.

Through the Rotary Foundation Matching Grants the Hull Rotary Club has provided a laundry for a home for girls in Rousse and purchased a tractor to help train handicapped young

Centre in Ferensway.
All proceeds will be donated to The Youth

Swap seeds and secrets

The Freedom Centre in Preston Road is hosting the Green Prosperity Seed Swap Day on Saturday, February 1.

EAST RIDING: There is a vacancy for a councillor on Reedness Parish Council. executive of East Riding Parish Council

requesting a by-election.

If the council receives fewer than ten letters by Thursday, February 6, existing members will vote in the new councillor themselves.

Write to the chief executive of East Riding of Yorkshire Council at County Hall, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 9BA.

Contact Sarah Belton, Oak Lodge, Goole Road, Hook, Goole, DN14 5NN for more information.

"Another scheme, at St Michael's Church in carton of yoghurt. Golden Charter Funeral Plans from H Kemp & Son Ltd.

Making sure everything goes to plan

MERCY MISSION: Christine Metcalfe looks

through photos from her recent trip to Bulgaria.

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What an eve-opener, I never thought I would

"When we arrived at the first soup kitchen

see soup kitchens on this scale. These people are really in need," she said.

there were 500 people mostly elderly, waiting, in the bitter cold weather. Some of them had

donation being delivered and decided to

During that afternoon, each one of the 500

received a food parcel, dry foods like spaghetti and packet soups, tinned fish, vegetables, cer-

eals, long-life milk and some treats like biscuit

teers at the scheme gave heartfelt thanks, saying the donation must have been heaven

sent "said Christine

"They were all very grateful and the volun-

"Until they heard about the donation they

had no idea how they were going to provide food for Christmas Day and Boxing Day to the

800 people registered with them.

been there for two hours, they had seen the

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TREATS: Christine gives out chocolate to the

elderly at the soup kitchen.

received a donation.





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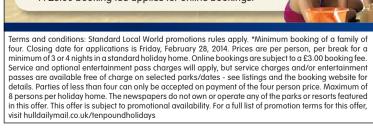
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The aid has included all kinds

wheelchairs and living aids for

people to work in farming "Most of them consumed the soup and bread immediately standing near the tables in the church garden, taking the yoghurt home for The food is obtained from the charity Hisfood, which is based near Market Rasen. Manufacturers and supermarkets donate their

excess food through the charity and a donation is made to Hisfood for the handling.
"The 20 pallets of high-quality food, plus the

carriage of the container, usually around £2,700, as the Bulgarian port charges are also paid, costs approximately £5,700," said "But the food is worth maybe ten times more

than that. The hope it brings is incalculable.
"Judging by the emails we have received from Varna, provides food at the weekends. This also Varna the need is becoming even greater so Bulgarian Aid is committed to sending another "We went along to witness 150 people, again container of food aid as soon as possible and most elderly, queuing up for a yoghurt carton of good vegetable soup, a small loaf of bread and a Email info@bulgarianrelief.co.uk or visit www.bulgariarelief.co.uk for more details

lessening the impact of the 20th-century shop Project is music to ears **HULL:** A new project to help young musicians is

In Brief

being launched next month.

The BlackBolt Project is a social initiative giving budding musicians the chance to develop their talent through a three-week course, which

Plans to transform city furniture store into flats

transformed into apartments.

A planning application has been submitted to Hull City Council seeking permission to turn the old Walmsley's Furniture Store in Paragon Street into two luxury apartments.

The plans for the three-storey building including two, two bedroom apartments on the upper floors and a communal residential entrance on

HULL: A former furniture store could be

the ground floor, which was once the shop. Nu Architects, the firm handling the application, states: "We believe this will enhance the facade of the building bringing unity between the ground and upper floors and

culminates in a major showcasing event. Each performance is filmed in HD and the film footage is then available via the project's in-house record label BlackBolt Records, which is available in 140 online stores in 70 countries.

The launch will see performances of theme music from television, film and games industries with the New Age Orchestra 2014 on Satueday, February 22, at the Albemarle Music

Music Service.
Visit www.blackdenbolton.co.uk for tickets

HULL: Green-fingered gardeners are invited to

swap their seeds and secrets at an event next

There will be expert gardening speakers from across the country, different types of seeds available to buy or swap, local food and

children's activities.

Times have yet to be confirmed but visit

Place on parish council