

PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



Gillian Rose - Bangladesh January 2019

Bollobhpur Hospital
PO Kedargonj
District Meherpur
Bangladesh

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Church of Bangladesh Group

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'And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory'..... John I 14.



Saturday December 1st 2018 and I am in the classroom invigilating the first of the end of the year examinations as I begin an overdue letter to you all, hoping it will arrive in time for Christmas. Indeed it seems only the other day that I turned the page of my Bible Society calendar at the end of October to a beautiful manger scene, reminding me that Christmas was on the horizon. But now November has flown past and the churches calendar tells us that Advent has arrived once again, and only four Sunday's left before Christmas.

And Babu has been busy this afternoon as at almost every house in the village preparing and setting up a beautiful star high up on a bamboo pole at the hospital gate, another reminder that something beautiful is going to happen soon and that we should be preparing ourselves and being ready. And these beautiful stars, lighting up each home, the hospital is a witness to the Muslim community that we believe in His coming.



Sunday 2nd December and Advent Sunday and it is a beautiful bright autumn day as I sit to continue my letter to you all. Blue sky and sunshine with the chill in the air that autumn in Bangladesh brings. The patients are sitting out in the sun rubbing mustard oil into their babies skin. A lovely time of the year and the markets full of the 'cold weather' vegetables – cabbages, cauliflowers, beans, golden pumpkins and gourds, besides the vegetables particular to Bangladesh which are available all the year round.

But to recap...

The hospital and village clinics have been busy since I signed off my last letter at the end of August. September saw all the incubators full, with tiny babies moving over to welcome a new

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arrival in the warmth. Against all the rules each incubator has had two babies sharing and the largest one welcomed three. The largest incubator was a gift from the Isle of Wight, all those years ago when Sister Carol was in charge at Bollobhpur. Carol's home was the Isle of Wight. The incubators inner works many years ago gave up beyond repair. But our driver at that time, Sonil, skilfully fitted it up with two 100 watt bulbs, since when it has been in service. Indeed, only two of our five incubators are working properly, the other three are fitted up with light bulbs but giving good service. We remain grateful to our friends at S.K.Foundation for the gift of the two new ones.



The newest batch of student (girls) who started their training in July are doing well, helping on the wards and preparing for their 3 month preliminary training examination next month.

October brought the first signs of change in the weather, and Binita, our hospital house keeper, issued new cardigans to the last two groups of girls. October 12th – 14th suddenly broke all rules bringing thunderstorms and unseasonable rain in torrents, cancelling our monthly community health meeting, as it was not safe to be on the roads.

October 19th Friday brought the final examination for the new group. They had prepared well and there were no failures.

October 27th Saturday brought our monthly staff committee meeting when with our Dr Boroha we sit together over a cup of tea to plan our work and try to solve any problems together. We also bring and share the previous months statistics from each department and were pleased to find numbers on the upward trend. We are especially pleased that mothers with babies in arms and small children have come to value Dr Boroha and her treatment, and numbers visiting her chamber has risen steadily. We are grateful.

Sunday October 28th brought a long overdue management committee meeting and we are grateful to our chairman, Bishop Mankin for managing to give us some time. The meeting went well and we were pleased that the staff were given a small cost-of-living allowance to boost their salaries. They work hard and faithfully for a very small salary in comparison to the private sector and government employees. Indeed it is their faithful service that keeps our hospital open to our mothers and babies and to the sick and the poor.

We especially welcome those patients who are unwelcome elsewhere, and always have diabetic patients with us, those with horrible infections of their feet and sometimes hands and trunk. They receive care, most of them have their diet managed too and for those whose ulcerated feet or hands are beyond repair, we arrange amputation of the limbs at a clinic in Meherpur town, where the sympathetic surgeon manages everything for a very small fee, which fee we often have to help with.

Another service we are able to give is for elderly women who in the past have had many babies at home at the hands of unskilled women, and are now in need of repair. They are mostly poor and unable to afford treatment. But again our sympathetic doctor sees it as a social problem and manages the surgery and medicines at minimum charge. The patients family pay what they can and the rest is made up from my pension money. This again is a service we are happy to be able to give.

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And on Friday mornings, our eye clinic for village people and the poor, is regularly packed to the door, our faithful friend Dr Yunus, seeing 70 and more patients at a sitting for a very small wage. We are grateful to him and his faithful service over the years.

And alongside, on the last Friday of each month, our old friend Doctor Bappy, has recommenced his dental service again; especially welcomed not only by the village folk but also by our students, girls and the laboratory training boys!! We are grateful to him as dental treatment is only for the well to do who can afford to pay the exorbitant charge. We take a token fee and Doctor Bappy provides free service, and simple medicines are ready at a low cost. Again we are grateful to be able to provide this.

Sunday November 4th and another capping ceremony, as our newest girls file to the altar step during the morning parish communion service to kneel and receive their caps then lighted candle in hand they stand to repeat the Nightingale nurses oath, promising to lead good lives and to uphold the standard of nursing. As we have a new intake every six months the capping ceremony is also a six monthly event and always takes place in our parish church. Please keep them all in your prayers.



November 10th and 26th brought local committee meetings at two of our village clinics – Nityanandapur (place of everlasting happiness) our most distant clinic and run by Johka and Doremol, both Bollobhpur hospital trained, and assisted by two of our 1st year students who stay for a month at a time and learn how to do field visiting amongst the elderly and how to weigh babies and counsel mothers on feeding and care. The committee was pleased with their reports. Dibakor, from the hospital office who is also a government trained “village doctor” goes once a week to run a general

clinic for village people. And Ratanpur which is only three miles from Bollobhpur, run efficiently by Bollobhpur trained Laki and husband Hebol. They have three student nurses in their team and run antenatal clinics in the village and deliver mothers of their babies at the clinic. Two field workers are also attached – one visits the elderly at home and the other monitors babies weights and counsels the mother.

Again the committee was pleased with the work. A weekly clinic I manage for general patients and laboratory students bring back blood testing especially for the growing numbers of diabetic patients.

Saturday 17th November and our monthly community health meeting when we welcomed our Doctor Borea for the first time and enjoyed a first class lecture from her on cancer especially of the uterus. Our field worker takes the knowledge into the community with them and now will be able to counsel women for early treatment.

Thursday November 29th and an influx of more than 60 girls are ready to sit the entrance examination for our 3 year training. From these girls two groups of 18 will be selected for intake in January and July next year 2019. They sat a written paper in the morning and Dibakor, Nilsury our nurse tutor and I conducted the viva examination in the afternoon. Many brought High School certificates with them having not been able to get into a senior training school.

Logistic wise our girls managed well. Cooking and feeding and accommodating so many arrivals, many of whom had a guardian with them, but all went well and it was a happy busy time for all.

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And after their return home on Saturday morning all is quiet again!! It will be difficult to select the new groups.

And to return to Advent Sunday today, the ward was/is busy but I managed to get to church today. Kalpona in her wheelchair and blind Lily from the Geriatric ward were there before me. And the lovely Advent hymns are being sung again and the beautiful passages from Isaiah are daily reading from now on. Days are short in the autumn and my morning quiet time on my verandah overlooking the garden begins in darkness, turning quickly to light and a little host of Bulbul birds and others arrive to pick up the rice scattered on the floor for them.

Babu arrives at first light to open the cows shed. The two cows are with calf again and the latest arrival has rapidly turned into a very sturdy young bull already getting too naughty for Babu to manage.

4pm and my dogs remind me that it is time to stop writing and have something to eat. The cats too have arrived at the table waiting to be fed too. And Babu has arrived to smoke out the mosquitoes before taking the cows in for the night. The cows too have a mosquito net!! A new baby has just arrived for the incubator and a new baby born on the ward.

Please keep us in your prayers and thank you for keeping alongside. May God bless us all this Christmas.

