

# PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



## Gillian Rose - Bangladesh May 2014

Bollobhpur Hospital  
PO Kedargonj  
District Meherpur  
Bangladesh

Gillian Rose is an  
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Church of Bangladesh Group

Dear Friends

Sunday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent, I am trying to catch up with myself and put pen to paper to bring you up to date with our news. An amazing three months have rushed by into oblivion since we celebrated Christmas together and I am well overdue with my news, though I do hope everyone has received a copy of the annual report for last year that was sent out last month.



Sunday is my day for office work and letter writing but like most Sunday's, today was swallowed up by an influx of sick patients needing admission, two tiny babies seeking the warmth and care of an incubator, blocked latrines in the students hostel!, chicken pox, fever and food poisoning amongst the students themselves, all keeping me busy till after three o'clock in the afternoon.

Time for a quick lunch, feed my dogs – no time for Sunday baths today so they are pleased!! And now it's 5pm and I'm invigilating a nutrition examination in the classroom, and beginning my long overdue letter to you all.



The weather has been beautiful with the winter months giving way to spring, the new lacy green growth of the trees, and the scarlet blooms of the red cotton trees brilliant against the blue sky. The grounds and gardens are carpeted with crunchy dry leaves, dislodged from the trees by the spring breeze, for leaves do not fall in the autumn here, they remain dead and dry on the trees all winter, waiting for the new growth and the spring breezes to bring them cascading down.

And last night, the first of the storms, that characterise this season – amazing thunder and lightning, flashing and banging immediately overhead, gale force wind and torrential rain sheeting down and turning the dry ground into a debris filled sea.

We had to abandon the Saturday evening Bible Class, as our

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chapel has sides open to the elements and the corrugated tin roof, a favourite taking off and on place for the monkeys of the neighbourhood, now looks like the waves of the sea, and leaks dramatically!!

The end of the cold season, marked by a steady rise in temperature, also stirs insect life into being, and hordes of mosquitoes are now assailing us as the examination continue in the classroom and ants emerge in their legions in search of any food stuff left around. Ants even find their way into the incubators if we are not careful.

But to recap:...

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 brought the first parish communion service of the year, and probably the most well attended time of worship of the churches year, a lovely tradition of the Church of Bangladesh with everyone starting the New Year together in a new way, and hoping yet again to be able to lead better lives.

January 1<sup>st</sup> also brings prize giving in the afternoon for those who completed in the sports that forms part of the Christmas season festivity.



January 2<sup>nd</sup> saw the classroom reopened after the Christmas break, with routine classes for everyone and examinations for those who failed their end of the first year examinations. Anyway, it is good to be able to report back that all managed to pass on the second try and are now proudly wearing their new orange striped 2<sup>nd</sup> year caps.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January and another group of new girls arrive, eager to commence training at Bollobhpur hospital; the senior group having completed their training and left at the end of December 23013. As usual it is a mixed group, Garo tribal girls from the north of the country, girls from the low lying plains of the very south, local girls from the surrounding villages, all with one aim to train to be a nurse at Bollobhpur hospital. Please keep them in your prayers as they settle in, 18 of them in all, and for Nilsury as she teaches them.



For the past month Nilsury has not been with us as she re-sat her final nursing exams. In the meantime Staff Nurse Hannah has taken the new girls under her wing and is teaching them both in the classroom and practically on the wards amongst the patients they are caring for.

As I mentioned before, January 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 brought a caricature of a general election staged by the ruling party, with none of the opposition parties taking part. And not only that but for fear of reprisals very few ventured to cast their vote, indeed 28 polling centres registered not even a single vote!! And

indeed there have been the most horrible reprisals, especially by opposition party members against people of the minor communities, especially the innocent Hindu people, some have lost their lives and women have been brutally misused, whole families have fled the country.

But on the positive side the unruly events, continuous strikes and enforced shut downs that preceded the January 5<sup>th</sup> election, have come to a close, and the man in the street can once again

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get on with his normal life, and especially move about the country in peace and ease. Which means that we too can visit our village clinics routinely again, and especially make the monthly visit to Khulna for oxygen and supplies and to support Reba and disabled Kalpona at the clinic there.

More good news is that our beautiful “new” hospital micro, that was ignominiously towed back to Dhaka over six months ago as no local garage was competent with the working of a modern Japanese vehicle, has had its engine changed and with great joy and relief our driver Rintu went to Dhaka and brought it back at the end of January. We are grateful to Bishop Sarkar for the trouble he has taken and also especially to Sister Pat Bennett and friends in England, whose timely Christmas sale has made it possible for us to be mobile again.



Sunday February 2<sup>nd</sup> found us on the road for Khulna in the early morning, especially to be welcomed by Kalpona and Reba as it has been three months since I myself had been able to visit, and Reba and Kalpona rely on my visits to boost their morale!

It is “change over” day too for the four student nurses who staff the clinic, assisting Kalpona in her daily living, and helping Reba with the running of the clinic. And also change for the laboratory student who spends a month in rotation during his training, helping Kalpona run the laboratory, and also being general dogsbody for all the daily needs of the clinic family.

St Valentine’s Day, February 14<sup>th</sup> found us at our Kejura clinic, for the change over for the student nurses on duty there for the month. It is also general clinic day, and two laboratory students have brought basic blood tests and there are a lot of patients and “mothers to be” waiting for us so everyone is pleased, patients, students and staff alike.

There is always great competition between the clinics as to the number of patients seen, the number of lab tests done and the income from laboratory and medicines sold, which is healthy. Maybe one day the clinics can become self-supporting!!

Surprisingly St Valentine’s Day is well known and celebrated in this majority Muslim country and cards are sold and adverts shown in the papers!!

February 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> found me invigilating in the classroom again. This time the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Year group eager to pass their final anatomy examinations and to commence Midwifery classes. It is good to be able to report that all (some on second chance) have managed a pass mark and are now enthusiastically embracing the basics of midwifery, coming to the antenatal clinic to learn and eagerly awaiting the time when they will be allowed to care for mothers-to-be and deliver their babies.

Pause to watch a minute ‘Tuntuni’ bird searching busily for insects in a bush just adjacent to where I am writing; an amoles melodious call is coming from the trees lining the river bank, and a little group of starlings have arrived to suggest that time for lunch is well overdue!!

But let me take you around the geriatric ward before I close. The newest group of students have just had their photographs taken with their nannies and granddads, and hopefully they will come out well for me to enclose.

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Bed number 1 is occupied by Shikha, who though not 'geriatric' has a bed in the corner and is well loved by them all. For Shikha has cerebral palsy and needs help with every aspect of her daily living. But God has given Shikha the most lovely disposition and her laughter is the heart and soul of the ward now, and her speech improves daily in her communications with everyone.

Shikha is 30 years of age, and comes from distant Barisal as her mother Vsha can no longer manage to care for her at home.

Bed 2 brings Anima, a widow from Karpasdanga who came to us three days ago and is enjoying being part of the family.

Long stay Shona (Gold) is in the third bed. Shona comes from Faridpur and has no one to care for her at home. She was completely helpless on arrival but is now mobile with her walking frame.

Bent almost double with spinal disease, Sukestri (beautiful hair) now occupies the bed that was one Minotis, before she left us suddenly one night a few months ago, to find her final rest in God the Father's care. We cannot forget her. Sukeshi once worked as an aide-nurse in our Karpasdanga clinic and has delivered many babies in her working life.



Atusi in Bed 5 comes from nearby Ratanpur, has problems with her bladder and no one to care for her at home, since her husband died a few months back.

Susana and husband Tela occupy beds 6 and 12. They come from Bollobhpur village both have nothing to call their own. Poor Tela, who is over 80 years of age is just recovering from a nasty bout of chicken pox and is asleep under his bright new mosquito net. Yes we have managed new mosquito nets for them all this year and the ward looks lovely at night with the bright new nets in the white light of the economy bulbs.

Shila has been in bed 7 for a long time now, since having a stroke and being disabled several years ago. Her daughter occasionally takes her home for a break.

Jyotsna, who many years ago trained to be a nurse at Bollobhpur hospital and who brought up many orphans during the war years is now constricted to bed 8 with spinal softening and needs help with every movement.

Almost blind Daniel, from the low lying villages of the south has now been in bed 9 and part of the family for more than three years.

Lorika from Nityanandapur, in bed 10 has lost her reason and needs sedation and careful nursing care from the 1<sup>st</sup> year nurses.

And Tunji, "long" and always hungry, in bed 11 has other mental problems and causes a lot of laughter in the family. Her daughter is a senior nurse and bears her mother's expenses. Nobody wants her at home!

Side cabin 9 has a sweet lady from Karpasdanga whose physically facial deformities has made her lead almost a hidden life. The cabin has two other beds tucked in, one for a long term stroke

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patient Fensi who has been with us for more than five years now. She lived with her widowed sister, who is now no longer able to look after herself, let alone her sister Fensi.

The other bed has our deaf, blind and facially deformed Ranju, who lives in a little world of her own and is visited twice a year by her A.G.Mission pastor brother, who pays her expenses.

Side Cabin 10, at the end of the ward was hurriedly emptied four days ago to give privacy to severely burned Rabia whose clothes caught fire in a domestic accident at home a week ago.



Thankfully, though the burns are extensive, they are not deep and to add to that she suddenly went into labour two nights ago and I managed to deliver her tiny son without adding to her pain and distress. And by the grace of God, though the front of her whole body is burned, miraculously the nipples of her breasts were untouched and with help she is able to suckle her small son, the joy of this birth helping her to cope with her pain and distress.

Tiny shrivelled Chaya, who used to walk miles taking birth control to the villages has not found a bed inside the ward, but is safely on the adjoining verandah and adamant that she will not go home again.

And in the far corner, Produt, now into heart failure following long years of smoking and asthmatic attacks.

Please keep them all, and indeed us all as we care for them, in your prayers.

As a footnote, Doctor Soren is working tirelessly, has a good bedside manner, and is liked by all. Please pray for him as he settles in properly and for his wife Lota, who is to join him soon after her final degree examinations.

And with grateful thanks to the generosity of the Church of Scotland, our building work goes on apace. The two storied unsafe block built with the old time lime stone and mud and two adjacent walls have been demolished and the new building will give us a new ward office/nurses station, an operation room and above a large utility room for meetings, drying linen in the rainy season and a hundred other useful purposes. I hope in my next letter to bring news of its completion, opening and new use. Thanks be to God.

May God bless and keep you, as you go faithfully keep alongside us in all we are trying to do.

With greetings and thanks from us all.

Handwritten signature of Gillian.

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