

# PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



## Gillian Rose - Bangladesh August 2016

Bollobhpur Hospital  
PO Kedargonj  
District Meherpur  
Bangladesh

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Dear Friends in Scotland

Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 and well overdue with our news which should have been written last month, though I did manage some sort of Annual report to send to you. And although it is difficult to find any good news these days I begin my letter with the news of yet another wee calf, black and white and beautiful, skipping around the compound and giving joy to us all. She is a naughty calf, often going out of sight of the other cows and ignoring her mother's anxious "moos" calling her back!!



And the elder calf who only seems to have been born the other day, has had to have a visit from the vet, and is already on the way to being a mother herself at such an early age.

Weather wise, we are in the middle of the 'rains', i.e. 'monsoon' and although this part of the country is rarely blessed with heavy rainfall, we are getting our fair share of heavy storms, interspersed with spells of very hot sunshine, (welcomed especially by the hospital washing!!) Everything is fresh

and green and growing apace. The paddy (rice) has been harvested and now the fields are mainly planted with jute, an important cash crop for the small farms in the area – the green leaves also make tasty vegetable, and the stalks left after the fibre has been stripped off for selling in the market, are dried in the sun and are used all the year round for lighting the kitchen stoves.

The birds are in full throat. They have reared their young, taught them to fly and are now together enjoying the tasty worms and insects that the wet weather brings, and no longer hover around at mealtimes to share the crumbs.

And there is no need to go into detail on the state of the country, or the world at that, everyone is no doubt seeing all the gruesome happenings on their televisions. I rely on the daily paper which has arrived today after several days break due to the countrywide shut down for the holiday that follows the month of fasting in the Muslim calendar, and it doesn't make nice reading.

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It has affected us too in the hospital as we have been forced to set up 12 video cameras covering the hospital and grounds (at a horrible cost for which we have no budget!!), and, also on police orders I have had to move from my lovely little room with its verandah overlooking the river and my red hibiscus bush as it is at the back of all the hospital buildings and considered insecure at present. So I have taken refuge in a room on the first floor for the moment, in the nurses home and felt horribly shut in, open air person that I am. But, praise God, an abandoned key opened a door into a tiny verandah at the end of the passage, surrounded by the green trees of the adjacent school girls hostel and alive with birdsong, and this where I am now sitting and writing to you and where I spend my early mornings quiet time with a flask of tea and my Bible and the beautiful English hymnal songs, so many of which are no longer in use today.



I had planned to begin my letter early today but a busy hospital with tiny admissions to the incubators, admissions to the general beds, a four year old very sick with a high temperature and diarrhoea, a young mother taking poison, another visit from the law enforcers, this one bringing his wife and family to see the hospital and having their medical problems solved etc. etc. found me on the wards until midday. And Sunday is the day I try to catch up on office work and letter writing!

A doctor on the horizon, whose first job of work was alongside me years and years ago when I was running the programme in Khulna in the 1970's! So pray God he will soon be able to come and take the responsibility with me. We await a committee meeting next Friday when they will decide.

But to recap:-

April 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> found the newest group sitting their Preliminary training school examinations at which all did well and on May 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday during the morning parish communion service they received their new uniforms and caps and with lighted candles in their hands, repeated the very meaningful Florence Nightingale nurses oath, promising again to lead good clean lives and uphold the standard of nursing. They will now go for their first holiday (not all together – in three groups), take a full part in caring for their patients on the wards and help staff two of the outstation clinics on a month's rotation duty and do their first night duty.



And also on Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>, a new group of excited 'case nurses' go out to the village clinics, eager to learn to care for and deliver mothers of their babies in a village setting, relieving the senior group who come back into the hospital to prepare for their final examinations in June. Babu takes the new team to Khulna by bus, I being 'once again; refused permission to visit our clinic there by the police.

May 2016 passed by with busy wards in the hospital and a busy classroom in the nursing school, all but the newest group having exams to sit in June, all eager to earn a stripe for their caps and move up a year. The new group have also moved into the new building into the two upstairs rooms and are grateful to US for the space and air and light they were being deprived of in the old building. And the two ground floor rooms of the old building are being painted, whitewashed and cleaned, beds moved out to make plenty of space for the new group expected in July who will now

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have two rooms, nine girls in each, instead of all 18 students having to squeeze into one room. Thank you so much to friends at US. God bless you all.



And in the compound, the new male ward and cabin to replace that which had to be demolished, is rising from the ground apace, money still not having run out! We are grateful to the generosity of Dorothy from St Paul's Church, Chippenham, who has donated some of her meagre pension to help complete the work.

And again our grateful thanks to go our faithful friends in S.K. Foundation, Amsterdam, for another sudden unexpected gift which has enabled much needed new wheelchairs for our geriatric patients and also allowed Babu to beautifully paint and decorate their rooms and bathrooms and their lockers, transforming the unit which was horribly in need of something being done. They are all most grateful. The gift has also enabled fans for the room where the Laboratory students have their lectures and they too send their thanks. The gift will also enable the necessary fans for the new male ward when completed, the old ones being past repair – thank you.

Another good news is that the local council has released a grant for a new road leading to the hospital gate and in front of the buildings inside the hospital grounds. This is wonderful news which has been awaited for years and will allow patients a smooth ride to the hospital rather than a bone shaking experience on the now un-metalled road. Thanks be to God for his goodness to us. This work will be completed in July.

May 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 found Rintu, our driver, escorting five girls to Rajshahi, to our Church of Bangladesh hospital there for their six weeks operation theatre training. He arrives back in the evening with the returning group, bubbling over with excitement to be back and relating all the operations they had seen and all they had learnt. We are indeed deeply grateful to the staff at Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi for giving our girls such a good grounding for their future careers. This greatly enhances their training. We still have not been able to open our operation theatre, no doctor being willing to work in a village setting, but we hope on.

June 2016 saw all the groups sitting their examinations, studying well in to the night after busy days on the wards, all eager to pass well. Again we are grateful to Dorothy at Chippenham for the solar lighting so necessary in the rooms and classroom at such times as this. Indeed on the wards at night solar lighting is a marvellous boon, springing into action during the frequent and often lengthy power failures.

The senior group at their outside midwifery final examination, our friend Dr Alok from the government hospital at Meherpur coming again to conduct the viva examinations. And again he is pleased with them all and all pass well. They await the written examination results and at the end of June have gone out to the clinics to replace their seniors who come in for their final examination in Medicine and Community Health and Rintu has another trip to Rajshahi to take the newest group for their operation theatre training and to bring back those due to leave at the end of the month.

June 30<sup>th</sup> Thursday. And the seniors gather in the hospital office to receive their hard earned certificates. I notice that farewells are no longer the tearful farewells of the past. The 'mobile' age seems to be changing everything. I notice small children admitted to the hospital lying back on their pillow and playing games on 'huge' mobile phones!! And during recent Bible class taken by



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friend Polash, of the Bible Students Fellowship, I was amazed to see him reading the Bible from his mobile phone and flipping around from place to place for different verses!! Amazement knows no bounds. School child no longer need dictionaries, I am told, it's all in the mobile sets!! God knows!

But I have strayed away from Bollobhpur Hospital – to return.

July 1<sup>st</sup> Friday and the senior girls all leave on early buses. The nurses home has its 6 monthly spring clean as each set cleans and washes the previous sets room before moving into their place. The ground floor is deserted, the two rooms awaiting 18 new girls next week.

A couple of cats have joined me on the verandah as I bring my letter to a close, and amazingly a dog from the village has found me out, climbing up the back steps of the nurses home to sprawl at my feet. He sometimes comes to join me for a share in my midday meal on my own verandah, but how did he find me out in my new location!



We have had a couple of huge monkeys around during the last two days, but they were noticeably absent during the fruit season, which was a poor season this year, due to previous hail storms destroying the blossoms. It is nice when they are around, mother with babies at the breast and youngsters playing together in the trees.

A quick visit back to the wards has assured me that the new premature are alright and getting proper care. Which reminds me to send special thanks to St Ninian's Church, Kirkcaldy for the latest two parcels of woolly jumpers ready for the winter – the newest tiny babies are needing them now – thank you so much. The babies send their thanks too. We will not need more jumpers, but woolly shawls to wrap babies in – knitted or croqueted would be welcome.

The day is coming to an end as my letter ends. With our greetings and thanks.