

PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



Gillian Rose - Bangladesh August 2017

Bollobhpur Hospital
PO Kedargonj
District Meherpur
Bangladesh

Gillian Rose is an
Ecumenical Partner of the
Church of Bangladesh Group

Dear Friends in Scotland

Sunday July 16th and high time to get a letter into the post to you. I see my last letter was signed off on March 19th but hopefully a copy of our Annual Report reached everyone in the meantime.

Time has not stood still and the month of Ashar, the first of two monsoon months (rains) has sped by with very little rain for us although other parts of the country have been inundated and five of the major rivers are running above the danger line and huge areas of the country are flooded.

And today is the first day of Srabon, the second of the two monsoon months, and the sun is brilliant and as hot as midsummer, my hibiscus bushes are bright with scarlet blooms and tiny sunbirds are flying from flower to flower to collect the nectar – a delight to watch and they share my quiet times in the early mornings.

For yes I am back to my own verandah in the mornings. A year has passed since the horrific terrorist attack and killings of twenty people at a restaurant in Dhaka and since then the police have been rounding up and breaking down the terrorist groups and their hide outs and in comparison with other countries, all has been quiet. And so although I still comply with request of the local police not to stay in my room at nights and retire to the second floor of the student's hostel at night, I return to my own verandah in the early morning to spend a precious quiet time with the birds and flowers and the dogs.

Though nights seem very short these days, four to five hours at the most, for there are always patients to be admitted, ward rounds to be done and sick patients to be monitored. But hopefully with God's blessings we will be having a new residential doctor again from next month, but no more of that until it actually happens, we have known "many a slip twixt cup and lip" in the past!!

We have planted fifty trees along the river bank this week, mahogany and neem, to replace all that had to be cut down last year to comply with the government's river widening programme and previously ten bamboo plants a few months ago as I say to our groundsman Babu, we must leave something for those coming after us, and prevent the

PARTNER PLAN

river banks from erosion as is happening in many areas, where the rivers are devouring schools, mosques, shops and many houses as the bank's collapse from the pressure of the water. Amazing, but it is happening.

But to recap.....

April 17 and Easter has flown by with all its glory. Palm Sunday with the processions around the village, palms held high. Again I remember the donkey with his precious burden –

“Fools, for I also had my hour
One fast fierce hour and sweet
When there were shouts about my ears
And palms beneath my feet.”

Maundy Thursday with Holy Communion in the evening and the washing of feet.

Good Friday with the three hours devotion at the foot of the cross.

Easter Eve, with the candlelight procession and Easter Day with prayers at the grave yard at dawn, and the packed church for the Easter parish communion service all so old and yet so new as each year brings the celebrations again.

Easter Sunday, April 16th 2017 and my trained staff all have a special day off from duty while the students run the wards with me in the background if they need any help. We have a new Easter baby which makes us happy. We have several admissions including another diabetic patient and a tiny premature baby arrives seeking the warmth and care of one of our incubators.

Diabetic patients are always with us, most with horribly infected feet which never heal until they seek the care of Bollobhpur hospital. We are happy to host them and with careful nursing and twice daily dressings they go home well.



Monday 17th April 2017 and the newest group of girls are sitting their three monthly preliminary training examinations. They have prepared well and are a good group, the majority from the tribal groups north of the country which are disadvantaged and short of opportunities and the girls are only too happy to get training with us to be able to do something with their lives.

And it is good to be able to tell you that all passed their examinations well and on Sunday 29th April, during the parish communion service they filed to the front to kneel at the altar rail and receive their new caps, and with lighted candles in hand to repeat the nurses' Nightingale oath, promising to lead good lives and to uphold the standard of nursing.

Over the years so many young women have made the same promises. Most are working in different venues all over the country, many have married good Christian boys and have

PARTNER PLAN

a family and most of them have been able to help their parents and to educate their younger brothers and sisters. It is a privilege and joy to be part of it all.

May 2017 takes a new group of excited “case nurses” out into the community to staff our village clinics while their seniors come in to prepare for their final examinations next month.

The wards are full and the geriatric ward has new arrivals seeking care. We are happy to have them. The month has seen several cases of suicidal poisoning and a silly girl who swallowed ‘Harpic’ because she failed her examinations!! She was very ill and we sent her to the government hospital for better care, but happily all the others recovered and went home with counselling, promising not to do the same again.

June 2017 brings examinations for most groups and final examinations for the seniors. They are not a good group and have not been easy to teach and I sent their written papers for marking with many misgivings. But they all did well in the viva and Dr Alok, who comes from the government hospital to conduct the examination, was pleased with them.

This month also saw our Laboratory Technician students complete their two year course, pass their final examinations and leave with their certificates for new pastures. And it is good to be able to report that all have already found jobs and started work in laboratories all over the country. Twelve students completed the course.

And already seven new students have come to replace them and more are expected in August. Michael gives them a good training and by giving him study leave to complete the Diploma course, he has been able to update his students training, which is good. This is another service we are happy to provide.



June 30th 2017 and our senior girls collect in the hospital office to sign for a receive their hard won certificates and to make their farewells. They donate a chiming clock for the ward office which is an innovation and appreciated by us all. Every time it chimes the hour we remember them. Soon we will be hearing back from them as to where they are started their new employment. For none remain idle, all easily find work and there are few clinics and hospitals in the capital where a Bollobpur trained nurse cannot be found.

Please keep them all in your prayers.

July 2017 and the first week finds everyone busy in the hostel as all is spring cleaned and they move up a room to make room for another new group due to arrive shortly and on July 10th Monday, thirteen new girls arrive with bedding and boxes to start the three year nursing and midwifery training with us. Most have relatives or friends amongst the other students, so they settle in well and easily, and today Sunday 16th, three more arrive to

PARTNER PLAN

complete the group ready to start classes and training from tomorrow with their Sister Tutor, Nilsury Biswas.

Again the majority are from the tribal groups, one from the Mangrove forests in the far south, and two from the low lying rice growing plains in the centre of the country. Please keep them in your prayers.

The sky has clouded over and darkened as I come to an end, so hopefully some rain is on the way – yes, it has arrived!

The cows are pleased, and are cooling down. We have another two new calves, very naughty, and I see Mary's husband Arun chasing them out of his vegetable garden. Amazingly the brown and white calf that I mentioned at the end of my last letter is already on the way to being a mother herself at such a young age.

We are going to sell two of them next week as the cowshed is getting overcrowded, and there is no shortage of prospective buyers coming to have a look at them, eager to purchase a "hospital cow"!!

Lunchtime is well overdue as I sign off my letter and four dogs are sprawled on the verandah patiently waiting!!

Life is full, busy and happy and I thank God again and again for the privilege of being here.

Thank you for keeping alongside with your interest and your prayers. God bless you all.

