

# PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



## Gillian Rose - Bangladesh December 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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and amazingly another year has flown by. Advent is upon us, with Christmas not far behind and time for me to put pen to paper to bring Christmas greetings and thanks from all of us at Bollobhpur and thanks for keeping alongside us for another year.

We really are grateful to our friends at St Paul's Church, Chippenham for their generous help for our girls in training, our friends at Linktown and St Ninian's in Scotland for the lovely warm knitted jumpers and blankets and tiny cardigans which our babies are already wearing as 'winter' has arrived and the temperature has dropped rapidly.



Also to our friends at USPG whose generous annual grant enables us to take care out into the community as well as the service the hospital is giving and the training our girls and boys are receiving. And not to forget our wonderful friends at S.K Foundation, Amsterdam whose amazing generosity has enabled most of the equipment for the laboratory, incubators for our babies and all ultrasonography machine for our women and also helped up equip our

operation theatre which we are hoping to re-open in the new year.

Our new doctor, who we were expecting, has arrived and has been working alongside us for two months now. She is young and lovely and keen to get the hospital on its feet and moving with the times. She brings experience from a special care baby unit at one of the country's largest hospitals, which is wonderful news for our tiny babies needing care, experience in the operating theatre at one of our new mission hospitals and is now completing a training in ultrasonography on a weekly basis, so we are hoping and praying for great things.

Please remember Doctor Borsha in your prayers as she settles in. She is the eldest daughter of Rev Daniel one of our Church of Bangladesh parish priests, and their home is in Bollobhpur itself, although obviously they have not lived here much, her father having worked in different parishes.

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But to recap.

My letter begins with two amazingly beautiful new blooms on my Night Queen cactus plant and everyone came to gaze in awe at its beauty. The bud begins to open at around ten o'clock, is at its beautiful best at 12 midnight and by two o'clock in the morning has shrivelled away. I stand in awe again at the amazing beauty and intricacy of this world we live in. In contrast, my beautiful red hibiscus flowers bloom anew each morning and end their lives in the evening, only to be replaced in the morning by more new blooms.



And alongside, in the cowshed, another calf has arrived, and is now big and naughty and has to be chased out of the vegetable garden. But we are grateful for our cows. We had a huge problem with a new doctor arriving and doctor's quarter being in a dilapidated state, with lots of repairs needed and absolutely no funding to get it ready. And so the cows came to our rescue!! We sold two of them for a good price and with the proceeds managed the repairing, a new roof for the kitchen, and then Babu, our "man of all work" beautifully painted and decorated and

got it ready. With the result that Dr Borsha and her family were thrilled with the result and we all went to join a housewarming party.

Our cows also give a "tithe" of their output (i.e. manure) to the church garden and the result is a beautiful display of different flowers blooming at different times of the year in front of the church! A joy to behold.

Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> and our newest set of students are sitting the 3 months preliminary training school examinations, and it is good to be able to report that all managed to pass, some very well indeed and on Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup> during the parish communion service, they filed to the front to kneel at the altar step to receive their new cape and uniforms and blessings for their future. And then, lighted candles in hand, they face the altar and repeat the Nightingale nurses oath, promising to keep off drugs, to lead good clean lives and to uphold the standard of nursing.

And in the evening the girls (our students) put on a most excellent evening of song, dance and comic sketches to celebrate the new girls capping ceremony. Many of them are very gifted and dancing beautifully and it is a joy to watch. I, for one, enjoy the comic sketches best!!

Sunday November 19<sup>th</sup> and our Bishop Mankin has arrived and the church is packed to the doors, for today the parish communion service includes the confirmation of around fifty girls and boys who had been attending classes for several weeks and had joined in a special day of prayer and teaching in preparation. The group includes five of our girls who came from distant parishes in the tribal areas of the north of the country and who had not had the opportunity of be confirmed before.

And afterwards photographs to be taken on their own and with the Bishop and clergy. A lovely prayerful time. Please keep out five newly confirmed girls in your prayers.

And after the service, at 11 o'clock, a meeting of the Hospital Management Committee with Bishop Mankin in the chair and for all, our Binita and helpers had cooked and magnificent midday meal.

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The meeting went well, Dr Borsha was warmly welcomed and no one seemed displeased with anything though no one ever says 'thank you' that we have managed to keep the hospital running well for the church, though outside at other meetings we hear that they praise Bollobhpur hospital as one of the church's well running institutions, which is nice to hear!!

In the community things have not stood still. During November we managed local committee meetings at our three outstation village clinics, namely at Karpasdanga, Ratanpur and Nityanandapur. Each clinic is run by a Bollobhpur trained experienced Midwife, and her husband manages the field outreach and the running of the satellite antenatal clinics in different villages. A team of our student nurses/midwives make up the team, doing a three month experience in the clinics during their three year training.

Each clinic has a special clinic day when they are joined by a team from the hospital including senior laboratory students, who bring blood tests and other tests for those who require them.

Karpasdanga clinic, serving the villages of the border area, is first with crowds of people availing themselves of the services and many women coming for delivery of their babies. The other clinics are also doing well and the local communities showed their appreciation.

Another special news is that we have pulled our services out of the clinic at Khulna, leaving the diocese to run it themselves. And on Monday October 16<sup>th</sup>, Kalpona and the students on duty there were brought back to Bollobhpur. We have served that clinic for eleven years and the time had come to say enough is enough.



Kalpona, who you remember came to Bollobhpur being increasingly disabled by muscle wasting disease about 13 years ago. Bishop Mondol, being concerned about her welfare, sent her to us. On consideration, we decided that she could manage the laboratory training, which she successfully completed and it was for her that we decided to send our girls on monthly rotation and for Kalpona we set up a small laboratory there. Later our laboratory students started going in rotation to help her when she could no longer manage alone.

Now Kalpona is completely helpless and needs continual care in the daily living and as this was considered too much responsibility for our students and at such a distance from the hospital, we have brought her back to Bollobhpur. So now Kalpona is now back in her old room and with two girls on 2 weekly rotation to care for her. Please keep her in your prayers, it is so difficult for an educated 'young' woman like her to accept her condition. And none of us can answer her 'why would this happen to me?'

And back to the hospital which has been busy over the past few months, the incubators with their tiny occupants, the geriatric ward with their grannies and grandads carefully looked after by the first year students, many heavy patients in the general beds needing extra nursing care. Many diabetic patients with horrible infections needing special care, daily dressings and managing of their diabetic state. All good training for our students and their future careers.

In the laboratory Michael is carefully training two new groups of students. The previous boys have not only completed their training well and left us with their hard earned certificates, but they are all

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phoning back to tell of the new jobs they have started and how pleased their employers are with them which for us is a joy to hear.



Over the years many many boys and girls have completed their training, found good salaried employment and many have married and are proud mothers and fathers! We are proud of them all.

And back to the church and parish. Friday December 1<sup>st</sup> and Advent starts with a service of light and then we circle the village lighted candles held high, singing and reminding all that Christmas is around the corner and time to prepare for and celebrate that wonderful birth once again.

And according to the tradition of the church an Advent prayer meeting will be held in every home in the run up to Christmas our turn will also be arriving when we gather under the lychee tree with our patients, the darkness lit by candle light to sing and celebrate – but that will be in my next letter. And also will be the arrival of 60 and more girls to sit the entrance examination for training in the 2018 schools, all anxious to secure a place. This will need a lot of organisation for which our Sister Nilsury, their tutor, is expert!

And it is time to come to a close. The light is fading and mosquitoes are arriving in droves!! Monkeys have been few and infrequent visitors, but birds are everywhere, which is a delight and always gives us great pleasure.

“Our” dogs, that is the ones that seem to have adopted me since my dog Tom died, have 10 puppies between them and we hope we will find good homes for them all! My cat is not happy about it all!!

So I leave with my thanks and prayers and every good wish for another Christmas.

God's blessing.

