

PARTNER PLAN

An ecumenical appointment with:



Gillian Rose - Bangladesh August 2011

Bollobhpur Hospital
PO Kedargonj
District Meherpur
Bangladesh

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

Dear Friends in Scotland

Sunday 10th July, the 3rd Sunday after Trinity, and once again, well overdue with my letter to you all. There have been so many “extras” in my already over busy daily schedule, that days and weeks and months have sped past without trace.

But today's good news is that I am writing from a Bangladesh well into the monsoon (rainy) season, and this year, thanks be to God, we are having some really seasonable weather and lots of rain. So there are smiles on the faces of the farmers, as they plant out their paddy (rice) seedlings in the flooded fields, and wells have once again started to produce water for everyone. This is especially good news for us in Meherpur district of the country, where the last few years have been dry, and the desperately needed rain did not arrive. It is a joy to go out to the outstation village clinics through flooded rice fields, green with the special green of newly planted paddy (rice), and see the rivers and ponds filling up with water again, and the jute plants growing strongly upwards to the sky.



Politically the country is in a turmoil again, the two main parties unable to work together for the good of the country, and now falling out over whether the next general election should take place under the umbrella of a “caretaker government” or not. And the opposition party vent their anger and discontent by calling for general strikes which help no one and nothing, but puts the general peace-loving citizens to a lot of hassle and trouble, and ruins the economy. Innocent people have their cars vandalised, and buses are burned and torched for no reason at all. We are in the middle of a six day “shut down” called by the opposition party at the moment!!

To follow up on my last letter:-

Monday April 11th brought the final examination for the new girls who started their Preliminary Training school in January, and although there were a few weak students who needed to resit the examination, it is good to be able to report that all were finally successful and on Sunday May 7th they received their new uniforms and cap during a simple afternoon service in the Parish Church, and made their Nightingale Nurses



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oath in front of God and the congregation, promising to lead holy lives and to uphold the standard of nursing. Please keep them in prayer as they start their training proper.



Monday 18th April brought great joy and thanksgiving. You remember in my last letter I mentioned "Chikdana", a woman who had had many pregnancies, but had never received a living child into her arms. After much prayer and consideration it was decided that an elective caesarean operation would be the best mode of delivering for her. So after 5 months of resting and waiting with us at Bollobhpur hospital, we took her to our liaison clinic at Meherpur, and had the joy of placing her sturdy baby boy into her arms after the operation. I left two of the student nurses to care for her and the baby during her

stay there, and she eventually went home after a week, surrounded by her happy family. A miracle of God's grace indeed.

Monday May 23rd brought the interview examination for the next entry of girls into the Nurses Training centre. There are fewer applications this year, and the examination was sat in three different centres. Rani, whose mother died recently of cancer, and Bahamoni, a tribal girl from a very poor family in the Rajshahi area, have stayed on after the examination and are enjoying themselves helping on the wards until the rest of their group arrive and they start their training proper.

And another good news is that May saw the beginning of the "biogas" plant being constructed. This is something we have been wanting to do for a long time and have great expectations for being able to cut down on the purchase and use of firewood.

Our own staff – Babu and his team dug the huge pit that was required, then came the construction during June, and now five carts of cow dung have been watered down and poured in. We now await the connection and the gas stove, and being able to report that we are now the proud and grateful owners of our own gas supply. The Biogas plant is situated behind the girls hostel, and the 10 latrines are connected to it. In addition we will need to add six buckets of cow dung a day, which our cows will provide. The fertiliser which will be produced as a result of the process, will be ploughed into our vegetable gardens.

We are grateful indeed to friends in Scotland whose generosity is making this possible, and to Dorothy from St Paul's Chippenham, whose advice and enthusiasm in alternate technology has spurred me on.

Friday June 6th 2011 and our Bishop Mankin and the contractor have arrived and an old friend from Khulna Mr Paul Dhali has also arrived, for today the first meeting of the construction committee has been arranged and soon all sit down for discussion.

For at last the dilapidated roof of the maternity and labour wards, and the female and children's area, is to be reconstructed, and again we are extremely grateful for the Church of Scotland, World Mission office who have generously offered to fund this work.

Bishop has selected Mr Paul Dhali to oversee the work, and he will not allow any faulty work or any misspending of the gifted money.

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I now have the nightmare hanging over my head at how to relocate all these patients and carry on with the smooth running of the hospital during the months of the demolishing and reconstructing. May God give us the strength.

Friday 23rd June and another exciting day for Bollobhpur hospital, for my friend Masud, from Medicine Supplies, Khulna has arrived with an engineer from Dhaka, and our new ultrasonograph machine is being unpacked and set up – (something completely new to Bollobhpur hospital – and we are extremely grateful again to Mr Spiers of S K Foundation, the Netherlands, whose previous gift has also made this possible). And also a new 200ms x-ray machine to replace our old 50ms machine that no longer provides a good x-ray. Thanks be to God.

Our laboratory technician students also learn basic x-ray technique from Michael, and they are especially grateful for this new help in their training.

All we need now is our own residential medical officer to use all these new “toys”. Please pray on with us for God to provide the person at his choosing.

The classroom has been busy too during June, with examinations for most groups, and the finalists completing their external examinations. Dr Alok came as usual from the Government Hospital in Meherpur to conduct the viva, and was pleased with most of them.

And on the wards, the theme of the month seems to have been the taking of poison, and I was up most nights of the week to deal with them. Our girls are adept at washing out the stomach of a case of poisoning, and managing them carefully and responsibly afterwards, which means that many patients live to tell the tale, and are able to repent for what they have done, and start their lives afresh.

Two tiny 1kg babies occupy the two incubators, both born at home, and carefully brought to Bollobhpur for incubator care, and several tiny arrivals have been promoted from the incubators to baby cots and finally went home in their grateful mother's arms. Again, our girls are very skilled at caring for them and that is the reason so many survive and go home. The tiny ones are fed by tube 2 hourly all day and night, and very weak little ones are often fed hourly at the beginning of their small lives. And so the hospital gets a name for tiny baby care, and people come from good distances seeking it.

Monday 27th June, and eight excited girls pile into a hired micro car for the long drive to the Baptist Mission Hospital at Joyramkura, where they will receive three months training, especially in operation theatre techniques, which puts them in good standing when they leave us for employment. The eight girls who have completed their training should be returning today, but local elections are in progress in that area, and by some quirk of fate, our vehicle is grabbed and commissioned by the police for the polling day. The poor driver and our Babu, having deposited the girls at the hospital, return to the police station and spend the whole night patrolling the area with the police, and the whole of the next day doing the rounds of the polling stations. They are eventually “released” at midnight, and the vehicles' documents returned!! – such is the state of the country. Anyway, we were glad to have the girls back on Wednesday, in time for their Medicine & Community Health examination in the evening.

And their guardians soon start arriving, for tomorrow is the last day of their three years at Bollobhpur. And Thursday 30th June 2011, they all assemble at the office to sign for their hard earned certificates and to make their tearful goodbyes. And so another group concludes their

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training – 15 in all, there was one drop out from the training. All have jobs of work to go too. None will remain idle. Please keep them in your prayers at this time.

Sunday 3rd July 2011 and after morning church it is “all hands on deck”, to empty the hospital for this roof repairing.

The ground floor girls have been squeezed into rooms on the 1st floor of their hostel. The classroom partition removed, and soon the classroom became a big bright maternity ward, full of mothers and babies, home sisters room fills up with general patients and Silpi's ex-room becomes the labour ward, and it is not long before two new babies arrive there. I am grateful to Zachary and his team, and to the girls for their tireless labour that has made this possible.

And Sunday 10th July a week later, I write to a background of banging and clanging as the roof is slowly demolished. We wonder when it will all be over!!

Monkeys have been very much to the fore front this past month. They have consumed all the lychees from the top of the tree (the staff divided and ate the fruit that could be saved!) – broken off and chewed the bananas, removed and enjoyed all the mangoes before they have properly matured, plucked and eaten the vegetable marrows and in general made havoc!! They descend with huge bumps on the tin roof of the chapel, bending and buckling the tin, and do the same to my kitchen. Their main target at present is the jack fruit trees, huge juicy stomach-filling fruits!! A joy to watch indeed, but very destructive. My dog Tom and his team get excited when they arrive, but are frustrated at not being able to climb the trees to catch them!

In the girls dining room, little Mininie has her first family of three delightful kittens, and in the cow house, mother Junu and her eldest “daughter” (now much bigger than her) are in the family way again.

And, joys of joys, my Night Queen cactus plant has flowered twice this week, the night nurses all coming at midnight to gaze on the beautiful bloom. For it blooms at midnight – two hours of beauty and scent a huge and beautiful bloom, growing out of the side of the very ordinary looking, unlovely leaves of the plants. How varied is God's creation.

And did I mention that I caught a glimpse of the Paradise Flycatcher the other week, only the second sighting in all my years here. A tiny white bird, with a tail several times longer than its body. A joy to watch indeed!

And so each day is packed full of joy and pleasure, and I am grateful each day to the God who loves us and pours his blessings on us.

May He bless you all abundantly.

With greetings from us all at Bollobhpur.



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