



Progress and Challenges

Premlata Hansda is now ready to come to work at St Luke's Hospital

After our Spring newsletter many of you asked about Premlata, and I responded to some of those emails separately.



Originally, Premlata came to assist in theatre whenever we were called to Prem Jyothi Hospital, whatever time of day or night. She is now conducting deliveries herself, and also is scrubbing in theatre alone and assisting Caesarean section operations.

THE CHALLENGE

However, for Premlata and the others we are going to need Nurses' Hostel Accommodation.

The Nursing Hostel Accommodation needs the usual work on the outside walls, which have been invaded and partially broken by trees growing through the walls, sometimes from the roof downwards, sometimes

from the ground upwards. It is back breaking work to dislodge these roots. Not only back breaking, but dangerous also. Munshi and Betka, with Shubhro's help, had just uprooted a tree growing under the water tank on the nurses hostel roof, when they disturbed a poisonous snake. The snake ran after Shubhro, who ran away. But Munshi and Betka were in hot pursuit, and killed the snake. Then the other builders looking on confirmed it was poisonous, and even knew the species. Shubhro was simply relieved no one was bitten, for we do not have the AVS - anti snake venom here. It is extremely expensive, so unaffordable for us at St Luke's - we used to keep a couple of vials at Sarenga, but it was used on such a regular basis there, that the expense was paid for.

Continued on page 2



Shubhro inspects the old fuse boxes of the nursing hostel



Dear Everyone,

As we write it is mid July, and the monsoon rains have just started with a welcome coolness, but still high humidity. We thought we should update our photo - but it's not often somebody takes our photo together.

That opportunity came one evening at the beginning of June when we were asked to share with a group of University students who came from ten different States in India. We hope you enjoy this update from St. Luke's. Please get in touch if you would like more information.

New Ultrasound Machine

We are looking to buy a new USG machine and we need to raise a further £9000.

Read more on page 3 about this vital piece of equipment. Please get in touch if you would like to support the work in this way.

Partnership with Prem Jyothi Hospital continues to grow

We have had regular visits to Prem Jyothi Hospital since our return, for their Medical Superintendent (general surgeon) left in April. Since Shubhro and I are on their staff they have called us for emergencies. But they only call in a real emergency, and how very impressed we are by the 24 year old Dr Barnabas who is now looking after the whole hospital (he only graduated in 2018).

The Nurses' Hostel also needs completely rewired, and another retired couple of friends in Scotland have given a donation for solar panels to power the Nurses' Hostel. After getting all the roots out of the roof and walls, Munshi and Betka cleaned the entire building. And as we speak they have started painting in preparation for the electricians to go in after our return in August.



The work starts on the nurses hostel

Heat Wave

We found the months of May and June quite exhausting this year, and people of all ages were arriving regularly with heat exhaustion requiring inpatient treatment with IV fluids and observation.

But it was great to see a rapid response to these simple measures. One of the local Pastors - Simon, witnessed villagers dying in front of him, and he was desperately calling the local government hospital to send an ambulance to pick up those who had already collapsed. Some of our friends in Scotland have suggested they would like to raise money for an ambulance for St Luke's Hospital, and about a month after this email reached us Simon was relating what was happening in the villages. Suddenly an idea came into my head, and I asked Simon if he had a driving licence for a four-wheel vehicle "Yes" he replied.

So the seed was sown, and in time, once we get an ambulance, we shall be able to call on Simon to combine his current pastoral work with driving the ambulance in these sort of situations.

It is in the surrounding communities where people are most vulnerable and most needy, and we continue to search for ways to serve them better.

Praying for James

Thank you all for praying for James Hembrom - he is now in Vellore Christian Medical College CMC, recovering after surgery.

We were shocked to see how sick James was when we returned to St Lukes at end of April. We had already contacted CMC Vellore, and they had said "Come as soon as possible". Then we got his blood results back and James was in acute renal failure so surgery had to be postponed.

James spent the months of May and June at home, with Dr Chandra Prof of Urology at CMC Vellore keeping in daily contact with us giving advice. During those two months James' kidneys slowly began to work again, and his surgery was planned for 5th July.

Surgery went well, and James has been overwhelmed by the care and love of all the staff, and also of his old friends and colleagues. They have spoiled him, taking him to English, Bengali and Hindi services, and treating James and friends on a trip to Pondicherry and taking them out for food in various places. We were able to speak regularly while in India, but even since coming to Shetland Elisabeth has been able to get through, and it is clear by his voice that James feels blessed in so many ways. Continue to pray for James, that the journey back to Hiranpur will go well, and James will continue to make an excellent recovery.



James looking a lot brighter ten days after operation

Thompson Solar Power Plant.

At last, after one long year the work on Thompson Solar Power Plant is completed, and it is running well. The engineers came from Kolkata in June to install the new inverters. They worked well from the word go, and are supporting the three air conditioners and all the other equipment which we are gradually bringing into the hospital.

We have decided to delay the formal opening of the Thompson Solar Power Plant until 5th December - on that day the 90th birthday of St Luke's Hospital will be celebrated. So it seems the right and proper time to remember Drs Bryan and Helen Thompson and their lives of service in St Luke's Hospital.

The Chief Guest at the opening is a good friend of Drs Bryan and Helen, an elderly but fit gentleman, who has sensibly confined himself to his home here in Hiranpur during these hot summer months. It will be far easier for him to venture out to the Hospital in early December. So we look forward to this celebration, and have already begun planning.

Haridas has joined our staff on a temporary basis.

With the Thompson Solar Power plant we can now run the A/C in the laboratory, which we have been doing continuously on a daily basis. News like this spreads fast, and lots more patients are requesting their blood tests at St Luke's Hospital and wanting to sit in the lab as long as possible. If we can't find a member of staff, we know the first place to look for them!

Its also a huge help for Shubhro and Elisabeth to be able to just send the chit for the lab. test, and not have to interrupt seeing patients to go to the lab and do the test themselves.

Pray that Haridas may consider staying on with the SLH team long term. He is settled here with his wife and baby daughter, but it is always a temptation to go after money at one of the lucrative laboratories in the cities.

Ultrasound

We have decided which ultrasound machine to buy, based on first hand experience of a friend and colleague here in India.

Dr Lindsay Barnes, originally from Lancashire came to India during her postgraduate study days 30 years ago, and decided to stay. She has been working in a remote part of Jharkhand looking after women and their babies during pregnancy and childbirth. The thrust of her work is in the communities ensuring women receive good nutrition in pregnancy and understand how to stay healthy and prevent complications arising. The women see Lindsay every month, sometimes more often, and then come to the small hospital for delivery - the majority are safely delivered with little or no intervention, and at minimal cost.



Lyndsay and Shubhro do ward round together on Sunday morning

Some 9 years ago Lindsay was presented with a scan machine, and all the women get at least one scan during their pregnancy - with upward of 100 mums having babies in a month, you can imagine this scan machine has been put to good use.

The company that sold the machine send an engineer twice a year to service it, and although this is costly, it is well worthwhile, for in all its nine years of regular use, it has never broken down or required any major part replaced.

We used to visit each other when we worked in Sarenga, but had not met recently, until Lindsay phoned and asked us to come. Though only with her for 24 hours we packed a lot into that visit, including scrutinising the scan machine, Elisabeth being able to do a few scans on the Saturday afternoon and then quizzing their own visiting gynaecologist on the Sunday about the pros and cons of the machine. It has a lot going for it, and we are praying we may even get the same engineer to service our machine here.

CAN YOU HELP

The cost of this USG machine has rocketed in the past 10 years, but the dealer, knowing that St Luke's Hospital is a charitable institution is doing his best to reduce the cost. We already have money in a fixed deposit for the scan machine, and extremely generous donation by one of Elisabeth's colleagues, who has visited St Luke's, but we need to match this fund to be able to buy the USG machine which Dr Lindsay is using. So we need to raise a further £9000 and are at peace that this money will come in God's perfect timing.

We do believe this is the right machine to buy, and Shubhro has spoken with the Senior Biomedical Engineer who services Lyndsay's machine. He has agreed to a similar contract of after sales service were we to buy this machine. This is a big factor in the decision, for he would be travelling from Ranchi - a 12 hour train journey from Hiranpur.

John heads for college

We praise God that John Malto got a place at Bishop Heber College to study B Com. Places at this college are some of the most sought after and we are grateful to Victor and Naomi, our friends from South India, who run the mission school where John studied. Grateful, not only for the



way in which they have taught, encouraged and shaped John's character, but also for helping and guiding him to gain this place at College. The main plus point in John's case was his excellent school leaving results, and for this he has Pandeni Mission School to thank.

We are very much missing John in Sunday School, but Haridas, who has joined our laboratory on a temporary basis speaks Santhali, and offered to help with Sunday School. Our God is not going to abandon these children now they have started learning about His deep love for them.

John used to teach in many different ways, one being through painting, so before he left we asked John if he would do a mural for the outside wall of OPD. It is the picture of Jesus washing his disciples feet, teaching them the principal that it is more blessed to serve others than to be served by others. The words Jesus spoke are written underneath in Hindi, so the majority of our patients who can read will understand.

And part of our mission statement is also written there as a caption. **"We are here to serve, not to be served"**

Government Visit

New Civil Surgeon paid a visit to St Luke's Hospital in May, and has requested Elisabeth to give regular input to the Government Antenatal Clinics here. These are good signs, and we hope to increase our dialogue with the government services in order to help improve services for all the surrounding communities.

The photo shows the Government ANC on 9th July, where Elisabeth and Susanna together saw scores of young women.



Prayer changes things!

More volunteers

We are really excited that a young doctor from Scotland, Kirsty McNab, is keen to come and give voluntary service here in 2020.

We shall get the process of registration with Medical Council of India started right away. Kirsty is the niece of one of the midwives in Aberdeen with whom Elisabeth works with occasionally.

We also got a similar exciting email from Karen, our friend from Sarenga days, herself a midwife. Through her example of compassion there was a marked change in practice by the nurses in Sarenga delivering women.

Karen has two colleague midwives due to retire this year and keen to think about coming out to St Luke's for a few months, There is also another colleague, a senior nurse and both she and her husband are keen to give several months service between them here at St Luke's. Thus 2020 may be the year when people start joining us to help expand the work here.

We need appropriate accommodation for foreign nurses and doctors, so we continue to renovate old quarters. It took nearly 4 years to encourage the occupants of the Old Nurses Bungalow to leave. This bungalow is similar to ours, but smaller. And this is where the foreign nursing staff used to stay over thirty years ago. However, the bungalow was literally falling down. The builders who have assessed it feel it is very much salvageable, and have already begun the work on exterior. However the work has stopped again, because of lack of sand. *Pray we can get a regular supply of sand and work gets started again by the end of August.*

Thanks to our faithful God for prayers answered.

Pray for ways to encourage the Eye Surgeons to keep coming to give service here at low cost. And pray also that we may find an optometrist to be based here at SLH who could both see patients who present to the hospital with eye problems, and also visit surrounding communities in rotation to screen the elderly population, who find it difficult to travel to SLH. Our Professor heading up the Eye Surgical Team has agreed to train an optometrist, but we need to find that person.

Pray for more midwives, a doctor, an anaesthetic technician, two lab technicians, and a pharmacist to join us. Pray about whether we should start in-patient services before we have a full complement of staff, or whether to go ahead in faith that others will come.

Prem Jyothi Hospital is still without any Specialist doctors on site - pray for a surgeon to join them.

Thanks for Dr Barnabas who took over as Medical Officer in charge, and has not only faced many clinically challenging situations, but also had the administrative burden that being in charge brings.

Both Barnabas and the other junior doctors who have helped out at PJH in the short term have witnessed miraculous healing of patients who would have died in normal circumstances.

Some of these "miracles" are related in the stories which you can read about on our web page.

There is sad news from Kolkata which has rapidly spread to the entire government hospitals of West Bengal.

In May a gang of around 140 moslems gate crashed the A+E of one of Kolkata's Medical Colleges and beat up the junior doctors badly - two are still in ICU on life support, as a result of head injuries sustained in the attack. This all came about because of the death of an 85 year old man, and none of the doctors who were attacked had been involved in his care. So the entire junior doctor force over Kolkata immediately went on strike and by the next day, not a single junior doctor came to work over the whole State. There is some security in the government hospitals, but clearly not enough, so although the junior doctors have returned to work, the situation is tense, and solutions to security need to be found.

Continue to uphold James in our prayers (see page 2).

Pray he may return to SLH with a fresh desire to serve. James has skills in anaesthesia which the young anaesthetists and anaesthetic technicians have never been taught. Pray that James may feel strong enough to return to work in an advisory and teaching capacity.

Pray that Premlata will be the first of many who wish to come forward and join us.