

## Reflections on 5 years at CRP

This April, CRP's Executive Director Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam, has been in his role for 5 years. In an interview with him, he tells us why he was drawn to CRP initially, and reflects on the successes and challenges over his time in the role.

Also, in this newsletter, we learn about how CRP's therapists are expanding their skills into the fields of mental health and women's health and learn about how CRP continues to develop new technologies and ideas, all to improve the quality of life and future prospects for those with disabilities.



### Chairman's Notes

Our fundraising in the UK continues to be successful and just over £1.3M has been sent out to CRP since VTT's formation in 2007. This is a remarkable achievement over a difficult financial period. Funds from corporate donors are mainly designated for specific projects. However VTT's policy for use of undesignated funds remains that of supporting the poorest patients in the Spinal Cord Injury unit who are often unable to make any contribution to their treatment costs.

Thank you to those who organise a wide range fundraising events including the old favourites of coffee mornings and bring-and-buy sales. Also thank you to the volunteers going out to CRP – last year there were 47 from the UK out of a total of 120. There was a worrying time when the security situation in Bangladesh was a deterrent for some. However the situation at CRP has not been affected by acts of terrorism in other parts of the country and the flow of volunteers is now getting back to normal.

Please do take the opportunity (at the Annual Meeting or contact our Administrator) to buy a copy of the book 'Journeys' written by Elizabeth Timms. This excellent book describes how those with spinal cord injuries have been able to lead new lives thanks to the treatment received at CRP. The individual stories are both moving and inspiring.

Finally thank you to all our supporters who help to provide a better life for those with disability.

**Bertie Woolnough CBE**  
Chairman, Valerie Taylor Trust

# An Interview with Shafiqul Islam



## **Shafiq how did you first hear about CRP?**

Working for the Bangladesh Government for 34 years I become aware of CRP and Valerie from various media stories during the mid-1990's. My joining CRP was a timely coincidence. After my retirement I wanted to join a humanitarian organization and CRP advertised for the position of Executive Director at the perfect time. I joined CRP on 24th April, 2011.

## **How has CRP developed in recent years and what would you say are the biggest achievements?**

Since joining CRP I have seen a lot of developments.

There are some notable achievements and I really cannot say which one is the biggest because all of them are intertwined.

We now work with bilateral donor organizations from multiple countries. On the education side, we have introduced a Master of Physiotherapy and Master of Rehabilitation Science programs which are funded by SAARC Development Fund (SDF). We have also started the first Prosthetic and Orthotics School in Bangladesh. The Nursing Institute has been upgraded to a Nursing College offering a 4 year Nursing Degree under University of Dhaka.

Other achievements include the introduction of a computerized data management system, starting 3 divisional centres and of course successfully completing the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of Rana Plaza disaster survivors.

## **When the Rana Plaza Building collapsed CRP staff were first on the scene – what ongoing part has CRP played?**

Rana Plaza Building Collapse has been one of the challenging events during my time at CRP. We successfully treated 509 Rana Plaza patients with medical services and assistive devices. 392 of these patients were successfully re-integrated into the community following treatment, vocational training and livelihood support. We also follow up their on-going quality of life. We also assessed the functional, medical, and emotional state of all Rana Plaza victim survivors, a total of 1972 people, as part of compensation payment process under ILO (International Labour Organization).

## **Tell me more about your CRP sub Centres**

Currently, 3 Sub-Centres (Rajshahi, Barisal, Moulvibazar) are working in rented buildings. Our next target is to set up our own buildings in these areas with increased patient accommodation and vocational training facilities. At the same time we will continue our efforts to establish new divisional centres at Mymensingh, Khulna, Rangpur and Rangamati.

Our other major efforts will be to establish an enlarged Vocational Institute with the support of Government funds and to spread CRP's wealth of knowledge and skills in the management of spinal cord injury and mental health patients into the Government hospitals.



## **CRP was the first to use IT technology to link medical experts in other countries to patients at CRP through The Swinfen Trust – how else are you using IT now?**

CRP has introduced the first e-health service for people with disabilities, who live in 'hard-to-reach' areas of Bangladesh providing cost effective regular treatment advice and follow-up. CRP has also introduced Digital Queue Management System



## **Is CRP involved internationally?**

CRP continues to send patients and staff to various international events and programs. This year ten of the staff have already attended various international conferences. Sport also helps form international links. Following last year's disabled cricket tournament at CRP, against India's 'West Bengal Cricket Association for Differently Aabled', they will play a return tournament in Kolkata (Calcutta) this year. Many of our previous patients have also participated in the annual 'International Disabled Cricket Tournament' with teams from UK, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan sponsored by ICRC.

(QMS) in the out-patient area, a first ever in a large scale hospital setting in Bangladesh. CRP plans an innovative online e-appointment system for patients where, patients can confirm their appointment using their computer, tablet or, smart phones, sitting in their home.

## **Does CRP still have a holistic approach to its patients?**

Yes, treating patients means not only dealing with medical problems, but day to day living where vocational and recreational development is of paramount importance. CRP assesses the patient's physical, psychological and socio-economic status to enable patients to earn their own livelihood.



### **Has there been a change in attitude to the capabilities of patients?**

Yes, by training and employment by large international firms for some of our patients. For example, Marks & Spenser, Li & Fung and TESCO are helping our patients to complete



vocational training and they then employ graduates in their factories. CRP is also working with GIZ, Germany, on a new project 'Inclusive Job Centre'. The main aims are to train disabled people, raise awareness of their capabilities, create employment opportunities and to develop a web based inclusive job site for them to source employment.

### **Any final comments?**

Valerie's image, CRP's brand and the quality of service of CRP are in high demand and valued all over Bangladesh. CRP's good infrastructure, institutions, human resources

and fixed and liquid assets place CRP in a larger canvass of exceptional humanitarian services.



## **Poppy and the Plant Garden**

Plants have been grown at CRP Savar since the early days and this has now developed into a plant nursery. "We are trying to formalise the gardening for our patients where they learn composting, use of grow bags and mushroom cultivation" Valerie told me. Tim, a new British volunteer is also training some of the patients in bee keeping.

About eighteen months ago Valerie's daughter, Poppy, became more personally involved as one of the Peer Support Assistants of AHEAD (Access to Health and Education for children and young people with Disabilities), a project run by Queens University, Kingston, Canada.

Working one and a half hours a day Poppy calls up the other wheelchair users to work in the garden. With two other staff members and a young volunteer Bangladeshi man, she is learning a lot about when and how plants grow. Some patients are very knowledgeable having been farmers before their accident. Physically some patients need specially adapted implements strapped to their wrists if they are very weak.



The sale of produce from the garden generates a small income for CRP while some vegetables are used in the patient's kitchen. The assistants, like Poppy, are all involved in selling any surplus usually in Savar. "The corn on the cob is looking very healthy and the Aloe Vera is very popular and grows well in the garden" says Valerie. She has just, for the first time, had it made into a drink but doesn't comment on what she thought of it! Medicinal plants also used to be grown at Savar and it is hoped that this tradition can be revived. So much potential!

**Daphne Woolnough**

## **Shakespeare Lives in a Different Romeo and Juliet**

In a project to mark the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the British Council, in conjunction with Graeae Theatre helped develop a production of Romeo and Juliet with a cast almost completely made up of persons with a variety of sensory and physical disabilities, including 3 members from CRP.

This is the first ever theatre performance of its kind in Bangladesh and the first two productions in Dhaka were incredibly well received. The production will now be taken to other venues across Bangladesh and abroad making all at CRP very proud.



## **Development of Women's Health Services at CRP**

### **Ann Vestergaard reports:**

I am a specialist women's health physiotherapist and have worked in this field for 25 years. The opportunity to teach in Bangladesh came at a time in my career when I felt well equipped to pass on my experiences. A couple of the female staff working at CRP had become aware of issues with pregnant patients and older women with incontinence problems. A fellow physiotherapist was volunteering at CRP in the outpatient department at the time, they asked her for help and she contacted me.

The physiotherapists in Bangladesh have had no formal training in the treatment of women's health conditions, so this was the first ever course run in the country. 37 female physiotherapists from CRP Dhaka and CRP Savar

attended. The course was over 3 days, in January 2016 and covered the assessment and treatment of a variety of conditions including common complications in pregnancy for example pelvic plan, and incontinence and prolapse management.

There was a mixture of lectures, practical sessions and patient forums. The participants were really interested and interactive, asked lots of questions and laughed a lot! I made several recommendations for the start of a new women's health service in the department and some of these have already been initiated. A specific room for the women's health physiotherapist has been created, with solid walls for privacy, instead of the usual curtained areas. There are plans in hand to employ a female Gynaecologist who would then work together with the physiotherapist. In all, good progress is being made from an initial idea last year. I look forward to monitoring the progress being made.



# Further improvement work from two long standing supporters

**Jan and Roger Varney have been visiting CRP for the past 20 years with Jan focusing on working with the nurses on the prevention and management of pressure ulcers and Roger undertaking a variety of work including supporting the Social Work rehab team and working with senior management in the Building Maintenance Team.**

During their visit in February 2015, Jan introduced the use of sugar in treating pressure ulcers and burns. In the past Manuka Honey has been used but a pilot scheme has shown that ordinary granulated sugar is equally as effective and costs much less. The feedback from the hospital is that the healing is much quicker and very effective. Jan also introduced new documentation which will ensure and enhance good preventative standards, as well as ensuring good communication and training for senior management in the strategies recommended. In addition, 10 further mattresses were purchased.

An assessment of the ward environment clearly identified that maintenance was required so in collaboration with the Maintenance Managers, with full approval of Val and Shafiq, and with Roger as Clerk of Works, a number of projects were undertaken.

These included:

- purchase and installation of a designated hand washbasin with liquid soap and paper towel dispensers on ward 5
- maintenance to the plumbing of the other wash basins



*New mattresses arrive*

- replacement of flooring in some areas
- Installation of LED lighting in the reception, which is brighter and also more energy and cost efficient.

Roger was also given the task of designing a garden for the inner courtyard of the new Residential Unit and this has now been achieved.

The maintenance projects were all financed as a result of Jan and Roger's fundraising back in Cornwall. Over the years they have raised over £25,000 from various events held in St Austell.

During their stay they were requested to undertake an inspection of the Operating Theatre which identified a number of maintenance needs plus the requirement to purchase new equipment. Jan and Roger have taken on this project for the future and with the St Austell Bay Rotary and various fund raising activities aim to raise sufficient funds to complete the work required.

The aim will be to purchase any necessary equipment in Bangladesh or India and also ensure that a member of the technical staff is trained in the regular maintenance of the theatre equipment.

Look out for further updates on this big project.

## APT at CRP goes from strength to strength

**Janet Ivin writes:**

John and I are both very encouraged by the progress that the Appropriate Paper-based Technology (APT) unit at CRP is making.

Last year the department used APT to make strong and colourful furniture and therapeutic toys for the newly opened hostel that houses 35 children with special needs.



*APT tables for wheelchair users*

The APT staff have grown in confidence and led a week-long training course for staff from Amar Joty (a special needs school in Dhaka) to train and equip them with the skills necessary to make educational and therapeutic equipment for the children attending their school.

It is now almost two years since John and I provided any hands-on input to the APT unit and we always look forward to hearing about new developments in the APT unit.

**Keep us up to date: If you have moved house, got married or had any other change in circumstances, please inform the administrator as soon as possible via the contact details on the last page of this newsletter.**



*Residential unit courtyard garden*

# Big Steps Forward in Mental Health Care

## Mental Health OT

### Karen Heaslip reports:

In Bangladesh, the stigma and shame associated with mental health overshadows the need for treatment. There are only two public mental health hospitals for a population of 160 million people, and when people do seek treatment, there is little or no therapies available despite the fact that Occupational therapy (OT), plays an integral role in rehabilitation in mental health.

At the end of 2014, a project called 'Restore Mental Health', started within the mental health hospital in Dhaka. Its main aims are to develop occupational therapy in the area of mental health and, educate and promote rehabilitation among patients, family and other professionals.

The project employed an OT from CRP, Razia Sultana, to work full time in the mental health hospital. Initially, patients were selected from attending psychological groups, but after some promotional work, patients and their carers started to refer themselves. As patients started to benefit from the service, the number of referrals from doctors increased dramatically, with doctors commenting that 'medication isn't enough' to treat these patients.

Other developments were the opportunities to present at the SAARC International Conference of Psychiatry in Nepal, and the World Congress of Psychosocial Rehabilitation in South Korea. The comments and feedback from these conferences were very positive and gave us encouragement to keep moving forward.



Conference

With positive feedback from CRP and from the director at the mental health hospital, we are planning to extend the project by 5 years, and if funds allow, expand the services offered by employing another OT.

Razia, and I also decided to complete a 2 day workshop for the OTs at CRP, to help with the development in that area and share our experiences of working in the mental health hospital. Our main aim was to increase their confidence about mental health and ability to distinguish these issues in the patients they were treating. All the OTs were able to identify some of their patients with mental health difficulties, and said they would feel more confident addressing these issues during therapy. We received very positive feedback after the training, with many of the participants requesting more training like this in the future.

It has been a very moving and humbling experience working with patients in the mental health hospital; seeing resilience and strength in a new light, the impact that compassion and empathy can have and how giving a person hope can help them flourish and believe in themselves.

With the future of the project looking positive, I'm not only looking forward to seeing the change in mental health services in Bangladesh, but more importantly, the continued opportunities of offering hope and compassion.



Mental Health garden

# CRP awarded for promoting integration through sport

A team from CRP, led by Krishno Sen, Head of Rehabilitation, have won first place in the Inclusion by Design Impact Awards. The award was set up to inspire and share practices around the world that demonstrate excellence and innovation in their approach to achieving more inclusion for children and adolescents with disabilities.

The award committee praised Krishno and the team for their innovative and easily reproducible approach to creating lifelong friendships among children with and without disabilities through sport and play at the community level. They developed a very simple system by which children with disabilities are the 'gate keepers' of low-cost durable sports resources (e.g. traditional games, board games, cricket sets, etc.). The resources are accessible to everyone and should children with and



without disabilities wish to play with them, they have to do so in cooperation with the 'gatekeeper'. The program was started in 2014 and has reached more than 1,200 children with disabilities and another 3,000 without disability, from 25 schools and 60 villages. CRP has captured information showing positive changes in the attitudes of the children in these communities, as well as among the community leaders, school management committees and

local religious leaders. They have become champions of inclusion and stronger advocates for including children with disabilities in their communities. In the end, the children are coming together, creating friendships and themselves creating more inclusive communities, while learning together how to break down societal barriers including negative stereotypes and beliefs.

The prize fund of \$1000 will be used to further develop this incredible program. Well done to all involved.

## First Step in the development of a power wheelchair

The development of a powered wheelchair is something CRP has been looking towards for a long time. This would allow wheelchair users with reduced arm function to have independence moving about, and not have to rely on others. However, the technology and ability to do this with locally available materials had proved elusive. Arham Chowdhury, a volunteer from Dhaka, along

with a group of mechanical and electrical engineers from BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) have produced a prototype chair from locally available parts. Initial trials have been very positive and although there is still a way to go, the team are optimistic they will perfect the design and provide further options for those dependent on a wheelchair for their mobility.

# A Beacon of Hope

Last year, we asked you to consider leaving a legacy to VTT in your will. Sue Reeves' late husband, John, did just that. Sue explains what this meant to them both:



"In the early 1980s my husband, John Reeves, and I first met Valerie Taylor in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She had come initially to work as a Volunteer in a children's hospital. We found her no longer in a hospital but in a single room in rented accommodation in the suburb of Dhanmondi. Here, with little equipment and not much help, but with great concern, Val was looking after four patients who had damaged spines. They were no longer able to walk or care for themselves or their families. Val, an experienced physiotherapist, was giving them the hope of one day being rehabilitated, able to face life in the world again with dignity and purpose.

John and I knew the value of legs. He had had limited use of his from the age of twenty six, so, on seeing the work that Val had as her vision for the future, we both felt that, as far as is humanly possible, restoration of body, mind and spirit regardless of colour, creed or nationality was important.

There is so much I would like to say about CRP in general and the qualities of determination, vision and single mindedness that have made it what it is today. Now, in 2016, we see a well-established, effective NGO whose sole purpose is to help people whose lives would be hopelessly limited if it were not there.

The development and growth of CRP is an indication that universally this is beginning to be realised. If you are about to make a Will do spare a thought for such an inspired endeavour as this Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed in Bangladesh. It is a beacon of hope in this unequal world."

Liz Timms, a long time supporter of CRP, is putting together a book about the history of CRP. She would love to hear from anyone who has stories, memories and pictures from their time at CRP over the years but especially those who visited CRP during the years at at Dhan Mandi, Farm Gate and the early times at Savar.

If you would like to share or for more information please contact Liz via her email: [liztimms01@gmail.com](mailto:liztimms01@gmail.com)

If you are on the lookout for original and eco-friendly gifts, then have a look at [www.anamikaaccessories.co.uk](http://www.anamikaaccessories.co.uk)

They sell traditional hand-woven scarves and handmade crafts, some of which are made in Bangladesh. 50p from each sale is donated to 2 chosen charities, one of which is the Valerie Taylor Trust.

All the trustees want to express our sincere thanks to two long standing trustees who have stood down in the past year. **Michael Woodley** and **Wendy Best** have both been ardent supporters of CRP over the years and their dedication and support to the VTT has been indispensable.

They will both be missed.

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The disabled poor in Bangladesh continue to need help. The Valerie Taylor Trust supports the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed. This is the only place in the country where the paralysed are given specialist treatment – free of charge for the very poorest.

### Support our work by:

- Regular donations by completing the back page of this newsletter – our preferred method.
- Donate on-line to our bank, details overleaf, or via [www.valerietaylortrust.org](http://www.valerietaylortrust.org), [www.paypal.co.uk](http://www.paypal.co.uk) or [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com).
- Donate by Text to TXTVTT12 £+ the amount (£1 to £10) from any UK mobile phone to 70070. You will receive confirmation of your donation which is deducted from your mobile phone without charge for the text message.
- Please register your donations for Gift Aid if this is applicable.
- Use a VTT Collection Box in the home and outdoors – obtained from the Administrator.
- Make a legacy. All sizes of donations are valuable and are tax-free. Please ask for our leaflet.

### Administration

We keep administration costs to a low 2-3% of income. However, as postage costs increase, we want to make maximum use of email. Please tick the following boxes as appropriate:

- I am happy to receive routine correspondence by email
- I am happy to VTT Newsletters by email
- Please unsubscribe me from the VTT mailing list

My email address is .....

Name and Address .....

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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE VTT ADMINISTRATOR

### Helping the Disabled Poor and their Families

**Administration Address:** 4 Wilberforce Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HA

**Tel:** 01622 743011 **Email:** [admin@valerietaylortrust.org](mailto:admin@valerietaylortrust.org) **Web:** [www.valerietaylortrust.org](http://www.valerietaylortrust.org)

**Valerie Taylor Trust** is a charity registered in England and Wales (number 1122245)

# DONATE TO THE VALERIE TAYLOR TRUST

- I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to **Valerie Taylor Trust**
- I would like to join the **Valerie Taylor Trust** (please tick as applicable)

In order to become a member, at least £25 per year, or £2 per month, must be given as a donation. You do not need to be a member to donate to the Valerie Taylor Trust, but being a member entitles you to regular updates on news and information, voting rights at the Annual General Meeting and ensures VTT continuity.

## PERSONAL DETAILS

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Contact Tel No .....

Email .....

## STANDING ORDER DETAILS

Your Bank/Building Society .....

Address of Bank/Building Society .....

Account Name (usually your own name) .....

Account No ..... Bank Sort Code - -

To the Manager: Please pay to HSBC for the credit of **Valerie Taylor Trust**, Account Number 3122 5227, Sort Code 40-28-29. IBAN (International Banking Account Number) GB59MIDL40282931225227 the sum of

£..... starting on ..... (date) and on the same date each **month / year**

Signature ..... Date .....

(Bank PLEASE QUOTE \_\_\_\_\_) (A number will be added by the Valerie Taylor Trust)

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

- I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.
- I wish all future donations to VTT to be under the Gift Aid Scheme until I notify you otherwise.

Signature ..... Date .....

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Please send **all of this form** to: **The Administrator**

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