

Spring
2011

Valerie Taylor Trust

Supporting the work of Valerie Taylor in Bangladesh

Doctor Valerie Taylor

Valerie Taylor received an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Health Science from York St John University on 19th November, 2010 at an amazing ceremony held in York Minster with a congregation of 3000 graduands and visitors.

Corinna Klaentschi sponsored Valerie and delivered the citation which included a history of CRP and some more personal messages:

"Valerie has not only transformed the lives of many poor and disabled people in Bangladesh but also the lives of many international professionals and volunteers who have worked at CRP. I was fortunate enough to volunteer as an 18 year old school leaver and have been back to the Centre and involved in the charity ever since. It was Valerie who inspired and directed me to qualify as an



occupational therapist and later on use my belief in internationalisation to inform my work in placement education with undergraduate therapists.

York St John will be a richer community for having forged such a strong working relationship with Valerie, the Centre and the Training Institute (BHPI). And those of us in this country who as individuals have come into contact with Valerie, whether as undergraduates on clinical placement, or as volunteers or fund-raisers, are professionally and spiritually the richer for having done so. I think you will agree that Valerie is extremely deserving of this honorary degree."



Valerie Taylor and Corinna Klaentschi

The degree ceremony was a culmination of a busy week in York. Valerie delivered lectures to both 30 York St John University staff and 30 undergraduate occupational therapy students. At a meeting with 11 individual staff it was possible to share ideas and discuss options for further collaboration around themes including inclusive sport, OT in mental health and research opportunities.

Corinna arranged a fundraising buffet dinner in her home town of Knaresborough. Hosted by the owners of Zolsha Restaurant, it was attended by 66 people and raised an impressive £960. New people were introduced to CRP and long term supporters had the opportunity to meet up again especially the former York St John students who shared fond memories of their 3 months working in CRP. Corinna will continue to co-ordinate and progress the relationship between York St John and CRP which has the potential to benefit both parties in many ways.

Pete Donnelly – rolling home

Raising money – have you run a marathon, jumped out of an aircraft, swum the Channel? Held a coffee morning, lunch, tea party, dinner party, or dance? Have you arranged a Mufti Day at your local school or a mile of pennies, or a teddy bear's picnic? Or organised a treasure hunt, bric-a-brac sale, sponsored walk, swim-a-thon or supported Peter Donnelly 'rolling home'?

"I'm hoping to raise awareness of what can be achieved using a wheelchair" says paraplegic Pete Donnelly. He is also raising money for CRP's new Maulvi Bazaar project in the north of Bangladesh at the same time as he journeys home to the UK covering 10,000 miles. This amazing young man spent four months as a volunteer at CRP then decided to travel back to Liverpool, UK in his wheelchair using only land/sea transport. He is currently in Taiwan (March 2011) for a month as he won't break his 'no fly' rule. To catch up on his progress and make a donation go to 'Just Giving Pete Donnelly'.

Valerie's Story

Do you have any interesting stories about Valerie and her life's work in Bangladesh? Exploratory work is underway to see how a record might be compiled and to identify sources of material. Please let me know if you can contribute. The project is self-funding (no VTT funds will be used) so suggestions about possible sources of sponsorship would be very helpful. **Contact Margaret Hakim at margarethakim@aol.com or 01234 825459**

Chairman's Notes

Another year gone by and more good news to celebrate. First, our congratulations to Valerie on the award of an Honorary Doctorate from York St John University. In Bangladesh, the opening of the new CRP- run physiotherapy out-patient facility in Chittagong means that another piece of Valerie's vision for the future is in place. The core work of CRP continues. A minimum of 50% of poor Spinal Cord Injury patients are treated free of charge and over 27,000 out-patients receive treatment each year.

Our financial support of around £120,000 a year remains a significant amount for CRP – about 8% of its annual income. Also the many UK volunteers who go to CRP each year carry out important roles, not just as health professionals, but in other key areas such as management and administration. Do **YOU** have time and a skill to offer as a volunteer? Can we raise even more money this coming year? If you are inspired by Valerie's work in Bangladesh, please share that inspiration with others and so help to increase our support for Valerie's work in Bangladesh.

Bertie Woolnough CBE



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Ibrahim the artist

New designs...

Twenty four year old Ibrahim has been at CRP for 5 years. He was electrocuted while working on a building site and the resultant fall left him in a wheelchair and without his arms which had to be amputated. The youngest of a family of five, his three sisters are all married and his brother works in the construction business. His mother cares for him at CRP Savar.

His first year at CRP was spent undergoing treatment, he then began his rehabilitation including painting by mouth. Some of you will be familiar with one of his first paintings of a river scene with trees. His portfolio is now quite wide ranging from groups of people in daily life situations to various subjects of native Bangladeshi flora and fauna.

The CRP printing press has reproduced seven of his paintings as a set of post cards. The subjects include fruit trees, fish and a very striking bull. The set, in a handmade paper envelope, will be available at the AGM and thereafter from Margaret Hakim at margarethakim@aol.com or 01234 825459.

Trustee David Newell writes: Putting Oxford on the map

The study of a map of the British Isles shows supporters are in geographical clusters of people who had worked in Bangladesh and knew Valerie and CRP. They were, and still are, the backbone of our support. Oxford, where I live, did not feature. I wanted to put Oxford on the map.

A chance meeting at Bangkok airport with an Oxford student, returning from voluntary work in Cambodia, and my acquaintance with Aziz Rahman, a prominent British Bangladeshi and restaurateur, alerted me to Oxford's potential. With generous help from Aziz, an event for Valerie was arranged at the Asian Cultural Centre in East Oxford. John Goddard, Oxford's Lord Mayor elect and Mrs Goddard attended and this resulted in the Lord Mayor nominating the Valerie Taylor Trust as one of his charities for his mayoral year.

Our Chairman, Bertie Woolnough, and I met the Lord Mayor to thank him for his interest and help and raised the possibility of seeking support from the students. He put me in touch with Jake Leeper at the Oxford Hub who told me about TravelAid.

Soon afterwards I was with Nick Denny and Megan Brown, both students on the Oxford TravelAid Committee talking about Valerie and CRP.

Many university students will play key roles in society when they leave university. Enlightened by their experience of working in developing countries, such people, seem to me the best possible investment in the future.

In November 2010 the Lord Mayor kindly hosted a reception for Valerie highlighting the role of students in international understanding. Zoey Forbes from Oxford TravelAid arranged a meeting with members and Valerie at Lady Margaret Hall. A Bangladeshi student at Oxford visited at Christmas (2010) and four medical students plan to spend the 2011 summer vacation at CRP Savar.

After the Lord Mayor's reception, Jane Skinner, a long-time supporter of CRP, gave me this quotation from Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist – 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has'.

Our grateful thanks to...

- **Eve Reckitt Trust Fund for a donation of £1000**
- **Alan Dye for the proceeds of £250 from the Cygnet Singers concert**
- **Gill and Hugh Lambert and friends for hosting lunches in Camberley, raising a welcome £723**
- **St. Thomas & St. John Church, Radcliffe, Manchester, for £300 from their fundraising event.**
- **Tring Team Parish Mission Committee for £1508.88**
- **Robert Biom Company for their £5000 donation**
- **And finally to Elspeth Fisher and her hens who by their efforts laid £450 worth of eggs sold for Valerie Taylor Trust!**

New Speech and Language Therapy Department at Savar

The building of the new Speech and Language department is nearing completion with three classrooms already operational allowing the six teachers to instruct the 108 students in their four year course. Runu Chowdhury, the Principal,

showed me round and explained that following the student's three year diploma course, in the fourth year they specialise; the female students in midwifery; the males in orthotics. I also met a Canadian student, Shannon Kerr, who is at CRP

on six weeks placement where she has been particularly helped to develop skills in problem solving and finding different approaches. "I'll definitely come back when I'm qualified" said Shannon.

DAW

Final year international placement: Neil Roberts

Valerie visited York St John University in 2008 where her inspiring talk, kind hearted nature and devotion to the Bengali people captured my heart. So I applied to undertake my final year placement at CRP. In April 2010 I set off on my adventure to Bangladesh with two fellow students. The language barrier presented a significant challenge in the first few weeks. As our vocabulary expanded both the staff at CRP, clients and locals loved that we could converse with them, especially both of my clients who loved to banter. Many people began to call me Blue, the direct translation for my name.

I worked independently providing occupational therapy for two clients' self-care, productivity and leisure. I also used my skills as an athletics coach to educate both staff and clients in javelin, shot put and discus. On a daily basis I played basketball to build up good therapeutic relationships with my clients. The clients loved to put my brakes on while they whizzed past me, causing me to fly out of my wheelchair!

Working in a developing country opened my eyes to the comparative lack of resources and differences in practice. It gave me an understanding into why these differences occur whilst enabling me to share my own knowledge in alternative methods of practice.

Living and working within a totally different culture from my own, I now have a greater understanding, awareness and respect for the beliefs, values and ethics of other cultures. I will draw on these skills throughout my career within the UK where cultural diversity is prevalent. My ambition is to return to CRP in a few years to share more experiences of clinical practice to further develop globalisation in occupational therapy.



Neil Roberts, Rebecca Walsh & Kathryn Colman

Bedford dinner - Margaret Hakim writes:

On 30th November 2010 supporters in Bedford were treated to an evening of good food and musical entertainment at Magna Tandoori restaurant. Proprietor, Mohammed, a long time supporter of VTT, his sons and staff provided an excellent meal for 76 guests.

We were entertained by a group called Rangla Punjab whose young performers gave their services free. The evening raised the magnificent sum of £1,111.00. Valerie was able to collect the cheque in Bedford.

A Family affair

In September 2008 Al-Amin was living with his family in Rampur, attending Class 8, when he climbed a palm tree for its fruit and fell, paralysing himself from the neck down. The local doctor told his family there was nowhere in Bangladesh where he could be treated and they should take him to Madras in India which the family could not afford. Four months later his mother was speaking to a family friend, a doctor, who told them about CRP and kindly took them there in his own vehicle.

Al-Amin is still under treatment and being looked after by his mother. At the moment (Feb 2011) he has only a small amount of movement in the muscles at the base of his neck. His father was employed as a construction worker at CRP until his failing eyesight became too bad. After an operation on one eye, he is waiting for the operation on the other eye. The family lives just outside the CRP gate in rented accommodation



Al-Amin with his mother

subsidised by CRP from where Al-Amin's younger brother attends the William and Marie School in KG 1.

From the Treasurer

We are looking forward to good results this financial year but, like all charities, are concerned to maintain financial support in difficult times. We would like to remind supporters of three items related to Taxation –

From 6th April, 2011, Gift Aid rebate from HMRC is 25%; still a valuable income from donations by taxpayers once registered. Please use it if possible.

Organising a fundraising event? See our latest Event Package for Organisers (available from our Administrator) which includes details of changes for claiming Gift Aid if a compulsory payment, or ticket, is needed to attend the event.

Legacies are another valuable donation as such bequests are tax free and reduce any Inheritance Tax due by the equivalent sum. Again more information from our Administrator.

Marks + Start

An initiative by Marks & Spencer is giving training and work to patients at CRP. 27 factories in Bangladesh are now employing 222 physically challenged female patients.

After a two months training course run by Anwara Saker at CRP Gonokbari through their Marks + Start programme the factory managers select from the girls who have finished the programme. The programme trains the girls how to operate modern commercial sewing machines supplied by M&S as part of their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programme started in 2006.

During the training each girl creates her own folder showing her progress, the results of the periodic tests set during training and also examples of each of the style of collars, pockets, cuffs and



Anwara Sarker teaching Marks + Start

decorative stitching they need to master. This file is taken along to the job interview. If successful they can expect to be making garments including shirts, jackets and T-shirts which, though the majority go to EU countries, go to M&S stores worldwide.

We visited the latest nine trainees during their first week when they were learning about the various parts and functions of the sewing machine and how to control the speed. The latter is very important as part of the final test includes a speed test against a stop watch. Each trainee must have two working arms/hands and

one working leg – it doesn't matter if this is the right or the left leg since the control of the power of the machine is a plate similar to the old treadle.

Teacher, Anwara Sarker, herself has many years experience working in a factory and passes on her own experiences to the Gonokbari girls during their training. "I am so happy today" she said during our recent visit. "I have just heard that five of our girls have been voted the best, the very best of all the employees – the position of excellence – this year. That is a tremendous achievement!" Anwara also mentioned that they frequently get letters from the various factories praising the CRP workers. "As well as the challenge to our CRP girls, the factories have also responded well to the challenge of employing people with disabilities" added Anwara.

There were several work related posters displayed around the training room; I was particularly struck by this one: – "Quality makes Sales, Sales makes jobs". Clearly the girls from Gonokbari are providing the quality and getting the jobs!

DAW

Betty Thornton



It is with sadness we report the death at 94 of Betty Thornton. A member of Daventry United Reformed Church for 89 years and passionate supporter, Betty donated items and helped at the Tuesday Sales in aid of Valerie's work, arriving at 7.30am winter and summer until a few weeks before she died. Pam Smith, who ran the Sales with her raising thousands of pounds for CRP, writes "Her smiling face and gentle personality will be missed by all who knew her". In 2010 alone the Sales raised £6,000.

Magic Mushrooms?

Well not exactly. But there is a new income generation project at Gonokbari.

In a small covered 'shed' about 8ft x 10ft, there are shelves and shelves containing 1000 plastic bags (about the size of Lakeland's No. 6) which contain growing medium with a circular hole near the top. One of the two growing 'seasons' was in full swing when we visited in mid-February.

Parveen, who has been in charge at Gonokbari for just over a year, introduced us to Md. Mazarul Islam, who with the help of a wheelchair user, runs the mushroom project. Parveen and Mazarul did a six day training course at The Savar Mushroom Training Centre.

Each of the 'fruiting' bags daily yield is around 300g with an overall yield of 3 – 4 kg which sells for Taka 120/= per kg. Once the mushrooms are cut the bags are moved to the lower shelves on a rotational system. Sold dried the mushrooms fetch Taka 800/= per Kg. Initial spoor costs Taka 8/= so this new



Md Mazarul Islam with mushrooms

project is a nice little earner AND the mushrooms taste great.

DAW

PS: I couldn't get the name of the mushroom though it looks like an oyster – can anyone out there identify it?

Helping the Disabled Poor and their Families

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