

## From the Chairman

**It was a great encouragement for us that in 2022 Valerie herself was able, as was not possible during the pandemic, to be in the UK giving interviews and speaking at fund-raising events from our Annual Meeting in May through until November. As ever, she showed remarkable resilience adapting to the challenges posed by some of these engagements, including long journeys and late night starts.**

Farhan Masud Khan has continued to help us with raising awareness of VTT and CRP in the British Bangladeshi Community. In particular he organised a Global Seminar on People with Disabilities and Autism which drew contributions from a wide range of speakers, including an excellent concise presentation of CRP's activities by Sohrab Hossein, the Executive Director, and a passionate contribution from the High Commissioner for Bangladesh in the UK. If you have time, you can view it on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuxQxgVGnzo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuxQxgVGnzo). With his support, we have also held a variety of successful in-person events across the country including London, Cambridge, and Leicester.

As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, more people, both volunteers and visitors, have gone to CRP from the UK this year than in the years of the pandemic, and we hope these contacts will be sustained in the future: nothing inspires support for CRP as much as seeing what it actually does for people with disabilities.

It has been year when many people have had less real income, more expenses, and other pressing calls for charitable giving as a result of the war in Ukraine and more recently the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. In these circumstances, it is remarkable that with Farhan's help we have raised a little more income this year than last. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this result with donations large and small. We are greatly blessed with your generous support. Some of the money was given for the completion of the first and second floors of the new CRP Centre under construction at Moulvibazar, and the rest will enable CRP to subsidise the costs of treatment and rehabilitation for people with disabilities who cannot afford the full costs themselves.

**Ben Clackson**



*Valerie, with Trustee Margaret Hakim, at an awareness raising event*

# Specialist Bobath Training at CRP

Jill Fisher writes: I was delighted to have the opportunity to spend this January at CRP Savar, especially as it was a visit delayed for three years due to Covid. My first visit to CRP was about 25 years ago. This was my seventh visit and, as previous ones, I was bowled over by the developments and growth that had taken place.



*Jill facilitating a teaching session*

Across Bangladesh, there still isn't sufficient professional rehabilitation available for people who have suffered stroke and other neurological conditions (my area of expertise as a physiotherapist). Therefore, the number of people that the CRP satellite centers are treating is increasing, along with the range of services on offer.

During my time at CRP I had the pleasure to visit the Mirpur centre and saw the opening of the new, very smart, physiotherapy department. I also had the pleasure of travelling to the Mymensingh centre with Valerie. As the unit is situated on university land, Valerie met with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture to thank him for the support the university gives CRP and to try to progress plans for much needed expansion of Mymensingh. I joined with the therapists there and treated three patients with the staff. That day, as throughout my visits to all departments, I received a very warm welcome. Staff were very pleased to have the opportunity to learn from an experienced colleague and share treatment ideas.

During my visit to Bangladesh, I spent most of my time in Savar, in the neurology departments and the two stroke units as well as working with

OTs. I tried to offer to work with each member of staff equally be they interns, newly qualified staff, or senior staff. I was particularly interested to work with physiotherapists who had completed the postgraduate Bobath course. I had helped to facilitate this globally recognised course led by internationally recognised tutors. I was pleased to see the positive impact that the courses have had on the treatment staff are able to offer and had the opportunity to deliver some additional theory and practical teaching sessions.



*Jill with CRP Staff*

I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to support CRP in my own small way. I am in awe of Valerie, Sohrab (the relatively new Executive Director) and all the staff in the organisation who generate such an inspirational ethos. It seems to be that where a need is recognised, the organisation develops to meet that need. It's not an exaggeration to say many hundreds of people's lives are impacted in a positive way every day by the service CRP provides. I always feel as though I'm leaving a little piece of my heart in CRP when I leave Bangladesh.

I'm greatly looking forwards seeing what other exciting developments will have been made when I'm next able to return!

# Rana Plaza Disaster – 10 years on

**On 24 April 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Savar, which housed five garment factories, killed at least 1,132 people and injured more than 2,500.**

Most people who are familiar with CRP have heard of the disaster because the location was within a kilometre of the centre's HQ. CRP's staff and students were amongst the first responders. Within days of the accident, senior executives from Loblaw Companies Limited (a Canadian retailer) visited CRP and pledged financial support, which amounted to one-half million Canadian dollars and gave rise to the program "Revive". The funds came through Friends of CRP - Canada of which I am the Founder and President. Since that time, the Revive program at CRP has treated and supported many hundreds of survivors with rehabilitation, financial compensation, assistive devices and vocational training. As a long-time volunteer (since 1994), I became very involved in the project in Canada where Valerie and I crossed the country meeting Canadian supporters and ex-patriate Bangladeshis. In Bangladesh, over successive years, I have visited survivors at both CRP and in their village homes. Covid suspended visits from 2020 until this year when I was able to reunite with many survivors such as Saima and her brother Babul. Saima suffered a spinal injury leaving her paraplegic and Babul's wife died in his arms still in rubble. Saima now has two grandchildren to date, and Babul has remarried and runs a successful electronics shop. Their stories and others will be described in greater detail and published in time for the 10th Anniversary.

**Carolyn Scott**



*Carolyn with Saima and Babul*

## **Annual Supporters Meeting 2023**

**Saturday 13th May 2023**

**St Paul's Community Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ**

**Doors open at 12.30pm – Curry lunch from 1pm – Annual Meeting starts 2pm**

**If you intend to come please RSVP to our Administrator to allow us to cater accordingly**

**Email: [admin@valerietaylortrust.org](mailto:admin@valerietaylortrust.org) or Tel: 01622 743011**



# The Flying Furniture Makers

Long Term Volunteer Hanneke Cusell reports on her recent visit to CRP



*Wood workshop at CRP Ganakbari*

It was wonderful to arrive at Dhaka airport and to be met by driver Salwar Selim, one of the many people I have come to know so well over the years and whom I was very happy to see again. Three years since my last visit, and I felt immediately very welcomed and at home again.

One of my aims was to prepare for the visit of the VMM to the wood workshop at Ganakbari in the summer. VMM (Vliegende Meubelmakers, or translated: the Flying Furniture Makers) in The Netherlands flies each summer to 3 or 4 projects in countries in Asia, Africa and South America. VMM originated in 2005 from the initiative of students from the Vocational College for Woodworking, Furniture and Interior Design, to go to Sri Lanka and to offer help to the victims of the tsunami there. The projects focus on transfer and exchange of knowledge and skills and cultural exchange. CRP applied to VMM in 2019, and VMM selected CRP out of about 20 applications as one of their projects for summer 2020. Covid disrupted these plans but now the projects are slowly starting up again and there are 5 students who are interested to go to Bangladesh. They will travel in mid-July and stay for about 3.5 weeks to work with CRP staff of the Wood Workshop.

As the initial application was more than three years ago, it was decided to look at this again with fresh eyes. So we had some fruitful meetings, including with Sajal Majumder, the centre manager at Ganakbari, Abdus Satter, supervisor of the wood workshop, and James who is setting up a 6 months carpentry training at Savar for patients with a disability. As for the wishes of the CRP wood workshop, an interesting idea came up. At the moment the workshop mostly makes furniture for CRP Savar and the various subcentres, but the production of some income generating items is also possible. At the moment the so-called smart furniture is booming in Bangladesh. This is space-saving and multipurpose furniture for example a single bed that can also work as a sofa, coffee table and provide storage. Such furniture is in high demand, as most people have small homes. Hopefully CRP Wood workshop and VMM can work out something in this line together.

At the end of March there will be an online meeting between CRP and the VMM participants. That is the start of their preparation. To be continued in the summer!

# Musculoskeletal Training for CRP Staff and Students

Many of the volunteers who visit Bangladesh are neurological or paediatric specialists. CRP was therefore particularly pleased to welcome Yuichi Takata, an experienced musculoskeletal physiotherapist from Japan. He reflects on his experience below:

I stayed at CRP for about two weeks starting in late December. During my stay at CRP, I did two main things: I worked in the Musculoskeletal Unit at CRP providing physiotherapy to patients, and I taught lectures and practical skills to undergraduate and graduate students at the Bangladesh Health Professionals Institute (BHPI).

The physiotherapy experience at CRP was one of my most cherished memories; the staff at CRP were kind and helpful. I shared the knowledge and skills I had learned in Japan and abroad with the physiotherapists and I also learned new ideas in return.

At BHPI, I gave lectures, which I found very rewarding. The students were all very enthusiastic and wonderful, and the faculty at BHPI were interested in the physiotherapy that I do.

I am interested in insoles, manual therapy, and biomechanics, which I use to treat patients.

I visited CRP because I found an article about Dr. Valerie A. Taylor on the website and really wanted to meet her. I am very happy to have met her in person and to hear her thoughts on CRP and Bangladesh.

My thanks to Md. Shofiqul Islam, Head of Department of Physiotherapy and MPT Coordinator, Ehsanur Rahman, and all the staff of CRP for their warm support. My visit to the CRP has made me realize once again the importance of taking care of people and the importance of human connections. It was a very important opportunity for my life and I will continue to cherish my connection with CRP.



*Yuichi Takata and some of his students*

# Adaptive Cricket League at CRP

## CRP Staff member Mizanur Rahman reports:

The Inclusive Cricket League at CRP is working to establish itself as a model league for the country, where persons with and without disabilities can play cricket together. This year, we held the tournament from 7th January to 14th February and matches were streamed live on Facebook. 12 teams participated and for every team it was mandatory to register a person using a wheelchair. All the players were staff from CRP and staff with disabilities also performed other roles in the tournament, as commentators, scorers etc. I was in the organizing committee. The tournament helps create a good relationship between staff with and without disabilities. Shahin Kadir from CRP Gonokbari was selected as the best player in a wheelchair.



*Celebrating a victory*

## Inauguration of New Vocational Training Centre

### In March 2022, CRP launched its new branch in Manikgani.

Most of this site is dedicated to Vocational Training with outpatient therapy also available. The building is well designed for those with disabilities and many participants live locally, although there are also accommodation options on site. The centre offers a variety of training programmes including phone repairs, electronics and computer training and shop keeping.



*Valerie at the opening ceremony*

CRP Manikganj centre was donated to CRP by Mrs Raihana Ahmad in honour of her late husband. She told us: "My husband, the late Dr. Mahbubuddin Ahmad passed away on 14th April 2002 in London. Before he died, I asked him what to do with

the property he bought in Manikganj. He immediately told me to donate the land, homestead, pond, paddy field, all of it, for a good cause. I first visited CRP in 2002/3 and was impressed. When I came to know they specialised in stroke and other disabilities

I made up my mind to donate the property to CRP. Long live CRP and the Vocational Training Centre established by CRP in Manikganj! My heartfelt gratitude goes to each and every one who was involved with this project from its inception to the present stage."



# New Computers Aid Learning at WMTS

Thanks to a generous donation from the Rotary Club of Southgate, William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School (WMTS) has been able to purchase new tablets and computers which will help all students have an opportunity to become IT literate.

Access to computers is essential for all students but can be particularly helpful for children with Cerebral Palsy, who may struggle to write legibly due to spasms or weakness in their arms. Additionally, WMTS is developing links with similar schools in the U.K. and improved IT equipment could greatly enhance these links and the ease of communication.



*Tying out a new computer with adapted keyboard and mouse*

## Lord Roger Swinfen MBE

**It is with sadness that we inform supporters of the death of Lord Roger Swinfen MBE.**

Roger, along with his wife Pat first visited CRP in 1992 and have been active supporters ever since. In particular, Roger was instrumental in setting up a pilot study of using telemedicine to link staff at CRP with a group of medical consultants working in the UK. This initial project developed into a network of hundreds of medical professionals across 96 countries, supported by the Swinfen Charitable Trust.

HRH The Princess Royal became a patron of the charity in 2014, having first witnessed the benefit of Telemedicine at CRP.

Valerie remembers Roger fondly, writing *"there must be countless people with disabilities who owe their treatment outcomes to conversations had between staff of CRP and medical professionals around the world"*

# Plans Under Way for New Regional Centre

In February, CRP staff including Valerie and CRP Trustees, Saidur Rahman, Mustaque Ahmed and Aminul Haque, made a visit to Rajshahi where the Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation has generously donated a 5 acre piece of land.

The aim of the visit was to arrange a gathering with local people to share CRP's plans for the site. The event was held on the donated plot of land and between 300 - 400 people attended. The event received quite a bit of coverage on local television channels it seems! The donor expressly said that it was not supposed to be a fundraising event, however pledges from the audience for the needs of the new building spontaneously started, with one crore taka being committed over the course of the event! Currently CRP Savar is the only centre where patients with acute spinal injuries are admitted. It serves roughly the middle of the country so those in the north can miss out on the high-quality care CRP provides. It is hoped that this plot of land will become a regional centre for the northern part of Bangladesh, offering acute in-patient services as well as the usual range of out-patient services. Additionally, it is looking likely that the Bangladesh Health Professionals Institute, based currently at CRP Savar, will expand its services under the Rajshahi Medical University. This will enable CRP to train increasing numbers of Allied Health Professions, to meet the growing need for these professionals in Bangladesh.

## National Paralympic Committee Visit CRP

**Earlier this year, an organisation dedicated to para-archery was launched in Bangladesh.**

As part of the celebrations, Secretary General of World Archery, Mr. Tom Dielen and the Secretary General of World Archery Asia, Mr. Han Kyu-Hyung, accompanied by the officials of National Paralympic Committee Bangladesh, visited CRP. They met with Valerie (who is the President of the National Paralympic Committee) as well as meeting with athletes from CRP.



*Adaptive weight training demonstration*



# Community Health Worker Training at CRP

**Shabnam Rangwala, an experienced paediatric physiotherapist, ran training at CRP in December 2022. She reports:**

I have been a MAITS (Multi Agency International Training Support) trainer since 2016 which has given me an opportunity to experience and learn from different cultures and settings. The MAITS Community Health Worker training package has been designed to serve families with children with developmental delay in low resource settings. Through trained local health workers, families receive recently updated family centric interventions for their children. The package teaches the health workers to make adaptations based on the availability of local resources, human and material. I have travelled to six countries to provide training in the MAITS package thus supporting my passion of working with children and families having children with developmental delays within low resource settings.

During my brief stay at CRP, I had the opportunity to meet and interact with the founder, Ms Valerie Taylor whose humbleness and dedication to the cause left me in admiration for the reach and scope of CRP. Ms Poppy Taylor's joie-de-vivre and infectious enthusiasm had me engaged in passionate dialogue as well as girly giggles and I hope to have the opportunity to engage in the future too.

The trainees were a group of dedicated therapists who were passionate about supporting



*Training in progress*

children with special needs in Bangladesh. It was heartening to experience the cross professional camaraderie which is rare in most countries. The sessions were very stimulating, with a lot of interesting anecdotes shared by trainees through their years of experience at CRP, providing a great opportunity for learning for all. It was also encouraging to see the Master Trainers in Training. These are therapists experienced in the programme who learn how to teach others to become trainers, thus expanding the reach of

the programme. Lusana Afrin Nirjhar, Master Trainer in Training explained "The MAITS training will help me to empower families with children with neurodevelopmental disability (NDD) in my country. It has also helped me to enhance my leadership skills in the field of NDD."

I wish them luck in taking this ahead and supporting CRP in its journey to serve the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh.

# Mental Health Services Expand to CRP Mirpur

CRP has been directly working with Mental Health and Psychosocial Rehabilitation since 2001. From 2013, CRP has provided an Occupational Therapy service at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Hospital in Dhaka. This service was also provided at the Pabna Mental Hospital and three Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Barisal from January 2017 to December 2020.

In 2018, with funding support from the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, CRP opened an Occupational Therapy Day Centre for People with Mental Health Needs, located at CRP-Ganakbari. This was initially funded for 3.5 years, then extended for another 3 years.

In addition, the services provided have been expanded and a new day centre, based at CRP-Mirpur opened in 2022. Clients attend Saturday to Wednesday. The set up of the centre is similar to CRP-Ganakbari with clients engaged in meaningful activities throughout the

day, with a focus on managing mental health in a busy urban environment. CRP-Mirpur Mental Health Day Centre will provide psychiatric consultation, psychosocial counselling and occupational therapy alongside vocational training and self-care and recreational activities. The expansion to CRP-Mirpur will improve access to mental health care both with regards to the location, and the number of clients CRP is able to reach.



*Therapy Session*



*Clients taking part in recreational activities*

# 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).
- 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.
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- ☐ I wish all future donations to VTT to be under the Gift Aid Scheme until I notify you otherwise.

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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

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