

Margaret Barlow's reflections on her time in Bangladesh.

A few of the main things I noticed were:

- The **friendliness** of people in the street, how they loved having their photo taken, and looking at it.
- The closeness to **dirt**, not that it was dirty, as everything was swept, by hand, even beside streets, but there was a lot where we would have cement/grass/bitumen that was still bare ground.
- The **language** barrier, which tested our ability to get ideas across without words.
- **Job satisfaction** - teaching adults, eager to learn, was bliss, although much more time was needed to do it well.
- How to get a class set of **photocopies**. First you put it on a thumb drive, take it to the principal's or admin office and get one copy printed. Then you take it to town, to the stationer's, and pay him to make the photocopies for you.

There wasn't enough **time** over all, to read and send emails, to sort photos, and even to have personal prayer and mutual devotions time: all had to be squeezed into the day where possible. Learning Bangla and journaling were out of the question for me. On the other hand, being busy meant not having time to be home-sick or to look for nibbles to eat (I lost 2 kg over there, but have put it back on now). This isn't a complaint: there were opportunities we could have knocked back, but when new experiences are on offer, I'd rather take them up, e.g. going to a neighbouring town to see the church William Carey established in 1799(?); interacting with dinner.



Shimla Hasta, the daughter of our cook on a non-school day; visiting people who invited us to **Animals**, mostly untethered, were just anywhere. There were three cows which belonged to the school. Goats, chooks, ducks, geese, sheep and dogs just wandered. I was unaware of any disputes over what animals belonged to what person, or if they roamed onto the wrong land; it all seemed very laid back and friendly to me. The most wonderful was seeing two new born lambs.

Motor bikes: Now I could spend a lot of time on these, but perhaps it would be better that anyone interested asks me about them later.

No apparent **O H & S** e.g. for painters

Many uses for **bamboo** - clotheslines, scaffolding, holding up marquees, and many, many more. Poverty: The boy is pulling along a 'toy'. The base of what was once a car, now even without wheels. His mother has died and his father is in gaol. He just has a grandmother, but people in town 'look out for him'.



Over and over I missed opportunities to **pray** as soon as situations arose, e.g. things lost or missing, things not seeming to go to plan, people suffering disappointments we seemed unable to solve, difficult situations that seemed inevitable, potential danger, but when I did pray, things came good, and two of the trainee teachers (Christians) who asked for specific prayer spoke to me of how very grateful they were when God answered. This was no doubt multiplied with the others.

I've come away with a better understanding of God's great desire to have things go well for us in his work, and hopefully I've learned to pray more quickly, and confidently, about all things.