

777

The newsletter of the Bhopal Medical Appeal, Spring-Autumn 2005



People cried
when it opened.

JOY AND PRIDE AS THE NEW SAMBHAVNA CLINIC OPENS ITS DOORS IN BHOPAL



Bhopal, a brief background

THIS FAMOUS TERRIBLE & TENDER PICTURE was taken by MAGNUM photographer Raghu Rai on the morning after the night of horror in Bhopal, on December 3, 1984, when a huge cloud of poison 500 times more toxic than cyanide spewed from a factory belonging to Union Carbide Corporation.

Thousands died in the most hideous ways. As the sun rose on streets full of corpses, Raghu found himself in a stony graveyard where a man was burying his young daughter. The father had covered the tiny body but then, unable to bear parting from her, brushed the earth away for one last look.

For the Bhopalis this picture has come to symbolise twenty-one years of unimaginable suffering, an injustice that has never been righted, crimes that continue to go unpunished, and a community that most of the world has forgotten.

Today in Bhopal, well over 100,000 people are still chronically sick from the effects of *that night* while some 20,000 others are suffering from illnesses caused by contamination of their wells and stand-pipes by chemicals leaking from the abandoned plant, which to this day remains derelict and full of poisons. Union Carbide and its owner Dow Chemical continue to deny responsibility for the water poisoning and refuse to clean up the factory.

WHY IS THE NEWSLETTER CALLED 777?

777 in Hindi and Urdu is *saat saat saat* which with a slight twist of the tongue can also mean *together, together, together*. The Bhopal Medical Appeal is a joint effort of ordinary people around the world to bring free medical relief to victims of the gas and water disasters. Who are we? We're survivors and Sambhavna Clinic staff in Bhopal, we're donors, volunteers, supporters and organisers in the UK and elsewhere. We're all equal, all together, and all together we're the Bhopal Medical Appeal.

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

We have learned a great deal about treating chemically- and industrially-induced illnesses with therapies that do not add to the body's toxic load. We are looking to share knowledge with people and organisations all over the world who may benefit from it. Ideas welcome.

DONATIONS MAY BE MADE DIRECT TO OUR ACCOUNT

PAN-UK/Bhopal, A/c No: 61752312, NatWest Bank, Brixton Branch (Sort Code 60-03-36), 504 Brixton Rd, London SW2 8EB

CONTACT 777:

Editor: 777@bhupal.org, Website: <http://www.bhupal.org>

TO DONATE WITH A CARD PLEASE CALL

FREEPHONE
0800 316 5577

Bhopal Medical Appeal

A project of the Pesticide Action Network UK, Registered Charity No. 327215.

It could never have happened without you.

MANY ONLOOKERS WERE IN TEARS as Bhopal survivor Kamlesh Verma unveiled a plaque at the end of April this year to open Sambhavna's new clinic in the heart of the gas-affected area of Bhopal. Said one old lady, 'I can hardly believe that this beautiful building and this peaceful garden is for me!'

In the years before our first clinic opened in Bhopal, she and so many others had grown used to waiting for hours in the heat at government hospitals only to be sent home without being examined and told to buy their own medicines – impossible for people whose 'compensation', meant to last the rest of their lives, averages around 4p a day. A recent Supreme Court Monitoring Committee report on the government hospitals which are supposed to treat gas victims makes horrifying reading. Our clinic is much needed.

Thanks to your generosity, at Sambhavna all consultations, treatments, therapies and medicines always have been and always will be completely free.

This special edition of 777 presents the new clinic and its work to the world. It's a big newsletter, and for this reason it replaces the two



Kamlesh Verma, a survivor of the night of horror, opens our new Sambhavna clinic watched by Sambhavna's managing trustee Satinath Sarangi.

we would normally issue each year. As always we have kept costs to a minimum by doing all the writing, photography, design, editing, typography & proof correcting ourselves.

Our secret weapon is our excellent printer Dave Elliott, a staunch and long-time supporter who does a great job of producing our newsletters at a cruelly competitive rate. (Cruel to himself, that is.)

The newsletter is a hugely useful tool, it goes not only to all our supporters, but to enquirers, journalists, legislators, doctors, schools, universities and potential funders all over the world. It pays for itself many times over and plays a crucial part in raising the funds that provide first class free medical care to those who are suffering in Bhopal.

In this issue we attempt to tell the whole story of the clinic that everyone reading this has helped to build. It's a fantastic achievement, and we have every right to be proud.

Already since opening a few months ago it has brought Sambhavna's compassionate healing to more than 1,000 new patients. Please keep supporting the Bhopal Medical Appeal, so the work we are doing together can continue to grow.

ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS
FRIENDS FROM THE
BHOPAL MEDICAL APPEAL
IN THE UK AND
AROUND THE WORLD.



PAUL
BULLIVANT

City of lakes & two deadly disasters

I VISITED BHOPAL FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE 1984 disaster arriving from Delhi after a long frustrating journey via Agra, Gwalior and Jhansi. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated four days after we landed in Delhi; the country entered a state of shock and panic and millions of Indians made for Delhi to pay their last respects and the transport system went into seizure. Bhopal seemed relatively calm after the mayhem near the epicentre of the mourning.

Surprisingly the Union Carbide factory still looms above the surrounding districts as it did on the fatal night of the disaster. Piles of what looks like asbestos surround much of the rusting plant and droplets of mercury lie in cracks in the first floor walkways. Wild pigs roam freely in the extensive grounds, and the place is slowly being reclaimed by trees and scrub. The jungle has not yet obliterated the ancillary buildings including the control room where, amazingly, official



We had time to relax and at sunset rowed out onto the larger of the two lakes created by Raja Bhoj in the 11th century. The sheer beauty of the upper lake still dominates the south side of the city, but since my last visit of course everything has changed: the Union Carbide corporation has made the name of Bhopal synonymous with greed and negligence.

As a documentary photographer I hoped to record in my short visit the tragic realities of life in and around the plant, and at the Sambhavna clinic. I wanted to recapture the positive spirit of the city as I remembered it but nothing prepared me for the passion and anger of the midnight march on the 2nd of December, eve of the 20th anniversary. Equally moving was the silence of the candlelit vigil under the memorial statue of the Bhopal mother and child on the ironically named Union Carbide Road. The heat of the torches, the smell of kerosene and the faces of those still grieving, bearing images of their lost family members will always be vivid memories.

papers still litter the floor mixed with animal dung, and a sign above a wall of dials and gauges declares: SAFETY IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS The factory has the feel of a film set where the ghosts of those former employees and those who died still walk.

Twenty years may have passed but for those who suffered, the memories of that night and the following



weeks, months and years are still real and potent.

The pain is written on the faces of those I met on Union Carbide Road and in the Sambhavna Clinic where so much amazing work was being done despite the cramped building and limited facilities.

At the time of my visit the new clinic was nearing completion. It will provide modern medicine as well as equally valued traditional and alternative therapies in a purpose-built complex into which the architects have designed a range of energy saving technologies.

The celebration of the still half-built clinic on December 4th was a joyful and highly emotional event which combined the grief and hope of local people with many international supporters who campaign to ensure that the name of Bhopal is kept alive in the global consciousness.

What the world needs to understand is that there have been not one, but two disasters in Bhopal. As if the terrible events of 1984 had not caused suffering enough, the factory's warehouses still stacked high with rotting sacks of insecticide, the chemical slag-heaps lying exposed to wind and rain, the carelessly spilled mercury and thousands of tons of chemical wastes dumped in two huge plastic lined lagoons have slowly and inevitably seeped into the earth and spread out into the underground water supply.

The drinking wells of twenty thousand people are iridescent and stinking with poisons whose bombastic scientific names probably not one them knows, but of whose effects they are in no doubt.

Sores, skin trouble, aching limbs, stomach ailments, nausea, breathlessness, all are part of daily life in the affected areas. Some of those now being poisoned were already victims of the gas. So far, at least, there is little sign that their misery will end. No power on earth it seems, can compel Union Carbide to behave morally, or obey the laws of the people it poisoned.

When the anniversary events were finished and the media caravan had moved on I revisited some of the sights for which the city and its surrounding areas are famous. I went out onto the lake again at sunset as I had on that other day in 1984 and visited the small island where a shrine to the fishermen of the lake stands and imagined the day when justice is done and the ghosts of Bhopal are laid to rest.

PAUL BULLIVANT paulbullivant@f2s.com



PHOTO: RAGHU RAI

Jaan hai to jahaan hai. If we have life, we have the world.

I CALL HER MY ADOPTED MOTHER she says I am her daughter and that I'll be there for her whenever she needs me. I just hope I will be, but these days I'm far away in England & I can't stop worrying about her.

I first met Mehboob Bi when Tim and I were filming with the *People's Tribune*— this is when she lived in her old house, it was a lot better than the house she lives in now, but the moneylenders took it. She had mortgaged it to get money for medicines for her sick husband, Chand Miya. He told her not to spend money on him, she replied, 'How can I not?'

Now she has moved to a corner of Qazi Camp to a house without a roof. In the monsoon the rain comes right in. The house is beside the stinking *naala* (an open sewage ditch). It was the only place she could find. I went to see the Chief Minister to ask him for some money for a new roof. He gave me 500 rupees, so I just spat in the earth outside his house. After this Raghu Rai the photographer and some others paid for a new roof.

Mehboob Bi, she has the most wonderful presence, looks straight into your eyes like she knows the truth.

The film cameraman was being an asshole and Mehboob Bi began to cry. I went and sat next to her and hugged her and cried with her.

She had just lost Chand, she was emotionally raw. You could see the pain and feel it in her. Tim and I then took a French journalist to her house. In the one room where everyone slept there was a goat tied

to the steel bed. When he offered her money she refused to take it, so he left it under her pillow.

Mehboob Bi was married to Chand Miya. She did not belong to Bhopal. When she arrived here life was really easy as Chand Miya was working for Union Carbide.

'We were so happy. We used to be well off, but my Kismet was written in Bhopal.' Even today when she speaks of Chand tears roll from her eyes. She is so deeply wounded, so hurt. The gas has taken everything.

From the first time I saw her to the time when I left for England her face has weathered.

Her daughter, the youngest one was so beautiful and wild, she looked a lot like her mother in the picture that Mehboob Bi shows so proudly of her and her husband.

She showed us an album of her pictures from before her marriage. She was stunning, dressed in short kurtas with big goggles, two plaits and curls plastered to the sides of her cheeks. One of her daughters said 'Ammi looks like Mala Sinha.' 'No,' said the other one, 'she's like Sadhna.' (Both Indian filmstars.)

'*Chal hat pagli ladki*' Go on with you silly girl. That is what she said to her daughter with a coy smile.

When her daughters were small and there was no food Mehboob Bi used to give them water at night to fill their stomachs. 'Afterwards I came to know that in many places the wells have been poisoned by that factory, the same cursed place that tried to kill us all with gas.'

So many years after the disaster

Mehboob Bi suffers from serious head aches, often faints and gets very high temperatures for which there is no clear or obvious cause.

'I am waiting, daughter,' she tells me. 'I am just waiting to go. I'm so tired, but who will look after these children then? The debt collectors will tear them apart, so the least I can do is spare them from debt before I go.'

'My husband warned me how dangerous the chemicals were. If by mistake you put your hand into them your hand would dissolve.'

'The day after the tragedy when we came back home our utensils were covered with a green coating. Chand Miya did not let us come in to the house he cleaned everything up, washed every corner of the house before he let us come in.'

'The days just before the disaster were the last few days I saw him happy. Our miseries began on that night. All of us had breathed the gas, but he most of all. When he got really ill and could no longer work . . . I . . . we ran short of money and I started work for the first time. He apologised to me for putting me through this.'

'I said *jaan hai to jahaan hai*, if we have life we have the world.'

He often told me not to spend the money on him and his illness.

'I will die,' he said, 'don't waste your money on me.'

'And he did. He left me alone.'

Narrated by Farah Edwards, a Bhopali woman who met her husband Tim when he cycled from Brighton to Bhopal to raise funds for the Bhopal Medical Appeal.

Meet the fabulous characters who built a house of healing

‘SINOJ IS IN LOVE, POOR FOOLISH FELLOW’ say his mates, laughing. ‘There’s this pretty girl who lives opposite the clinic. After work’s finished Sinoj gets dressed up to the nines and parades around on the balcony gazing at her, hoping she’ll notice him, but the poor fellow doesn’t even know her name. ‘Carrying rocks around on his head all day has softened his brain.’ Sinoj Joseph at 25 hopes to get married soon. He’s an assistant stone-mason, that’s him in the picture, duly carrying a rock.

Like most of the men on the site, Sinoj’s home is in Kerala, a thousand long miles to the south.

The men came to Bhopal with Jeet the architect, his hand-picked team of experts, (*see www.houseofconsultants.com*) To folk for whom a wintry night is 22°C (71.6°F), Bhopal must feel arctic. At night here the mercury has been known to fall to 1°C. As a bonus buffalo beef costs half what it does at home.

The women do the labouring, the unskilled fetching & carrying. It may seem bizarre, but this is the way construction is done in India. All the women are Bhopalis and almost all were recruited by a lady called Sabita.

Rani Bai is on the left end of the group in the picture above. She’s 35, has four daughters and a son and has not done this sort of work before. ‘I prefer to work with women,’ she says but asked why shyly refuses to answer.

The movement of the women

in their bright saris, coming and going with saucer-shaped *tagaadis* on their heads—very good for posture—is hypnotic, rather like a dance. French painter Jeff Stride (*see later article*) who visited the clinic while it was being built, was fascinated by the rhythms of the women’s work and spent hours trying to capture it on canvas.

Everyone works hard, fuelled by endless glasses of excellent tea made by Pappu the chaiwallah, an astute entrepreneur who opened a tea-stall outside the clinic the day construction started.

At four o’clock people go their separate ways. The women return home to more work. ‘Who else will clean my house?’ asks Rani Bai. ‘My husband can’t wash or cook.’ The men, far from home, meet to have a drink, play cards or go to the cinema.

The biggest movie fan is Madhu 28, a carpenter. He’s the one on the left in the photo of the men working on the wooden ceiling. Madhu is unmarried, likes TV and loves Keralan cinema. ‘Sakilla’s my favourite. So shapely is she.’ It turns out that she was a famous actress in the 60s. Of western movies, Madhu likes *Titanic*. He tolerates Bhopali food, but misses the fish, pomfret, crab and lobster of his home.

Rajeeva (the carpenter wearing the red bandana) is the James Bond of the clan. He’s 29, into body building and has even found a gym in Bhopal to go to.

(Continued on next page)



Rajeeva likes watching Bhopali weddings. 'They're so exotic. Lots of lights and music, not like in Kerala. The bridegroom actually rides a horse to the ceremony!'

Gangaram, thatching at right, is one of Bhopal's real characters. Ex-chef, house-painter, maker of plastic flowers, luckless chicken farmer & would-be goat breeder, he starred in Dominique Lapierre's *Five Minutes to Midnight in Bhopal*.

Once, when a group of earnest activists decided to float a sizeable meteorological balloon above the derelict Union Carbide factory to measure wind speeds and vectors, they hired Gangaram to manage the rope, which had to be raised and lowered a metre at a time, to take readings at various heights.

Gangaram, so the legend goes, tied the rope to his toe and dozed off. The balloon drifted into a high voltage line waking him, literally, with a jolt. Recovering in hospital Gangaram demanded, and duly received from his hapless employers a whole roast chicken every day, while every evening (so rumour has it) he would climb out of bed and escape through a window to enjoy the bright lights and sideshows of the Istima fair, which was being



held at the time in Bhopal.

There was a sense throughout the construction that what people were making was more than a building: everyone knew it would make an enormous difference to the poor and sick of the city.

One day the workers listened to a story of how the money for the clinic was raised, how people all around the world had contributed for the sake of the gas victims and for those who've become ill through drinking poisoned water.

Someone said, 'Those people who gave, it's like they're all here working alongside us.'

When the work was finished

someone sang a song:

*I'm missing my home
I'm missing the sea
I'm missing my boat
I'm missing my missus
but when my work here's done
I'll miss you too*

Everyone in these pictures has a name and a story, unfortunately there is no space to tell them all.

Most of these friends are gone now, to other places and other projects, leaving us this beautiful house of healing and for those who knew them it still echoes with their banter and laughter.



‘Why does such kindness make me want to weep?’



WHEN I SAW THE FLARE STACKS that had spewed death and misery in Bhopal on December 3rd, 1984, chills ran down my spine. It was 11 at night and a glow from behind the steel structure etched its crisp, eerie silhouette against the night sky. I was standing on the terrace of the new Sambhavna clinic.

Sambhavna was formed in 1995 to provide free medical treatment to the survivors of the gas leak & study its health effects. Barely a kilometer away, the clinic stands for trust, compassion, honesty, respect for the earth & life on it – everything the chimneys of Union Carbide had betrayed.

THOUGHTFULLY BUILT

When one enters this brick clinic from the 40°C heat outside it feels air-conditioned — actually better — because the air is not stale. The architecture provides for an airflow to cool the rooms and corridors. One sees clever use of concrete fretwork, like those which cooled the palaces of the Mughal emperors 500 years ago.

The clinic has double-skinned walls which provide insulation, conserve energy and make for a healthier environment. Judiciously proportioned windows and glass skylights provide plenty of natural light; planks from crates used to ship heavy machinery were recycled to panel the ceilings.

Rain water off the tiled roofs is naturally filtered and collected in an underground tank that supplies the clinic with water for washing. Waste water too is treated naturally before being used to irrigate the thirsty garden of medicinal plants.

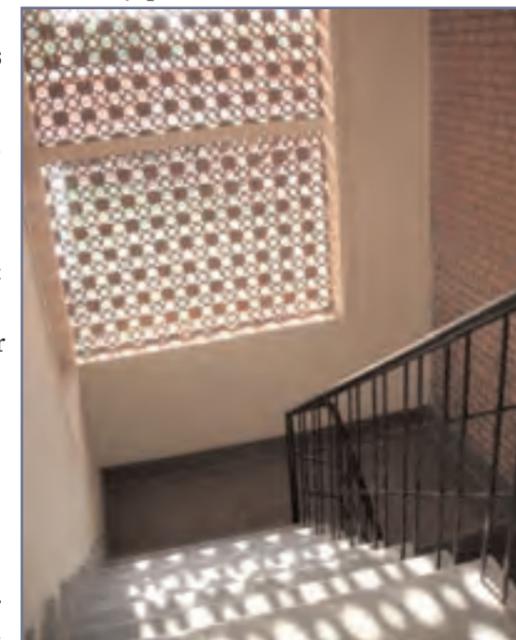
Bhopal's fierce summer heat is harvested by solar panels capable

of providing hot water & a hefty ten kilowatts of power.

LOVINGLY RUN

People coming to the clinic for the first time are invariably amazed by the cool building in its beautiful gardens. They seem to find it hard to believe that such a fine place, surroundings so enchanting, can possibly be for *them*.

‘We have never had anything so lovely provided for us before,’ said



one elderly lady. ‘I’ve spent half my life in hospitals. Why does such kindness make me want to weep?’

Like everyone coming to the clinic for care, she is received with respect and heard with compassion.

Sambhavna provides free health care and rehabilitation using age-old ayurveda and yoga therapy, *in combination* with the best modern medicine. It is uncommon to see treatments like panchakarma under the same roof as colposcopes, but this unorthodoxy is effective as it is unique. Allopathic and ayurvedic doctors work together to choose a regimen best suited to each patient.

Sambhavna is sensitive to the social and cultural underpinnings of local communities. People exposed to Carbide's gases in 1984 suffered severe damage to their musculoskeletal, gastro-intestinal, nervous and reproductive systems. Large numbers of women suffer from severe gynaecological disorders. Sambhavna's community workers have helped these women to overcome the social taboos of talking about such problems.

WHAT THE LOCALS THINK

Pappu, a local man, started his tea kiosk near the main gate, the day the first mattock broke ground for the new clinic. His contribution to bringing health & justice to Bhopal is to assure an incessant supply of tea to clinic workers, patients, volunteers and doctors alike.

I sat in Pappu's tea stall for a long time. Chatting with people there gave me a glimpse of their pain and frustration, as well as their resilience & courage. An aged Muslim person with a flowing beard recounted his experience of the dreadful night of terror.

With a reflective smile, he said that while human beings might lie, the trees that never bore leaves again after the disaster, would not.

He suffers from breathlessness and had to quit working many years ago. His family finds it hard to make ends meet on his meagre ‘compensation’.

A MONUMENT TO GREED

Later, I rode through the slum of Atal Ayub Nagar which lies between the northern boundary wall of the factory and the railway track.

Reaching a signal cabin, I hurried up its metal stairs, and there they

were, barely 100 metres away – the steel flare stack and scrubber, the locomotive-sized tank which leaked lethal methyl isocyanate gas on the night of terror. I stood in a dead silence trying to sort out concurrent feelings of anger, pain, sorrow and helplessness. The hideous structures, overgrown with plants, seemed to say, 'If we had legs, we too would have absconded like our owners.'

Chemicals left lying around in the factory have seeped into the water table rendering it dangerous for human consumption. The Delhi-based *Fact Finding Mission On Bhopal* found toxic heavy metals & cancer- and birth defect-causing chemicals in soil, water and even in breast milk samples collected from communities around the factory.

This has led to severe illness among very poor people who can't afford medical bills or loss of their livelihoods. Desecrating the purity of a mother's milk should be the greatest trespass against humanity – and failure to redress it the greatest criminality.

Union Carbide, whose negligence caused the deadly gas leak, and whose subsequent carelessness led to the poisoning of soil and water, is now wholly owned by the Dow Chemical Company, which refuses to clean the factory. Equally appalling is their refusal to share information on the effects of MIC on human physiology.

By gathering information and by its painstaking documentation of every case, Sambhavna is trying to preserve history for posterity to learn from.

Union Carbide is no longer the only name associated with Bhopal. The Bhopal Medical Appeal and Sambhavna have been added to the list. Sambhavna means compassion. Sambhavna means possibility. The Bhopal Medical Appeal means you.

SOMNATH MUKERJEE



DR SUSHMA PIPPAL, an allopathic physician, provided medical relief to gas victims at Hamidia Hospital in December 1984. She has a MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) and a post graduate MD in paediatrics. Sushma brings us 14 years of experience as a physician.



ANIL KUMAR SHUKLA, pathology lab technician. He is 32, a Bachelor of Science with a post-grad diploma plus a certificate course in medical laboratory technology. Coming to us with four years' field experience, Anil takes special responsibility for our microbiology tests.



CHANDRAKANTASISODIA, 35, is a sanitary worker. In December 1984 she was visiting Bhopal to see her aunt when she got caught in the gas disaster. She cannot prove this so got no compensation. She has been living in Bhopal and working as a sanitary worker for the last 15 years.



ANAND VERMA, 25, is a community research assistant with an MA in social work and a BA in computer science. Anand, from a village in the Narmada valley, is a member of the Peoples' Health Movement. He has done research evaluating primary health care at a district level.



NANDKISHORE YADAV, 24, works as a sanitary worker. At the time of the Union Carbide gas disaster he was living in Shahajahanabad with his parents and was severely exposed. Before joining Sambhavna he worked for the Bhopal Memorial Hospital Trust.



DR MALI MUTTANNA MALLAPPA, 25, Jai for short, is our panchakarma doctor. He did a degree in ayurvedic medicine & surgery from Ayurvedic Medical College, Hubli, and a further six months of panchakarma training in Trivandrum. Jai is already on the clinic's 6-strong steering committee.



Six new staff, a thousand new patients.



Everyone gets their own Sambhavna patient record

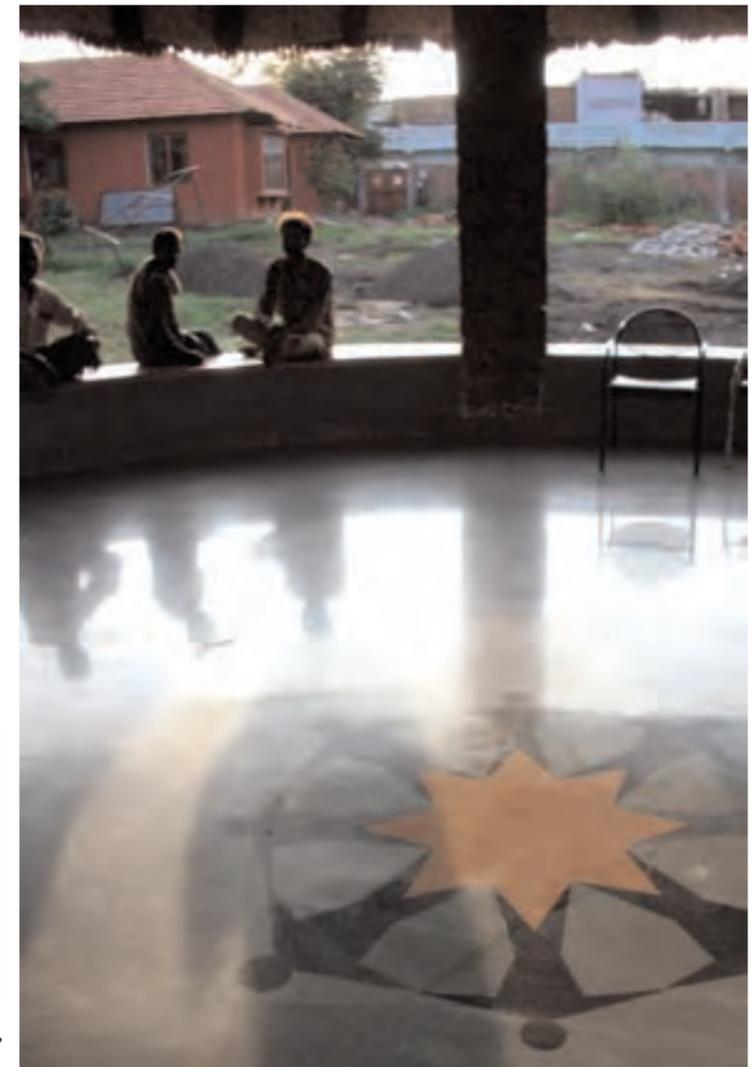


Even waiting can be fun, in a cool, comfortable place



Above: Clinic staff hold their weekly meeting in the round house.

Below: A 'thank-you' smile Dr Sushma in consultation



*paropakaaraaya phalanti vrikshhaah
paropakaaraaya vahanti nadyah |
paropakaaraaya dubanti gaavah
paropakaaraarthamidam shariiramah ||*

*for the good of all trees bear fruit
for the good of all rivers flow,
for the good of all cows give milk,
this body too should be used for the good of all*

From great evil comes great good

Over two decades, an unimaginable number of people in Bhopal have lost control of their bodies to a host of little-understood illnesses. From Union Carbide came only silence, refusal to share information about the likely composition of the poison cloud, refusal to share the findings of its medical studies into the long term effects of MIC. Union Carbide said these were 'trade secrets'. Medical knowledge gained in the face of such obstacles is doubly precious, for its only laboratory has been thousands of living, suffering bodies. The survivors of Bhopal wish to offer this knowledge born of their suffering as a gift to be shared with the world.

Thanks to your continued support the Bhopal Medical Appeal in partnership with Sambhavna will soon be able to undertake projects to bring advice, know-how and medical help to chemically-affected people all over the world.



A garden of physick & delight

WHAT A DIFFERENCE NOW THAT EVERYONE IS HERE! Hot weather approaches can be easily dried and stored in our brand new beautiful clinic surrounded by our medicinal gardens. After two years of gardening alone to the sounds of construction, seeing the brilliant smiles of the people coming for care, is pure magic.

The Ayurvedic doctors send many people directly down to the garden with prescriptions for fresh herbs that we pick on the spot.

Biju, the medicine maker, came by the other day to request leaves of acacia, an essential ingredient in our pain-relieving massage oil.

Thus begins the process of introducing folks to the bounty of our garden.

When the new clinic opened at the end of April we were busy processing our winter harvest. The cool, dry weather between October and March is our most productive season with the mild temperatures and sunny days that many tender annuals prefer. It is a joy to be in the full bloom garden, its bright yellow and white flowers buzzing with bees and myriad other wild pollinators.

Seed crops and root crops that are maturing as the



for use throughout the year. We harvested seed crops of fennel, dill, cumin, nigella, cress, and coriander. My desk was covered with rose petals and calendula flowers drying for use in herbal teas and soothing oils – a far better state than being buried in reports and memos.

This winter we gave about 1/3 of our field to ashwaganda (*Withania somnifera*), an important general tonic that helps the body to cope with all types of stress. To make one of the preparations used at the clinic the dried white roots are ground into a powder and mixed with shilajit, a black, mineral-rich ooze that seeps from rock outcrops in the Himalayas. This powerful combination is given to TB sufferers to strengthen their immune systems and help them get through the arduous, six-to-nine-month long treatment with antibiotics.

Now it is August, the heart of the monsoons, which have been so heavy and constant this year the garden is afloat. We were on time planting our monsoon crop of white musli and tumeric, but we got too delayed by all of the rain to get the ginger planted.

Quite a few volunteers have helped in the garden over the year, our thanks to Steve Doctors and Rosa Stride, whose father Jeff can be seen here, painting in the garden. (Read about his pastel exhibition in aid of the Bhopal Medical Appeal later on.)

We've been giving attention to designing and planting the medicinal landscaping around the building. We want to create beautiful spaces around the clinic with both practical and educational value. In the courtyard outside the gynaecology and Ayurveda wings we have focused on plants used in daily panchakarma and massage therapies, and plants especially important to women's health.

Continued overleaf >>



Jeff painting in the garden



The jhopri is especially beautiful at dawn, as here. Ratna built the hut and gave it a clay hearth (just visible) for tea making. The 20th anniversary meeting of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal was held here.

Ratna weeding the nigella bed in front of a hedge of holy basil (tulsi). Look out for Sambhavna's herb garden blog and catalogue of herbs, herbal remedies, cures and treatments, coming soon to www.bhopal.org



The tulsi (basil) harvest. Tulsi is widely used in Indian herbal medicine and is in great demand among our herbalists. From left to right are Steve, Terry's hat, Mukesh and Ratna, our gardeners, who built the jhopri.

Continued from previous page

Staff from these departments provided ideas, suggestions, and requests for specific plants, which we incorporated into a design appropriate for and adapted to the different environmental conditions (sun, shade) of the space. Thus purple foliage of tulsi alternates with the bright green leaves of lemon balm to form a fragrant and colourful border along the passage where visitors wait to see the doctors.

A bank of roses and vitex (nirgundi) lines the sunny wall by the panchakarma rooms, ready to pluck as needed by the therapists. Creeping up the pillars behind the roses are climbing asparagus (shatavari) vines (good for treating vaginal infections) and leafy vines of heart-shaped giloy, *Tinospora cordifolia* which among other things is a tonic, revitaliser and remedy for diabetes. The shady walls opposite are planted with the evergreen shrubs of vasa, beneath which a ground cover of brahmi grows. And the center of the courtyard will be shaded (in a few years time) by the shapely Sita ashok tree, an evergreen covered in bright orange blossoms, symbolic for women all over India with many medicinal uses.

We also just finished building a waterfall (see right) to channel rainwater runoff to our pond, which is once again full.

As I gaze across the water surrounded by verdant vegetation a kingfisher perched on the castor tree dives for her dinner, a white egret glides in for a landing, and hundreds of green parrots perch and swoop in the top of the tamarind tree. There are so many more birds visiting now than when I began two years ago on a barren plot. We would love to have some birdwatchers visit us to do a population survey so we can record the increasing number of species attracted to and supported by our growing garden.

There is so much going on, even more to write about, but I'll have to save it for the next newsletter. If you'd like to help in the garden, please write to me at terrykisan@yahoo.com



Much love from
Terry



Well over
ninety
different
species
of herbs
grow in
the clinic
garden,
we use
them to
make
our own
medicines



Neem. *Azadiracta indica* One of the most important herbs used in Ayurveda. The roots, bark, gum, leaves, fruit, seed kernels and seed oil all find uses in remedies that heal & prevent disease. We use it in combination with other herbs shown here to treat pain.



Akua. *Calotropis gigantea* in Sanskrit also called Arka. In alliance with tamarind from our garden it is used in a medicinal oil effective at treating aching and swollen joints, muscular and lower back pain as well as sciatica, headache and paralysis.



Tamarind. *Tamarindus indica* The leaves are ground with lime juice and other herbs and applied to boils to reduce sepsis and swelling. The leaves and pulp are often used in congestion of the liver, cases of chronic constipation and to treat painful haemorrhoids.



Tulsi. *Ocimum sanctum*, Sacred Basil. Has strong antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral action. Inhibits growth of E coli and other pathogens Its natural anti-tuberculosis activity has been recorded at a tenth the strength of streptomycin and a quarter that of isoniazid.



Eranda. *Ricinus communis*. Castor oil plant. Traditionally used to treat pain, fever, inflammation, asthma, bronchitis & leprosy. Leaves for intestinal worms. Flowers for glandular tumours, anal troubles & vaginal pains. Seed and oil are cathartic, and said to be aphrodisiac.



Ginger. *Zingiber officinale*. The familiar rhizome is a powerful anti-inflammatory, its juice is a staple of many Ayurvedic preparations. A common home remedy for nausea and dyspepsia, ginger has also been shown to be of use in treating viral hepatitis.



Vasa, Arusa. *Athanasia vasica* Traditional healers use the juice of Vasa leaves mainly to treat cough, asthma and other respiratory diseases. A paste made of the leaves can be given with honey to asthma sufferers. We use its leaves to produce a medicinal steam.



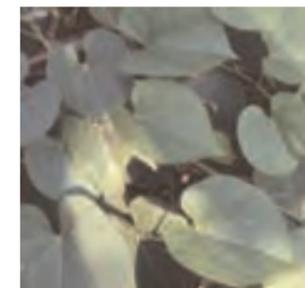
Ashwagandha. *Withania somnifera* The dried and powdered root is used to boost the immune system and to treat weakness, muscular pain and seminal disorders. Taken with milk it is a fine tonic. Ashwagandha is often used in shirodhara massage to treat headaches.



Lemon balm. *Melissa officinalis*. One of the most useful of all herbs in women's medicine, Extracts of the leaves taken in both oil & hot water have been shown to possess strong antibacterial & antiviral qualities.



Nirgundi. *Vitex negundo* The traditional healers and natives have rich traditional medicinal knowledge about Nirgundi. The healers prepare special herbal oil from fresh leaves of Nirgundi and use in treatment of more than 70 common and complicated diseases.



Giloy. *Tinospora cordifolia*. The entire plant is valuable, used in Ayurvedic medicine as a tonic, revitaliser and remedy for diabetes and metabolic disorders, stomach ulcer and urinary affections. It is also helpful in chronic problems and cases of fatigue.



Shatavari. *Asparagus racemosus*. Used as a blood purifier, it is highly recommended for many women's problems, including coping with the menopause. It helps to maintain a healthy urinary tract, strengthens the immune system and is useful against vaginal infections.

Biju the Medicine Man

HOW APPROPRIATE THAT BIJU IS CALLED BIJU (pronounced *beeju*) because *beej* in Sanskrit and Hindi means *seed*. Not that Biju is the slightest bit seedy, but his job is to turn Sambhavna's harvest of seeds, leaves, flowers, fruit, bark and roots into ayurvedic medicines.

The clinic's *vaidys*, or ayurvedic doctors, insist that the old ayurvedic texts be followed to the letter, they are the distilled wisdom of many thousands of years of practice. This gave Biju a minor problem. He comes from Kerala, whose language is Malayalam:

വീശസ്തം സത്യവാതം എന്തുശ്ലേഷ്മ
വീശിയെ പോരാടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

The texts however are in Sanskrit, of which the following is an example:

आमवातगजेन्द्रस्य शरीरवनचारिणा
निहन्त्यसावेक एव एरण्डस्नेहकेसरी

aamavaatagajendrasya shareeravanacharinina nihantyasaveka eva erandasnehakesharee it informs us. Or, to put it another way, 'Only oil from eranda (root of castor), like a lion can kill the rheumatism that moves like an elephant in the forest of the body.'

Out of necessity Biju studied Sanskrit and Hindi in which he is now thoroughly proficient.

Castor root is dried, then pounded and boiled with water to make a decoction or *kwaatha*. This is used in a *kashaaya basti* or enema given in cases of constipation and chronic lower back pain. It is also the main constituent of *vaitarana basti* used in arthritis. This one herb makes redundant several chemically produced anti-inflammatories, analgesics and laxatives.

Here's a recipe for a medicinal oil, *vadari taila*.
Ingredients: Akaua (*Calotropis gigantea*) Arka in Sanskrit, tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), garlic, black pepper, mustard seeds, rock salt, coconut oil, mustard oil and sesame oil. Method: Akaua leaves are boiled in water to make a *kwaatha*. The garlic, black pepper and mustard seeds are ground to a paste. The rock salt is powdered. Tamarind is soaked in water for one



day, then boiled and the juice extracted. The three oils are mixed in equal quantities. When warm the akaua *kwaatha* is added, followed by the garlic, pepper & mustard seed paste, the powdered rock salt and, finally, the tamarind juice. The mixture is boiled until all the water evaporates. As the oil boils a black paste settles in the pan. One tests the oil by rubbing a little of this paste between the fingertips. A drop of oil is burned to make sure all the moisture is gone. Finally the oil is filtered. The black paste is used as a hot fomentation to treat pain in the knee. This oil replaces analgesics like aspirin, diclofenac sodium, nimesulide and ibuprofen, all of which can have unpleasant side effects. The value of these remedies has repeatedly been proven in Bhopal. People whose bodies are already in toxic overload are successfully treated without exposing them to chemical drugs.



Ayurveda in action

UMA SAINI IS 40 YEARS OLD At the time of the 1984 gas disaster she was a newly married 20 year old. She lived with her husband behind the *Puttha Mill* paper and board factory near the bus stand. Uma's is the archetypal Bhopal story. Around 1 am on *that night* she woke up coughing, her eyes burning. Outside, people were shouting 'Gas has leaked, run for your lives!'

Jostled in the panic-stricken and half-blinded crowd, Uma was separated from her family. She passed the night in great pain and in the morning went home through streets where corpses in some places lay in heaps, their faces still twisted in agony. Uma's husband had luckily survived, and also came home.

Uma developed TB of the uterus (the possible cause of her childlessness) which was treated at the District Hospital. About nine years ago at the Diwali festival she bought an armload of marigold garlands. Instantly she started sneezing and a violent itching began in her eyes, ears, nose and inside her throat. Her face, eyes and ears swelled. These problems did not go away again. Uma's life became a nightmare of eye-rubbing, vain attempts to relieve ear and nose itches & to twist her tongue to ease her itching throat. She was always sneezing, with a headache that was often unbearable.

Four years ago she began to suffer seriously from breathlessness, pain in the ribs, frequent colds, sneezing, itching and swelling. Her eyes became permanently irritated with fine eruptions on the lower eyelid. Rubbing them affected her vision. The sneezing became incessant, 40-50 explosions one after the other. In all weathers she was forced carry an umbrella as the sun exacerbated her problems. She could not wash her face with warm water nor cover it in winter. At Hamidia hospital doctors gave her a pill 'that looked like a grain of masoor daal', but didn't work. A private eye- doctor prescribed five sets of eye drops, an array of pills, vitamin E & new glasses. Apart from the glasses nothing worked. The eye drops did nothing for the agonising itching, the pills made her drowsy and if anything the



swellings worsened. Uma could not afford to continue this treatment which in all cost her about 12,000 rupees. Next, she tried home remedies: sandalwood paste applied to the forehead and eyes, a wet cloth over the face. Vicks!

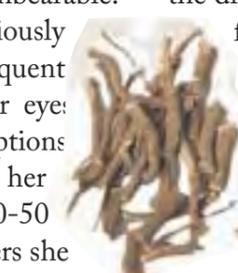
A neighbour told her about Sambhavna where treatment was free and she would be able to choose between allopathic and ayurvedic medicine. When she came to us Uma chose ayurveda because she was tired of *angrezi darwaa* (foreign medicine).

Dr Deshpande prescribed her *nasya* treatment: a massage with *mahanarayan* oil on her head and forehead, a steam bath, and six drops of *shadabindu taila* given through the nose. Every two days the drops were changed to *anu taila*, giving

four days of *shadabindu* and four days of *anu*. At first her nose streamed, she was sneezing badly & her headache worsened, but Dr Deshpande told her that people with chronic illnesses often grow worse before they start getting better. Uma began experiencing relief from the third day of treatment. After a week of *nasya* she had no headache, no sneezes, no more itching. Her face and limbs were no longer swollen.

Beaming at us, she says she finds it nigh impossible to believe that her problems are really over, she'll believe it if she stays well throughout next summer.

We'll be sure to let you know.



NARRATIVE BY JEFF STRIDE

A painter from the Lot in the *bastis* of Bhopal



THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE SHANTY towns around the derelict Union Carbide factory have seen dozens of photographers, film crews have filmed them, journalists have interviewed them, but no one, they tell me, has ever been there to paint.

The instant I set up my easel a crowd gathers. I'm difficult to place. No expensive equipment, no camera or tape recorder. Someone clears people away from in front of my easel and stops the under-fives from pinching the pastels from the tray at my feet. I smile a bit and answer questions with

a yes or no. I need to remain uninvolved, to be considered harmless, so that I can put all my energy into painting.

Most days I work for about two hours on each of three different pastels. While I work, pastel sticks are stolen from my box, but inevitably return later. Someone picks my pocket but gets roughed up by the crowd. My photo turns up on the front page of the *Hindustan Times* though I have no recollection of the photographer.

All of my working life has been spent in rural France. I am used to painting in peaceful solitude. In Bhopal I am forced to become a different sort of artist, midway between a painter and a one-man street theatre. Sometimes in the rougher bastis, I feel frightened by the crowds. Once, as I'm packing up to leave, I am overwhelmed by a feeling of disorientation and have to force myself not to panic.

One morning a snake charmer settles at the foot of my easel and starts blessing small children with the tail of a two metre python. The going rate for a blessing is one rupee, some people bring cups of flour which he adds to a sack on the lid of the python's basket. I vaguely consider fleeing but when I look again, half an hour or so later, he has gone. I don't notice time passing when I'm painting, just the shadows spinning round and the light changing as the sun climbs higher. When things change too much, I stop.

On another day my audience is chased off by three baton-wielding constables. The officer in charge returns and salutes me smartly, then the three of them stand behind me to watch. They try a few English phrases but once it becomes evident that I am not in conversational mood, they leave too, and the crowd returns. I wish I could do something for them and worry that they

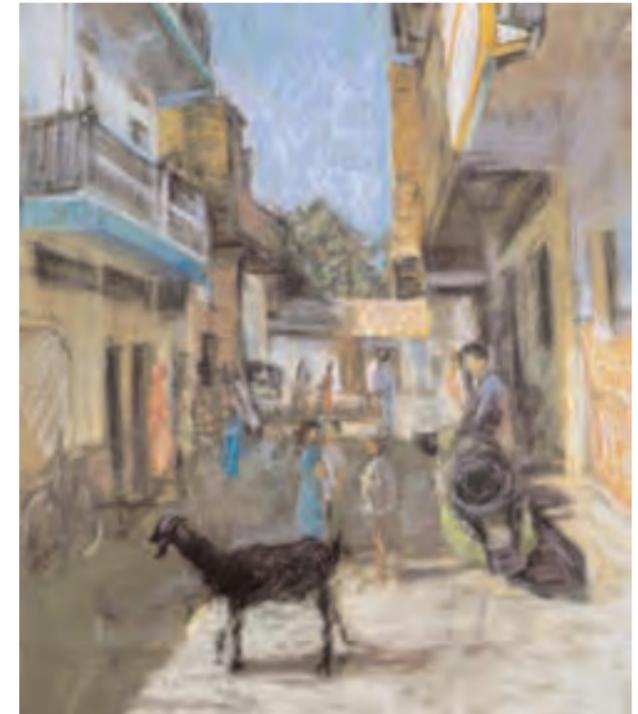
will not be able to understand the tentative jabs and scratches of my pastels on the paper. I wish my images could appear like the ones in a how-to-paint book, first you do the drawing, then wash in the tone, then slick it all up with colour and highlights. Mine aren't like that. After three hours work, all I have to show them is a piece of paper covered in measuring marks and the occasional area of tone. 'Tomorrow,' I say. I don't think they believe me, but the next day the children are there, just in case, and as I prepare for work, people run over to get a good place. On the second day of a painting, if all goes well, the marks will join up and become space. It's the mysterious alchemy that transforms a rectangle of paper into a field two hundred metres across and a kilometre deep. This moment still thrills me, even after performing the same trick every day for forty years, and the onlookers enjoy it too. They stand in the centre of my composition, usually couples or groups of friends, two boys with their arms round each other, or three girls holding hands. They grin shyly, and face the artist squarely. I try a bit of stage direction, but it doesn't help much. People are enjoying themselves, and there's a murmur of approval when they recognise one of their friends in my picture.

When the painting is finished, a man comes forward. 'Sir,' he says. 'This is extremely fine. Never we believe it possible.' Well, I had my doubts too, but glowing from this compliment, I reply, 'Thank you, you've been a wonderful audience.'

JEFFERY STRIDE AND HIS WIFE SALLY DAVIES STRIDE, also an artist, live in the Lot Valley in south west France. Their paintings hang in the Elysee Palace, 10 Downing Street and in art galleries and private collections all over the world.

Jeffery is best known for his fine studies of the Lotois landscapes. This was his first trip to India. The pastels will be exhibited, with half the proceeds going to the Bhopal Medical Appeal, at the BURGH HOUSE ART GALLERY, HAMPSTEAD, 12 NOON - 5PM DAILY BETWEEN 30 NOV - 4 DEC, 2005.

You are cordially invited and readers of 777 may reserve paintings in advance. For a sneak preview please visit www.jeffstride.net.



Twelve months worth of heartfelt thanks to our friends

THANK YOU TO OUR FANTASTIC VOLUNTEERS

Judy Daniels for her tireless support on the database. Dolina Grant who rejoined us for a while one day a week plus valuable help from PAN UK volunteers Mark Hamberry and Yoichi Kosugi.

Thanks to all the Trusts who have given so generously since the last newsletter: The Bay Tree Trust for a considerable donation; The Paget Trust for their continued support; The Pittcroft Trust; The Wild Rose Trust; Balsams Charities; The Lewis Family Charity Settlement.; ED Charitable Trust.

Thanks to all those who did sponsored events: Mr Merenyi who did a brave 3 day silence and raised £350; Actor, Pip Torrens, who raised £1,531 running in the London Marathon 2004, Carys, Jack (hurrah!) and mum Denise who did the 10K Christmas Pudding Run (*again* this year) and raised £200 – even more than last year.

Thanks to everyone who sent or received donations to Bhopal in lieu of Christmas presents: Nina and Robin; Richard Heaton; Annie and William Allen; Kate and Roger Woodward; Ben and Janet Whitaker; Mrs Elizabeth Cunningham and friends; Staff at All Saints Church of England Primary School who gave £64 instead of sending Christmas cards this year.

Some of you generously gave up leaving parties & gifts to donate to the Appeal; Judy Gough at the Lattimore Surgery; John Reber at the ISD Department of the Legal Services Commission; Neil Craven at Retail Week donated his fee for a telephone interview.



Wacky Wizard and victim at Pilton village fete

IN MEMORY We are deeply grateful to the Copus Family, and the memory of their daughter Rachel; to Olive Sleaford who has left us a legacy; for donations given in memory of Mrs B Parfitt of Frome, Keshav Gautam, & a further donation in memory of Jeremy Rees, founder of the Arnolfini Centre for the Contemporary Arts in Bristol.

Warm thanks to all the Society of Friends (Quaker) groups who have so kindly kept Bhopal in their thoughts and collected at their meetings or tea-time collections: St Helen's Meeting House; Selly Oak Preparative Meeting; West Kent monthly meeting; Marple Preparative Meeting; Colchester Religious Society of Friends; Durham Quaker Group; The Society of Friends in Oswestry, Bexhill-on-Sea Meeting and Hereford Preparative Meeting

Donations from the following groups, centres & churches have been very much appreciated: Members of Mount Pleasant United Reform church in Glossop; United Reform Church, Bishops Stortford; The Liverpool Hindu Cultural Centre who raised a generous donation at their Diwali celebrations; Ponteland United Reform Church in Newcastle; St Pancras Parochial Church Council in London; The Convent of St Emilie, Altrincham; Glasgow Unitarian Church; The fellowship of Pentwortham United Reform Church who collected for the appeal at their carol & Christmas morning services; South East



Bell ringing wearing saris (Photo by Ian Sumner)

heartfelt thanks to our friends

Wales Unitarian Society; The Church of the Holy Angels, Hale Barns for the continued support of their Third World Group; The Milton Keynes Peace and Justice Centre who raised money at their 'Feast for Peace'; Lucinda Lavelle and U3a Hillingdon Group; Royston Health Centre for raising funds with their book stall; Eynsham Charity Stall; Marilyn Brown and friends who sent a donation as part of their Winter Solstice Celebration; thank you all.

Thank you to the following enterprising schools: the children in the Reception & Nursery classes at Ravenstone Primary School who raised £200 at their Christmas Play *The Little Robin* (see picture below) Eastlea Community School who held a non-uniform day last term and raised £363.25; Stowupland High School Sixth Form in Suffolk who raised £179.61; Students at Linacre College, Oxford, Haberdashers Monmouth School for Girls raised a donation at their last non-uniform day; staff at Loughborough College.

Thanks also to the following partnerships, and groups of concerned colleagues, for their donations: Architects and Engineers for Social Responsibility; The Kennedy Partnership; Hitchin Tax Office who held a special coffee morning; The UK Transplant Social Committee; Staff at Sweet and Maxwell; Staff at Brennan Atkinson International who held a sale of sample goods among themselves; Colleagues at the ISD Dept of the Legal Services Commission; Robert Leacroft Systems; Liverpool Council of Social Services.



The Little Robin with two of its stars Francesca & Hamish



Liverpool University's Rugby First XV scored for Bhopal

Thanks all the performers, organisers and audiences involved in the following, for their donations and for spreading the word: Parminder Sekhon & the Mehtab Theatre who gave a reading of *The Ghosts of Bhopal* at the Hammersmith Lyric Theatre Studio; Sheffield Independent Media who raised money at a showing of *Bhopal Express*; Graham Hartill who performed his poem Bhopal at a poetry fundraiser earlier this year. (Graham, take a look on www.bhopal.fm); First Nature singers at the Brighton Festival, whose unique sound supported the Appeal once again

To Fiona Case and fantastic friends who held a concert in Pilton that raised £1,122. It was a creative explosion of music and prose from handbell-ringing in saris (see picture) to baroque, folk and blues, fire-dancing and poetry and drama by local groups. The local Indian restaurant in Pilton generously donated some of the food and it sounds like a great night was had by all. Fiona and her enterprising family Mike, Polly and Alex also raised £120 at the annual Pilton Show, running a golf putting competition and defying people to beat the Whacky Wizard at a cunning coin game. They ran a 'Roll a penny' and 'Wine or water?' stall this year, plus held a carboot sale. Thank you!

Our thanks continue on the next page>>>

Continued from previous page:

Thanks to fabulous Susanna Rees who organised a Bhopal Day in Liverpool that made over £1,000 and sparked stories in the local press and on BBC local radio. She couldn't have done it without her star 'performers', the extremely brave Liverpool University First XV who roamed the city centre dressed as fairies to shake collecting tins! Nor can we forget the support of Liverpool University rag-team.

Thanks to all the India-Ireland Friends; Will Chester-Masters and Cargo who gave a very generous donation (Cargo sells lovely Indian furniture in Cirencester & Will has an organic farm); Sacks Wholefood in Totnes; James Davies for his donation and poem inspired by December 2004's *Independent* ad full of ingenious Elvis references in memory of Raju. James, please send your poem to editor@bhopal.fm

Thanks, Simon Duffin at the UK office of the European Parliament & Westminster Explained; to Eric Walker who runs the 'Of Public Concern' video library; and great thanks to L.T. Silkin.

Thanks & medals to the valiant Glastonbury Festival Litterpicking Team who again battled against rain and mud to raise £1,552 for the Appeal: Katie Fenton-Morris, Rosie Scourti, Benjamin Gill, Phil Stubbs, Eloise Touni, Lina Andersson, Lisa Ingwall, Caroline Cochrane, Trishan Panch, Klara Arneman, Paige Powell, Camilla West, Hazel Rowson, David Russell, Mari Jonsson, Colin Pearce, Shamila Adam, Marie Gallagher, Andy Learoyde & Petri Oinonen.

A kind donor who may not want to be named has given £10,500 to the Appeal this year. Thank you!

Thank you for your donations, messages of support, prayers and good wishes. You are all brilliant!

Much love, *Kate*



FC United score a hatful for Bhopal

WE ARE PROUD to be associated with FC United of Manchester, the breakaway fan-owned club started by Manchester United fans fed up with the commercialisation of the game and the unwanted takeover of Manchester United by US tycoon Malcolm Glazer.

As we are also a grassroots effort of ordinary people disgusted by the greed and callousness of big business,



we felt why not support each other?

The idea has been enthusiastically greeted in both cities, it's great to see people in Manchester and Bhopal getting involved together. (See *Club Curry* below.) Our thanks to the FC United Supporters Group for collecting for the Appeal. We're delighted to report that the team is runaway leader of its division.

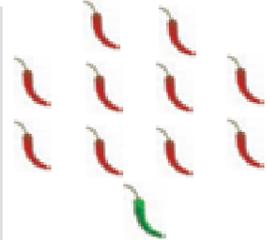
More details: www.fcunited.co.uk

A red hot curry for a red hot team.

For the garam masala
 4 large black cardamoms
 4 green cardamoms
 8 cloves, black pepper, cinnamon, saffron

For the chicken:
 1 kg chicken pieces
 1 onion, chopped
 Onion-garlic paste (made 2 onions, 8 cloves of garlic plus 1 small piece of fresh ginger)
 Chilies, 10 red, 1 green
 1 tsp turmeric
 3 tsp coriander
 100 gm yoghurt
 1/2 cup coconut milk
 chopped green coriander

Method:
 Heat oil, add garam masala and fry 10 seconds release their aroma. Add chopped onion, sauté till golden brown. Add red chilies and onion-garlic paste, toss in chicken pieces and fry well. Add turmeric, coriander, salt to taste. Carry on frying. Add coconut milk and yoghurt. Simmer. Add a little water, cover, leave to simmer till done. Garnish with green coriander leaves and a green chili sliced into thin rings. Serve with rice or naan.



Bhopali Chicken FC United Wallah

THIS RECIPE WAS CREATED IN Bhopal especially for FC United by Raabeeda Bee, joint winner of the 2004 Goldman Award. Ten red chillies and a green give it its zing. Just like FC United. Let's make sure our club is talked about whenever Mancunians go for a curry by asking every Indian restaurant in town to put it on the menu. Demand the one and only Bhopali Chicken FC United Wallah!

You can make a donation to the Bhopal Medical Appeal by calling 0800 316 5577 with a credit or debit card, or by sending a cheque to Pesticide Action Network UK (Bhopal Appeal), FREEPOST LN 10946, London EC2B 2BR. You can also donate online at our website www.bhopal.org.

Bhopal Medical Appeal

A PROJECT OF THE PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK UK, REGISTERED CHARITY 12723

Co-op Bank customers raise an incredible £54,000

A GIANT THANK YOU to all who voted for us in the Cooperative Bank's *Customers Who Care* competition last year. The Bhopal Medical Appeal was one of five charities nominated for your support and to the delight of everyone here and at the Sambhavna Clinic in Bhopal, we received an amazing 48% of the votes.

As a direct result the Cooperative Bank has made us the generous donation of nearly £54,000. This is an enormous sum of money to us – almost enough to cover the entire medicine budget of the clinic for a year – *after it has already funded* the conversion of the new clinic to solar power.

Hard by the pond featured on the cover of this newsletter is a bank of solar panels which can generate ten kilowatts of clean, green, electricity.

To give you an idea of what this means in practice, we are able to run all of the following on solar power: 20 computers for 7 hours a day; 2 printers; 40 lights; 32 fans and some of the pathology lab equipment (centrifuge, auto analyser, microscope & colorimeter).

Solar power makes vital sense in a place like Bhopal where power failures are an almost daily occurrence while the city swelters in the massive heat of the sun.

Thanks to you we can now run the clinic without worry of everything shutting down without warning. Thank you from all the rest of us.



Thanks Dave, miracle printer

IF YOU HAVE BEEN WONDERING how we can afford to print a 32 page newsletter in full colour, the answer is smiling at you out of the picture at right.

Himself a long-time committed Bhopal supporter, Dave Elliott has printed all our materials from the very first mono circular back in 1996, the year our first clinic in Bhopal opened.

The sheer quality of Dave's work has turned 777 into one of the most valuable fundraising tools we have. Thanks to him we not only get a first class newsletter at a price as modest as the man himself, but he even carefully guillotines his scrap into neat reams of virgin A4 for us, thus enabling us to enter a resounding £0 under the cost of stationery on our budget.

Dave learned his craft the old way Unlike digital press operators who, if something goes wrong, must call a software expert, he knows every part of his presses and if need be can repair them himself. He mixes inks by hand and can tell the make and grade of a piece of paper by feeling it with his eyes closed.

Should you ever, of a summer's afternoon, be in Mayfield, Sussex, you'll probably find Dave at the cricket ground, bowling googlies for the village.

Do say hello, and buy the man a well-earned pint.



KATE
BOOTLE

On PAN-UK & Bhopal

SOME OF YOU HAVE OCCASIONALLY BEEN BAFFLED to see the name of 'PAN UK' or the 'Pesticides Action Network' on your bank statements after donating to the Bhopal Appeal! PAN is in fact the international health and environment charity that has been administering the Bhopal Medical Appeal since 1994.

Many people have also rung the BMA's number and got me, Kate Bootle. I am a Senior Administrator at PAN and look after the Medical Appeal for three days a week. Here's a brief history of the Appeal and who's who in it.

Satinath Sarangi, who is now Managing Trustee of the Sambhavna Trust, which runs our award-winning Clinic in Bhopal, had worked with victim support groups since day after the disaster, and in 1993 on a visit to the UK connected with writer Indra Sinha.

It was out of this meeting that the idea for the Medical Appeal was born. Indra penned the first appeal in the *Guardian* newspaper to appear on the 10th anniversary of the disaster. The sheer generosity of the response was, and continues to be, inspiring.

The very first appeal produced enough money to buy a building in Bhopal, equip it, hire and train the staff to run it. Indra, in between writing novels, (*The Death of Mr Love* was published in 2002, *Animal's People* is due out next year) has continued ever since to write our appeals. He also helps to run the Bhopal websites and to edit the 777 newsletter.

When the first money had been raised in the UK,



PAN undertook to administer the Fund, donating our time and keeping costs to a minimum. We had already been involved in Bhopal work, in 1994 PAN hosted the *Permanent People's Tribunal on Industrial Hazards and Human Rights* in support of the Bhopal survivors.

At that meeting we, like many others, were deeply shocked to learn that victims of the disaster were still without adequate medical care. Despite the constant calls for justice nothing had been done to alleviate the immediate suffering of the survivors.

PAN-UK works specifically on the health and environmental problems of chemical pesticides, and the explosion in Bhopal is still the worst chemical pesticide-related disaster of our time. As we say on our leaflet 'Pesticides damage or kill living things. Sometimes that includes us'.

We work to educate governments and individuals about the hazards of toxic pesticides, and to eliminate those hazards. We work for solutions and wherever possible we promote sustainable alternatives.

In 2002 we won a ban on the persistent pesticide, lindane and we've worked hard persuading countries to share information on banned and dangerous chemicals. Last year we had cause to celebrate our founding role in this information-exchange when it became part of international law.

PAN UK's projects include an information service for people whose health has been affected by pesticides. We also provide information for householders and recently increased the availability of disposal facilities for home and garden products. In countryside areas our pressure for change has helped trigger an investigation by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution into the health problems of pesticide spraydrift.

Overseas we've established a partnership with the United Nations and local groups to remove 50,000 tonnes of banned pesticides left to rot and leak in Africa. Assisting African cotton farmers to convert to organic methods has been very successful and we work with designers and retailers in the UK to increase the use of organic cotton in clothes and textiles.

These are just a few of PAN's projects. It's timely to mention them since the Bhopal Medical Appeal is likely to gain independent charity status in 2006, but we will remain closely involved with its work.

To learn more about what we do please do visit www.pan-uk.org or call us on 020 7065 0905.



Goodbye to Rajesh bhai

WITH MUCH SADNESS WE HAVE TO TELL YOU that Mr Rajesh Sharma, 35, a security worker at the clinic, died in a road accident on the night of 14th September. He was on his motorcycle on the highway when a truck hit him from behind and the front wheels went over his legs. Rajesh got help from the police but died due to severe bleeding on the way to the hospital.

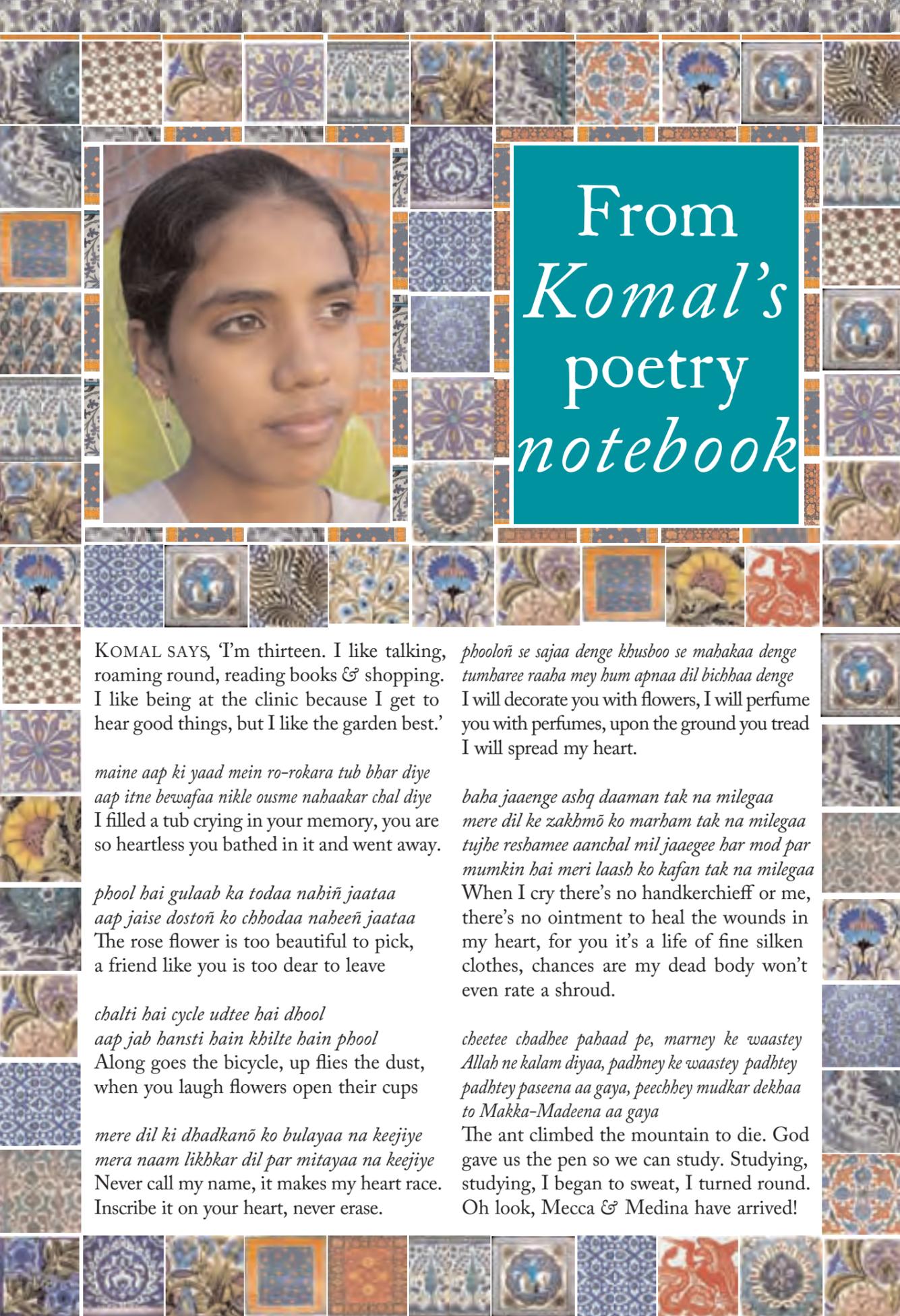
Rajesh bhai had been working with us for eleven months. Very sincere in his work, he made friends easily and always wore a smile on his face.

We will miss his shy, generous presence, a real comfort to have around, especially for those of us who had reason to camp in the new clinic while it was still being built and had to walk back there through pitch black alleys and unseen obstacles. Rajesh's quiet voice, the welcome flashlight at one's feet, and later, his footsteps making the rounds, the tap of his stick, the calling of the night hours – all these are things we will mourn. His death comes as a severe shock to all who knew him.

In the photograph above, Rajesh's friend Gangaram is pointing to the Sambhavna logo embroidered on his uniform. The tailor originally made a badge showing two crossed .303 rifles. These were replaced by the Sambhavna logo of two people, a care giver and one receiving care, embracing and supporting each other.

Among Sambhavna's four security workers perhaps Rajesh most exemplified the Sambhavna ideal of what a guard should be. With his tall strong build he could be firm when necessary, yet he was gentle and warm with children and those who needed help.

A meeting of clinic staff has unanimously resolved to create a job for Rajesh's wife in the clinic. She will run our canteen. Meanwhile we are taking a collection for his family among Sambhavna's staff and trustees and those of us in Bhopal would like to assure friends around the world that we will do our utmost for their welfare. If you would like more information about this please send an email to 777@bhupal.org.



From
Komal's
poetry
notebook

KOMAL SAYS, 'I'm thirteen. I like talking, roaming round, reading books & shopping. I like being at the clinic because I get to hear good things, but I like the garden best.'

*maine aap ki yaad mein ro-rokara tub bhar diye
aap itne bewafaa nikle ousme nahaakar chal diye*
I filled a tub crying in your memory, you are so heartless you bathed in it and went away.

*phool hai gulaab ka todaa nahiñ jaataa
aap jaise dostoñ ko chhodaa nabeñ jaataa*
The rose flower is too beautiful to pick, a friend like you is too dear to leave

*chalti hai cycle udtee hai dhool
aap jab hansti hain kbilte hain phool*
Along goes the bicycle, up flies the dust, when you laugh flowers open their cups

*mere dil ki dhadkanō ko bulayaa na keejiye
mera naam likhkar dil par mitayaa na keejiye*
Never call my name, it makes my heart race. Inscribe it on your heart, never erase.

*phoolōñ se sajaae denge khusboo se mahakaa denge
tumbaree raaba mey hum apnaa dil bichhaa denge*
I will decorate you with flowers, I will perfume you with perfumes, upon the ground you tread I will spread my heart.

*baha jaaenge ashq daaman tak na milegaa
mere dil ke zakhmō ko marham tak na milegaa
tujhe reshamee aanchal mil jaaege har mod par
mumkin hai meri laash ko kafan tak na milegaa*
When I cry there's no handkerchieff or me, there's no ointment to heal the wounds in my heart, for you it's a life of fine silken clothes, chances are my dead body won't even rate a shroud.

*cheetee chadhee pahaad pe, marney ke waastey
Allah ne kalam diyaa, padhney ke waastey padhney
padhney paseena aa gaya, peechhey mudkar dekhaa
to Makka-Madeena aa gaya*

The ant climbed the mountain to die. God gave us the pen so we can study. Studying, studying, I began to sweat, I turned round. Oh look, Mecca & Medina have arrived!