

Memories from Bangladeshi Students

There are currently four Bangladeshi students registered at Stirling. Reflecting the change in project work however, most of them are conducting field work in Bangladesh on a range of projects the Institute of Aquaculture has with partners in Bangladesh including BAU.

Faruk Ul Islam, who works with the charity organisation Intermediate Technology Development Group in Bangladesh, is studying the impact of self-recruiting species production on carp production in polyculture ponds. Md Mafuzul Haque, faculty at BAU, is working on the DFID-AFGRP decentralised seed project. Manjurul Karim is studying how farmers prioritise the use of water from a pond for growing crops around the pond, not just for growing fish. This work is part of an EU-funded project that also saw another Bangladeshi student, Shamsul Kabir who is registered at Wageningen University, visiting Stirling recently.

The fourth student registered at Stirling is Almas Gheyas, from BAU, who is conducting laboratory research in the Institute of Aquaculture. Below she explains her time here in more detail:-

'I have been familiar with the University of Stirling ever since I started my undergrad studies in the Faculty of Fisheries at Bangladesh Agricultural University. Many of my favourite professors received their doctorate titles from the world-renowned Institute of Aquaculture. After finishing my Bachelors and Masters studies I joined the Faculty of Fisheries as a lecturer.

'I started looking for opportunities for higher studies abroad and was fortunate enough to win a Commonwealth Scholarship, which allowed me to start my Ph.D. programme at the Institute of Aquaculture. This also paved the way for me to be a part in the long-lasting relation between University of Stirling and Bangladesh Agricultural University. For my Ph.D. research I am working on the applications of microsatellite markers in aquaculture management of Chinese and Indian major carps. I believe expertise in this area can be invaluable for my country.

'I greatly enjoy my research work here and very much appreciate the multinational environment of the University, the spectacular natural beauty of Stirling, its rich historical and cultural background and very welcoming and easy-going people.'

Dr. Gias Uddin Ahmed **Post doc fellow, 1994 –1995**

I worked as a post doc fellow in aquatic pathobiology with Dr. Rod Wootten and Dr. James F Turnbull from September 1994 to February 1995. I attended MSc courses during the period. At IoA I worked on histopathology, parasitology and electron microscopy with Indian major carps, previously collected from Bangladesh. Currently I am working as a professor in the Department of Aquaculture at BAU. I am now in charge of Fish Pathology and have completed many research projects and investigated diseases and their control measures in indigenous and exotic fish species of Bangladesh. My present research is identifying the causes of the reduction of endangered fish species from a health management point of view.

Dr Md. Ali Reza Faruk **PhD 1996-2000**

It has been over four years since I finished my PhD at the Institute of Aquaculture (IoA) but I still have preserved extraordinary memories. My very first day at Stirling remains special for me. It was 1 March 1996, I arrived just after midnight due to delay of my flight and was able to find my accommodation with the help of the taxi driver. The next day I started as a study fellow under Dr Valerie Inglis to learn advanced fish bacteriology and histopathology. For six months I attended the taught section of MSc Aquatic Pathobiology and in March 1997 I switched over to my PhD research to characterise *Flavobacterium psychrophilum*, the causative agent of rainbow trout fry syndrome (RTFS). I submitted my PhD thesis in February 2000 and probably it was the first thesis at the IoA in the new millennium.

My wife Zui and myself enjoyed our stay at Stirling. Our only child Hasin was born at Stirling Royal Infirmary on 20 August 1996. We consider our days at Stirling as very special and golden ones in our life. We miss the beauty of Stirling and always deem it as our second home. After coming back from Stirling in May 2000, I joined as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Fisheries Technology, BAU and then transferred to the Department of Aquaculture considering my PhD specialization. Now I am an Associate Professor and a member of Fish Disease Research team based at the Department of Aquaculture. I am involved in teaching and conducting research. Very recently, I finished two research projects entitled "Economic impact of fish diseases in rural aquaculture of Bangladesh" funded by

DFID and "Diseases and health management of *Pangasius hopophthalmus*" funded by WorldFish Center. My future interest is to establish immunological approaches especially development of rapid-diagnostic probes for disease management in aquaculture.

Dr. M.A. Salam **Ph.D. 1996-2000**

It was 26 February 1999. I was preparing to fly to Vancouver to present a paper. Earlier I sent my passport to the Canadian Embassy in London for the necessary visa. They sent back my passport with visa via 24 hour guaranteed delivery mail to Edinburgh Central Post Office. The passport, however, was somehow lost on the way. My flight was on Sunday morning 28 February. The post office was trying to locate the passport but couldn't trace it even in the afternoon of Friday. I was bit worried about my passport and the Vancouver conference. As it seemed impossible for me to travel on Sunday without a passport and visa, my supervisor Professor Lindsay G. Ross asked me to book tickets also for Monday and Tuesday. Drs. Christina Sommerville and Rod Wootten came to console me. Lindsay requested Beatrice to keep tracking the passport. She worked round the clock and finally traced the passport. Poor Beatrice had to cancel her holiday for that weekend, but finally I got my passport back and flew from Glasgow on Sunday morning and arrived in Vancouver on time.

Dr. M A Wahab **PhD 1983-86**

I am now a professor within the Department of Fisheries Management and maintain strong links with Stirling and DFID. We have a newly formed Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum that is bringing together all the fisheries universities in Bangladesh and other institutions to further current research activities. I am also a partner with Stirling on EU projects. It was excellent to celebrate the 25 years of collaboration and everyone at BAU enjoyed the preparation and day of celebration. I look forward to success with the new Stirling-BAU link for the distance learning Master's programme in Aquatic Resource Development.

Md. Arshad Hossain **Ph.D 1989**

After successful defence of my thesis I was officially awarded the Ph.D on 9th February 1989. Dr. Kim Jauncey was my supervisor. I and my wife Shahnaz enjoyed our on-campus stay at the university during my entire period in IoA. We always remember the

sweet memories that we had with our friends and colleagues at IoA. We miss our friends! Our son Fahim who was born in the Stirling Royal Infirmary on 7 October 1987 is now in XI class. I will be pleased to receive mail from my friends Ganeswaran, Amaratne, Chris, Mark, Smith, Marlie, Natarajan and others.

As a member of staff in the Department of Aquaculture I teach two courses - Fish Nutrition and Fish Feed Technology both at B.Sc and M.Sc. levels. In November 1997, I was appointed as Professor. I availed the STA Fellowship in Japan in 1999 and AvH Research Fellowship in Germany during 1999-2001.

Since the establishment of a Nutrition Lab at BAU through Stirling-BAU link project, the research facilities have been increased and I am actively involved with research projects on evaluation of indigenous plant and animal protein sources as fish meal substitute, nutrient digestibility of feedstuffs, nutritional requirements of the cultivable species, and formulation of low-cost diets for carp, catfish and crustaceans. Presently I am working on the effects of anti-nutritional factors on fish growth, metabolism and inhibition of reproduction in Tilapia. Any research collaboration is welcome!

Dr. Md. Bazlur Rashid Chowdhury **Professor, Department of Aquaculture**

Sweet memories of the past three times staying at University of Stirling for advanced research activities with the colleagues of the Institute of Aquaculture are so many that they cannot be expressed in a few words. I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of the colleagues with whom I was directly or indirectly involved either for research purposes or official formalities, especially to Professor R.J. Roberts, Dr. R. Wootten, Dr. Valerie Inglis, Dr. Sandra Adams and Dr. Kim Thompson.

My first visit to the Institute of Aquaculture was in 1990 for about three weeks and included participation in a Bacterial Fish Disease Conference and visits to different aquaculture facilities in Scotland with Dr. R. Wootten. This was funded by the British Council. The second one was a three-month visit in 1993 under the ODA-BAU Link Program where I had an opportunity to work with Dr. Valerie Inglis and also with Dr. R. Wootten on fish diseases (Advanced Microbiology and Histopathology). The most important and interesting was my third visit which was a longer one to the Institute for one year (1998-99) to conduct post-doctoral research on fish immunology and disease under the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship Programme. This time I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Sandra Adams and Dr. Kim Thompson. My wife and daughter accompanied me during this time where my daughter successfully completed Scottish Board Higher Grade Examination in Biology, Physics and Chemistry supported by English and Mathematics from Bannockburn High School and obtained B grade in all

of the subjects which was really tough for her considering the short period and new environment. She was awarded as the best student of the year. I and my family will never forget the sweet memories with Dr. Sandra Adams and her family especially for nice dinner at Sandra's house. I remember her scholastic advice in research, my visit to Rhodes with her team for presentation to European Fish Disease Conference. I express my everlasting thanks to all other colleagues of the Institute and the lab technicians and associates for their cooperation.

Currently, I am continuing teaching and research on diseases in aquaculture in Bangladesh, especially on bacterial and fungal diseases of fish and shrimp, under the Department of Aquaculture at BAU. Let us try to meet again and share our views.

Prof. Dr. Md. Ruhul Amin **Postgraduate Diploma** **1995-1996**

I completed my postgraduate diploma in Aquaculture Engineering with Prof. Dr. James F. Muir in 1996 (October 1995 to August 1996). After my successful training in IoA, I teach Aquaculture Engineering and Farm Design at both graduate and post graduate level at BAU. There were plenty of memories of IoA besides studying there. I cannot forget the memories of climbing up the hill behind UoS; that was a tremendous pleasure in my life. I still remember snow covered roads, tulips, daffodils and the breath-taking beauty of Scotland. Finally I acknowledge the gesture of colleagues and staff of IoA and thank them for their helpful attitude towards me during my stay.

Professor Dr. Md. Fazlul Awal Mollah

I had the opportunity to spend a year (July 1991-June 1992) in IoA for my post-doctoral research under EC fellowship programme. My wife Shamima and our two kids Ishtiaque (5 years) and Punni (3 years) were also with me. I worked with Dr. Kim Jauncey and Dr. Graham Haylor on aspects like brood management, breeding, larvae and fry rearing of catfish. Presently I am involved in research relating to breeding and fry production of some indigenous species like *Mastacembelus armatus* and *Rita rita*. Cryopreservation of fish spermatozoa is another branch of my recent work. The eye-pleasing and mind-capturing beauty of the university campus of Stirling is still fresh in my mind.

Mostafa Hossain **MSc in Aquaculture 1994-1995** **PhD 1995-1998**

After the masters course in Aquaculture with Dr Liam Kelly in 1994-1995, I started my PhD with Drs Graham Haylor and Malcolm Beveridge on fish feeding physiology. Both my supervisors were very cooperative and I am grateful to them for their continuous support and encouragement during my PhD. It was only because of them that I was able to publish six papers from my PhD thesis. Malcolm and Graham were not in my viva at the request of the external examiner, Dr

David Grove (a great scientist and wonderful personality), but Malcolm had words of encouragement for me as he pointed his finger to the window and said, "See Mostafa, the sunshine, after a week of gloomy weather, this morning comes with the bright sunshine on your thesis defence day." I have hundreds of sweet memories about IoA, UoS and Scotland. It is almost 6 years since I left Stirling, all my memoirs, however, are very fresh and vivid. I very much miss working at the Institute, Howietoun Fish farm, Tropical Aquarium, Nutrition Lab, Computer room and my desk in the then BAFRU building. I can still see myself along with my friends from Bangladesh, Scotland, Iran, Malaysia, Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Turkey walking on the bridge over the frozen lake, chatting in the MacRobert Centre or dining in Allangrange, Fair View or Lyon Crescent.

Since my graduation I have been to Kyoto University in Japan for two years postdoctoral research. We also formed a research group "Fisheries Foresight" with 5 members from BAU (Prof. M A Wahab, Dr. M R Faruk, Dr. M A Salam, Dr. Nesar Ahmed and myself - all Stirling graduates) and one representative from each of the other four fisheries universities (Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi) - see the website www.fisheriesforesight.org. I have worked as Country Coordinator for CABI Compendium in Bangladesh. I have successfully completed several research projects funded by DFID, WorldFish Center and Bangladesh Government on different aspects related to fisheries and aquaculture. This year I took the charge of Head of the Department of the Fisheries Biology and Genetics at BAU and our second child Galeeb was born.

I have visited many beautiful countries since I left Stirling, but still Scotland is the 2nd most favourite place for me after Bangladesh. It is where I did my MSc and PhD, I started my married life, my daughter was born, and above all I met and worked with some wonderful people in an amazing place.

Nesar Ahmed **PhD 2001**

The year of 2001, very memorable for me as I earned my PhD (January) and my daughter was born (December). Turin, is now 3 years, dreaming to be a student at the University of Stirling, like her father. Eity, my wife, is busy for family life, although she does still miss everyone at the Institute of Aquaculture, and living in Stirling. Fortunately every year I meet my PhD supervisor Professor James Muir, as he frequently visits Bangladesh. I am currently working in the Department of Fisheries Management at BAU. The year of 2004 was a very productive and busy year for me. I successfully completed SUFER, IFS and WorldFish Center funded research projects. These projects were based on prawn (golda) farming in Bangladesh, studying socio-economic, marketing and livelihoods issues. Currently I have 6 MSc students, working on golda and its sustainable production to increase income for the poor. Hope good days are coming for golda and prawn farmers in Bangladesh.