

Judy Shepherd

Isn't it great to meet an enthusiast? Especially when they have put time and effort into their chosen field, to the benefit of others as well as themselves. Such a person is Judy Shepherd, who has lived in Flackwell for the last 5 years. Her attitude to life is 'Let's have a go', and that's taken her along many roads.

She began training as a ballet dancer, but didn't grow enough. Undeterred, she changed to drama, trained as a teacher, and now shares her passion for the stage with her pupils. She taught at High March School in Beaconsfield for nine years and now holds private classes, including coaching adults in public speaking. Here in Flackwell she runs the 'Showcats' children's drama groups at the Community Centre. Judy is convinced that, besides learning to perform on stage, her pupils' gains in self-esteem help them to fulfil their potential in other areas of their lives.

After encountering an orphanage in India that specialises in music teaching (the Mathieson Music School near Calcutta), she decided to give some of her energy to helping them, and has spent several trips of some weeks each there.

Her interest in India and Eastern philosophy was the reason for a visit to a village near Pondicherry in South India over Christmas 2004 and she was there when the tsunami struck. Not directly caught by the wave herself, she decided to do what she could in the aftermath. She and a Canadian friend asked what the survivors wanted, and then bought and distributed pencils and exercise books for the children, and over a thousand cooking stoves.

Other enthusiasms have led to her qualifying as a reflexologist, and running T'ai Chi classes, exercises which combine movement with breathing control and meditation. Her latest venture is a fully-equipped recording studio for hire by bands wanting to rehearse, or even produce demo tapes for that assault on the big-time! It has its own living accommodation, for those wanting sustained sessions. Those playing any type of music can hire it, and there are recording engineers available if required. Details of the Nutbrown Studios are on nutbrownstudios.co.uk.

Judy, I don't know how you fit it all in, and I wait with interest to see what you take up next!

Sue Arnautov