

Jo Cave

Gilly's new school is a fitting tribute



Above - The late Gurpreet Singh Mundy - friends and family have turned his vision into bricks and mortar by building a school in Northern India. (s)

The Gilly Mundy Memorial School opens one year after campaigner's death

HUNDREDS of people gathered in rural Northern India to mark the opening of the Gilly Mundy Memorial School, named in honour of a Leamington-born race campaigner.

Exactly one year after the 36-year-old's sudden death from a brain haemorrhage, the school opened its doors to the villagers of Buwan Kothi, a remote farming community in the state of Haryana.

The event was the culmination of work by the Buwan Kothi International Trust (BKIT), a Leamington and London-based charity founded by Gilly and his wife Debbie in 2006 following their marriage in the village.

More than £50,000 of donations funded the new building, which will also act as a com-

munity centre, meeting space and library, offering workshops and courses to adults from the surrounding area. The next phase of BKIT's work includes extending the school to take secondary pupils, installing a water filtering system and creating facilities for a healthcare professional to visit the village on a regular basis.

Kevin Blowe, a close friend of Mr Mundy and BKIT secretary, said: "We have been overwhelmed by the generosity and support from so many people in Leamington Spa and from Gilly's friends in London. They have enabled us to build a community school that will provide high standards of learning for children whose parents have, until now, faced the choice between inadequate state education and fees for private tuition that they simply



Gilly's family at the opening of the memorial school - father Mota Singh, widow Debbie Quagnolo and brothers Rupee and Jas.

cannot afford."

The inauguration ceremony was attended by members of Gilly's family, including his father Mota Singh, a former mayor of Leamington who has served for many years on both Warwick District and Warwickshire County councils.

Mr Mundy, known as Gilly, attended Clapham Terrace Primary School, Sydenham Middle School and Campion School. He became involved in the Abbey House Youth Project in Russell Street, which led to a degree in race relations and racism at Edge Hill University in Lancashire. He was widely respected in the field of race relations and known for his work with the family of Stephen Lawrence, who was killed in a racist attack in London.

Mr Blowe added: "Gilly believed that

people can change the world by the actions that they take. I can't think of a better tribute to his memory than the opening of the school."

Runner Sheila Alon has agreed to join the London Marathon on April 13 to help raise funds for BKIT's continuing work in the village. Anyone who would like to sponsor her can via her website, www.justgiving.com/bkit.

For more information on the work and future plans of BKIT, go to www.buwankothi.org.uk.

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