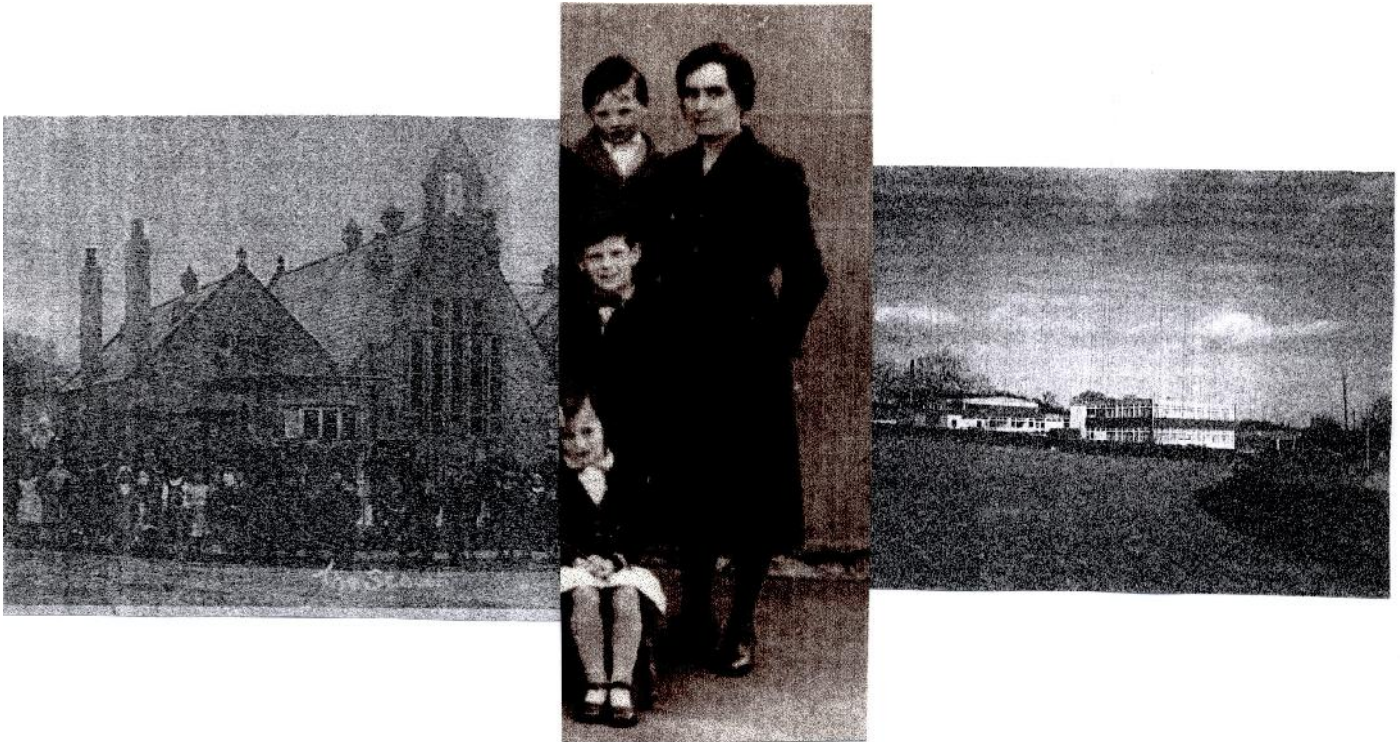


Bramham Millennium Characters 9 : Miss Mary Boswell



Sadly , because she had to give up her home in the village during Millennium Year in order to enter care, it was not possible to interview probably Bramham ' s longest serving resident . However , the village is full of people who owe Miss Boswell [she is always referred to in this way] a great deal . Having spent the whole of her teaching career in the village school , she has literally thousands of former pupils ranging in age from late thirties to late seventies -- and many are still around to tell the tale !

One of the ' old school ' , Miss Boswell ' s style was to have her classes ' just there ' as one of her oldest ex - pupils said . Her lessons in the basics [and how well ingrained they were into her children] may have been formal , but there were add - ons which made her a very enlightened teacher too . A keen bee keeper , with her hives at College Farm , she would take her classes down there to give them hands on experience of practical science. This interest in things natural could be

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seen in the way she kept her garden delightfully until she left her home on Wetherby Road [on the corner of Lyndon Crescent] when well into her nineties.

The presentation of work of instinctive interest to the children was just one of her secrets in ensuring excellent behaviour from her pupils. Another was her insistence on high standards of work and behaviour. She expected her children to do their best , and was ready to push them on if they needed it. More than one child went up to the grammar school [Tadcaster] early because she knew that was what they needed . Yet again , she always appeared a calm , unfappable personality , which naturally settled children whose touch paper might well have been lit by someone of a more excitable nature. One little quirk was mentioned by Ernest Hallaways who , at 75 , must have been one of Miss Boswell 's earliest pupils . She always had , on her desk , a packet of what we would call paper tissues ; this must have been a very early example of what has now become commonplace.

Ernest ' s wife Margaret , who , though not an ex - pupil , nevertheless knew Miss Boswell most of her life and was a fellow member of the Women 's Institute [later Yorkshire Countrywomen] , tells a story which sums up the lady . One day , passing Harland 's petrol pumps which stood in the Square opposite the Red Lion , she saw a motorist light up a cigarette , and throw the empty packet into the street . Miss Boswell , picking up the packet , gave it him back , suggesting that he may have dropped it accidentally . The motorist said , fairly bluntly , that he didn ' t want it . " No , " said Miss Boswell . " and neither do we . Now , take it home with you like a good lad . " And he did.