

Bramham Millennium Characters 13 : Patricia & David Machin



Pat & David Machin moved into their home at 9 , Prospect Bank on the last day of 1968 , with their two young children , Andrew and Heather. They were to make several contributions to the village during the next 35 years . Mancunians both , they settled in Bramham when David came as Head of English at Tadcaster Grammar School , after having held teaching positions in grammar schools at Eccles , Manchester , at his old school , Stretford Grammar, and at Bolton School. A graduate of Leeds University, with further advanced qualifications from Loughborough and a masters degree from York University , he had previous connections with Yorkshire , and was soon settled here. A chief examiner in English Language , he became , whilst in Bramham , a Deputy Head at a large Bingley comprehensive before becoming ,during 20 years of headship , probably the only person to be successively Head of a grammar school , a comprehensive , and Principal of a sixth form college , the latter two set up and opened under his direction. NEW College , Pontefract was to become one of the leading colleges in the country.

Pat , meanwhile , had chosen to act as full time mother and organiser of the home , for eleven years keeping a keen eye on her aged parents living in the adjoining flat. After leaving her grammar school in Urmston , Manchester, Pat

worked in local libraries in Flixton and Urmston, completed her librarianship degree qualifications at UMIST, one of Manchester's universities, before taking up a post as children's librarian with Stretford Libraries until Andrew and Heather arrived.

Over their 35 years in Bramham, both became involved at various times in village life, though they will be best remembered for their work in recording Bramham's life and history through the book 'Bramham, the Village in Times Past' and the creation and building of the Village Archive. For some years Pat sat on and was Secretary of the Parochial Church Council, was a member of the Mothers' Union, and of the committee of Bramham Yorkshire Countrywomen. As regular All Saints' attenders, both read on occasions and supported Church life. David also served on the PCC, was for some time a Church Warden, Sidesman and Deanery Representative, as well as spending over 30 years winding the Church clock.

Their most abiding contribution, however, was that involving the recording of Bramham's history. With Doreen Dickson, Pat conceived the idea of collecting from older villagers their recollections of the village as it had been, together with their old postcards, photographs and articles. These formed the basis of the book, never intended as a straight history, but so popular as to sell out both its first run of 1000 copies, and its second of a further 500. The resulting profit of over £4000 went into projects in the village, and good causes locally and in Yorkshire. Because the information continued to come in after publication in 1994, David started to compile the Archive, which, within 9 years, ran to 40 volumes and a mass of photographs, maps, plans and further artefacts.

As people interested in a wide variety of pastimes, they maintained their gardens, went to the theatre and jazz concerts, and followed their own interests. With Pat these included solving quizzes, creating pictures and decorative covers through her needlecraft skills, and, of course, mastering the arts of home management. Once her parents had departed, she also ran very successfully the village's only short-term holiday flat in the house annexe.

David was seen for years jogging the highways and byways of the parish and wider afield once his days as a footballer and Yorkshire League cricketer with

Harrogate had come to an end --- though he spent his final two years with Bramham village team , the last as captain. He never did , however, quite achieve his ambition to run the equivalent of round the globe before collapsing back and neck made him settle for walking. He did , nevertheless , keep up the pace for 15 years as a member of the Parish Council , a role which suited his capacity to talk and discuss as well as to secure action !

Though resident for only 35 years , Pat and David Machin came to be accepted as locals --- even when they continued to claim that , as Mancunians , they had only ever come over the Pennines " to do missionary work " !