



## Part 3 Farms and friends.



*Rev. A. E. Cann,  
Crowton's vicar 1945 to 1958*

The two lasting impressions of my time in Crowton are the very rural environment and the close community. I can think of nine or ten working farms within walking distance of the church and the time I spent at some of them had a lasting impression on a small child. I fed lambs and calves, collected eggs, helped bring up the cows and watched the milking, made dens in hay lofts and rode ponies and one placid old sow called Victoria. I was given several farm kittens, and my first and only puppy. You can see why I did not want to leave.

My mother was almost thirty five when I was born, so many of the friends she made in the village had older children, some grown-up and I can see now that I was indulged somewhat, but everyone I knew seemed to have accepted our small family into the fold and I always felt cared for and safe.

Added to all that was the experience of sharing a house with three American families. The first arrived with two small girls when I was around four. They were from Pennsylvania and quickly became friends. When they left they had added two boys to their family and stayed in touch for very many years. Then a young couple came for a short while with a very flashy American car and they took me out in it to the seaside one day-I remember feeling very shy.

The last family were from Texas. They had four children from 2 to 11 years old, one house Alsatian dog called Lady and an English au pair. They established two large pens in the orchard to house twenty Alsations and twenty Corgis

which they were breeding for showing. It was a colourful time. The eldest boy made friends with several village boys and I remember packing cases and old prams becoming go-carts which we tried out on the new vicarage's sloping drive.

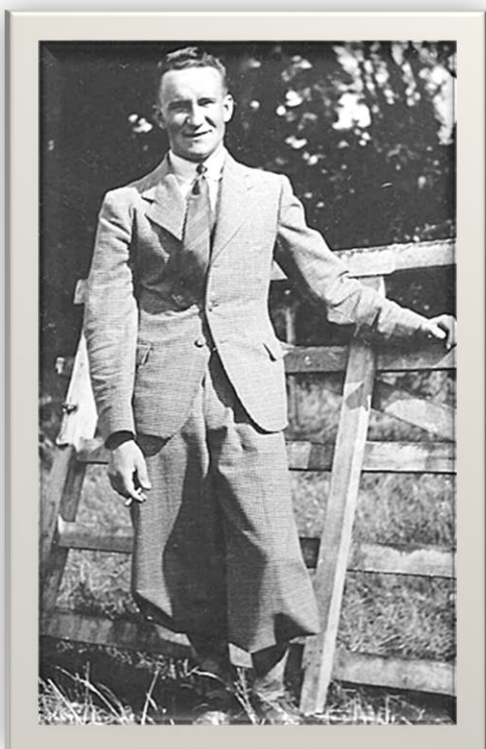
### My Crowton Coincidence

One family, Peter, Kay and Heather Holmes, lived for a few years in Ainsworth lane and were part of Mum and Dad's circle of friends. They came from Devon and returned to live there before we left Crowton.

We moved to Cuddington in 1956, and when I left school, I went to Homerton College to train as a teacher. After the first Christmas break, I was tapped on the shoulder in a lecture by a girl I knew only slightly. "I've been hearing a lot about **you** this Christmas," she said. I was puzzled as I knew she lived in Devon. She explained that her **real** Auntie Kay had been talking to former Crowton neighbour Vi Shaw on the phone and discovered a surprising coincidence concerning a niece and a goddaughter. Sue and I established a firm friendship over the three college years and she remains one of my dearest friends to this day.

### One last glimpse of life on a farm in the 50s.

Auntie Vi Shaw's daughter lived with her husband in Acton Bridge later in life and I mentioned the coincidence above in a Christmas card to her not so very long ago. This was her response:



*Leslie, Marjorie and  
Carol Mills,  
Pikenall 1948*



*'Peter came to our area to advise on the best use of farmland – hence my father became one of the first in Cheshire to make a silage pit. This consisted of long grass buried in a long trench rolled down to compact it (with his tractor which frequently looked as though it would flip over.) It was then soaked with molasses, covered over and left to become cattle food. Our hired help at the time just filled his bread with the 'treacle' from then on.*

Some baggin! And the smell of that pit has stayed in my memory.



*A Crowton group at my wedding in 1970: Miss V. Heaton, Mr& Mrs. A Moreton, Mrs. J Lewis, Mum, Mr &Mrs. F Shaw .*

So thank you Crowton for all these memories from a happy childhood, and thank you to those who are organising this year's celebrations, whose help and encouragement have led to much time in the loft and a lot of pleasure.

I now have it on good authority that the Rose Queen procession still enters to the tune of Greensleeves, and the Bran Tub is still filled with real bran. If I discover that teas are still in a marquee, and include homemade potted beef sandwiches and Victoria sponge, I may have to make a trip from Bedfordshire in a year or two.