



My great grandparents, Charles and Ada Garfit, possibly worshipped in Christ Church Crowton from day one in 1871.



Charles Garfit

At the end of 1869 Charles Garfit was appointed land agent to the Wilbraham estates of Delamere Park, Sandiway and Cuddington, and in February 1870 he got married, and at the end of the year, my grandfather, Charles Corringham Garfit was born.

The previous agent, Mr William Peover died on 7th November 1869 and Charles Garfit was appointed in his place before the end of the year. For the first year of married life he lived at Massey's Lodge, a property owned by the

Wilbrahams and where Mr Peover had lived; it was also where my grandfather was born.

Almost immediately after William Peover died, John Douglas, the famous Cheshire architect, began work on building the land agent's house at Ruloe.



A fairly recent house had been built on the site for the gamekeeper but with the intent of turning it into the land agent's house.

Wikipedia says that Ruloe was built in 1873 but my great grandparents moved in in 1871 and will have become regular members of the congregation.

Two daughters followed in quick succession, Ada Mary in 1872 and Helen Maude in 1874. Both were baptised in Crowton Church.

In 1875 my great-grandmother gave birth to a third daughter, Kate but both died that year, not as a result of childbirth but because she had suffered "10 months of a most painful illness of paraplegia brought on it was thought by a rheumatic deposit of the spinal cord".



Detail from the Garfit memorial in Crowton churchyard

So in the first four years of the life of the Church the family experienced three baptisms and two burials.

My grandfather, despite being a great countryman, did not follow his father and grandfather into land agency but instead became a doctor, perhaps as a result of seeing his mother so ill at such a formative age.

Both surviving daughters were married in Crowton Church. Ada Mary married a widower, John Isaac ("Jack") Watts, a director of Brunner Mond, in 1902.

Helen Maude married a Scottish farmer, Thomas Douglas in October 1910. The previous year she reached the semi-finals of the Ladies Singles at Wimbledon, losing to the eventual winner, Dora Boothby, but she did win the (unofficial) mixed doubles.

The following month, my great grandfather died of a heart attack whilst out hunting, following a meet at Delamere House, and was buried with his first wife in Crowton churchyard.

Apart from being sometime Chairman of the Crowton Parish Council he was, for many years, a church warden.

He had worked for the Wilbrahams and lived at Ruloe for forty years, but this marked the end of our family's association with Crowton.

It is entirely coincidental that I moved so close to Crowton from Hertfordshire in 2013.

In the Crowton WI scrapbooks there is mention of the 100th anniversary of the church, and of a "music copy of Hymns Ancient and Modern which will be of great interest to some Crowton people. It was originally presented in 1902 to a Sunday School teacher who was leaving to be married – Miss Ada Mary Garfit – by the Teachers and Scholars of Christ Church Crowton. Then, 50 years later, the book was given back to the Church by Mrs Ada Mary Watts, née Garfit. A list of those who subscribed is pasted in the hymn book ... the book weighs nearly ten pounds ..."

And there is a link back on the Crowton Story webpage to the newspaper account of the wedding of Miss Garfit, which mentions the "splendidly bound edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern".

Guy Garfit
Frodsham

Postscript: according to the Crowton WI records there was a further bequest from the Garfit family when a church lectern was given in memory of Charles Taylor Garfit and Ada Maria Garfit. It is still in regular use, most recently at Harvest Festival on 3rd October 2021.

