

## TELLING

"We all have a story to tell, our own story, unique to each of us. It is a story, that is important because it is unique. It is precious to us, to God and, if we are fortunate, to those who love us."

### I am fortunate.

Quotation from "A faith worth sharing? A church worth joining?" by Cyril Ashton and Jack Nicholls. Darton Longman & Todd. London

## SOMERSET

A person's story begins with their parents at least, probably much further back than that. In any case my parent's stories are a whole lot more interesting than mine are. Take my mother for instance, if she didn't actually run away to London, she certainly went there as a young lady - too young a lady maybe.

My mother's name was Mable Gertrude, mercifully shortened to Pam, or as her father called her, Mab, as in Mab queen of the fairies, she was told. The family name was Bishop. There were five children all girls but one. Their father ran a successful market garden in Bittern, or Bidden, a small village in Somerset. I only know a few things about my grandfather; he played the violin, called it his 'Strad' short for Stradivarius - which it wasn't of course. His philosophy of life was that you should do unto others as you would they do unto you. He always gave to beggars, and said as doing so "there but for the grace of God go I", and my mother adored him.

My mother was born about the turn of the century, on the third of March. March it is said in England "comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb". It was certainly doing its lion thing on the night of my mother's birth, because Emma said, "ah, she will be a wild one born on a night like this" My mother was quite proud of this, and told me of it many times.

Emma was, I suppose, a housekeeper, certainly it was with her that the jaunts to the village to buy goods, in the pony trap pulled by Nellie, took place; and she did seem to run the house. She was dearly loved. Children who were naughty at table were banished to the kitchen, there was no punishment in that as the kitchen was always warm and cosy, and besides, Emma was there. Also Kruger the sheepdog-mix was there. He was called Kruger because he was so ugly! All her life my mother did things the way Emma had taught, and referred to her as 'dear old Emma'.

My mother's mother, now she seemed to be 'something else.' My mother told me in later years that, when I was young, fearful that I was turning out like her mother she watched me most carefully. What she hoped to do about it if her worst fears had been realised she never said! On reflection as an adult though maybe that is where that, "Bee-Ann watch what you are doing" came from. It could be that all people have to be told to watch what they are doing I really do not know, but I do know that I have always been exceeding clumsy. You know droppy, spilly, breaky, that sort of thing. There have been times when I have actually been aware of not having 'watched what I was doing!'

However this lady who was my grandmother, was deeply religious, a great church lady. My mother suffered from the "church three times every Sunday when I was a child" syndrome, but with this - as usual - went a very thorough knowledge of the Bible. I think my mother herself had quite a problem describing her mother. She seemed to be very vague, and not in touch with reality. My mother told how, if asked where one of her children were, she would say something like "I'm not quite sure dear, but I saw one of the children down by the strawberry patch just now."

Another time in the early days of the gramophone, a young chap, a friend of one of one of the older girls, asked if he could bring along his newly acquired wonder and demonstrate it.