

THE REVEREND CANON GEORGE PALMER
Vicar of St Helen's Church 1949 - 1963

On Sunday 24th January 2010 a new oaken font screen at St Helen's Church was dedicated and blessed in memory of The Reverend Canon George Palmer and Mrs Nora St Clair Mortimore Palmer. More than 100 family and friends of the Palmers gathered at the church for the occasion.

Canon George Palmer was vicar of Benson during the years of austerity following the Second World War and did much to build up community life here. In 1949 he founded the Benson Evergreen Club and he started Benson Sea Scouts and a Men's Club. He was also Chaplain to RAF Benson. He enjoyed amateur dramatics and entered into the community spirit of the day with gusto. His wife, Nora, was the perfect complement to George being gregarious and outgoing to his more reserved nature.



Nora and George's Golden Wedding

Nora started a choir in the church and taught for a while at Benson C of E School in the days when vicar's wives were not expected to work! Throughout their lives they exuded a true spirit of generosity and a willingness to put others before themselves. There are still many living in Benson today who will give ample testimony to their devoted ministry in this parish.

The couple left Benson in 1963 to go to Deddington near Banbury but returned

on retirement from parish ministry. They had been left a house in Preston Crowmarsh in 1949 by Miss Carrington, companion to Lady Wittenham. It was here that they celebrated their Golden Wedding with friends and lived together until George's death in 1993. Nora stayed on in Preston House always enjoying the fellowship of 'her' church and the people of Benson. She was invited to become the President of the Evergreens Club, an honour she rejoiced in, given that her late husband had founded the club many years before.

In late 2005 Nora moved to the Beaumont Nursing Home in Oxford and died at the age of 92 in 2006.

The Font Screen was paid for out of the collection at Nora's Thanksgiving Service in the church and many other generous donations. It is a fitting memorial to both Nora and George. Through this work of art many will be able to reflect on the life and witness of two exemplary Christians. A framed inscription beside the screen reads,

“To the greater glory of God and in memory of The Reverend Canon George Palmer Vicar of Benson 1948 - 1963 and his wife Nora who faithfully supported him in his ministry.”

Rev. Canon Andrew Hawken