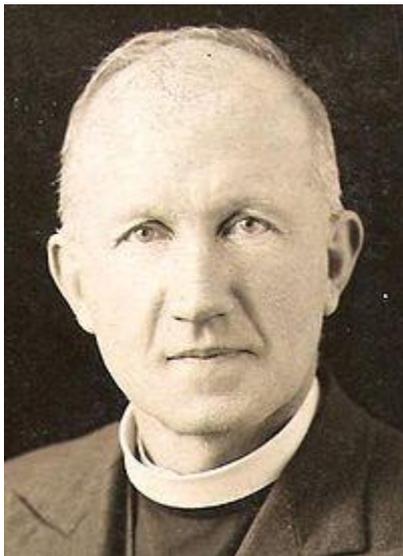


## **'FATHER GEORGE'**



George Bennet Chambers was born January 18th 1881 in Ealing, London, into the large family of George N (a merchant) and Margaret Chambers. By the 1901 Census (when he was 20 years old) George had become a Benedictine monk, based at Caldey Island in Pembrokeshire, Wales. After changing denomination, he took successive roles in the East End of London amongst the poor and destitute, and South Africa working with the Church of England.

He was deaconed in 1906, priested in 1907,

In 1921 he married Aline Robinson at Dunmow in Essex. They had 4 children two of whom, (Julian W. b.1929 and Justin H. b.1932 were born in Carbrooke and attended Carbrooke School).

Aline was the daughter of Louis Robinson a 19th century English physician, paediatrician and author. Although brought up as a Quaker he became an ardent evolutionist, and helped pioneer modern child medicine during the later Victorian era, writing prolifically in journals on the emerging science of paediatrics. Active in scientific debate, Robinson was critiqued in some parts of the press for his outspoken evolutionary views in the wider debate between scientific theories of human origin and the religious view. – Perhaps an unusual father in law for a devout Christian Vicar!

In 1927 George Bennet Chambers, or 'Father George' as he was affectionately known by his parishioners became Vicar of Carbrooke. He remained in Carbrooke until 1955, and becoming Rector of Ovington, Norfolk in 1952.

At this time Carbrooke had its own Vicar who lived at what is now 'The Old Vicarage', and, Father George would have been ministering to his congregation at this difficult period in British history, as the population came to terms with the aftermath of WW1, living through the great depression, and the events and effects of WW2.

Father George has written many notes in the Vicars Logs which make fascinating reading, for example the worries he had about getting his parishioners into church – some things never change!

The problems he had with the boiler and drains in the Vicarage.

He was much loved by his parishioners, (and he has been described as a true Christian Socialist), he involved himself in all aspects of village life, joining the cricket club, founding the Carbrooke dance club and opening the doors of the vicarage and its grounds to his parishioners. RAF airforce officers were given accommodation at the vicarage after the war.

He was a regular visitor to the school, teaching the children country dancing, and taking them on trips (including a residential trip to Sea Palling).

His extreme socialist views were not welcomed by everybody, and he earned himself the name 'The Red Vicar of Carbrooke' he was also well known for his left-wing social and political views, which were evident in his well publicised commission of a crucifix incorporating hammer and sickle iconography. He was famous for his membership of the Thaxstead Group. In Carbrooke church we have a number of items which were commissioned by George Chambers.

Memorial to Elizabeth Chambers his daughter.

By the altar on the east wall hangs a most interesting memorial to Elizabeth Chambers who died in 1932. It shows a girl walking in a meadow with a cat and a sheep on either side, and a blue tit on her hand.

Also various other plaster figures, a lovely printed Altar frontal, and a 1928 Nativity set comprising 24" figures, unfortunately this set has been badly damaged with use over the years, and is now unsuitable to use at Christmas. Controversially in 1955 the church roof was stripped of its lead - to prevent it from being stolen!! The money raised was used to renovate the church but this left the church with only its roofing felt for the next 30 years, until it was able to raise money for a new roof in 1988.

His interests included the study of Plainsong, and he wrote a book on the subject, he was also interested in Traditional Folk dance. He was actively involved in fundraising for institutions that included the Imperial Cancer Research fund (now part of Cancer Research UK), and a friend of several prominent left wing figures in England.

Aileen died in 1964 aged 70 and George died early 1969 in Surrey.

An Aumbry was placed in the Church for the Reserved Sacrament. This was paid for by public subscription in memory of George Chambers and his wife Aileen. It was dedicated at a special service, when many of the relatives and friends of the Chambers family were present.

This book was written by Rev. George Chambers (GB Chambers) and was updated in 1972

### **“Folksong - Plainsong: A Study in Origins and Musical Relationships”**

‘The concept that art music, in this instance chant and plainsong, grew from rustic and peasant roots is given a welcome airing by Father Chambers in this treatise on origins. His sources date back to the time when the early church was searching for tunes to carry the message of God and his son on earth. What better source than the songs of the rural working class. All that needed doing to them was to change the message from one of a healthy respect for the earth and its produce to that of praising the creator. Art music takes some serious knocks at Chambers' hands and it surprises me that the book has not been reprinted and been made available to a wider audience. Trained musicians, read it at your peril! Traditional and folk musicians will love it’.

*References Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_B.\\_Chambers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_B._Chambers)*

*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Robinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Robinson)*

*Carbrooke Vicars Logs 1922-81*

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