TRIBUTES have been paid to the lives of two high-profile worshippers connected to our cathedral.

Cathedral congregation member Colin White, who was director of the Royal Naval Museum and one of the world’s experts on Admiral Lord Nelson, died of cancer on Christmas Day.

More than 700 people – including Nelson’s great, great, great granddaughter Anna Tribe – packed into our cathedral for a memorial service last month.

And Surgeon Vice Admiral Ian Jenkins, who chaired the Cathedral Council, died suddenly in February. His royal connections meant the flag on the round tower at Windsor Castle was lowered to half-mast as a mark of the Queen’s respect.

Colin, 57, joined the Royal Naval Museum in 1975 as a research assistant and rose to become its director in 2006 after a secondment to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. He wrote five books about Nelson, and was a keen amateur thespian.

He was awarded the honorary rank of Captain (Royal Naval Reserves) after leading the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005.

He was a server and lesson reader at our cathedral, and previously served as churchwarden at St Mary’s, Alverstoke.

His friend, the Rev Peter Wadsworth, who was a priest in our diocese from 1984-2004, said at his funeral: “Colin lived fully, colourfully, rumbustiously, humorously, communicating love and passion for people and for his work wherever he went. “Not for Colin the view that this life is merely a third class waiting room for heaven. He just loved being physically alive and he was not afraid to live. “This flowed from a profound belief in a loving, compassionate and understanding God.”

And at his memorial service, former Naval Base Commander Commodore David Steel said: “I knew Colin well from my years at the base and I was always struck by the generosity he had. He was an enthusiastic and welcoming presence at the Royal Naval Museum.”

Ian Jenkins, 64, had a distinguished career. His naval service included spells with HMS Ark Royal, Haslar Hospital and the Royal Yacht Britannia and he was part of the surgical support team for the Royal Marine Commando Unit.

He was Medical Officer in Command at Haslar Hospital from 1990, before becoming Commandant of the Royal Defence Medical College in 1996 and became Surgeon General of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces in 2002 until his retirement in 2006.

He had previously been appointed Medical Officer Overseas to the household of HRH the Prince of Wales in 1982, and became Honorary Surgeon to the Queen in 1994.

In February 2008, he became Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle, which meant he was in charge of day-to-day operations there on behalf of the monarch. The role carries no salary, but entitles the holder to live within the castle.

There will also be a memorial service in our cathedral for him after Easter.

The dean of our cathedral, the Very Rev David Brindley, said: “Ian Jenkins had been chairman of the Portsmouth Cathedral Council since 2001, and a trustee of the Cathedral Development Trust.

“He made a huge contribution to the life of the cathedral community through his wisdom and support. Ian and I met regularly, and I will miss his interest, good advice and personal support.”

EXCITED children were given a chance to learn from our cathedral choir – and to perform in our cathedral.

Choir members visited nine primary schools in Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight this term, and helped 600 children to develop their singing. The project culminated with two concerts in the cathedral last month.

Portsmouth Cathedral Choir has been awarded a grant to deliver a range of inspirational singing for local primary schools, through the government’s national singing programme, SingUp! This initiative aims to make good quality singing central to young children’s lives.

Several schools take part each term, and a small team of choristers go in to sing with the children three times, working towards the end-of-term concerts in the cathedral.

Teacher Esther Botley said: “This had the ‘wow’ factor for me. ‘Uplifting’ is too inadequate a word. Fantastical!”

The cathedral choir has also been invited to sing for the re-dedication of Chantry Cathedral in the French Alps on May 16.