

Tributes for Caroline's work on the island

TRIBUTES were paid to Caroline Baston's work as archdeacon as she signed off with a cream tea and farewell service.

The farewell happened last month at All Saints Church, Ryde, where island worshippers gathered to thank Caroline and pray for her new role.

She had been Archdeacon

of the Isle of Wight since 2006, and was responsible for encouraging and resourcing clergy and parishes on the island.

She had previously been a parish priest, communications officer and director of ordinands in Winchester diocese, and has worked as a teacher.

Bishop Christopher said: "Caroline's ministry on the

island has been committed and generous of her time, energy and of prayer. We shall miss her leadership, but most of all I am sorry to lose her as a close colleague and friend.

"It is a mark of Caroline's deep sense of call to the ministry of the gospel that she is accepting this challenging and pioneering role in Swindon."

And the Lord Lieutenant of

the Isle of Wight, Maj-Gen Martin White, said: "On the island, Archdeacon Caroline has made a real and lasting impact.

"Her quiet sense of humour and engaging manner has endeared her to church congregations and the wider community, young and old. She leaves for a new ministry with our best wishes and thanks."

Itinerary planned for bishop in Africa

THE itinerary for Bishop Christopher's first visit to our partners in Ghana has now been planned.

The bishop will be there from October 14-25. He'll be travelling with his wife Sally, now parish priest at Holy Trinity, Fareham, our IDWAL chairman Canon Terry Loudon and his wife Alison.

After arriving in Accra, they will visit Archbishop Justice Akrofi, Archbishop of West Africa and Bishop of Accra, and the British High Commissioner. Bishop Christopher will also preach and celebrate the Eucharist with Bishop Matthias Mededues-Badohu in St George's Cathedral in Ho on October 16.

The party then go to Kumasi and visit the retreat centre at Nkawie, which was supported by Bishop's Lent Appeals in 2009 and 2010. A day will be spent in Sunyani, where St. Anselm's Cathedral is linked with our cathedral in Portsmouth.

The second weekend will be based in Cape Coast, where Bishop Christopher is the guest speaker at the annual graduation ceremony at St Nicholas Anglican Seminary on October 22. A day visit will be made to Sekondi-Takoradi diocese, and to the Church of the Good Shepherd, Effiakuma, which is Holy Trinity Fareham's link.

"It will be a busy ten days," said Terry. "Please keep us in your prayers as we prepare and as we travel around."

God called me to big challenge

SHE will start work this month on a radical new challenge.

The Ven Caroline Baston has switched from her role as Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight to a new post as transition minister and priest-in-charge of St Andrew, north Swindon.

It's a parish that changed quickly from a village to an urban sprawl of 22,000 people, largely employed in the local car industry.

But the recent recession and lack of community focus has left it with massive needs, and the Church has been ill-equipped to help. The geography of the parish means the church is on the outskirts of the newer housing, and ill health meant three vicars have resigned in 10 years.

Caroline will lead a team of three people trying to make a difference. She'll be joined by the Rev Anne Faulkner, the former vicar of St John's, Wroxall, as associate priest, and by Mark Tidey as a home-school community worker. The team will be licensed and commissioned by the Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Rev Mike Hill, on October 3.

"This was a call from God that I just couldn't ignore," said Caroline. "It was unexpected, but I know that everything I've done so far should equip me for this job. I compare the parish to a school that's in 'special measures'. It doesn't need a newly-qualified or supply teacher to help, but some people with experience.

"The community is struggling. It grew from a village of 100 people to a parish with 22,000 in 10 years, as the car industry grew. But the recession meant Renault and Rover closed and workers at

Honda are now down to a day a week. And there are few roots in the community there – the biggest meeting point is the largest Asda-Walmart in western Europe.

"The parish has been in interregnum for two years and the bishop decided this couldn't go on. So I've been appointed for three years to see if I can devise a strategy for the church, heal the divisions in the congregation and make the job do-able for a future parish priest.

"There is a fledgling congregation which can be developed which meets in a church school, St Francis, in the middle of one of the new areas of housing, and the medieval church has 30 baptisms a year, so I hope it will be possible to grow a worshipping community in St Francis School.

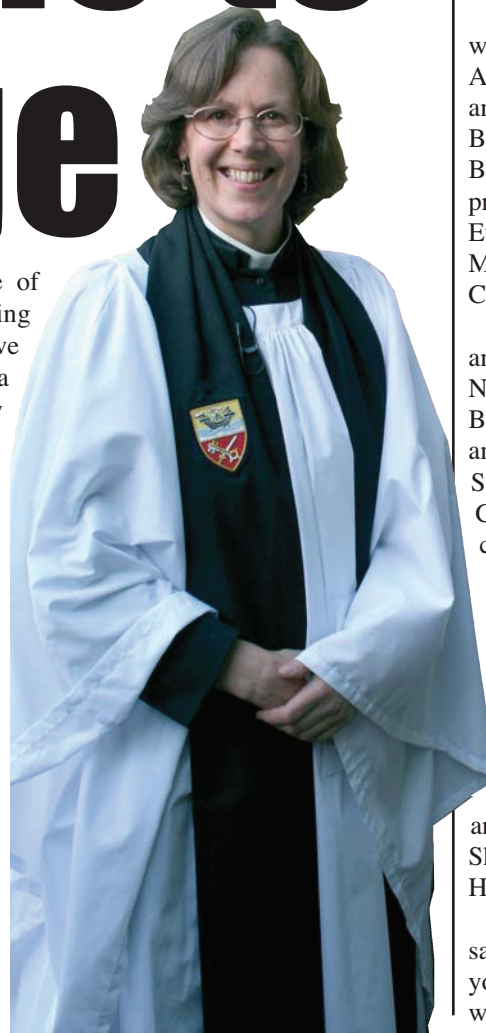
"The vicarage is next to the

church primary school – one of nine schools in the sprawling parish – and Anne and I will live there and offer hospitality and a place of prayer and sanctuary to local people. There is no holy space in the new housing areas, so we hope to create one.

"God's always called me to situations that are challenging. But I hope this will use the skills I've developed on the Isle of Wight in terms of community development, healing conflict, liaison with civic authorities and creating strategy."

Caroline, Anne and Mark will be licensed for a fixed period of three years.

The Ven Caroline Baston: heading for pastures new



Unique handwritten Bible is created



Matthew and Thomas Hodges-Gilbert and their auntie, Gill Cross, with the iPad

THEY queued up to make their mark on history.

Some worshippers and passers-by waited for more than an hour to write out two verses of the Bible for a project to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Version.

Entitled 'The People's Bible', the unique handwritten version of the Bible will be presented to the Queen once it is completed in November.

The tour came to Portsmouth last month, and Gill Cross, from Christ Church, Portsdown, brought her nephews Matthew and Thomas Hodges-Gilbert to add some verses from Luke 24

to the thousands that had been written by others across the country.

"Anything that highlights the importance of the Bible is good," said Gill. "It's nice that my nephews will be able to be part of history like this."

And Matthew, 12, said: "We were visiting my auntie's church and heard about it. It's quite cool. I'll look at it in the future and see what it looks like."

The project is run by the Bible Society, and started in Edinburgh in June. Special scribe stations have appeared in city and town centres across the UK.

Participants are given

two verses to copy from either the King James or Good News editions of the Bible.

They then copy those verses using a special digital pen, which records their handwriting in an online archive.

They and others can then read their verses, and those written by others, at www.thepeoplesbible.org.

Margaret Burnham, churchwarden at St Peter and St Paul, Wymering, said: "It's a fascinating project.

"The Bible should be available in every media. It's an interesting idea, and great to leave a bit of yourself behind in this way."