



Left: Bishop Christopher and the Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi take the salute from the Boys and Girls Brigades outside St Andrew's Cathedral; centre: with the Archbishop of West Africa, the Most Rev Justice Akrofi; right: the graduation ceremony for ordinands at Cape Coast with the Bishops of Tamale, Cape Coast and Ho, and the dean of St Nicholas Theological Seminary, the Very Rev Victor Atta-Battoo

Bishop inspired as he meets our friends in Ghana



IT was an exhilarating few days that allowed Bishop Christopher to see Ghana for himself.

The bishop spent 10 days visiting dioceses in Ghana that are linked to our diocese, meeting fellow bishops, visiting projects supported by our worshippers and preaching at significant events.

He went with his wife Sally, who is vicar of Holy Trinity, Fareham, the chairman of our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL), Canon Terry Loudon, and his wife Alison. It was the first visit by a Bishop of Portsmouth since 1994.

They toured southern Ghana in an anti-clockwise direction, visiting the dioceses of Accra, Ho, Kumasi and Cape Coast, and Bishop Christopher met 10 of the country's 12 Anglican bishops.

"It was a full, exciting, wonderful trip," he said. "We were offered gracious, generous hospitality. I learnt a lot, saw much that was thought-provoking, and am looking forward to going again."

The bishop told our Diocesan Synod that future plans could include offering central diocesan expertise, a specific IDWAL act of worship each year, a renewal of our link as a covenant, and regular prayer for our partners at diocesan



Above: digging the first sod for the bishop's new house in Sunyani; top right: Sally is greeted by a flower girl outside Sunyani Cathedral; bottom right: a Eucharist at St Paul's, Agbozume

events. He also announced that Canon Terry Loudon, and the Rev Tom Kennar, from North End Team Ministry, would become honorary canons of Cape Coast.

The group visited the site of the Spirituality and Retreat Centre at Nkwie near Kumasi, which has been supported by two Bishop's Lent Appeals. The centre has now been dedicated and commissioned, its warden is on site and staff are being interviewed. The only outstanding issue is electrical power.

They were given an overwhelming welcome at Sunyani Cathedral, which is linked with our cathedral. Bishop Christopher turned the first sod at the site of a

new house for Bishop Festus Yeboah-Asuamah, who first met our bishop at Newport Minster on the day he was announced as the new Bishop of Portsmouth.

Bishop Christopher preached at the graduation mass and spoke at the graduation ceremony at St Nicholas Anglican Seminary in Cape Coast, which trains ordinands from across Ghana. It now has six full-time staff and its degree course is validated by the University of Cape Coast.

Its accommodation block was funded by contributions at the bishop's installation service. Work had stalled because of lack of capital, but £2,000 was raised by the

graduation service.

The bishop met the Rt Rev John Otoo in his Diocese of Sekondi-Takoradi, and preached in St Andrew's Cathedral. He and Sally were driven around on the back of a pick-up truck flanked by outriders and a brass band.

The Rev Sally Davenport preached at the Good Shepherd Anglican Church in Effiakuma, which is linked to Holy Trinity, Fareham. And they also saw a completed nursery at Essikadu, which was funded by worshippers from Stubbington.

"Sally's presence in the pulpit and at the altar was an important witness in a parish and diocese

where the ministry of women is not yet recognised," said Terry.

The bishop met the Rt Rev Matthias Mededues-Badohu, Bishop of Ho, to talk about developing links between his diocese and Portsmouth deanery. He saw the Archbishop of West Africa, the Most Rev Justice Akrofi, twice and also met the British High Commissioner in Accra.

"This was a wonderful, overwhelming and extraordinary experience," said Terry. "Our hosts were generous with their organisation, time and resources, and their pleasure in our visit was evident everywhere. The bishop's visit has shown our partners that we take the Ghana link seriously, and that it is integral and not peripheral to our diocesan life."