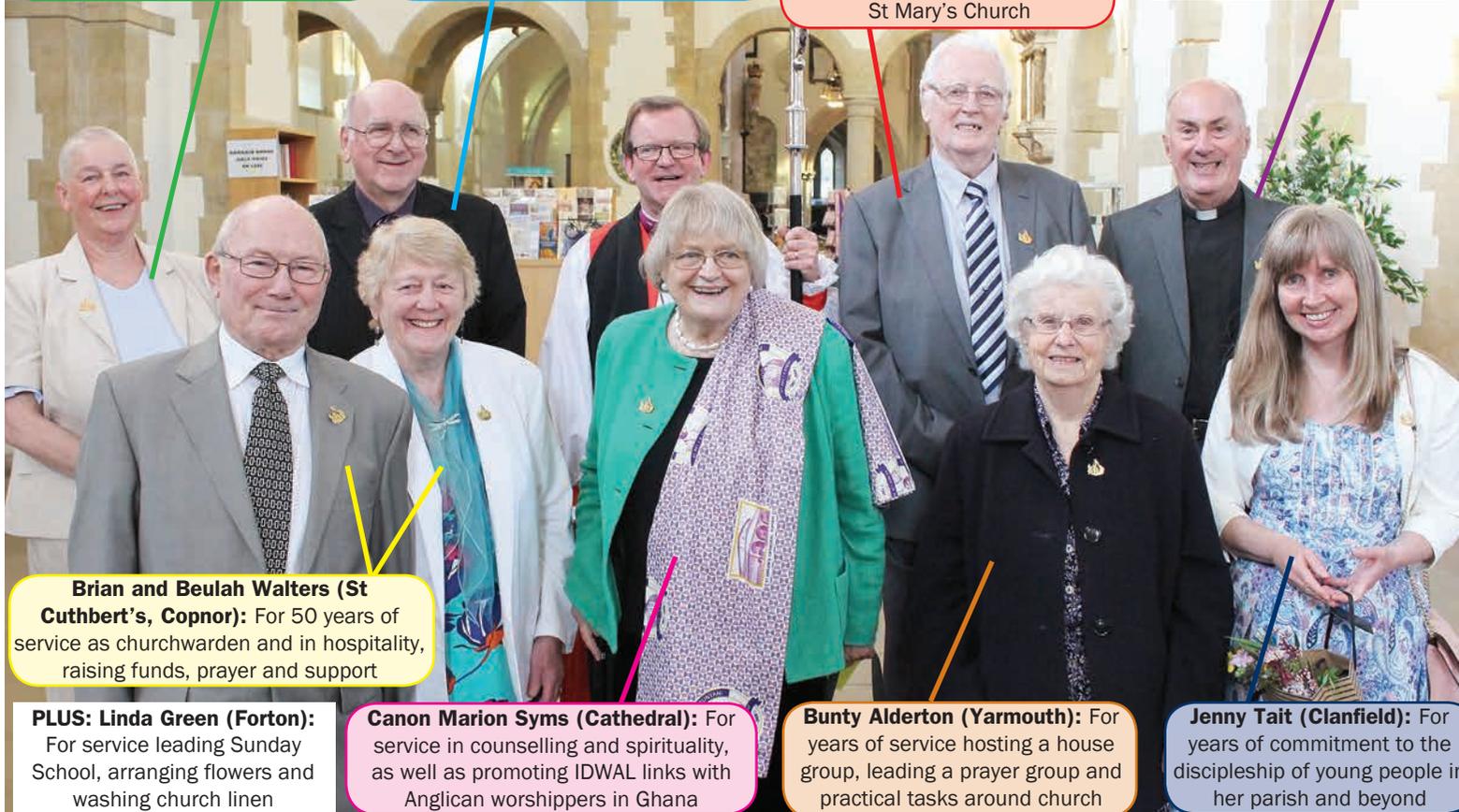


Rose Ashton (Whitwell): For service as churchwarden at Niton parish church and fundraising for both Niton and Whitwell churches

John Green (Forton): For years of service as churchwarden and treasurer, as well as assisting worship, plus volunteering and fundraising

Alan Hoad (Hayling Island): For service as churchwarden and major involvement in the project to re-order the interior of St Mary's Church

The Rev Michael Harper (Leigh Park and Warren Park): For dedicated service as a deacon for more than 30 years



Brian and Beulah Walters (St Cuthbert's, Copnor): For 50 years of service as churchwarden and in hospitality, raising funds, prayer and support

PLUS: Linda Green (Forton): For service leading Sunday School, arranging flowers and washing church linen

Canon Marion Syms (Cathedral): For service in counselling and spirituality, as well as promoting IDWAL links with Anglican worshippers in Ghana

Bunty Alderton (Yarmouth): For years of service hosting a house group, leading a prayer group and practical tasks around church

Jenny Tait (Clanfield): For years of commitment to the discipleship of young people in her parish and beyond

Honours for ten faithful stalwarts

TEN faithful worshippers were given a special award by the bishop to mark their commitment to the Church and the wider community.

Bishop Christopher presented each of them with a St Thomas Award, named in honour of St Thomas a Becket, patron saint of our cathedral. It took place during Evensong at the cathedral.

It's the second year that Bishop Christopher has presented St Thomas Awards to long-serving stalwarts from our parishes.

Among the recipients was 93-year-old Bunty Alderton, from St James Church, Yarmouth, on the Isle of Wight. She was praised for years of service in hosting and leading church groups there, and her commitment to her church and local community.

Bishop Christopher said: "At the age of 93, she can still be found polishing the brass and vacuuming the pews, as well as delivering parish magazines or collecting for Christian Aid."

The vicar of Yarmouth, the Rev Mark Watson, said: "She recognises what needs to be done around the church, spiritually and

practically, and gets on with it."

Bunty, who previously worshipped at St Alban's, Ventnor, said: "I came to Yarmouth 30 years ago to retire, but was churchwarden for a while.

"The cathedral service was lovely and it was a joy to see so many people who had come over from Yarmouth to support me."

Congregation members from St John's Church, Forton, in Gosport, turned up to the cathedral waving flags and carrying balloons to celebrate the St Thomas Awards being presented to John and Linda Green. Unfortunately Linda wasn't able to attend, due to ill-health, but she was praised for her work helping with Sunday School, arranging flowers and washing church linen.

John was honoured for assisting with worship, serving as churchwarden and parish treasurer for many years, and volunteering and fundraising in the community. The bishop also praised him for his expertise at fixing toilet cisterns and changing lightbulbs.

"It is a real honour to be given this award, and I know Linda would feel honoured too," he said. "It is slightly embarrassing to have the congregation turning up with

flags to wave, but it's lovely that they want to support me."

Among the other recipients was Rose Ashton, who was recognised for her role as churchwarden at Niton parish church, and for fundraising for both Niton and Whitwell churches on the Isle of Wight.

Alan Hoad was presented with an award for his service as churchwarden at St Mary's Church, Hayling Island, where he played a major role in the stunning transformation of the interior of the church.

Canon Marion Syms, from Portsmouth Cathedral, was recognised for supporting others in the development of their spirituality, and in counselling at the All Saints Counselling Centre based at All Saints Church in the city. She also has a high-profile role in the Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link, which links our parishes with Anglicans in Ghana.

Brian and Beulah Walters, from St Cuthbert's Church, Copnor, received the award for their contributions to parish life over the past 50 years. Beulah was churchwarden while the church building was split into three parts in a 12-year, £4.5m project

– creating a GPs' surgery and community facilities as well as a new worship area.

Brian has been involved in the financial side of church life for two decades, and both Brian and Beulah have offered hospitality, raised funds, prayed and helped those who were ill, and supported the worship and social life of the church.

Jenny Tait, from St James Church, Clanfield, was rewarded for her commitment to youthwork and discipleship, and is currently running a joint youth group with St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain. And the Rev Michael Harper was given a St Thomas Award for his long service as a deacon, serving the churches of Leigh Park and Warren Park over the past 30 years, as well as working in schools in Warren Park and Bidbury.

Bishop Christopher said: "These are, of course, just a very few examples of the commitment and service offered by so many in the parishes, congregations and communities of the Isle of Wight and south-east Hampshire. In serving their community and parish and congregation, they are serving our Lord, who we seek to follow as disciples."

Get better publicity for church activities

EVER wondered how to harness the power of the media to help you publicise what your church does? Or thought your parish should have a better presence online?

We're offering a day-long training course for clergy, parish administrators, magazine editors, webmasters and others involved in publicity to explore more effective methods.

'Get Your Church Noticed' is on June 27, from 10am-5pm, in our diocesan offices, and is led by communications adviser Neil Pugmire. It's based on his book *100 Ways To Get Your Church Noticed*, and covers the principles behind good communication and how to create a strategy.

Then there are practical tips on using logos, noticeboards, church buildings, posters, parish magazines, the secular media, websites and social media to tell others about the great things your parish does.

Worshippers from the Isle of Wight are welcome to come, but they may prefer to attend a similar course on September 16 at St James Church, East Cowes. It also happens from 10am-5pm.

Details of both courses, and how to book, can be found on www.getyourchurchnoticed.com

Grant helps church to be watertight

A GENEROUS grant has ensured that All Saints Church in Ryde has become watertight.

Water has managed to get into the church building for many years. One problem was birds nesting under buttresses and on the tower balustrade. This caused rainwater hoppers to be blocked, sending water cascading down the walls and penetrating the stonework.

The £53,000 grant from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund helped pay for broken roof tiles to be replaced, safety ladders and hawsers installed and hoppers adapted. Mesh cages have been fitted to prevent birds from nesting.

There are further plans to repair stained glass windows in the sanctuary and choir during the summer months.