

**Above Bar
Congregational
Church
Southampton
1662=1962**

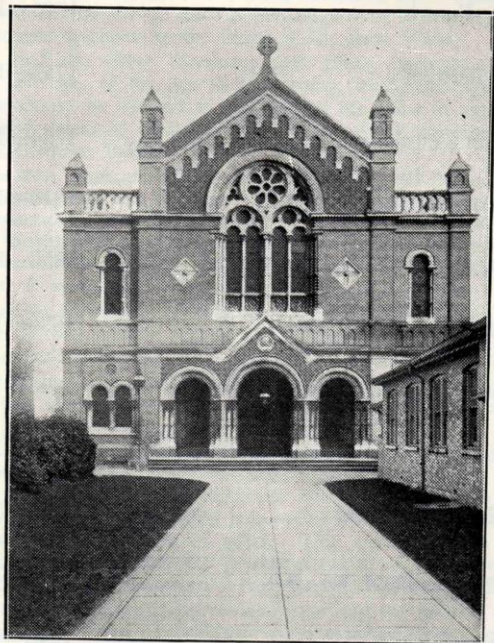
**TERCENTENARY
CELEBRATIONS
NOVEMBER 1962**

Souvenir Brochure

FOREWORD

IT WAS FELT by many that the 300th Anniversary Celebrations of the Above Bar Congregational Church should not be allowed to pass without some permanent record. To fulfil in some respects this desire is the purpose of this brochure. It does not claim to be in any sense a history of the Church, only to give a brief account of the various happenings since the printing of the previous brochure on the occasion of the 250th Anniversary in 1912, and a record of the services and meetings arranged during the 1962 Celebrations.

It is sent forth in the hope that it may prove a not unfitting reminder in coming days of the way in which the gratitude of the Church found expression; and may also prove an inspiration urging to like service by such as shall in future years share the high honour and responsibility of witnessing to the Kingdom of God in the Church which is now part of the United Presbyterian-Congregational Church, and although the building of the Above Bar Congregational Church is now gone, the Church lives on and is sacred to us by so many rich and hallowed associations . . .



ABOVE BAR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
FRONT ELEVATION, 1912

LIST OF MINISTERS FROM 1662 TO 1962

Nathaniel Robinson	...	...	...	1662—1696
(The ejected Rector from All Saints' Church)				
William Bolar	...	...	...	1694—1734
Henry Francis	...	...	...	1726—1752
John Bertram	...	...	...	1753—1763
William Kingsbury, A.M.	...	...	...	1764—1809
Thomas Adkins	...	...	...	1810—1868
Henry Herman Carlisle, LL.B., B.A.	...	...	...	1858—1885
Thomas Nicholson	...	...	...	1886—1895
William Frederick Clarkson, B.A.	...	...	...	1896—1902
George Stephen Samuel Saunders, A.T.S.	...	...	...	1904—1920
G. Hartley Holloway	...	...	...	1921—1931
Maxwell O. Janes, B.A., B.D.	...	...	...	1932—1945
William George Kite, B.A.	...	...	...	1946—1947
(Died May 25th, 1947)				
William Thomas Hinsley	...	...	...	1947—1950
David Peter Cyril Geddes, M.A.	...	...	...	1951—1955
Dudley Allon Smith, B.Sc.	...	...	...	1956
(Present Minister)				

NOTES FROM SOUVENIR BOOKLET ISSUED IN 1912

THE HISTORY of Above Bar Church, published by Mr. S. Stainer, reveals that although the Church came into existence in the year 1662, for some time previous to this a little community of persons who formed the nucleus of the future Church, met in Southampton for fellowship and worship. These meetings were privately arranged owing to the persecution of the times and usually held in the private residence of one of the members of the fellowship.

Later, some buildings were obtained north of the Bargate, and these became the first place of worship in Above Bar. These buildings stood on the site of the Church which was destroyed in 1940, and belonged originally to the father of Dr. Isaac Watts.

In 1662 the Great Ejectment took place, consequent on the passing into law of the Act of Uniformity, which decreed that no minister should be allowed to continue in his office in the Church of England unless he would give his consent to all contained in the Book of Common Prayer.

The Rev. Nathaniel Robinson, the Rector of All Saints Church, Southampton, was one of those who refused to give such consent, and consequently was deprived of his Rectorship. The little community worshipping at Above Bar, thereupon invited him to become its minister; he consented, and became first in the succession of ministers of our historic Church.

After the Revolution of 1688, the Above Bar Church was allowed to go on its way, and on August 24th of that year the members met and organised themselves into a distinct and separate Church.

Dr. Watts, the hymn writer, was the son of Isaac Watts, one of the first elected deacons of the Church. His name is the first on the Baptismal Register of the Church in 1674.

Prior to its destruction in 1940, the building was the fourth that had been erected for public worship since the foundation of the Church. The first building, called the Meeting House, was erected in 1690. In 1727, the building was pulled down and a more commodious structure built in its place. This was afterwards altered and enlarged and in 1819 the foundation stone of an entirely new structure was laid, the opening service was held on April 26th, 1820.

In 1889 the Church was reconstructed and the interior entirely rearranged with organ improvement, and a seating capacity for 1,100. The Watts Memorial Hall and Class Rooms were built in 1875 to commemorate the bi-centenary of Dr. Isaac Watts.

In preparation for the 250th Anniversary Celebration, a building plan was adopted in 1910. This included the erection of the Robinson Hall in 1911. The building was named in memory of the first minister of the Church, the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson. The tablet placed on the wall outside was salvaged when demolition work was in progress.

The King Street Mission Hall was opened in 1912 replacing the Lime Street Hall, where the work had been previously carried on. The completion of the Scheme resulted in external and internal renovation to the Church buildings and the installation of electric light in the Church.

1912-1962



In 1920 Rev. G. S. S. Saunders closed his ministry, and on July 28th was inducted to Zion Congregational Church, Kendal.

On May 1st, 1921, Rev. G. Hartley Holloway from Leigh-on-Sea Congregational Church was inducted to the pastorate and during his ministry the renovations to the Church interior were carried out in 1929—services being held in the Grand Theatre on Sunday evenings during this work, also the re-building of the Church Organ, the entire cost of this being met by Mr. W. Vaughan Cotten, in memory of his wife.

It was during Mr. Holloway's ministry that hospitality was extended to the Southampton Brotherhood for meetings to be held in the Church on Sunday afternoons which provided fellowship amongst the men of the town.

These meetings were undenominational and well attended, the speakers being notable people from all parts of the country.

In July, 1931, Rev. G. Hartley Holloway closed his ministry at Above Bar, having accepted a call to Castle Gate Congregational Church, Nottingham.

On March 13th, 1931, Rev. Maxwell Janes, B.A., B.D., was inducted to the pastorate and it was during his ministry in 1934 that more modern methods of Sunday School work were considered, and on May 6th the system of a graded school was adopted. Separate departments were formed and the children placed in suitable age groups which proved satisfactory and more interesting for the children.

This system continued until the outbreak of World War 2, when the children were evacuated from the town.

When the children returned the School re-opened in restricted premises at the Friends' Meeting House and continued until the premises were available at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The Sunday School continued until October, 1960, when a Junior Church was formed and considered a still more modern method of training in Christian knowledge and worship.

The destruction of the Church by enemy action occurred on November 30th, 1940, and the entry in the Church Minute Book reads :—

“On the night of November 30th, 1940, the Germans launched the first of two severe fire raids on Southampton. For over four hours incendiary and high explosive bombs were rained on the town, especially on the shopping centre in Above Bar Street.

“Among the buildings that were quickly set alight were the Watts Hall and our Church, which burned fiercely and were soon an inferno of flame. Nothing could be done to save them owing to the many other fires. Our great suite of buildings was reduced to a crumbling ruin. Next morning Above Bar Street presented to would-be worshippers a tangle of wires and hose-pipes, with fires still burning all round.

“We record with deep thankfulness that in spite of the severity of the raid, and of the one on the following night, no-one belonging to our Church was killed or hurt, although several of our people lost their homes and business premises. Fortunately the folk who were on duty in our Canteen that evening had left the Church half an hour before the raid began.

“During the week that followed this severe and almost overwhelming loss, the Minister, Church secretary and caretaker were able to force the safe that had been in the wall of the Deacons' Vestry, and to obtain practically unharmed the valuable records and deeds which had been stored therein, but almost everything else we possessed perished—pictures, organ, classrooms, Robinson Hall, Chapel House—everything.

“By the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. C. V. Tomlinson, a service was held on the following Sunday morning in a large room in their house, some forty-five members of Above Bar Congregational Church assembled there to rejoice in the living Church of men and women which abides, even though the Church of brick and stone is destroyed. The question of a temporary home for our Church was now faced, and the Deacons were led to turn to the Society of Friends, with whom arrangements were made for the use of their Meeting House in Ordnance Road.

“Here the Church has been able to carry on some, at least, of its activities, only too thankful to maintain its life and witness.”

Although the Church building was completely destroyed gratitude is due to those responsible for demolition, for the care and thought in salvaging the carved stone medallion of Isaac Watts, which has now been placed in the entrance to the United Church.

Northam, a daughter Church of Above Bar, was also destroyed by enemy action and the members were invited to join in worship at the Friends' Meeting House.

On September 15th, 1941, the Church sustained the loss of a secretary in the passing of Mr. E. J. Curtis to Higher Service, after a period of faithful and devoted service for 33 years.

King Street Mission. An expression of appreciation should be recorded to all who rendered faithful service on behalf of the Church at the King Street Mission.



"GREATNESS IN HUMBLE RUIN LIES"

(Isaac Watts)

The Southampton Corporation made a Compulsory Purchase of the Above Bar Church site, and would not permit the building of another church thereon.

Furthermore it was envisaged in the then Town Planning Scheme that St. Andrew's Church would be demolished. In consequence of these two facts a site was purchased in Brunswick Place for a new Church, but the Town Planning Scheme did not materialise and the Brunswick Place site was sold.

The Above Bar Church site included ground on which, at one time stood the Ministers House, and under the provision of Trust Deeds, income derived from this source must be used to pay the stipend of the Minister of Above Bar Congregational Church.

The proceeds of the remaining part of the site was placed in Trust to be used in purchasing a site in the County Borough of Southampton and in building thereon a new Congregational Church.

In April, 1942, an invitation was received from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church to join with them in worship.

This was accepted with appreciation and continued under the ministry of the Rev. Maxwell Janes, B.A., B.D., until 1945, when he left to become the Moderator of the Southern Province of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Mention should be made of the close connection which has existed between the Above Bar Congregational Church and the London Missionary Society. The Rev. William Kingsbury (Minister 1764-1809) was one of a small group who founded L.M.S. and throughout the years Members have loyally supported the Society. A member has been on the Board of Directors for a good many years, and the Rev. Maxwell O. Janes is the present General Secretary.

The Rev. W. G. Kite, B.A., came from the Robert Stewart Memorial Presbyterian Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, beginning his ministry on the 27th of January, 1946, as pastor of the two Churches. He endeared himself to all and a fruitful period of service seemed about to begin, but he was stricken with illness in the following August. He passed away on Whit Sunday, 1947. The large congregation at his funeral service bore testimony of the esteem in which he was held by those both within and outside the joint Churches he served so well.

The Rev. W. T. Hinsley came to Southampton first as a locum tenens and later as Minister in Charge during the illness of Mr. Kite. He subsequently received a call to the ministry of both churches and was inducted by the South Coast Presbytery and by the Hampshire Congregational Union on the 29th of October, 1947. During his ministry a scheme for the closer unity of St. Andrew's and Above Bar Churches was formulated and approved. This scheme was duly sanctioned by the Presbytery and by the Hampshire Congregational Union and came into operation on the 1st of January, 1948.



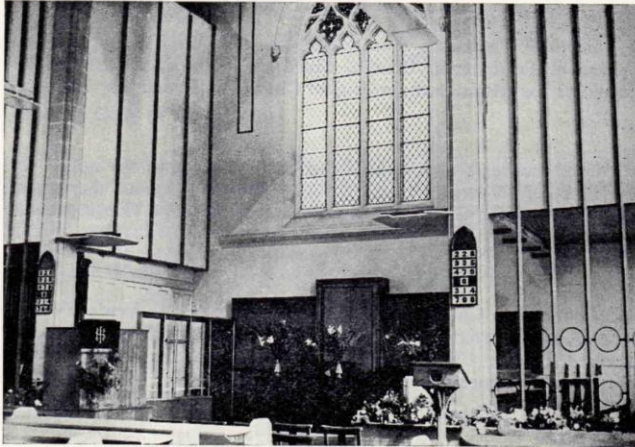
THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BRUNSWICK PLACE, SOUTHAMPTON

ACT OF DEDICATION

used at the Inaugural Service on January 4th, 1948

We, the Members and Adherents of the St. Andrews Presbyterian and Above Bar Congregational Churches, gathered together, as we believe, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, hereby covenant to walk together as one Congregation of Christ's people, to be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We pledge ourselves to seek God's Will for our united work and worship and to follow whither He leads, one Flock under one Shepherd.

Mr. Hinsley closed his ministry on the 1st of October, 1950.



UNITED CHURCH INTERIOR AFTER RECONSTRUCTION

War damage compensation was received from the Government in respect of Above Bar Congregational Church Chattels Claim and part of this money was used in helping to reconstruct the interior of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. David Geddes, M.A., was inducted to the pastorate of the United Church on June 20th, 1951, and under his ministry the Constitution of the United Church was finalised and approved by the South Coast Presbytery and by the Hampshire Congregational Union. The United Church is no longer "an experiment" as outside friends sometimes call it, but an accomplished fact for which we have great reason to thank God.

In July, 1951, a notification was received from the Corporation that during excavations of the old site a burial ground had been discovered. Following this, the remains were reinterred at Hollybrook Cemetery on November 28th at a ceremony conducted by the Rev. David Geddes, with 16 members of the Church present.

On September 18th, 1955, the Rev. David Geddes was inducted to the Leatherhead Congregational Church.

In 1956 a call was sent to the Rev. D. Allon Smith, B.Sc., of Felixstowe Presbyterian Church, which he accepted, and he was inducted as the Minister of the United Church on March 8th, 1956.

Over the years considerable thought was given to the use of the money received from the sale of the Church site, and the urgent need of funds for Church extension in the Hampshire Congregational Union became evident.

Above Bar Church having united with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church obviated the need for new church buildings, and it was resolved by the Church Meeting to apply to the Charity Commission for authority to distribute the funds.

On October 22nd, 1958, at a meeting of the Church, the members were informed that the Charity Commission had sanctioned the sum of £23,100 being paid to Winchester Road Congregational Church for the completion of their new Church building.

This Church, now known as the Isaac Watts Memorial Church, was opened on October 29th, 1960, and a commemorative tablet unveiled inscribed as follows: "This Church, opened on the 29th October, 1960, was completed through the generosity of the members of Above Bar Congregational Church, whose premises were destroyed by enemy action on the 30th November, 1940."

The following are extracts from the report in the "Southern Evening Echo" of the opening of this new Church on October 29th, 1960:—

The new Church is at the corner of Winchester Road and Luccombe Road, Shirley, and the main part of the cost, £23,100, has been met by a grant from funds arising from the disposal of the site of the Above Bar Congregational Church, where the famous hymn-writer Isaac Watts worshipped.

Unveiling of Tablet

At the beginning of the service, the minister of the Church, the Rev. Arthur Mills, and others taking part assembled at the Winchester Road entrance, where the architect presented the key of the Church to Dr. Trevor Davies, who then unlocked and opened the outer doors, entered the vestibule and declared the church open.

A commemorative tablet in the vestibule, recording the part played in the building of the Church by the Above Bar Congregational Church, was unveiled by Mr. E. S. Lucas, senior deacon of the Above Bar Church, who said that exactly a century ago his grandfather became the organist at that church.

Looking Back to 1662

Mr. Freddie Clift, Secretary of the Building Committee until recently, when he had to give up owing to his departure from the district, traced the history of the new project and said they should all feel grateful to Above Bar Congregational Church for their open-handed generosity. That church could be traced back to 1662: thus the Isaac Watts Memorial Church had a link with the very beginning of their denomination.

Mr. F. W. Owers, the secretary of the Above Bar Congregational Church, said that in 1940 the Above Bar Church was blitzed. They had visualised building an up-to-date church in its place, but the Corporation acquired the site by compulsory purchase.

Three years ago the Church came to the decision that the money raised from the compulsory purchase should be used for church extension. The spending of trust funds, however, had to have the approval of the Charity Commission, and that had taken time.

"It is a great joy to know that part of these funds have been used to complete the buildings at Winchester Road. After many years of having a church hall you now have a beautiful church."

The Above Bar Church still lives in the united church, where they have an Isaac Watts plaque which was rescued from the ruins.

It was resolved to submit a further scheme to the Charity Commission for approval that the balance of the funds be distributed to the Daughter Churches of Above Bar, retaining a portion for the Mother Church, for use in the United Church, and the balance to the Hampshire Congregational Union for extension work in the Churches of the Middle District of the County.

This scheme was approved and the gifts made accordingly at a special meeting held in the United Church on November 3rd, 1960, at which the Minister, the Revd. D. Allon Smith, B.Sc., presided.

The following report from the "Southern Evening Echo" states :

MOTHER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHAMPTON HELPS HER DAUGHTERS

Funds arising from the disposal of the site of the old church have now gone in part, towards the new Isaac Watts Memorial Church in Winchester Road.

The balance is being disposed of to daughter churches of Above Bar, and last night, at the United Presbyterian Congregational Church, Brunswick Place, cheques were officially handed over by the Above Bar Congregational Church treasurer, Mr. R. I. Palmer.

The Above Bar Congregational Church and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church covenanted together in January, 1948. When the union proved to be working successfully, the building of a new church was dismissed from their planning.

As the years passed by, the Church, knowing the needs of the churches in Hampshire County Union, decided that the money in trust should be used. The money was invested and yielded a substantial interest.

A further scheme was submitted to dispose of the balance to the United Church, the daughter churches of Above Bar and to the County Union.

The schemes had now gained the consent of the Charity Commissioners and they were able to share out the money.

They decided, therefore, that the balance in funds should be paid over to the county treasurers to assist with the work of building in the middle district. As the work of the Above Bar Church continued within the United Church, it was felt right that a cheque be paid to the latter.

The Above Bar Congregational Church treasurer, Mr. Palmer, had prepared the cheques, said Mr. Owers, and he expressed the gratitude of the deacons and members for the way in which he had dealt with the difficult problems involved.

The cheques Mr. Palmer presented under the scheme approved by the Commission were to be used for structural purposes.

How the Money is Shared

£1,000 to Bitterne, received by the Rev. R. H. Mills—to be used to add a storey to their Hall;

£2,000 to Bitterne Park, received by the Rev. George F. Seymour—to help with the installation of central heating and further ancillary buildings;

£2,500 to Hythe, received by the Rev. David Nevard—they plan a new Church Hall and toilet accommodation;

£3,000 to Pear Tree Green, received by Mr. A. Irwin—to aid in extension and building a new hall;

£2,000 to Totton, received by the Rev. Allan Butler—towards the cost of their new church;

£3,000 for United Church, received by th Rev. D. Allon Smith.

£7,974 3s. 5d.—the balance—received by Mr. S. C. Rowland for the County Union Extension Fund, the money to be used within 20 miles of the Civic Centre.

The gift of £3,000 received by the United Church is being used during this Ter-centenary Year to modernise and extend the cloak-rooms and kitchen, which will include the installation of a service lift to the Lamb Memorial Hall.



PRESENTING THE CHEQUES AT THE UNITED CHURCH
NOVEMBER 3RD, 1960

**ROLL OF ABOVE BAR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
DEACONS (SINCE 1912)**

	Elected
William Wallace	1914
Thomas Hendin	1920
Ethel Pearce	1922
Elizabeth Maffey	1922
Elsie Randall	1922
Thomas A. A. Cleveland	1923
Leonard J. Foot	1923
Henry Hector Harwood	1923
John H. Moore	1923
James Wildman	1923
Winifred Drew	1926
Frederick George Binning	1926
*Ernest Stewart Lucas	1929
Edwin George Hutchinson	1929
Frederick G. Smith	1930
*Frederick Walter Owers (Present Secretary)	1933
Edith Coombs	1935
Donald H. Mitchell	1935
*Douglas Henry Harwood	1935
*Ronald Irving Palmer (Present Treasurer)	1935
*Frederick Thomas Cecil Barber	1938
William C. Tyler	1938
Roland Henry Hobern	1938
Harry Scott	1938
*Edith Lucas	1938
*Cecil John Marsh Cox	1947
Roy Ellery	1947
Clarence Victor Tomlinson	1947
Thomas George White	1947
Harold G. Wilkins	1947
*Marjorie Owers	1947
*Edgar Leslie Howard	1947
Mabel Barber	1947
*Elizabeth Pollock Malcom	1952

The present Deacons of the Above Bar Congregational Church are marked thus *

Thanks must be recorded to all who have helped in preparing this Brochure, especially to one friend who was a former member of the Church.

Many records were destroyed with the Church and memory has had to play a part in this production.



CONCLUDING WORD

It is obvious to those who have read this little booklet that no attempt has been made to write the history of the last half century of the Above Bar Congregational Church in narrative form, since this would require a volume to itself. The aim has been the more modest one of gathering together the principal names, dates and happenings which have been the landmarks of the past fifty years and to link them with those of the earlier and longer period since 1662.

The names and events recorded in the foregoing pages should stir our memories and help us in mind and spirit to think of the real history of the Above Bar Congregational Church which is written in the hearts and lives of those who have worshipped within its walls. As a preacher once said to a congregation celebrating a similar occasion: "Would it not be a great thing if we could visualise all those who have passed through the doors of the Church during the long years of its history: those who have stood in the pulpit—preachers who, I doubt not, have changed the lives of many of their hearers: and those who have sat in the pews—a multitude scarcely to be numbered—who have by their Christian conduct influenced the lives of those around them? These men and women have been the strength of the Church and will be the inspiration of those who follow in their steps."

The foregoing pages should help us rightly to visualise the past, so that we may engage in our present work, and pray for those who are committed to our continuing witness, with fresh inspiration and renewed consecration to our Lord Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

D. ALLON-SMITH

**PROGRAMME OF THE 1662 - 1962 CELEBRATIONS AND THE
TER-CENTENARY OF THE ABOVE BAR CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH. TO BE HELD IN THE UNITED CHURCH.**

Thursday, November 15th, 1962. At 7.30 p.m.

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Guest Speakers : THE REV. DR. H. F. LOVELL COCKS, M.A.
Moderator of the National Free Church Federal
Council.

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHAMPTON
Right Rev. K. LAMPLUGH.

The service will also be attended by the

Rural Dean, Canon K. W. H. Felstead, M.Sc.

The Rector of St. Mary's, the Rev. Roy Chamberlain, M.A.,
Ministers and Members of the Middle District of the Hampshire
Congregational Union and the Southampton Free Church
Federal Council.

Sunday, November 18th. Services at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Preacher : REV. G. T. BELLHOUSE, M.A.

Minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Eastbourne.
His Worship the Mayor, the Mayoress and Members of the
Southampton Corporation will attend the Morning Service.

Saturday, November 24th, at 7 p.m. in the Lamb Memorial Hall.

Rally of the Church and Congregation, and former Members
and Friends.

Buffet Refreshments will be served.

Sunday, November 25th, 1962.

Divine Worship at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Preacher : REV. DAVID GEDDES, M.A., of Exeter,
former Minister of the Church.



The Above Bar Congregational Church which now forms part of the United Presbyterian Congregational Church will be celebrating the Ter-Centenary of its formation this year.

The enclosed Brochure has been compiled giving points of interest since the previous issue in 1912.

A programme of the celebrations will be found at the back of the brochure and it is very much hoped that the Services and Rally will be supported by former members and friends as well as members and adherents of the United Church.

An indication of the number to be present on Saturday evening will be appreciated to facilitate catering arrangements.

We extend a cordial invitation to join with us in these celebrations.

- - - - - Cut Here - - - - -

We shall be grateful if you will kindly return this slip if you are able to come on Saturday, November 24th.

F. W. Owers,
83, Janson Road,
Shirley,
Southampton.