

BRIGHTON AND HOVE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Brighton (originally Brighthelmstone) became popular around 1750 thanks to the advocacy of one Dr. Russell for sea-bathing for health and the Prince Regent (later to become King George IV) coming to the resort. Before 1770 Brighton had fewer than 600 houses, 2500 inhabitants and seven main streets. One of these residents is recorded as the first Jewish Brightonian. He effectively started the community when he settled here from the Rhineland, married a local Jewess and together they had 10 children.

The first synagogue and school were established in Jew Street in 1792 ; earlier than the town's first Catholic and Methodist congregations. After moves to Pounces Court and then Devonshire Place this building was constructed 1874-5 to provide room for a growing congregation and a steady flow of visitors from London.

From the very earliest days the town's Jewish citizens established a tradition of local service. Amongst these are included one of Brighton's 19th century Chief Constables, a prominent local Commissioner, a distinguished editor, numerous Aldermen, Councilors, Justices of the Peace, no fewer than seven Mayors (including the late Lord Cohen of Brighton) and even the architect who designed Brighton Railway Station.

Many local sites are named after local Jews in recognition of their services to the town. Amongst these Davigdor Road, Palmeira Road, Goldsmid Road, Palmeira Square, Montefiore Road, Julian Road, Osmond Road and Somerhill Road are all examples of the honour paid to these men.

There is still today a large and vibrant Jewish community in Brighton & Hove. There are two other orthodox synagogues, a reform-movement synagogue and a liberal-progressive movement synagogue all in active use each week. Additionally there are many other non-affiliated people in Brighton with Jewish ancestry. Middle Street welcomes people of all denominations, backgrounds and nationalities to visit.