



Enfield Museum, Local Studies
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**London Borough of Enfield
Local History Sheets.**

**Jewish settlement in Enfield a
history**

Jews were permitted to settle in England in 1656, after having been officially banned from the country since 1290. The first Jewish settlers were Sephardim, originating mainly from Spain and Portugal. These were later joined by Ashkenazim from Germany, Poland and Eastern Europe.

Initially Jewish settlement in London was mainly confined to the Aldgate area and the adjoining districts of the East End. By the mid 18th century some Jews (mainly Sephardim at this stage) were sufficiently well established to acquire country houses on the fringe of London in such places as Stoke Newington, Highgate and Totteridge.

A few Jewish names can be found in Land Tax records and ratebooks from Edmonton from 1750 onwards. For example, one Abraham Lumbrozo de Mattos was living in Fore Street in 1750 and one Jacob Diaz Fernandez was living at Millfield House in 1799. Similarly at Enfield, Benjamin D'Israeli (grandfather of the Prime Minister) was living at Baker Street from 1782. However, these settlers did not constitute a Jewish community in any real sense and there is no evidence of any organised Jewish life in the Enfield area at this time.

The year 1838 saw the establishment of a boarding school for Jewish boys at Edmonton. With the public schools still closed to Jews, this school attracted pupils of a very high calibre. The proprietor, Henry Solomon, a former head of the Jews Free School, was a major figure in the field of Jewish education. He was also the first Jew to be elected to a local authority in this area, serving on the Edmonton Local Board of Health 1850/78. Solomon died in 1881 and the school closed in 1888.

In the late 19th century and the early 20th century large numbers of Ashkenazim came to Britain as refugees from persecution in Russia and Poland. The Jewish population of the East End grew dramatically. Partly because of sheer pressure of numbers and partly because of the activities of the Jewish Dispersion Committee (set up by the Federation of Synagogues), Jews began to move into the suburbs of London. Large scale Jewish settlement in Tottenham began in 1902 with a synagogue established by 1904. There was also some Jewish settlement in Edmonton at this time. Evidence from school admission registers reveals the presence of a number of Jewish families in the Bounces Road/Twon Road area. However, despite initial promise, this small community failed to develop.

More significantly, school admission registers and other sources reveal that a small number of Jewish families had settled in Palmers Green by 1914. By 1926 the numbers had grown sufficiently for services to be held in hired halls. A purpose-built synagogue opened in Brownlow Road in 1936. Jewish migration to Palmers Green and Southgate accelerated during World War II as a direct result of heavy bombing in the traditional Jewish areas in the East End. The increasing Jewish population of Oakwood and Cockfosters resulted in the building of a synagogue in Old Farm Avenue to serve this area.

Both the Brownlow Road and Old Farm Avenue synagogues are orthodox and are affiliated to the United Synagogue. However, provision has also been made for those Jews of a less orthodox persuasion. A Liberal synagogue was established in Chase Road in 1943. This was followed in 1961 by a Reform

synagogue initially at Winchmore Hill, moving to Southgate High Street in 1982.

Synagogues

United Synagogue

Palmers Green and Southgate Synagogue, Brownlow Road N11

The Palmers Green Jewish community began to organise in 1926, holding services in hired halls. Later on, services were held at a house in Palmerston Road. A permanent building was erected in Brownlow Road in 1936. This was destroyed by enemy action in 1944 but was rebuilt in 1947. A further reconstruction took place in 1954. The building was extended in 1977.

Cockfosters and North Southgate Synagogue, Old Farm Avenue N14

A breakaway from the Palmers Green and Southgate Synagogue. In 1945 Jewish inhabitants of the Oakwood/Cockfosters area began holding services in hired premises becoming a separate congregation in 1948. A site was acquired in Old Farm Avenue in 1949 and the synagogue was ready for consecration in 1954. By 1959 the building was too small for the growing congregation and it was rebuilt in 1965. In 1978 structural defects caused the roof of the hall to collapse. The building has since been restored.

Enfield and Winchmore Hill Synagogue, Wellington Road

Established in 1950. Serves the small and fairly scattered Jewish population of the Enfield Town area.

Liberal

Southgate and District Liberal Synagogue, Chase Road N14

Established in 1943. In 1954 a house was acquired in Chase Road. A synagogue was built in the grounds in 1959. A new enlarged synagogue opened in 1989.

Reform

Southgate and District Reform Synagogue, High Street N14

Established in 1961. In 1963 the building of the former Winchmore Hill Collegiate School at Queens Avenue was acquired. The move to Southgate High Street took place in 1982.

Cemeteries

Western Synagogue Cemetery, Montagu Road N18

Opened in 1884. Another cemetery has since been opened at Bulls Cross Ride.

Edmonton Federation Cemetery, Montagu Road N18

Opened in 1889 by the then newly formed Federation of Synagogues. The land was acquired on their behalf by Sir Samuel Montagu (later 1st Lord Swaythling)

Adath Yisroel Cemetery, Carterhatch Lane, Enfield

The plans for this cemetery were approved in September 1924.

Further Reading

Baum Jefferey and **Baum** Barbara

The Jews of Tottenham before the First World War
In Heritage no.1

Baum Jefferey and **Baum** Barbara

A light unto my path: the story of H N Solomon of Edmonton
Edmonton Hundred Historical Society. 1981.

Biography of Henry Naphthali Solomon, proprietor of a Jewish boys' boarding school at Edmonton.

Frayman Joseph

The history of the Cockfosters and North Southgate Synagogue
In Heritage no.1

Grant Alan

Palmers Green and Southgate Synagogue. Golden Jubilee 1927/1977
Southgate 1977

Southgate and District Reform Synagogue

Silver Jubilee, 1961/1986
Southgate 1986