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PLACES OF WORSHIP IN GEORGIAN AND REGENCY BRIGHTON AND HOVE c.1760–1840

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Between 1760 and 1840, the number of places of worship in the flourishing resort of Brighton and Hove increased from four to about forty, most of which were built after 1800. The provision for Anglican worshippers before 1820 was limited to two old parish churches and a seasonally open chapel of ease. By 1820 the total number of buildings and sittings offered by Nonconformist places of worship had outnumbered those for Anglicans. Their simple buildings were located on cheaper land behind streets or along minor streets. But from 1817 Anglicans and Nonconformists started building larger places of worship on major streets, and some of these striking buildings still survive.

From around 1740 the small town of Brighton was saved from a long period of decline by the development of seaside tourism, attracting increasing numbers of wealthy visitors and residents and many people who provided the wide range of services that a large resort was expected to have. Between 1760 and 1840 the number of places of worship increased from three to about forty, most of them built after 1800, when Brighton expanded rapidly and crossed the western parish boundary into Hove. The town's prosperity helped to persuade congregations that they could afford bigger buildings, and it also attracted developers to build proprietary Anglican chapels, most of them deriving their income from charging pew rents.

In 1815 a commentator in the *The Gentleman's Magazine* remarked on the insufficiency of Anglican churches in Brighton. He observed that only there was only one parish church for 12,200 residents,

whereas Lewes had 6,221 residents and six parish churches and Chichester 6,426 residents, eight parish churches and a cathedral. The writer believed that Brighton needed at least four more Anglican churches, calculating that one church would serve 3,000 people. He claimed that, because of the lack of provision by the Church of England, dissenting groups would flourish, and he drew attention to the closure of the St James's Street Chapel (see below), an Anglican free chapel opened by some local gentlemen in 1810 because neither the Vicar of Brighton nor the Bishop of Chichester would support it. Though there were already some fifteen nonconformist places of worship, most of which had free seats,¹ the outburst did not result in any immediate change, and in this respect Brighton was typical of other fast-growing towns in which the Church of England did little to attract worshippers until the 1820s.²

From the early 1820s Brighton's prosperity as a resort began to transform the rural parish of Hove into a suburban area, the most prominent part of which was Brunswick Town (Fig. 1). Before then, the community in Hove was a tiny hamlet on the western side where the parish church was falling apart. The parish church was rebuilt, and St Andrew's, a chapel of ease, was built to accommodate the visitors; these churches are included here because they were treated by contemporaries as if they were part of Brighton.

ANGLICAN PLACES OF WORSHIP: THE OLD PARISH CHURCHES

The medieval parish church of **St Nicholas** was treated like many others throughout England during this period. The demand for more seating in box pews was met by the addition of galleries lit by dormer windows and accessed by outside staircases (Fig. 2), but they disappeared, along with the large pulpit, when the church was virtually rebuilt by R. C. Carpenter in 1853-54.³ The development of Brunswick Town during the 1820s came too late to save **St Andrew's**, the medieval parish church of Hove. By 1792, though still in use, only about a third of the tower stood, and the chancel had fallen down, its roof line discernible on several prints and drawings; the small congregation made use of the patched up nave.⁴ In 1828 Rev. Edward Everard opened St Andrew's in Waterloo Street (see p. 164), just east of Brunswick Town, the use of the name of the old church for the new one suggesting that the old church was expected to fall down.⁵ The parish of Hove then decided to rebuild 'Old St Andrew's' to

Basevi's unusual Neo-Norman design in 1834-1838; his parents were amongst the wealthy residents of Brunswick Town who donated most of the cost, and his father also underwrote his son's fee.⁶

NEW ANGLICAN CHURCHES AND CHAPELS 1790-1830

Before 1830, the majority of new Anglican places of worship were proprietary chapels of ease to the parish church. They were not intended to compete with the parish church, since that would have undermined the income of the vicar and the parish from pew rents, weddings and burials and other perquisites. Prospective builders required the permission of the Bishop of the diocese and of the vicar or rector of the parish in which they intended to build; he was also consulted about the choice of incumbent. Each chapel also had to have a private Act of Parliament, which gave the promoter permission to appoint the incumbent and to collect

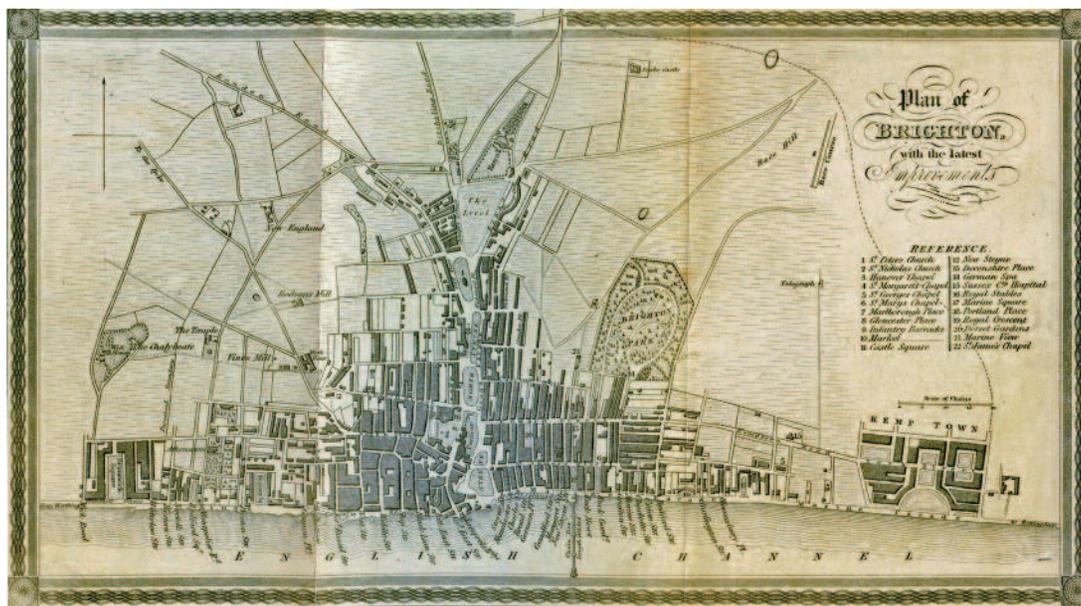


Fig. 1. Bruce's 1835 Map, showing major sites mentioned.



Fig. 2. St. Nicholas, Brighton's medieval parish church, engraving by R. Havell (1824), showing stairs to the galleries and dormer windows to light them.

the income. Promoters of chapels of ease had to pay for the building and then hope for enough income from pew rents to pay the incumbent and to recoup the cost of the church; locally the Acts set a curate's stipend at £150. Chapels of Ease built by the parish, however, such as St Peter's in Brighton, did not require Acts of Parliament and the parish was responsible for all of their costs and maintenance.

With two exceptions (St Peter's and Christ Church), the new buildings were designed as 'preaching boxes', rectangular in shape and without aisles. Most had galleries, and many were equipped with large pulpits which in Anglican chapels and churches obscured the view of the communion table. The majority were designed and built by local builders, probably from pattern books.⁸ From 1817

Anglican Chapels and Churches in the parishes of Brighton and Hove 1793–1840⁷

Chapel	Date opened	Owner when built	Style	Architect	Builder	Cost(£)
Chapel Royal	2/8/1795	Rev. T. Hudson	Classical	T. Saunders		
St James's	1810	N. Kemp	Classical	Not known		
Royal Chapel	Jan. 1821	George IV	Assembly Room	J. Crunden		
St Margaret's	26/12/1824	B. Gregory	Neo-Classical	C.A. Busby	Cooper&Lynn	
St George's	30/12/1825	T.R Kemp	Neo-Classical	C.A. Busby		11,000
Holy Trinity	April 1817	T.R Kemp	Neo-Classical	H. Wilds	A. & H. Wilds?	
St Mary's	18/1/1827	B. Gregory	Neo-Classical	H. Wilds	Mr Vine	9,000
St Peter's	24/1/1828	Parish	Gothic	C. Barry	W. Ranger	21,865
St Andrews	5/7/1828	Rev. E. Everard	Italianate	C. Barry		
All Souls	3/4/1834	Parish	Neo-Classical	H. Mew	H. Mew	2,000
Christ Church	26/4/1838	Parish	Gothic	G. Cheesman	G. Cheesman jnr	3,380
St John's	Jan. 1840	Parish	Grecian	G. Cheesman	G. Cheesman jnr	5,212



Fig. 3. St. Peter's, by Charles Barry, showing his apsidal 'east' end and the unbuilt spire. The 'east end' was demolished when the church was extended in 1906.

the quality of the architecture improved, most builders and architects following the fashion for neo-classical façades. Yet in spite of the generally conservative approach to design, one innovatory church and two very distinctive façades were built. The church and one of the façades were by the young Charles Barry, and the other façade by George Cheesman, a local builder and surveyor. Several very competent designs were by Amon Wilds (1762–1833) and his son Amon Henry (1790–1857), with whom he worked.⁹ And George Basevi, whose parents lived in Brunswick Town, Hove, rebuilt Old St Andrew's in Hove, marking the beginning of a phase of such treatment of old parish churches in this area.

The Rev. Thomas Hudson, vicar of Brighton, built the first proprietary chapel as a private venture. The eighteenth-century resort was entirely within

the parish, but by the end of the century it was expanding northwards and eastwards, away from the parish church. Designed by Thomas Saunders of London, the **Chapel Royal** fitted snugly on a site just off North Street, a busy main road in the town centre and close to the Royal Pavilion. It did not have a frontage to North Street, as that side had shops along it; Arthur Blomfield refaced the modest entrance on the eastern side of Princes Place during the later nineteenth century, but a Coade stone crest of the Prince of Wales's feathers survives.¹⁰ Built as a preaching chapel with galleries on all four sides designed to focus on the pulpit, it was capable of accommodating a thousand worshippers. Hudson's aim was to recoup the costs and then make a profitable living from the chapel by letting the pews either for 99 years at twenty guineas each or for one

guinea a year for a large pew on the ground floor seating between five and six people.¹¹ The Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone on 25 November 1793 and agreed to rent a pew. The interior was embellished with his coat of arms, and there was an elaborate three-decker pulpit. The chapel opened in 1795, with two Sunday services, but the income from the short autumn tourist season was insufficient to meet the overheads, so Hudson organised sacred concerts to try to boost usage. In 1799, when the building was only six years old, it was shut for major repairs. By a private Act of Parliament of 1803, the chapel became a perpetual curacy and a chapel of ease to St Nicholas (the parish church), Hudson keeping the vault below the chapel (which has survived) and letting it as a wine store. But problems with the quality of the building continued, and part of the ceiling fell into the box pews in 1817 during a service. The chapel was then repaired and re-opened.¹²

During the confident and prosperous 1820s the population of Brighton grew from 24,429 to 40,634, and large capital investments such as the Chain Pier helped to modernise the resort. Five high-quality Anglican chapels of ease were built, three of which – St Peter's, St George's and St Andrew's (Hove) –

survive with their façades intact and some of their original interiors.¹³ Two older private chapels were also enlarged and converted into proprietary chapels, and an assembly room was converted too. All were built in the auditory fashion of the times, with galleried interiors, prominent pulpits and shallow chancels, or no chancels at all.

The increase in population, and the prospect of grants towards a new church from the Commission for Building New Churches of 1818, galvanised the parish vestry of Brighton, and in 1823 a competition was held for what became St Peter's. It was won by the young Charles Barry over local competition from Amon Henry Wilds and his partner C.A. Busby. **St Peter's** was a development of two churches that Barry had already designed in Lancashire in the Perpendicular Gothic style. But it was much grander, its south front with its elegant tower still making a superb eye-catcher at the north end of the North Steine gardens, visible from the grounds of the Royal Pavilion. Barry failed to persuade the parish to pay for the spire shown in his engraving of 1824 (Fig. 3), but the Church Building Committee of the parish agreed to use Portland stone both for the building, with its polygonal apse, and for the galleries (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. The interior of St. Peter's, showing Barry's galleries and east end lost to the enlargement in 1906.



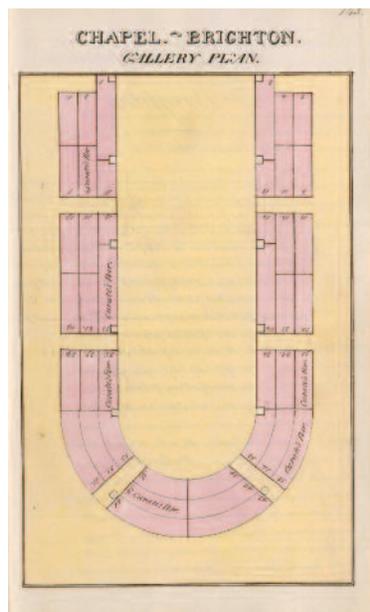
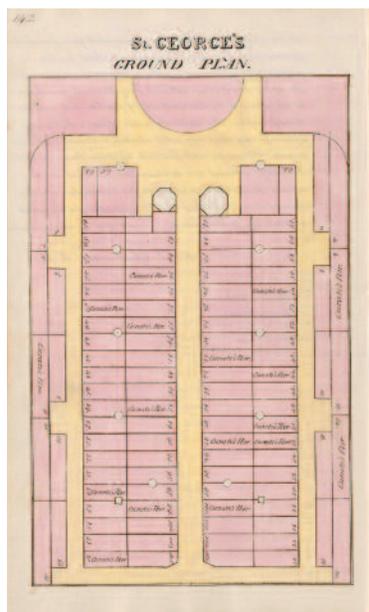
Fig. 5. St. George's Chapel, Kemp Town, by C.A. Busby (opened 1825), photograph c.1900.

The church cost £21,865 – one of the most expensive projects supported by the Commission for Building New Churches, and once it was opened in 1827 it provided most of the free Anglican seats in the parish.¹⁴ The parish expected the church to pay for itself, and there was constant pressure from the Vestry to reduce the number of free seats; a list of the pew rents of c.1827 shows that 92 pews and another 23 in the gallery were expected to generate £800.2s¹⁵. But this proved to be over-optimistic, partly because the opening of the church coincided with the start of a recession which paralysed the town in the 1830s, putting an end to the house-building expected to the north.¹⁶

St George's was the largest and most assertively sited of the new chapels. Built as a freestanding building by Thomas Read Kemp on the west side of

his Kemp Town development, it faced visitors as they drove out from Brighton. Designed by C. A. Busby and consecrated in December 1825, it was built of local yellow-gold brick made on the western side of Brighton, with stucco dressings; the cost was allegedly £11,000, more than any of the other places of worship in Brighton apart from St Peter's.¹⁷ The entrance is framed by Ionic columns, and there is a low tower surmounted by an octagonal cupola (Fig. 5). The interior is galleried, the galleries curving at the west end and reached by elegantly curved staircases (Fig. 6). There was no chancel; instead, a simple reredos of three panels of texts was placed on the east wall behind a big triple-decker pulpit – a reflection of Kemp's Evangelical sympathies. The second minister, the Rev. James Anderson, became a favourite of Queen Adelaide who appointed him her Chaplain in Ordinary; her regular attendance boosted the church's popularity.¹⁸

Barnard Gregory, whose many roles included being a developer, wine merchant and newspaper proprietor, started the construction of **St Margaret's** in 1824 and obtained a private Act of Parliament in 1825 which also applied to St Mary's, his other chapel of ease; St Margaret's was named after Gregory's wife, who laid the foundation stone. The chapel stood at the end of St Margaret's Place in the rapidly expanding western area of Brighton, close to Russell Square and Regency Square, begun in 1817, and must have been a very attractive eye-catcher there. The Act specified that there should be two hundred free places, and Gregory expected that the rents from the remaining pews would produce £150 a year to pay the perpetual curate. But as soon as he built the nearby Newburgh Assembly Rooms, the chapel and a few houses, he sold the development.¹⁹ The church was designed by C.A. Busby, and a complete set of his drawings survives.²⁰ There was an elegant Ionic portico surmounted by an octagonal tempietto containing a lantern lighting the west gallery; under-floor heating was advertised as enhancing the comfort of the building (Fig. 7).²¹



Figs. 6a and 6b. St. George's Chapel – ground floor and gallery plans.

WSRO, EpII/2/1 pages 142 and 143, by permission of the Bishop of Chichester and the Diocesan Record Office.

St Mary's Chapel, Rock Gardens, was also built by Barnard Gregory. It was intended to profit from attracting the new residents of the infilling of eastern Brighton and stood on a plot of land given or, more probably, sold to Gregory by the Earl of Egremont, who had his own pew in the church, which was conveniently located at the bottom of his large garden (Fig. 8). The church was designed by Amon Henry Wilds in the form of a Grecian temple, allegedly the Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous in Attica. There was a portico of four fluted Doric columns with a triglyph frieze and a pediment; the congregation entered through three doors shown on earlier prints. The interior included a large pulpit and a reading desk with a small communion table slightly behind them in a shallow chancel; the three galleries rested on fluted columns.²² Work began in September 1825, and was largely completed by January 1826; the church was later sold to Charles Elliott, who had it consecrated in 1827 and nominated his son as the first perpetual curate. The building

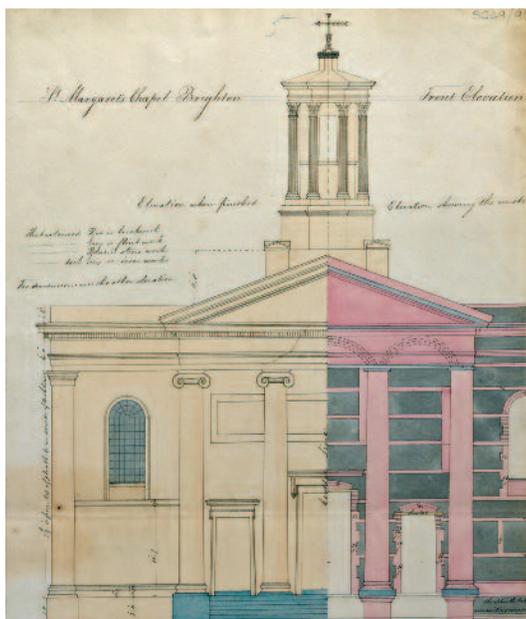


Fig. 7. St. Margaret's by C. A. Busby
RIBA drawings collection, SC49/9(1), by permission of the British Architectural Library.

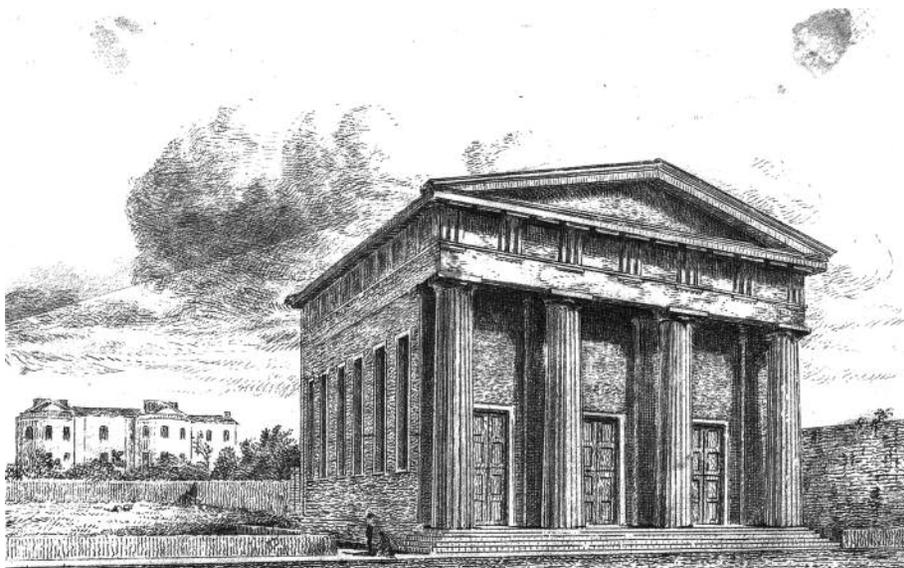


Fig. 8. St. Mary's, by Henry Wilds, with the Earl of Egremont's Brighton villa in the background.
By permission of Mr Henry Smith.

must have been altered before c1853 when Delamotte, a prolific painter of Brighton scenes, shows one central door in his watercolour. The church was in poor condition in 1876 when part of the roof and a wall collapsed, and it was rebuilt to the Gothic designs of William Emerson, a pupil of William Burges.²³

St Andrew's, Waterloo Street, Hove was built by the Rev. Edward Everard, the first perpetual curate of St Margaret's, to attract the wealthy residents of, and visitors to, Brunswick Town and was consecrated in 1828. Neither the landowner, Rev. Thomas Scutt, nor his architect, C. A. Busby, had planned a place of worship for the estate, which went up just to the west of the parish boundary with Brighton. Having obtained the permission of the vicar and of the patron of the living of Hove and a private Act of Parliament, Everard chose Charles Barry as his architect; he had chaired the Building Committee for St Peters, where he had been a curate, and was also a joint honorary secretary of the Sussex County Hospital which Barry also designed. The façade is notable for Barry's pioneering use of the Italian

Quattrocento style, specially in the round-arched west doorway and the paired arches of the low west tower (Fig. 9). The interior was typical of preaching chapels, with a single west gallery and a plain altarpiece on the east wall flanked by a pulpit and a reading desk. The success of this chapel was aided by the poor state of the parish church of St Andrew's farther west and, by the distance of Brunswick Town from rival chapels in Brighton, and by the early 1830s it could not meet the demand for rented or free seats. This helped to persuade the residents of Brunswick Town to support Basevi's rebuilding of 'Old' St Andrew's (see above).²⁴

ADAPTATIONS OF OLDER BUILDINGS

In 1821, the demolition of most of the Castle Inn gave King George IV the chance to have a private chapel for the Royal Pavilion. In January 1822, the assembly room, designed by John Crunden in 1776, was consecrated as the **Royal Chapel**; Pugin included a

drawing of the exuberant interior in his second edition of *'Contrasts'* published in 1841, condemning it as pagan and inappropriate for a place of worship.²⁵ When the Pavilion was sold to the town in 1850 the Town Commissioners decided to demolish and sell all service buildings south of the kitchens, including the Chapel, and lease the land to help pay for the purchase. The Vicar of Brighton and the Bishop of Chichester were compensated to the tune of £3,000, and the chapel was quickly re-erected in 1851 as St Stephen's Church, Montpelier Place, which still stands.²⁶

In 1810, Nathaniel Kemp of Ovingdean Place and some other wealthy local people erected the brick-built **St James's Street Chapel** behind some existing buildings just off St James's Street. It was an Anglican free chapel intended to serve the developing suburbs of east Brighton, by then over a mile away from the old parish church, but, after the opposition to it described earlier, it was run as a dissenting chapel by Kemp's nephew, Thomas Read Kemp, until he built Holy Trinity chapel in Ship Street (see below). Even after refurbishment and enlargement as a proprietary chapel in 1826, St James's had difficulty raising income. It faced Chapel Street, a side turning in area of small dense streets, and although always described in directories and guides as well-built and spacious, it could not compete with other better-located chapels of ease such as St Mary's, only a few hundred yards away.²⁷

Holy Trinity in Ship Street – part of the old town – was registered as a dissenting chapel in 1817, when Thomas Read Kemp paid for it to be built to the design of either Amon or Amon Henry Wilds. Kemp, a member of an Evangelical sect lead by Harriet Wall and George Baring, recognised the value of having a street façade and a front which was distinctive and easily seen. So the building was constructed with a portico of four Doric columns and had a tower or dome which was said to help with ventilation; the façade, like much of the Royal Pavilion as rebuilt by John Nash, was coated with



Fig. 9. St Andrew, Waterloo Street, Hove.

mastic. The guide books remarked that the pulpit was shaped like a vase supported by Ionic fluted columns, and under-floor heating was provided to help with the ventilation. But Kemp soon lost interest in the sect, decided that he wished to return to being an MP, and in 1822 sold the chapel to George Faithful. In 1825 the Rev. Robert Anderson bought it and turned it into an Anglican proprietary chapel, prudently securing a private Act jointly with Nathaniel Kemp, who needed one for St James's.²⁸ No image of the chapel as designed by Wilds has been identified, nor is there any evidence for the claim that Barry was associated with the alterations by Anderson; the local press was well aware of Barry and his projects in the town, so it is very likely any association would have been reported. The earliest print, dated 1830, shows a pedimented façade and a rather curious ventilation shaft which looks more like a tower than the dome described in guide books; it was published after Anderson's changes.²⁹



Fig. 10. Christ Church, by Cheesman, engraving c.1840 by W. Burrett.
By permission of Mr Henry Smith.

CHAPELS OF EASE 1833-1840

From the early 1830s the Vicar of Brighton, the Rev. Henry Wagner, built several new churches for the parish. He was concerned that there were only 3,590 free sittings in Anglican places of worship in for a population in 1831 of 40,364, of whom he estimated 18,000 were poor. He knew the established church had to compete with the new nonconformist chapels, many of which were large and well-located, and he campaigned to build his churches on prominent sites in the emergent new suburbs, especially those in which poorer people lived. He raised the funds not

from the church rate but from his wealthy family and contacts, and from the Incorporated Church Building Society, and in planning the churches he did not depart from the long-established auditory layout with large pulpits and galleries.³⁰

Subscriptions soon flowed in for **All Souls, Upper Edward Street**. Wagner wanted to raise enough capital to build the church and to ensure that it did not become chargeable on the parish. Built in 1833-34 of rendered brick and flint for £2,000, including internal fittings, an organ and basic heating, it was designed by a local architect and builder,



Fig. 11. St John, Carlton Hill, by Cheesman, in 2010.

Henry Mew, explicitly ‘for the accommodation of the poor and working classes’, and was dedicated in April 1834. Of the eleven hundred sittings, only 240 were for rent, a major departure from the usual ratios, and Wagner ensured that the presentation of the incumbent was reserved to the vicar of Brighton.³¹

Christ Church was built in 1838 on Montpelier Road to serve the middle-class residents of Bedford Square to the south and the expanding residential area around it, known then as Montpelier. Designed by George Cheesman, a well-established and wealthy builder, in a simple Gothic style, it originally stood a little uncomfortably in a terrace of bow-fronted houses occupied by doctors, surgeons and teachers, with its aisled and galleried nave, very shallow chancel and 130 ft.-high tower and spire (Fig. 10).³² Henry Wagner used his network of wealthy contacts to raise the £4,600 required to raise most of the money needed to buy the site and build the church. On behalf of the Incorporated Church Building Society, J. H. Good rejected Cheesman’s first design. He recommended more columns to support the

galleries and more horizontal ties between them, and advised Cheesman to look at the balance between the need to ensure that the galleries were strong enough and the appearance of the interior as members of the congregation entered the building. The church was lit only from the east and west ends, allowing for the development of houses to the north and south, and the east end was dominated by a three-decker pulpit until 1887, when it was removed as part of a major overhaul. All of the thousand seats were covered in crimson cloth, which caused comment for it was thought to be rather grand in a church in which only four hundred sittings were rented.³³

Consecrated in 1840 **St John’s, Carlton Hill** was the last Anglican auditory church to be built in Brighton and Hove, and so marked the end of an era. Designed with a very distinctive and austere Grecian façade by George Cheesman jnr., and built by Messrs G. Cheesman & Son, the interior was fitted with galleries. Of the 1200 sittings, at least 650 were free. The future of this building is now uncertain due to severe fire damage (Fig. 11).³⁴

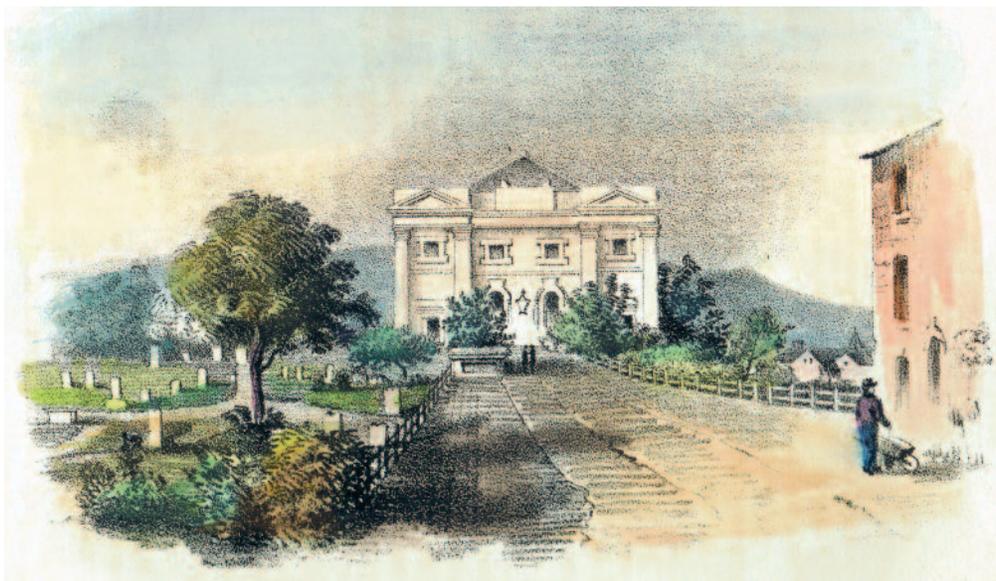


Fig. 12. The south front of the Hanover Chapel c.1832, lithograph by E. Wallis.

NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS

During the eighteenth century, most nonconformist groups apart from the Presbyterians could not afford a chapel and were licensed to meet in rooms by the Diocese of Chichester. The accommodation varied depending on what groups could afford. A room in the house of Elizabeth Hemsley of West Street was licensed in 1765 for Baptist worship, and the Assembly Rooms of both the Old Ship and the Castle Inns were regularly used in the later 1700s by various denominations. Many of these groups were unstable; personality conflicts and disagreements over what might now seem to be minor issues about the order of worship resulted in groups splitting up and chapels changing hands.³⁵

But in spite of the small size of most nonconformist groups, they eventually caught the building bug and sought more prominent sites. In 1825 the *Brighton Gazette* remarked on the amount of building work noting that the ‘Dissenters were as active as the Churchmen’ and singling out the recently enlarged Baptist Chapel in Bond Street and a large new

chapel built for the well-known preacher and lawyer George Faithful on busy Church Street.³⁶ Yet the majority of Brighton’s thirty or so nonconformist chapels were small, seating fewer than two hundred.³⁷ The grander stuccoed classical façades of Holy Trinity, the Union, the Hanover, the Countess of Huntingdon, Faithful’s and the Ebenezer Chapels, all of the period 1817–1830, were exceptional.³⁸

Union Street Chapel is the oldest dissenting chapel in Brighton and Hove, first recorded in 1698 when a Presbyterian group owned it. During the later eighteenth century, the building was used by Independents, and in 1822 it was described as ‘much altered’, possibly in 1810, with a capacity of 800. The building was changed again in 1825 when Wilds and Busby repaired and enlarged it to seat 860, with a new stuccoed, classical façade. To give more space on the awkward corner site the seating (including the gallery) was horseshoe shaped, and the pulpit stood in a large niche on the wall with a concealed staircase.³⁹ The chapel is now a pub and the façade survives.

The Independents (Congregationalists) may have

increased in number during the early nineteenth century for in 1829 they were amongst the largest nonconformist groups in Brighton. The Rev. Edward James of Petworth paid Stephen Wood £4,000 to build the imposing **Hanover Chapel** with its Doric façade in 1824–1825 (Fig. 12). No architect is mentioned and so Wood probably used a design book to help him with the details of the façade. When it was opened in August 1825, the chapel had 1,200 sittings and its own burial ground. It stood on the northern outskirts of the town at that date, its stucco façade facing south towards its cemetery. The building is now the Brighthelm Centre, but only the south side is original.⁴⁰

The Quakers were established in Brighton a little after 1655 and became an influential group in the town. In 1700 they leased for a thousand years at a peppercorn rent a malt house and part of a croft of about an acre and turned the building into their meeting house.⁴¹ In 1804 the Crown Estate bought part of their land for New Road, an essential part of the extension of the grounds of the Royal Pavilion. The Quakers then moved to Ship Street where they bought a substantial site and paid Patching and Sons, local builders, £1,800 for the construction of a new **Quaker Meeting House**, a simple large room and a cottage to the south side. It was enlarged in 1876 when the present west front and the classrooms (to the north) were added. The garden served as the burial ground from 1805–1856 when burials in the town were forbidden.⁴²

Both the Calvinist and Arminian Methodists had chapels in Brighton and Hove before 1840. In 1759 Selina, Countess of Huntingdon invited George Whitefield to preach at Brighton, where she was staying with her sick son who was trying sea bathing, and two years later she organised the building of a chapel in the grounds of her house in North Street. Initially this Evangelical group was part of the Church of England, but they later broke with it, and the Countess's chapels (which also existed in Bath, Tunbridge Wells and elsewhere) became part of

the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. The **Huntingdon Chapel** in Brighton was rebuilt in 1774, enlarged in 1810 and substantially altered in 1822, after which it could accommodate a thousand people. Before the 1822 alterations the chapel stood behind a frontage of shops, which helped to pay the costs of the ministry, the chapel and the Sunday school, but the alterations gave it a classical street façade and an interior to match. In 1826 a lot of mathematical tiles fell into the street off the façade, suggesting that it may have been a re-facing of older buildings along the frontage to North Street. This was a popular chapel, partly because of its excellent central location.⁴³

In 1758, John Wesley visited Brighton but did not preach, and Wesleyan Methodism did not arrive until soldiers were stationed in and around the town from 1803. The small congregation of thirty-three opened their square brick-built Wesleyan Chapel on land bought from Thomas Read Kemp for two hundred guineas. The chapel was successful and in 1823 the congregation paid £400 to enlarge it, a contemporary sketch depicting a neo-classical façade though on a tight site behind shops in St James Street.⁴⁴

The **Unitarian Chapel** in busy New Road just west of the Royal Pavilion was designed by Henry Wilds with a Doric portico modelled on that of the so-called Temple of Theseus in Athens (now known to have been the Temple of Hephaestus). It was built after a split within the Unitarian group in Brighton and is still a substantial landmark, with an unaltered façade, though the Greek inscription with which it was embellished when opened has disappeared.⁴⁵

The **Providence Chapel** in Church Street (1810), the Particular Baptists' Meeting House in Bond Street, the Huntingdonian in Union Street (close to the Union Street Chapel) and the Unitarian Chapel in New Road all added to the choice of Protestant non-conformist places of worship built after 1800. And when the Baptists split in 1818, a new group of Baptists was formed who were then licensed to worship in a substantial chapel on Richmond Hill built in a neo-classical style.⁴⁶

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

In 1791 the Catholic Relief Act gave Catholics the right to build churches provided they did not have a bell or a steeple, but there is no evidence of any place of worship for Catholics in Brighton until the Rev. Philip Wyndham, chaplain to successive Dukes of Norfolk, established a Catholic mission in 1798. In 1806 money was raised, mainly by Wyndham, to build a church and presbytery on the east side of High Street. The simple church looked like many of the other modest classical chapel designs of the period used by most religious groups, but it was enlarged in 1821 and remained in use until the present church of **St John the Baptist** was built in 1835-6 at the junction of Upper St James's Street and Upper Bedford Street. It was modelled on St Mary's Moorfields in London, a classical building of 1817-20 and may have been designed by the builder, William Hallett. If so, it was typical of many Brighton churches and chapels of the period.⁴⁷

JEWISH SYNAGOGUES

At least one Jewish family lived in Brighton during the 1760s but a Jewish community did not develop until the 1780s. The first synagogue was in use in Jew Street by 1792 and this, like the next one, was probably a room in a family's house. By 1808 the synagogue was in an alley on the south-east side of West Street. In 1823 the Jewish community took a 99-year lease on land to the east side of Devonshire Place and a small building was built to the design of Benjamin Bennett. It accommodated fifty people and had a ladies' gallery. In 1837 it was enlarged by David Mocatta, who designed Brighton's railway station; his father, Moses Mocatta, a partner in the merchant bankers Mocatta & Goldsmidt, lent the £300 needed for the work. The building was sold in 1874-75 and replaced by Thomas Lainson's Middle Street Synagogue, considered one of the best in Europe, but the façade of the old synagogue in Devonshire Place survives.⁴⁸

By 1840 the majority of the churches and chapels listed in the religious census of 1851 had been built. The Anglican churches and chapels of Brighton and Hove offered not only more seats for worshippers but also many more free ones than the nonconformist groups, largely as a result of the Rev. Henry Wagner's campaign to build new churches. Yet in 1851 the majority of these buildings were not full at any of the Sunday services investigated in the Religious Census. The enthusiasts of the Georgian and Regency eras had built too many places of worship, but this did not deter the next generation, who went on to make Brighton and Hove one of the leading centres of Anglo-Catholicism and Gothic Revival architecture in the whole of the United Kingdom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pat Berry, Michael Hickman, Jan Lank and her employer (American Express), Adrian Peasgood, Michael Ray, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, Henry Smith, Geoffrey Tyack, Professor David Watkin. Fig. 6 is reproduced by permission of the Bishop of Chichester and the Diocesan Record Office, Chichester, Fig. 7 by permission of the Drawing and Archives Collection, British Architectural Library, Figs. 8 and 10 by permission of Mr Henry Smith. The other illustrations are from the author's collection.

NOTES

- 1 *Gentleman's Magazine* (August 1815), pp. 85, 145-46. Chapel numbers are derived from WSRO EP/II/25/1-3; M. Vickers, *The 1851 Religious Census for Sussex*. (Lewes, Sussex Record Society, 1989), pp. 92-110.
- 2 M. Port, *Six Hundred new churches: the Church Building Commission 1818-1856* (Reading, 2006), pp. 15-56.
- 3 WSRO, Ep/I/26/3, Ep/II/41/12, Ep/VI/56/12; A. Dale, *Churches of Brighton* (London, 1989), pp. 2-6; *Baxter's Guide to Brighton* (1822), pp. xlv-vii.

- 4 Examples include *Gent. Mag.* (February 1792), facing p. 105, and Sussex Archaeological Society (hereafter SAS) Sharp Collection, SAS Prints and Drawings, print dated 1818 (source unknown).
- 5 E. Wallis, *Brighton as it is* (London, 1830), p. 83.
- 6 East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO), PAR 387 contains the detailed building accounts. The builders were J. and J. Butler.
- 7 *Chapel Royal: Sussex Weekly Advertiser* (hereafter SWA) 2 Dec. 1793, 3 Dec. 1795; St Margaret (Demolished 1959) : *Brighton Gazette* (hereafter *B. Gaz.*) 15 May, 3 June, 26 & 30 Dec. 1824; St George: *B. Gaz.* 5 Jan. 1826; *St Mary's: B. Gaz.* 5 Oct. 1826, 11, 18 & 25th Jan. 1827; St Peter: *B. Gaz.* 31 Jan. 1828; St Andrew: *B. Gaz.* 10 July 1828; All Souls: *B. Gaz.* 27 Mar., 3 Apr. 1834; Christ Church: *Brighton Herald* (hereafter *B. Her.*) 28 Apr. 1838; Holy Trinity: *B. Her.* 21 Apr. 1817, *B. Gaz.* 21 Apr. 1826; St James: *B. Gaz.* 27 Apr. 1826. *Royal Chapel* see section in text.
- 8 E.g. Anon, *Familiar Architecture* (1768), plate LXV; *The Builders' Magazine* (1794), Plate CX (Gothic Façade), Plate XCV (Protestant Dissenting Meeting House), etc; W. Pain, *The Practical House Carpenter* (eighth ed., London, 1815), plates 133-136 (design for church and pulpit); W.F. Pocock, *Designs for Churches and Chapels* (London, 1819).
- 9 West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), Ep/I/26/3.; S. Berry, *Georgian Brighton* (Chichester, 2004), the most recent overview; H.M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* (New Haven & London, 2004), pp. 1119-1120.
- 10 ESRO, PAR 259/4/2/1 and /2 are thought to be drawings for the original design.
- 11 *Baxter's Guide* (1822), p. xlviii.
- 12 WSRO, Petworth House Archives, MS 10,600; Dale, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26; *SWA*, 25th Mar. 1799, *The Times* 8th Apr. 1817. Brighton History Centre (hereafter BHC), Eredge Box File F, press cutting dated 1817; An Act to establish a Chapel of Ease at Brighthelmstone In the county of Sussex, 43 Geo III, cxc; ESRO, PAR 259/4/1/2.
- 13 *The Times*, 2 Dec. 1823.
- 14 ESRO, HOW34/19, Vestry Book; S. Berry, 'The building of St Peter's Church, Brighton', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter *SAC*) 148 (2010), pp. 203-212; Brighton Museum and Art Gallery Watercolours Collection (BMAG), drawing by Delamotte of interior, c.1851.; M. Whiffen, *Stuart ad Georgian Churches outside London* (London, 1948), pp. 85-86. N Antram and R. Morrice, *Brighton and Hove* (London, 2008), p. 89 incorrectly say that the idea of the spire came from Barry in 1841.
- 15 ESRO, PAR 259 /6/1/2.
- 16 S. Berry, 'Thomas Read Kemp and the shaping of Regency Brighton' *Regency Brighton Group Journal*, 17 (2009), pp. 125-140.
- 17 *B. Gaz.*, 25 Nov. 1824.
- 18 W.F. Bruce, *A Stranger in Brighton*. (Brighton, 1835) p. 60; *Times*, 1 Jan. 1825; BMAG, drawing by Delamotte of interior, c.1851.
- 19 ESRO, PAR 269/4/1/3; Wallis, *op. cit.*, p. 79; WSRO, Ep/II/27/92-100.
- 20 RIBA drawings coll., SC49/9 (1-6).
- 21 *B. Gaz.*, 15 May, 3 June, 26 & 30 Dec. 1824; BMAG, Delamotte drawing of interior c1851. 'Mr Clarke of London' is sometimes said to be the architect, but this is a misreading of the *Brighton Gazette*; he was the clerk of works.
- 22 J. and J. Ford, *Images of Brighton* (Richmond-on-Thames, 1981), see Gallery numbers 788, 789 which show façade from south; BMAG, Delamotte drawing of interior c.1851. I am grateful to Professor David Watkin for the correct name of the temple.
- 23 *B. Gaz.* 22 & 29 Sept., 3 Nov. 1825, 12 Jan., 11 Feb. 1826; BHC, Anon, *Churches of Brighton* (c.1880), p. 382; *Building News* 35, 1878, 123-4. The church fell down during repairs by E. Nash and Co. The French Gothic building cost between £17,000-£20,000; *Builder* 1876, 637; *Building News* 1878, pp. 123-4, 438; *Chichester Diocesan Kalender* (1877), p. 85.
- 24 BMAG, Delamotte watercolour c.1851 of interior; Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- 25 A.W.N. Pugin, *Contrasts* (1841); *Gent. Mag.*, Jan. 1822, p. 79; British Library (BL), Add MS 32984, f.225; *Times*, 8 Jan. 1822.
- 26 ESRO, PAR 278/4/1. Antram and Morrice, *op. cit.*, p. 171 says that G. Cheesman jnr was the architect, but his name is not mentioned in the surviving archives or contemporary press.
- 27 ESRO, SAS, N830, N834; BL, Add Ms 33112 ff.261-268; *Baxter's Guide* (1822), p. xlix.
- 28 *The Times* 22 Dec. 1819. *B. Gaz.*, 3 Nov., 15 Dec., 1825.; Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 69; WSRO, Ep/II/27/96.; An Act for the appropriation of two chapels as chapels of ease to the parish church of Brighthelmstone, 7 GeoIV, ciii.
- 29 *B. Gaz.* 12th May, 3 Oct. 3 Nov, 4 Nov 1825. Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 49 has the photograph of the later façade, wrongly described as the original. Faithful moved to

- a new chapel in Church St, now a restaurant; the original façade was replaced between the wars.
- 30 There were two influential Wagners: the Rev. Henry Mitchell Wagner (1792–1870), Vicar of Brighton, and his son Arthur Douglas Wagner (1824–1902), a staunch Anglo-Catholic, sometimes addressed as Father Wagner and incumbent of St Paul’s Church: see A. Wagner and A. Dale, *The Wagners of Brighton* (Chichester, 1983); BHC, *Smith’s Cuttings: Chapels*.
- 31 W. Saunders, *Strangers’ Guide to Brighton* (Brighton, 1846), p. 95; *SWA*, 7 April 1834, p. 3 and 30 April 1834.; *B. Gaz.*, 27th Mar, 3 Apr 1834.
- 32 J. Freemantle (ed.) *A short history of Christ Church, Montpelier Rd., Brighton* (Brighton, 1910), pp. 7–16; *Kelly’s Brighton and Hove Directory* (1845), p. 12.
- 33 Lambeth Palace Library, IBCS 2125.
- 34 BHC, Smith’s Cuttings: Churches, undated press cutting; M. Ray, ‘Who were the Brunswick Town Commissioners? A study of a Victorian Urban Ruling Elite’, *SAC* 127 (1989), pp. 211–228.
- 35 WSRO, Ep/II/25/1,2,3.
- 36 *B. Gaz.*, 27 Aug, 15 Dec. 1825.
- 37 ESRO, QCR/1/11/EW1, 1829 return.
- 38 WSRO, Ep/II/25/1,2,3; The façades of the demolished Countess of Huntingdon’s and of the demolished Ebenezer Chapel are on the website of the Regency Society at <http://www.regencysociety-jamesgray.com>. The Sussex Archaeological Society Photographic Collection, stored at the Barbican House Museum, High Street, Lewes which is currently being catalogued has photographs of the exterior and the interior of the Countess of Huntingdon Chapel, seen in November 2010.
- 39 *Baxter’s Guide* (1822), p. xlix; Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 60; *B. Gaz.*, 21, 24, 31 April, 7 July, 4 Aug 1825. The building was demolished and rebuilt but the façade is hard to photograph; RIBA Drawings SD68/4. C. A. Busby signed the surviving drawing of this façade, but the newspapers cited above, some local guides and directories attribute the design to Amon Henry Wilds who was better known locally.
- 40 Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 177; *B. Gaz.* 1 Sept 1825; W.F. Pocock, *Designs for Churches and Chapels* (London, 1819).
- 41 S. Farrant, ‘The physical development of the Royal Pavilion Estate and its influence on Brighton, East Sussex, 1785–1823’ *SAC* (1982), pp. 171–184.
- 42 J.G. Bishop, *Brighton In Olden Times* (Brighton, 1892), p. 333, citing *SWA* 18 Sept. 1749; L.P. Lucas, ‘Some notes on early Quakers’, *SAC* 55 (1912), pp. 74–76; *Baxter’s Guide* (1822), p. li; *Brief Guide for Visitors* (undated, c.2008).
- 43 D.A. Levistone Cooney, ‘The Methodist Chapels in Dublin’ *Dublin Historical Record* 57 (2004), pp. 152–163; M. R. Hickman, *A story to tell: 200 years of Methodism in Brighton and Hove* (Brighton, 2007), pp. 28–30, 67.; BHC, *Smith’s Cuttings Volume: Chapels*; BHC, SB287, GRI; E.W. Griffin, *A pilgrim people: the story of Methodism in Brighton, Hove and district 1807–1957* (n.d.).
- 44 BHC, B287.GRI; Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–13. ESRO, SAS, N830, 834’ *Baxter’s Guide* (1822), p. 1; M. Hickman, ‘The role of soldiers in the organisation of Wesleyan Methodism in Brighton and other resorts on the Sussex coast’ *SAC* 143 (2000), pp. 257–266; BHC, Anon *Churches of Brighton* (c1880), p. 65; G. Parsons *Religion in Victorian Britain* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 174, 77–79, 205–208.; Hickman *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.
- 45 ESRO, ACC 6121; Anon, *Providence Chapel Church St., Brighton 1805–1955* (Brighton, n.d.); A.E. Carson, *Union (Congregational) Church Brighton* (Brighton, 1954).
- 46 *Baxter’s Stranger in Brighton and Directory* (Brighton, 1824) pp. lvi–lvii.; BHC, Anon, *Churches of Brighton* (c.1880). In 1861 Richmond Hill Chapel was rebuilt.
- 47 *Attree’s Topography of Brighton* (1809), p. 42; Dale, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–187. T. Pugh, *The church of St John the Baptist Brighton 1835–1985* (Brighton, 1985), pp. 8–16. The High Street chapel was demolished in 1981; the site is now occupied by Kebbel Lodge.
- 48 *Attree’s Topography of Brighton* (1809), p. 42; D. Spector, ‘Jewry in Brighton’, *Sussex Genealogist and Local Historian* 3, No. 3 (n.d.), p. 83; D. Spector, ‘The Jews of Brighton 1770–1900’, *Jewish Historical Studies*, 22 (1970), pp. 42–52.; D. Spector, ‘Brighton Jewry reconsidered’, *Jewish Historical Studies*, 30 (1987–88); Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 192; *Baxter’s Guide* (1822), p. lii; ESRO, HEB11/1, QCR/1/11 EW1.