

# Kimberley Synagogues



**The Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation** was formally established in 1873. It was the third or fourth in South Africa, after Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and possibly Graaf Reinet. It has had three synagogues – only one remains ...

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were two distinct communities in Kimberley which worshipped in different synagogues. Learn the history of each synagogue and take a tour by clicking their names:

[The Memorial Road Synagogue](#) 1902 (pictured above left)

[The Baronial Street Synagogue](#) 1911 (pictured above right)

**The very first synagogue in Kimberley** was built in **1875** by the largely British and German community of diggers and diamond buyers and brokers and their entourages. It was located in Dutoitspan Road, roughly where Cecil John Rhodes statue now stands. It held 250 people and opened with much civic and religious ceremony **1876**. It served for 25 years though it was already too small even when it opened. In the 1880s there were about 1400 Jewish souls in Kimberley 600 of them adult males. No trace or photo of this first synagogue exists.

This was replaced in **1902** by the glorious **Memorial Road synagogue** (above left) designed and built by the diamond magnates on land donated by De Beers Consolidated Mines. The small **Baronial Street Shul** (above right) was the most recent one, established in 1911 for the lately arrived Eastern European community who lived in the city centre around Bultfontein Road. By the 1940s and 50s the two communities had integrated using the smaller synagogue for daily prayers and the bigger one for sabbaths and festivals.

**By clicking the names below, you can see beautiful slideshows of the interior and exterior of the Memorial Road Synagogue by five outstanding photographers.**

[Shawn Benjamin](#)   [David Jawno](#)   [Marvin Cohen](#)   [Alon Berman](#)   [Jono David](#)

**Read about all the ministers who served Kimberley**  
[Kimberley Ministers 1875 to 2020](#) in chronological order

**Here are Links** to more details of some of the individual ministers

[Mendelsohn, Rev Meyer & his son, Sidney](#) (1878 – 1884)

[Isaacs, Rev Harris](#) (1890 – 1927)

[Konviser, Rev Maurice](#) (1927 - 1935)

[Goldberg, Rev Chaim, Tribute by Leon Chonin](#) (Rev Sheini 1925 – 1955)

[Weinstein, Lipi and Hannah \(nee Erhlich\)](#) (Reader in the Grinne shul 1929 – 1973)

[Wulf, Rev Bernard \(1941-1943\)](#)

[Werner, Rabbi Oscar, Tributes by Leon Chonin & Bernard Werner](#) (1957 – 1970)

[Moshe Silberhaft's Kimberley chapter](#)

**And see the galleries of weddings and barmitzvah pictures:**

[family weddings](#) in the Kimberley shul

Kimberley [Bar and Bat Mitzvahs](#)

**And see an article on the Kimberley synagogue** with some beautiful watercolours made in 2011 [africansynagogues.org Kimberley](http://africansynagogues.org/Kimberley)

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Synagogues Page compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE London

Posted 2014, updated 2018 and further updated May 2022, October 2022.