

# Our Local History

Hertford Infants School is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. Here are some extracts from local newspaper reports at the time, about the exciting development in the 'new town' of Hollingdean - built to ease the overcrowding at Ditchling Road (now Downs) School.

## The Ideal School

The recently completed Hertford Road School near Hollingbury Rise, Brighton, built at a cost of over £10,500, was publicly opened by Alderman W. Stevens J.P, this afternoon (21<sup>st</sup> April 1931). The school is the last word in modern design and it is situated in one of the rapidly growing districts of Brighton. It is a possibility that many of the oldest inhabitants of Brighton could not say offhand exactly where Hertford Road is. It may be described as the central road of the new town which has sprung up within the past few years to fill the valley, not long ago a lonely Downland combe, between the Abattoir and Hollingbury Hill.

So new is the district that even today the steam-roller is at work grumbling its way up and down the steep hill, compressing the white chalk of the Downland into a solid foundation for the black tarmac. The army of builders is still storming the heights above where all suggestion of Downland is being smothered under bricks and mortar.

It seems a curiously isolated and self contained district, and there can be no doubt that it needs a school for at least the younger children. So the education authorities, have provided the new school, which is capable of holding 288 children. The need for it is made plain by the fact that on the first morning the Head Mistress Miss M.F. Knight enrolled 218 "infants and junior mixed".

It was an exciting morning for Hertford Road is quite a charming place. It is a low long building, in the shape of a letter "L" with the inside turning toward the sun and the sea. On the inside of the "L" is an open corridor, covered, so that the children can, when necessary go from one part of the building to another without passing through classrooms, and can get both shelter and fresh air. The spacious hall and the six classrooms are all bright and airy, with as much window space as is possible. All the details are of the most approved modern kind, with special consideration for the cleanliness and comfort of the children. The trees have been well preserved.

The Mayor, who spoke from a fern decorated platform, said the children would have the advantage of a school built on the most modern lines. One up to date feature he had noticed was that the school was warmed electrically, and he was pleased to see also that there was a school hall. If ever children were happy in school they would be here. Prior to declaring the school open Alderman Stevens said that the Moulscombe school for boys and girls and the Varndean Secondary school for boys had been opened within the last six months and now came Hertford Road.

The Mayor commented with pleasure on the fact that it was designed by a Brighton architect, Mr Gilbert M. Simpson FRIBA and built by a Brighton firm of builders, Messrs James Bodle Ltd.

Councillor Hone said that there had been a great need for the school. It had been built in record time – two years – and it was one of the best the Brighton Education committee had erected. It was the only school heated throughout with electricity.

Extracts from:**The Argus Tuesday 21 April 1931**

**Brighton & Hove Herald Saturday April 18 & 25 1931**

**Southern Weekly News Saturday 25 April 1931**

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