



By Michael Greenbaum

## THE DUHC: MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

The sale and deconsecration of the Great Synagogue sees the end of an era in the Durban Jewish community. But the end of one era means the beginning of a new era. The sadness of losing our beloved and beautiful Shul is mixed with feelings of joy, anticipation and excitement about re-locating our Shul to nearby Silver Oaks where a magnificent new Shul is currently being constructed. No expense has been spared to make this a superb Shul in design and content. The Shul will seat approximately 400 congregants. There will be a function hall for brachot and simchas and administrative offices. Throughout South Africa, population movements and emigration have led to the closure of long-cherished places of worship due to the decreasing Jewish populations in these areas. Centres of Jewish life and worship may come and go but the DUHC has ensured that the congregation and the community have a home at our new location, and that our new Shul will continue to be the spiritual, communal and administrative hub of the Jews of Kwazulu Natal.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE:

The Great Synagogue was consecrated in 1961 and is one of the largest shuls in South Africa. Primarily viewed as a place of prayer and worship, the Shul has developed as the core of the Durban Jewish community. As a structure of aesthetic splendour and dimensions, the Shul has a distinctive classic exterior design and beautiful interiors of wood, marble and mosaic which have made the Great Synagogue a landmark on Durban's Berea. The structure was considered so impressive that in 1987, the DUHC was honoured to have a scale model of the Great Synagogue built in Minitown at the Durban beachfront. While the exterior of the Great Synagogue has not changed since the original construction, the property has seen many additions and changes including the Minor Shul, a beautiful modern Mikveh and the Perling Hall which has seen many memorable communal celebrations of simchas, including weddings, barmitzvahs and batmitzvahs, Festival and Oneg Shabbat dinners, Shabbat brachot and Seudot Shlishit as well as hosting lectures and meetings. The Sukkah area adjacent to the Great Synagogue has also seen many enjoyable Sukkot events and celebrations. The area was redesigned featuring an edifice made of Jerusalem stone representing the Western Wall. The restoration project was sponsored by the Martin Sternberg Foundation and formally opened as the Martin Sternberg Terrace.

But most importantly, the DUHC has been most fortunate to have a spiritual leader with vision and foresight in Rabbi Dr Pinchas Zekry. Rabbi Zekry has been the longest serving Rabbi in the history of the Great Synagogue and his accomplishments and successful efforts of community building over the last 32 years are a tribute of gratitude due to the pioneering efforts of the spiritual leaders and committed congregants of the past.

The success of the achievements of the DUHC over the past 55 years would not have been possible without the contributions of the loyal and long-serving staff of the Synagogue who will continue in their positions at the new location. Rev Brian Lurie will continue as Shammas while the Shul Office will remain the operational hub of the community's activities. This busy office is currently staffed by Val Cohen and Rachel Shalem, all of whom perform their numerous responsibilities in a helpful, friendly and professional manner.

The Valedictory service on 29 January 2017 at the Great Synagogue will mark the end of an era but it will also be the start of a new beginning at our new holy home which will remain the centre of Orthodox Jewish life in Durban as we move forward into the future.

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<p><b>FOR ALL YOUR FUNCTION REQUIREMENTS</b></p>	



## REPORT BACK ON LIMMUD U.K. 2016

by Maurice Pillemer

From 23 to 29 December the National Exhibition Center at Pendigo Lake Birmingham was Limmud U.K. Attended by over 2750 people, mainly from the U.K. but with a significant presence from the rest of Europe including Eastern Europe, Israel, the USA, Latin America, Australia and a few from South Africa. We decided to participate this year with our U.K. family.

By providing what is described as Limmud Nursery, Young Limmud and Teen Limmud, Limmud U.K. offers families the opportunity to participate while the children are cared for during most of the day and (those not in nursery) in the night too.

There really is something for everyone with leading world experts presenting and participating. From the Chief Rabbi to a leader of the Momentum Trade Union who spoke on why Jews should support Jeremy Corbin, from cooking classes to the director of the Eli Wiesel Foundation who dealt with Nazi hunting in various forms in many sessions, from the Deputy International editor of the New York Times on the criticism of its coverage of Israel to left wing Israeli and U.K. journalists and the spokesman for the IDF, history, religion, politics, art, film, music making workshops, and in the evening until the early hours choices of music shows stand up comedy and other entertainment.

Mealtimes are flexible and there is time for relaxation and chatting and meeting. A swim with the grandkids. A walk round the lake. A communal Hannukah candle lighting with live bands. Five different kinds of services on Shabbat.

It has now run for over 30 years and there were couples who had met there back with their children. A vibrant singles scene, something for the over 65's and everything in between.

**PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**9 AUGUST 2017**

**LIMMUD DURBAN**

**Help us make 2017 even better.**  
Be involved in the planning of this exciting event  
or register as a volunteer. We look forward to hearing from you.  
Contact: [durban@limmud.org.za](mailto:durban@limmud.org.za) for more information