

# COMPLETING THE REFURB PROJECT

David Lerner<sup>a</sup>

*and on the 7<sup>th</sup> year we rested.*

*The refurb team first met at the end of 2014. The community has been in turns, generous, tolerant, supportive and mostly very enthusiastic. Visitors and returnees have saluted the light airy appearance of the shul, the amazing Judaica and the upgrade to the grounds.*

*I can't think of any shul in London at least, that has paid attention to and beautified the grounds, providing reflections of our heritage.*

In a quick summary, we created a Jerusalem lounge for our youth and seminars, a compact Beit Midrash, upgraded our front door in that now popular colour - fire station red, our foyer, stairways and facilities, provided new internal doors, a new 'garage'/ store room, new equipment for the kitchen and strengthened all the external fencing. The centre piece has been the total re-structuring of our main hall. An important principle was lowering the height of the Bimah and the area in front of the ark to make them much more accessible.

We have art work and embroidery from around the world. Chris Westall did the Jerusalem wall Trompe l'oeils, upstairs and downstairs, the back lit psalms from original paintings were imagined by the late Rav Moshe Berger of Jerusalem, the Jerusalem tapestry in the main hall by Shulamit Ron, originally from Moldova, a new Ner Tamid in the Beit Midrash, by Claude Riedel, a clinical psychologist from Minnesota, the parochet and Omer Counter and other embroidery in the Beit Midrash from Tehilla Markovits whose work place is in Mea Shearim. Photos of Israel and on the stairwell came from our own member, Murray Freedman and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. Installation and building workers included Andy and Rhys Ford (the doors), Pavel and Janusz (the Beit Midrash), painters led by Warren Hoadley, the Bimah and mechitzah changes by Andrew Jaffe, and the entire Aron and front by Alan Williamson, project managed by Martin Woods. After a gap of some years, the audio loop has been re-instated. The tree sculptures in the gardens and foyers up and downstairs are by Chris Townsend, whose work is now in a number of shuls and Jewish Care facilities.

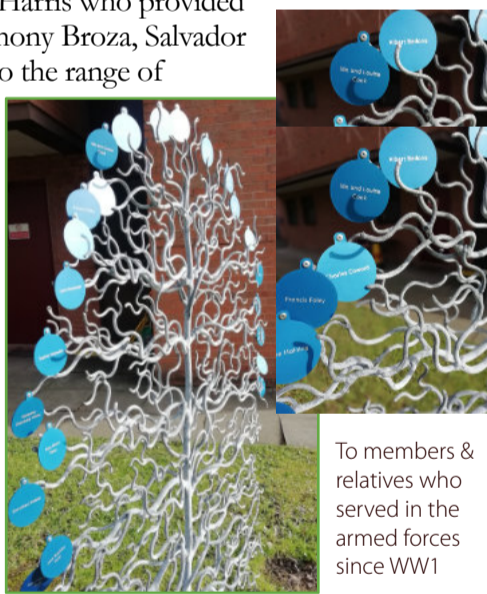


Beehive - Lion from Samson lion & honey - other side Devorah - bee and a land flowing with milk and honey

This brings us to the gardens with its mosaics of the Menorah and an early Magen David, a windmill in honour of Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore, our 'hero' trees that honour both relatives and members who have served in armed forces since the outbreak of WW1 and gentiles who saved Jewish lives in WW2. Decorated and non-operational beehives reflect both the story of Samson, the greatness of the prophetess Devorah and Israel as a land flowing with milk and honey. These were created by Julie-Anne Pugh with artistic contributions from children and adults of our community. New planting is shortly going around all sides of the gardens with colours that have been chosen to match the beehives and our back lit psalms and the Jerusalem tapestry in the main hall. It will be enhanced by a Noa's Ark, bullrushes, a gourd and "Miriam's well".

None of this £350,000 project could have happened without the generosity of our members and some Trusts. The refurb committee commenced with Stuart Harris who provided the initial drawings for both upstairs and downstairs and Anthony Broza, Salvador Mazliah and Roger Vickers who provided time and thought to the range of practical, aesthetic and religious issues that we had to consider. Latterly, we were joined by Frances Grossman and Viv Waters to help us with the decoration of the main hall.

**Belmont renewed and refreshed, ready to face the opportunities and challenges of the 2020s and beyond.**



To members & relatives who served in the armed forces since WW1



To gentiles who saved Jewish lives in WW2



Montefiore Windmill