

# The Lusaka Shul - A Short History

The Lusaka Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1910. For many years, its members met at the home of Benjamin and Friedah Glasser. A *Sefer Torah* was acquired through Edward Kollenberg in 1914. The building of the synagogue was inspired by Cantor Feivel Metzger who became the spiritual leader of the Jewish community following the arrival of a number of German Jewish refugees in the town in the late 1930s. Metzger was of Polish Jewish origin and had lived in Austria and Germany. He arrived in Lusaka in August 1939. His wife and children arrived from Germany via Switzerland in March 1940.

In 1941-1942, during the darkest days of the war and the Holocaust, construction began and the foundation stone of the synagogue was laid on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1941 by Henrie Kollenberg, president of the congregation. In 1946 the synagogue was consecrated by the Reverend Maurice Konviser, but by then Cantor Metzger and his family had moved to Durban, in 1944. (The synagogue remained in use until 2013.) Leading members of the community at that time included Sam Fischer, whose wife, Sigrid, was secretary of the building committee, David and Ivie Shapiro, S.B. ("Tubby") and Floretta Wulfsohn, Sam and Annie Mendelsohn, and Sam Osrin.



Mervyn Smith, President, African Jewish Congress congratulates Michael Galaun on the rededication ceremony of the Lusaka Synagogue, while Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft looks on



Members of the African Jewish Congress delegation to the rededication ceremony of the Lusaka Synagogue – 19 January 2006

This foundation stone for the Lusaka Hebrew Hall was laid on 16 July 1950 by Sam Mendelsohn. Born in Warsaw, Poland, he settled in Lusaka in 1932 with his Russian-born wife, Annie Liptz. The couple ran clothing shops in the town. Following Sam's death in 1956, his family donated a *Sefer Torah* to the congregation in his memory.

The plaque for the rededication of the Lusaka synagogue after its refurbishment was unveiled by Mervyn Smith, President of the African Jewish Congress (AJC) on 19 January 2006. Those present included Ann Harris, widow of Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Cyril Harris, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, Spiritual Leader and CEO of the AJC, representatives of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies Cape Council and of the Union of Jewish Women (South Africa), Harold Pupkewitz representing Namibia, Michael Galaun and Simon Zukas.



Refurbished interior of the Lusaka Synagogue