



Silanet Mekonan at the reunion

## UJIA looks back on its twin peaks

BY JC REPORTER

▶ A BENEFICIARY of UJIA's Ethiopian bar/batmitzvah twinning programme addressed around 100 former participants and family members at a 10th anniversary reunion at St John's Wood Synagogue.

Silanet Mekonan, 18, who made aliyah from Ethiopia in 2006, said that "if it wasn't for this project, I would not have had a batmitzvah."

"My parents did not have the time to deal with this. I know I would feel I was

missing a very important experience."

A 2015 UK programme graduate Joshua Tornis also addressed guests, along with Jacob Glantz, who completed the programme two years ago. Jacob recalled how the scheme had been "the first time I really came into contact with my Jewish roots".

The celebration featured Ethiopian-inspired activities including drumming and basket weaving. A film was shown about Kiryat Bialik, the new base in Israel for UJIA's work with Ethiopian immigrants.

## Fed PR drive draws crowd

BY JAY GRENBY FINCHLEY

▶ AN INTENSIVE Finchley Federation publicity campaign to promote its new home in Victoria Avenue paid off when its launch Shabbat service attracted more than 150 people – three times the normal turnout.

The 80-family community moved into the former Edwardian school house several months ago after selling the Redbourne Avenue shul it had occupied since 1961. The premises have undergone considerable refurbishment and reconfiguring to meet the congregation's needs, including the installation of a new mechitzah.

"We had already decided several years ago that we needed to make a move," said Finchley Federation president Dr David Gertner.

"Our previous shul was just 200 yards outside the eruv. As our membership was both ageing and in decline, we wanted to attract more young married couples with children, so a location within the eruv was important to us. The shul was also badly located in terms of its proximity to the principal Jewish residential areas."

Many of the congregation on Shabbat were non-members who had expressed interest in joining, Dr Gertner added. "Our rabbi and rebbetzin, Yaakov and Yael Hamer, are both teachers and educators and are keen to foster educational activities."

## WE'RE IN THE ZONE FOR SUMMER

PHOTO: JOHN FISHER



Isla Batty and Abigail Shnyder getting a grip on things at the sport, arts and dance summer camp being held at the Zone centre in Leeds

### NORTHWOOD IS ON STREAM FOR SHABBAT

▶ NORTHWOOD AND Pinner Liberal Synagogue is broadcasting its Shabbat services online. The shul's Richard Conradi said the initiative "has been enthusiastically received by the elderly, who are helped to view the services by the synagogue's care group; by those in hospital; by relatives of families celebrating special occasions; and by members on holiday". It was also a way to attract members. The broadcasts are available on [www.npls.org.uk/streaming.htm](http://www.npls.org.uk/streaming.htm).

### LIBERAL PARTY FOR GROWING STEVENAGE

▶ ADDRESSING STEVENAGE Liberal Synagogue's fifth anniversary lunch, Liberal Judaism officer Ed Herman paid tribute to its "active and passionate council and membership. The community's presence is keenly felt at Liberal Judaism events and student rabbis invariably receive a warm welcome." Originally known as North Herts Liberal Jewish Community, it has grown from 19 members to more than 50.

### MR BAKER FEELS THE HEAT FROM INSPECTOR

▶ THE NEW Mr Baker kosher restaurant in Borehamwood has been graded as in need of major improvement following a Hertsmere food safety officer's inspection. Owner David Shamash attributed the one star Food Standards Agency rating to "missing paperwork and lack of food labelling". It was "simply procedural elements which had no association with hygiene or hygiene practices". He had requested a new inspection following improvements.

### THEY'RE HOPPING MAD AT SINAI

PHOTO: JAMES SHAW

