

Lithuanian hero honoured

A HOLOCAUST survivor who has dedicated his life to the memory of Lithuanian Jews killed by the Nazis was this week honoured at a reception at the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street, writes Susanna Bellino.

Joseph Levinson (pictured below) has spent the last 20 years travelling across the eastern European state uncovering sites where Jewish communities were massacred and erecting memorials in their name. He has so far discovered more than 200.

He escaped the fate of 76,000 fellow Lithuanian Jews – and his entire family – in his home city of Vilnius in 1941 by sheer good fortune, as he was working on a farm some 60 miles away.

He told the *Jewish News*: “I have carried a burden with me all my life. The burden of what

happened to my family, friends and the entire Jewish community of Lithuania.

“I cannot forget what happened and I have made it my life’s work to tell people of the atrocities that happened.”

Forced to hide his Jewish identity while under Soviet occupation – and unable to discover the full extent of the Holocaust – Joseph finally began his hunt to unearth the true extent of the horrors inflicted on his countrymen in 1990, travelling around Lithuania in search of the sites of infamous massacres and organising memorials.

Joseph, who still lives in Vilnius, was determined to remain in the country, despite the atrocities he helped to uncover.

He said: “It’s like a tree that has been uprooted. I had a duty to stay to replant the tree and raise my own family in the country.”

