

Welcome to the 15th issue of Four Corners, to Aberdeen past and present, to the unveiling of a memorial bench in Dundee, and an opportunity to see ourselves as others see us through the eyes of two recent visitors to Scotland, one from the States and the other from Israel.

Do you have time on your hands? If so the Jewish Volunteering Network may be for you. It doesn't matter where you live – there are ways you can help whether you live in the middle of a large community or miles from your nearest Jewish neighbour, so have a look at their website or give them a ring!

SCOJeC's AGM is coming up soon, and we'd love to meet as many of you as possible. George Reid, the former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament will be the guest speaker, and there'll be an opportunity to chat and get to know SCOJeC members over the bagel lunch.

And don't forget to keep sending Leah your news and photos for the next issue! See foot of page for contact details.



HENNY KING (CHAIR, DUNDEE SYNAGOGUE)
WITH HAL KWALWASSER

Memorial Bench UNVEILED IN Dundee

On Sunday 26th August guests from around the world gathered in the Jewish section of the Eastern Cemetery on a sunny Dundonian day for the unveiling of a memorial bench dedicated in memory of Marie Kwalwasser.

The ceremony opened with a rendition of "Bonnie Dundee" played by Piper Kyle Howie, and then Henny King, Chair of Dundee Synagogue, welcomed Hal Kwalwasser, friends and relations of his mother, members of the local community, the Lord Provost of Dundee, and the Lord Mayor of Alexandria (Washington) who came to pay tribute on such a special occasion.

Before the Lord Provost unveiled the Indian marble bench, Hal Kwalwasser described his mother's great love and enthusiasm for Scotland and all things Scottish. He thanked Henny King for having put so much effort into finding such a special bench and for organising the event, and he particularly welcomed Cis MacLeish, a lifelong friend of his mother, who still lives in Dundee.

After the ceremony there was a reception at Baxter Park, where an exhibition of photos and newspaper cuttings about Marie gave more insight into her life and work, as she flew across the Atlantic, and from State to State, meeting the great and the good to promote the 1938 Empire Exhibition in Glasgow.

The Scottish Jewish Archive Centre is especially grateful to Hal Kwalwasser for the kind donation of a 1919–1920 Dundee Synagogue minute book. It makes fascinating reading – not least to see how little synagogue meetings have changed over the years!

See Four Corners 14 to find out more about Marie's life.



THROUGH MAGEN DAVID LEFT TO RIGHT:
WILLIAM EUILLE (MAYOR OF ALEXANDRIA, WASHINGTON), HENNY KING,
JOHN LETFORD (LORD PROVOST OF DUNDEE), CIS MACLEISH,
HAL KWALWASSER.

BELOWS SHOWS THE INSCRIPTION



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**Please send us your comments about
and contributions to Four Corners**

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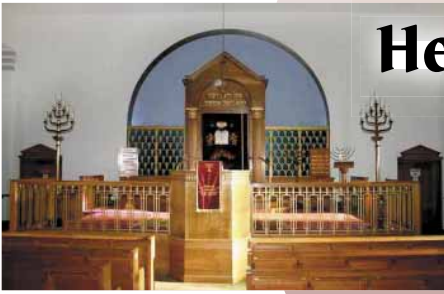
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Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

RECENT EVENTS

PHILIP MASON



Annual Civic Service

On Shabbat, August 18th, around 175 guests, visitors and members, rose midway through the Service to welcome into the Synagogue the colourful and very moving procession of the High Constables, followed by the Lord and Lady Provost of the City of Edinburgh and 14 Councillors and Civic Officials, on the occasion of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation's Annual Civic Service – traditionally held during the middle of the Edinburgh International Festival. Among the guests were the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt. Rev. Sheilagh Kesting, the local MP Nigel Griffiths, the local MSP Mike Pringle, and Dame Elizabeth Blackadder RA, Her Majesty's Painter in Scotland. At the Kiddush that followed, Synagogue Chairman Hilary Rifkind gave a speech of welcome, during which she acknowledged the contribution made by the Jewish Community to the life of the City and recognised the support given to the Community by the City and the Police. In his response, the Lord Provost, the Rt. Hon George Grubb, indicated he was especially pleased to be representing the City of Edinburgh as he had grown up in a very 'Jewish' area close to the Synagogue and, from his early school days onwards, had many friends within the Community – some of whom were present at the Civic Service.

TOP: THE INTERIOR OF EDINBURGH SYNAGOGUE SHOWING THE ARK AND BIMAH

BELOW: FESTIVAL OPEN DAY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SUZIE KELPIE, MOLLY SECKL AND MICHELLE NEVILLE



Festival Open Day

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation held its Annual Festival Open Day on Sunday August 19th at the Shul Community Centre where visitors and members were able to enjoy a taste of the Jewish cultural events and shows appearing in this year's Edinburgh International Festival. Participants from 15 different shows both performed snippets from their acts and talked about their shows in conversation with writer/producer David Neville, Chairman of EHC's Festival Open Day Committee. Those present included Jenni Wolfson, from Glasgow, talking about her one woman show, 'Rash'; local Stephanie Brickman together with Phil Alexander and Jo Nicholson talking about and presenting an extract of their show 'The Yiddish Song Project'; Iris Bahr, telling us all about her moving and very popular one woman show 'Dai'; The Solomon Sisters who performed an extract of their superb Yiddish Cabaret show and the amazing American comedian and actress, Lynn Ruth Miller.

TOP: DAVID NEVILLE, CHAIRMAN OF THE FESTIVAL OPEN DAY COMMITTEE, IN CONVERSATION WITH (RIGHT) GLASGOW'S JENNI WOLFSON, AUTHOR AND PERFORMER OF 'RASH' AND (LEFT) IRIS BAHR, AUTHOR AND PERFORMER OF 'DAI' - BOTH ONE-WOMAN SHOWS AT THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

BELOW: THE SOLOMON SISTERS PERFORMING AN EXTRACT OF THEIR SUPERB YIDDISH CABARET SHOW.



Shabbat Lunch

to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Opening and Consecration of the Synagogue at Salisbury Road

Following the Civic Service and Kiddush, close to 140 members and guests, sat down to a magnificent Shabbat lunch to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Opening and Consecration of the Synagogue in Salisbury Road in September 1932 – a rare modernist 1930's building and as a consequence one of only a few listed Synagogues in the UK. Councillor Eric Milligan, former Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and very good friend of the Community, said he felt honoured to give the toast to the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation – especially as he represented the area of the City named after Sir Thomas Whitson who in 1932 as the then Lord Provost had also given the toast at the opening of the Synagogue. He described how much the City owed to so many outstanding members of the community such as Elias Furst, Professor David Daiches, Sir Malcolm Rifkind and Lady Hazel Cosgrove. Sir Malcolm Rifkind replied, and said how proud he is to be part of a Community which has given rise to so many distinguished people. Sir Malcolm, added that, in his view, the Jewish community successfully integrated into the wider community soon after arriving in the UK partly because Synagogue sermons have always been in English and the Shabbat service includes a prayer for the Royal Family.

TOP: EDINBURGH SYNAGOGUE IS ONE OF THE FEW LISTED SYNAGOGUES IN THE UK

BELOW: AMERICAN COMEDIAN AND ACTRESS, LYNN RUTH MILLER.





TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Volunteering

Jewish volunteering is as old as the Torah and still developing with 21st century technology. The Jewish Volunteering Network is a new community-wide service helping volunteers find opportunities that fit their interests and skills.

Dr Judy Citron, founder of JVN, describes how it developed. "When I took early retirement, I didn't want to stay at home, I wanted to feel useful and needed but I didn't have any idea where to start looking for a fulfilling volunteering opportunity in the Jewish community. A search on the internet revealed that I could find a job or even find a partner, but I found nothing that provided a tailored service to help me volunteer in the community. The only answer was to establish such a service myself: an internet portal where all Jewish charities could promote their vacancies and all potential volunteers could search for the opportunity that would match their skills, their interests, their location and their time available."



One of the most exciting things about inviting Jewish organisations to join was discovering the very wide range of organisations that exist and wide variety of voluntary work being done. For example, there's a Jewish organisation, Noah, that cares for the environment; those who want to get involved in racial equality can volunteer with JCORE; GIFT helps the homeless through a large team of volunteers, and Tzedek places volunteers in Africa.

Some volunteers help children learn to read English or Hebrew in school, befriend the mentally ill or run a football session for teenagers. Others help to organise events, advise on marketing, help with administration or become a trustee.

These are just a tiny sample of what can be found on the JVN website. You can choose to work close to home or further away, and can specify how many hours you want to volunteer per week. You can also make yourself available for specific short-term projects such as helping at a one-day conference or stuffing envelopes for a fundraising drive.

After the Jewish Volunteering Network has made the initial introduction, each volunteer is interviewed by the relevant organisation which will ask for references in line with their normal procedures and, if necessary, carry out a Criminal Record Check.

As well as helping them find suitable volunteers, we hope to bring Jewish organisations together by providing a platform to share common issues. JVN's aims are to:

-  **Increase the number of volunteers within the Jewish community**
-  **Bring together volunteers and volunteering opportunities**
-  **Support volunteer-involving organisations with volunteering issues**
-  **Develop corporate responsibility programmes in the Jewish business community**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON JVN
call us on 020 8952 7227 or log onto www.jvn.org.uk

Through the Looking Glass

A TOURIST'S IMPRESSIONS OF SCOTLAND

YEHUDA BERLINGER
[HTTP://JERGAMES.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://JERGAMES.BLOGSPOT.COM)

Scotland is a land that, during the summer, gets light during the night and dark during the day.

Little familiar certainties of life come undone in an unsettling manner. It's almost like being in the real world, but not quite. It's the other side of the looking glass.

Of course, there's the wrong side of the road and the right side of the car. Swapped keys on the computer keyboard. Strangely coloured and sized paper money and coins. Changed tones of a ringing telephone. Changed accents. Changed words.

Shops only open at 10:00 am, and close at 4:30 or 5:00 pm. Sometimes they're closed for 2 hours for lunch, too. Or on Wednesdays.

Nothing is marked kosher in a typical supermarket (except for Walker's shortbreads), but many items are marked suitable for vegetarians, vegans, or even coeliacs.

Outside of the cities, people live in old stone cottages. Sheep appear to rule the roads, but no one shears or tends to them. Rather than make roads wide enough for two cars in either direction, roads are one car width with a series of pregnant bellies every forty feet into which you pull your car over if another car is coming.

A youthful passer-by asked me for loose change on my first Shabbat here. I don't carry money on Shabbat, and told him so. The beggar apologized to me for his intrusion and wished me a fine day in any case.

At Kiddush following Shabbat services, half of the pre-poured cups had wine and the other half had scotch whisky. A lady had two silver pitchers of hot drinks, coffee and tea, and would pour for you whichever you requested.

Everyone is so nice. Warm. Spooky. When I try to pass on the highway, the car that I'm passing slows down to let me get by. When I ask for help, people go out of their way to help.

So much of Scotland is still unspoiled. There are no billboards or advertisements outside the cities, except for small wooden painted plaques hanging outside the B&Bs, of which there are so many. There are no McDonalds outside of the large cities; well, there are some McDonalds, but they are hotels, not fast food joints.

People gather at the pubs, instead of hooking up and dropping out. The traditional music, dance, and language is still accorded respect.

And yet, some people do leave Scotland. Perhaps they don't know what a treasure they have?

There are some McDonalds in Glasgow, and even some rude people. Change, however slow, appears to be inevitable. Like night and day.

Shemini Atzeret

ADAPTED FROM "A GIFT FOR YOM TOV" BY RABBI YISROEL MILLER

Shemini Atzeret is often thought of as no more than the tail end of Succot, but the Talmud describes it as a festival in its own right. So, if it's a festival, what are we celebrating?

Shemini Atzeret differs from all the other festivals in two ways.

The first is that it has no special mitzvah or symbol associated with it. We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we fast on Yom Kippur, we build a succah and shake the lulav and etrog on Succot, eat matzah on Pesach and stay up all night to study Torah on Shavuot. But what do we do on Shemini Atzeret? It seems to be "just a Yom Tov" without any distinguishing features.

The second difference is that Shemini Atzeret is the only festival that doesn't commemorate a particular historic event. Pesach recalls the Exodus from Egypt; Shavuot, the giving of the Torah; Succot, the 40 years wandering in the desert; Rosh Hashanah, the creation of the world; and Yom Kippur, the day when the second set of tablets of the law were given at Mount Sinai. But Shemini Atzeret doesn't seem to commemorate anything at all.

And yet, since Pesach is usually counted first in the annual cycle of the festivals, Shemini Atzeret is the last, the culmination, the one to which all the others lead.

One of the Hebrew words for "festivals" is "Moadim" which literally means "meeting". Moadim are occasions when we get together with each other – and with G-d. Shemini Atzeret is the archetypal festival, a day to pause, to relax, and, instead of "doing" it is a day to simply enjoy "being".

Throughout the year we are busy with work, on Shabbat and Yom Tov we are busy with the special mitzvot of each day. But on Shemini Atzeret we are told "Atzor!" "Stop!" and enjoy time simply to be with family and friends and to appreciate everything that G-d has given us.

Calendar for Succot

First two days Yom Tov: evening Wednesday 26 September until night of Friday 28 September.

Middle days of Succot (Chol HaMoed): evening of Friday 28 September until night of Tuesday 2 October.

Hoshanah Rabbah: evening of Tuesday 2 October until night of Wednesday 3 October.

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah: evening of Wednesday 3 October until night of Friday 5 October.



ScoJec's AGM

WILL TAKE PLACE ON

Sunday 28 October 11.30am

AT THE

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
GLASGOW**

Guest speaker: George Reid

former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament

Bagel Lunch

please let us know if you're coming so
we'll know how many bagels to buy!

MORE INFORMATION FROM LEAH

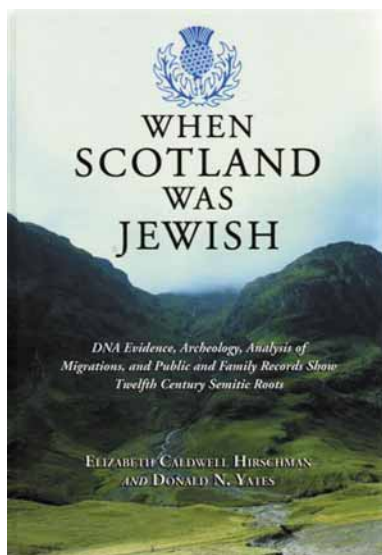
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Misunderstanding Judaism ■ QUOTES FROM SCHOOL STUDENT ESSAYS

The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.

- Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinead.
- The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat an apple.
- The seventh commandment is 'thou shalt not admit adultery.'
- Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol.
- David was a Hebrew King skilled at playing the liar.
- King David captured the city of Jerusalem from the Jesuits 3000 years ago.
- He fought with the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.
- Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
- Judaism is based on debate and it is difficult to find a defiant answer.



WHEN SCOTLAND WAS JEWISH,
BY ELIZABETH CALDWELL HIRSCHMAN AND
DONALD N. YATES, IS PUBLISHED BY MCFARLAND
AND COMPANY, NORTH CAROLINA

When I first became aware of this book I looked forward with some excitement to examining its claims that it could produce DNA evidence, archaeological evidence and an analysis of migration patterns and family records to show that Scotland had twelfth century semitic roots. Unfortunately, the book's evidence does not live up to the claims it makes for itself and I am afraid that on the basis of what is described here I could not confidently support any statement arguing for any Jewish links to Scotland's early history. Indeed, the highly inaccurate map of Scotland on page 4, linking Skye with the mainland, having Edinburgh on an inland loch and Wick on a peninsula jutting out from Scotland's north east coast is an early indicator of errors to come.

The efforts of the authors to link Scots and semites is partly based on their own background coming as they do from the Melungeons, a people based in the Appalachian Mountains in the Eastern United States and claiming both Scottish and semitic ancestry. The evidence of language, place names and family records they use to establish the Jewish links for Scotland are so fanciful as to be incredible and illustrate that while the authors may have academic credentials in science and marketing, history is not one of their strong points. There is no evidence of Scots practising Judaism in the early mediaeval period and nor is there evidence that Scots reverted to Judaism when they reached the Appalachians and there is a good reason for this; it just didn't happen. Just because the Scots Reformation gave an emphasis to what we would call Tenach does not mean that John Know was a secret Jew. Nor can we accept that the Burgess Role of Aberdeen 1600–1620 shows patterns of Jewish migration within Scotland.

One clear link between the book's Melungeon authors and the people of Scotland and its current Jewish community can only be described as chutzpah and this Hirschman and Yates have in large measure. It would be nice to believe their thesis that Scotland was once Jewish but the evidence just isn't there.

The 5th Corner

TALI JOAN SEGAL (TJSESQUIRE@AOL.COM)

PART 1 OF THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN ISSUE 13

I did my research. I knew Januarys in Scotland are cold. The long johns and the fur boots were packed. So were the scarf, ankle-length down coat and umbrella. I was set for my journey to Edinburgh.

What greeted me instead was balmy 10°C weather and sunny skies. I knew this was going to be a great trip.

Professor Nathan Abrams of the University of Wales, with whom I made contact after reading about his research in Four Corners, was kind enough to lead me to Sid Caplan, a lifelong Edinburgh resident and member of the Jewish community.

I spent a delightful morning with Sid, a tremendously knowledgeable fellow who exudes his love of his country and his city. We started our morning by chatting about the history of Scotland, and how the Jews fell into place in the historical timeline. As we chatted, about English Common Law versus Scots Law with its Roman Law basis, Sid learned that I am an attorney, and so he started my tour at a quite appropriate place for me, at your High Court of Justiciary at Parliament House to observe some of the workings in the current courthouse.

If I wrote my impressions of everything Scottish that I experienced, I would have my own megillah. Suffice it to say I was awed by so much.

I loved learning from Sid about James Mossman, a Jewish goldsmith to Mary, Queen of Scots, as we stood in front of the John Knox home. I enjoyed learning about the Jewish deli, next door to the John Knox/James Mossman home, and how the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, used to go to that store when it was reincarnated as Esther Henry's antique shop. Later in the day, on my own, I saw additional references to James Mossman as I toured Edinburgh Castle. What an honour to know that a Jew was among the important, though beheaded, supporters of Mary, Queen of Scots!

We left the Royal Mile and walked through the old Jewish quarter, past what used to be Jewish-owned stores. The Flodden Wall was to our right, Arthur's Seat to our left. What an extraordinary venue for a Jewish community.

What was clear to me was that the Scottish Jewish community is a small one. How fascinating to learn that aliyot to Israel are in part responsible for Edinburgh's dwindling Jewish community. I also learned that the younger generations leave for London and other Jewish communities where there is a greater chance of marrying within our faith.

I enjoyed discovering how Sir Walter Scott promoted the rise of Jews in Parliament, and I found it so interesting to learn that Jews sat in Scotland's



TALI IN FRONT OF EDINBURGH CASTLE

Parliament before Catholics ever did, because of Sir Walter's urgings.

I photographed many of the sites that Sid pointed out, including Huntly House, former home of the Earl of Huntly, chief of Clan Gordon. The Earl of Huntly gave money to start the University of Aberdeen, the second oldest university in Scotland. He conditioned this gift, however, on the University accepting three Jewish students. This was in the 16th century.

Sid explained that the Scots look upon Jews favorably, referring to them as the "People of the Good Book." How extraordinary not to have a history of being considered the scapegoats.

I found it interesting to see how the City of Edinburgh takes it upon itself to maintain the historical Jewish cemetery.

I liked hearing that Edinburgh has a history of treating the Jews respectfully. No expulsions, as there were from England. Again, as a Jew, a woman and a lawyer, it was exciting to hear that the first woman member of Scotland's High Court was a Jewish woman from the Edinburgh community.

Scotland, a land with a history of clans and tartans, is a comfortable place for me. I may not have a tartan for my clan, but I know my clan, the People of the Good Book, is alive and well, holding up its own, in the land of Scotland.

Aberdeen's synagogue today

EHUD REITER



The Aberdeen Jewish community is centred around the synagogue, a mid-terrace house on Dee Street, in the centre of Aberdeen. It was built in the early 1800s, and purchased by the community in 1945, and is now a listed building within a conservation area.

There is more to the building than "just a synagogue". As well as the sanctuary on the ground floor there is a social space and kitchen on the first floor, and two flats, one in the basement and the other in the attic. Our caretakers live in the basement flat, and we rent out the attic flat for income (preferably to Jewish people, although this has not always been possible in recent years).

In recent years our official membership has ranged between 10 and 15 households, but many non-members also participate in community events. According to the census, there are around 200 Jews in the Aberdeen area, and about a third of these attend one or more of our events each year.

As anyone who has anything to do with old buildings will know, repairing one problem will often reveal another...and another...and another.

A small gas leak in the attic flat led to the discovery that there were major problems with the gas piping which resulted in the gas being shut off for nine months – not much fun in an Aberdeen winter! Raising enough money to replace the pipes wasn't easy; this was one of the biggest crises our community has faced in recent years, and I am proud of the way we pulled together to resolve it. We are also very grateful to Linda Martin, who lives in England but attends our shul on her occasional visits to Aberdeen. She works with Pronto Gas in Preston, and she and her business partner Ciro Vivone came all the way up to Aberdeen to carry out the work - at cost price.

Unfortunately, the gas work and a survey we commissioned of our building revealed many more problems. Our building has not been maintained properly for many years (perhaps not since it was bought in 1945), and many other serious problems have come to light, including woodworm, windows and doors in poor shape, and a toilet block which needs to be demolished and rebuilt. The total repair bill could reach £50,000 which is a lot of money for a small community such as ours, but we love our shul and are working hard to find ways of raising the money to undertake the repairs.

Aberdeen's yesterdays

NATHAN ABRAMS



In 2005 I wrote about the 60th anniversary consecration of the shul in Aberdeen. And, although I have since relocated to Bangor in North Wales, my research has still continued. So, I'd like to share with you below a few historical nuggets that I have unearthed in the past year.

According to William Skene, in his East Neuk Chronicles: James VI had been under some obligation to the Jews, and as recompense to them, granted charters to settle where they pleased in the country. A few came to Aberdeen but were not long in returning whence they came. His Majesty got word of it, and sent for them to know the reason. They seemed diffident to answer, and His Majesty thought it might be the cold climate; still, he thought it could not be that, for there were Jews in St. Petersburg. After a lot of fencing, they said the reason why they came back was because they could not make a living, 'as the people of Aberdeen were all Jews together.'

The Jewish Chronicle reported in 1910 that 'An old jibe says that a Jew cannot flourish in Aberdeen, and there is a well-known case of a wealthy Lord London Mayor who first tried his fame in the northern city and failed. Probably the truth is that few try'

Skene also mentions one Lazarus Myers: I can fancy I see him yet – wizened, round face and stubble beard, keen eyes looking through spectacles, and everlasting blue cloak, with brass chain at the neck ... by all accounts ever I heard he found money-lending, etc., profitable, and, like his great prototype 'Shylock,' he always secured his pound of flesh' when it was obtainable by possible means. The late Sheriff Watson had a few of Lazarus's customers before him in his time. I believe Lazarus was the only Jew in Aberdeen for many years. He ultimately left the city, I understand, to end his days in his native Germany.

But, as there is no record of Lazarus Myers in the 1881 Aberdeen census (which, incidentally, does record an 'Isaac Myres' from Russia and a 'Lazarus Lubon' from Poland), it may be that he was either the product of the dim recollection of a real Jew or a concoction, based heavily on anti-Semitic stereotypes, of Skene's imagination.

In the spring of 1842 Harris Rosenberg and his wife, Alethia Rosenberg (nee Barnett), furriers described as 'foreigners', were convicted of 'wilfull fire-raising' at their shop premises H. Rosenberg & Company, 115 Union Street. Although there is no precise evidence to confirm their Jewishness, their first and last names certainly indicate a high probability of this being the case. It is also said that a Jewish doctor resided in Aberdeen during the early 1800s of which there is, as yet, no evidence. Perhaps the person referred to here was Joseph Levenston and/or his son, Solomon Alexander, born in Aberdeen in 1858, who, until his death in 1897, practised as a medical herbalist all over Scotland.

Length has not allowed me to write more, but I'm still keen to hear from anyone who can add to my research.