

Extended Family Gathering of Descendants of Abraham Hart of Penzance

On 14th September 2019 a gathering took place in South Bucks, of descendants of 'Rabbi' Abraham Hart of Penzance (1710 – 1784).

12 descendants were able to attend, representing 4 generations.

Also attending the gathering were the leading Anglo-Jewish genealogist, Dr Anthony Joseph, President Emeritus of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain & Doreen Berger the Chair of the Anglo-Jewish Special Interest Group of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain, a previous Chair of the Society and author of the 'Jewish Victorian' reference books. One must not forget the spouses who were also present. Keith Pearce, the author of 'The Jews of Cornwall – A History' (Halsgrove 2014) and responsible to a great measure for the restoration of the old Penzance Jewish Cemetery, hereinafter called 'The Cemetery', send his apologies for not being able to attend with his wife Mandy, who is secretary of the Friends of the Cemetery charity.

The gathering was hosted by Martin (just mentioned) and Susan Lee, Martin being one of Abraham Hart's descendants. The gathering included 6 descendants of Hannah Selig, nee Woolf (1779-1847), the wife of Aaron Selig and 6 descendants of her youngest brother, Lemon Woolf (1783-1848). Both Hannah Selig and Lemon Woolf are buried in the Old Jewish Graveyard in Penzance. The gathering took place at the suggestion of Douglas 'Doug' Kahn, a recently retired Rabbi from San Francisco, and his wife, Ellen, who attended the gathering after having visited The Cemetery, where many of the others, who attended the gathering, also had previously visited. One of the descendants at the gathering, Martin Lee's nephew, who had been born in Penzance and even lived fairly close to The Cemetery (of which he had been unaware) for many years, was profoundly moved by his newly acquired knowledge of his ancestors, whose graves were so very nearby. (His mother, Elizabeth Lichy nee Lee (1950-1985), who was a 5 times great granddaughter of Abraham Hart is buried in the Paul Church Cemetery to the west of Penzance). He is arranging with Keith Pearce to visit the Cemetery as soon as he can.

All the descendants at the gathering were descended via Abraham Hart's daughter Eddle (1747-1824), only recently proven to be a daughter of Abraham Hart of Penzance by Martin Lee, the host. Keith Pearce recently published a booklet entitled 'Lemon Hart of Penzance' which incorporates the Hart and Woolf family trees corrected by Martin Lee. Eddle Hart was the wife of Hyman Woolf (1732-1847). Both Hyman and Eddle Woolf are buried in The Cemetery.

The 4 generations of descendants attending the gathering included:

One 4 times great grandson, descended via Hannah Selig, nee Woolf (1779-1847)

Three 5 times great grandsons, one, the host descended from Hannah Selig's youngest brother, Lemon Woolf, (1783-1848), the others being descended from Hannah Selig

Two 5 times great granddaughters, both descended from Hannah Selig

Three 6 times great grandsons, all descended from Lemon Woolf

One 7 times great granddaughter, descended from Lemon Woolf

Two 7 times great grandsons, both descended from Lemon Woolf

Great interest was shown by the gathering in a hand drafted tree drawn up by Dr Anthony Joseph as far back as in 1956. Also on display were Lemon Woolf's Derby tea and coffee services from 1815, no

doubt used by Hannah and Aaron Selig and by Lemon and Hannah's first cousin Lemon Hart, after whom a brand of rum was named.

There is an unsubstantiated claim that Hart family's rum business was started by Abraham Hart, Lemon Hart himself having turned from being a clockmaker in Penzance to rum entrepreneur, ultimately in London.

The adults present gave a toast to all the living descendants of Abraham Hart with a tot of Lemon Hart rum. It was a joyous event with the fellowship of common ancestry and continuing interest in that ancestry.

Martin D Lee with many thanks to my wife Sue for the catering.