



PEACE LIGHT 2013 – FRIEDENSLICHT 2013

MESSAGE TO OUR BROTHER SCOUTS FROM THE UK PEACE LIGHT ORGANISERS

It has been getting on for 15 years since a Scouting friend phoned and said “I have a Light from Bethlehem – have you got any ideas what we can do with it...” and that’s where it started – looking back over the years we now help the Peace Light on its journey across the UK and with its journey across the globe. If you would have told me then, that each year I would be conversing with fellow Scouts, Guides and other people across the earth about this “little flame” I would not have believed it. And then if you said I would represent the UK at the dedication service in Vienna, then create and maintain a website about the same “little flame” I would have laughed – but I have done all those things, and still stand amazed at that “little flame” and wonder what else it has in store for us all.

Although we had managed to get the Peace Light over to the US the year before, courtesy of Phillips Petroleum, its distribution was very limited, but the events on the 11th September 2001 focused our resolve to deliver the Peace Light to you that Christmas the objective being to get the Light to Ground Zero. I think the whole team in the UK had the same idea and briefly this is how the Light was passed to you that year.

On hearing our objective, the Austrian Organisers allowed the Light to be collected early by a group of Boy Scouts of America working in Germany, being “released” before the Dedication Service in Vienna. They in turn, took the Light to Paris where they met up with one of our colleagues who scouts with BSWE (British Scouts in Western Europe) who then passed it on to one of our couriers from Dover. She took the Light from Paris to Calais where it was collected by the UK Organisers and brought it back to Dover UK.

From Dover it was collected by another of our Organisers, who took it to Luton Airport to meet up with a corporate jet belonging to Phillips Petroleum. The jet was on a flight from Stravanger in Norway to Maine USA and stopped at Luton to be refuelled. This link was arranged by “Mike Cortner”, and American scouter working in Aberdeen for Phillips Petroleum.

On arrival in Maine it was met by members of Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of America who managed to move it across the country working with “Aggie Donch”, a GSA member who worked on the Railway.

In New York, Aggie met up with a Deep Sea Scout Fellowship member, who worked with the security services in New York and was also a volunteer fire fighter in New York. Again working with another BSA scouter, who was a Port Authority Police Department Detective they managed to arrange for them to deliver the Light to the city morgue and Ground Zero and I am assured that the delivery to Ground Zero has continued every year since.

As one of the UK Organisers said when I asked about compiling this message, "it may only seem to be a few words but it moved mountains" – such is the power of that "little flame".

You also asked about "Peter and Richard" who have a memorial page on our website:

Peter was one of the "founder" members of the UK Peace Light team, although I had known Peter for a lot longer than that as he was the Chair of the British Rail Scout Fellowship, with whom I had done quite a bit of Scouting with, in fact Peter was the Scouter that first "phoned" me about the Light. It was also Peter who I travelled over to Vienna to collect the Light for the French Scouts and the UK Scouts in 1999. But from that point, with our contacts on the railway and Peter's enthusiasm our distribution plans were developed. Peter's enthusiasm always ensured that the Light was collected from Dover each year and taken to his local contacts in Bedford and Luton before taking it up to Leicester where it would continue its journey north to Scotland and Ireland. It was Peter that took the Light from Dover to Luton airport to hand over to the Phillips Petroleum jet, and liaised with Aggie Donch to get the flame to you in 2001. Over recent years Peter's health had suffered and sadly in Nov 2012, Peter passed away and is greatly missed by all who knew him and worked with him.

Richard was one of our couriers who with his wife Margaret help deliver the Light along the South Coast from Reading to Exeter passing the Light and the Peace message to others along the way – ensure the Light reaches Brownsea Island (home of Scouting) and onward to South West England and South Wales. Again Richards's health has not been good of late and sadly in Nov 2013 Richard passed away.

Can I please ask as part of your dedication at JFK Airport, Peter and Richard are remembered in your prayers.

I guess I must end this message at some stage but can I close with the following, I hope the Peace Light brings everybody there, the Peace, Satisfaction and Joy it brings all of us and trust at some time over the next few days you get the chance to just look at that little flame, and consider just how far it has travelled both graphically and spiritually and how its flickering brings hope to all involved with this wonderful project.

UK Peace Light Message 2013

"We receive this Light with the message of Peace to Everybody -- May all those who accept this Light pass on that Peace"