

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting Ceremony

Thursday 4th June, 2022

21 Group's Event

Thursday was a glorious sunny and warm day, 17 degrees C which was a great start. Commencing at Goosnargh Village Hall at 6pm with a meal, a brief AGM followed by a Talk, then at 8:45pm we went to the Bunker and were greeted by the owner Paul Miller. Most of our party headed into the Bunker and were given refreshments, then split into 2 groups for the guided tours, in the capable hands of Trish Wootton and Mike Smalley.

Paul kindly assisted Mike Norris, collecting the beacon, climbing up the steps at the rear of the car park, on to the bunker roof using the lid of a vent as a base and erected the Beacon. Mike man-handled the 19kg cylinder of propane gas connected it to the beacon and then charged the ignitor wand with butane gas.

We then all met on the carpark for a group photograph taken by Mike Smalley, while there was still some light. The group was made up of bunker team Paul and Viv Miller, Emily and Elaine along with their families and children, and the 21 Group party, about 30 of us. Fred and son Simon Morris joined Kath Cummings, Sylvia Hockin and Anne Smalley, they used camping chairs on the carpark with a view of the beacon above them. The rest of us climbed up to the roof.

Our President John Gedge lit the Beacon promptly at 9:45pm the flame which was quite impressive. He kindly took 'direction' to adopt the Elizabeth Beacon Lighter pose while we all took photographs. John had also brought our ROC flag, which we unfurled and held across the crowd by wife Val and son Paul Gedge, ready for more photos.

Mike Norris spent half the evening climbing up and down the steps as he checked on the carpark party, we filled glasses with Prosecco and handed them out to everyone, Mike then ran back down the steps again to fill glasses for those sat on the carpark. Sandra and Barry Riches opted for their own non-alcoholic beverage.

Once we were all assembled Trish kindly did the honours and proposed The Loyal Toast – The Queen – Duke of Lancaster.

John Gedge made a short speech and then presented Paul Miller with the original brochure from the opening of the Bunker in 1962, and an 8 inch bronze beacon lighter figure on a block base. It was donated to our Group by Air Commodore Jack Broughton OBE DL,

The visitors all said they had enjoyed the evening and the children would have a great story to tell their friends when they returned to school, about playing and running along the roof of a bunker. Then we spotted fireworks in the distance and picked out another beacon which appeared to be on Inglewhite hill.

We repeated our thanks to Paul Miller, said goodbye to everyone and headed home at 11pm.

Submitted by Elaine Norris

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