

Beacon Men Chairman's Report – 2025

On the morning of Saturday the 22nd of February we got 2025 off to a tasty start at the Toby Carvery in Langley. Ten Beacon Men met at 9.00am for an as-much-as-you-can-eat-and-drink breakfast. It was supposed to be an AGM and planning meeting but, as usual, because of eggs and bacon getting in the way, nothing got planned except that Mike Marsh and I agreed to meet a few days later to plan what should have been planned at the meeting, i.e. events for the coming year. So enjoyable was this gathering that we decided we would repeat the experience every couple of months.

We had an interesting evening on Friday the 11th of April when 31 people came to Holy Trinity Church to hear Kiaran Jenner and Zac Veitch give an amazing illustrated talk on their 2024 Maidstone Grammar School expedition to Everest Base Camp in Nepal. It was an incredibly physically demanding trip but an experience that neither of them will ever forget. Certainly not recommended for anyone who likes their creature comforts or who does not have a high level of fitness.

On Saturday the 24th of May, 9 Beacon Men met at the Toby Inn in Langley for one of our regular 9.00 am breakfasts. Very nice it was too.

On the evening of Wednesday the 11th of June, 19 Beacon People met at the Hollywood Bowl at Lockmeadow for the annual Beacon Ten Pin Bowling Tournament. For the last two years, Barry Doyle has taken the championship winning outright in 2023 and coming first equal with Chris Bird last year. There was a new champion this year but modesty prevents me from revealing their identity. After the game, as in previous years, 17 of us visited the nearby Thai Orchid Restaurant for a delicious meal and joint celebrations to mark Charles Lumatenga's birthday and Mike and Geraldine Westfield's diamond wedding anniversary. It was a wonderful night.

The morning of Saturday the 5th of July was earmarked for one of our communal breakfasts at the Toby Inn at Langley. On this particular morning everyone, including myself, seemed to be busy or had prior commitments. Only four Beacon Men attended but I'm told that the food was up to its usual high standard and that the conversation was convivial and stimulating.

James Small did the Beacon Men proud again this year with his amazing hospitality when he hosted another annual barbecue. On Saturday the 20th of September 17 Beacon Men gathered in the rustic setting of James's garden to enjoy great fellowship, conversation and of course James's incredible food. This has become a much anticipated annual event.

The evening of Saturday the 18th of October saw the village scout hut filled with 39 contestants, two markers and one quiz master for the annual Beacon Men Quiz Night. Steve Parnham set and asked the questions and scores were kept by Marian Simpson and Sandra Baker, so grateful thanks to them for a sterling job. It has to be said it was a challenging quiz but it was great fun and we all had a good time.

The final Beacon Men event for 2025, was on the evening of Friday the 14th of November at Holy Trinity, where Mike Marsh gave a really interesting, and meticulously researched talk on British merchant maritime history and his time at sea with Shell. The work he put into it, together with an amazing power-point presentation to illustrate the talk, was remarkable. The money raised from donations on the night went to The Mission to Seafarers and The Tall Ships Youth Trust, so many thanks to all who attended and who gave so generously.

Steve Poole,
Chairman.