

**Minutes of the 1271st Meeting of the Manchester  
Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club  
on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**

Recent minutes have commented on the number of times the meeting has commenced later than the listed start time of 8.00p.m. although the normal delay can be counted in minutes. The 1271<sup>st</sup> meeting was unique in that it started one week late but prompt at 8.00p.m. This was due to the terrible weather on the scheduled date which had prompted calls for cancellation on safety grounds. The minute writer cannot recall any previous occasion when a meeting has had to be cancelled apart from the covid crisis, not even the two world wars!

Eight members were present when the revised meeting took place and some shuffling was necessary due to the sickness absence of two key members, the Vice-chairman and the Fines Officer. Pickwick asked Dodson to act as Vice-chairman whilst the post of Fines Officer was to be occupied by Tom Roker.

Dodson started his new, temporary, position by failing to gavel until prompted by Pickwick and shortly afterwards was again remiss until reminded by Pickwick. Mivins suggested that two omissions merited a fine and the opportunity for Roker to display his expertise with the fines box. Pickwick agreed but unreasonably fined Mivins instead for telling tales to get a colleague in trouble.

Pickwick then advised members of the death of Mrs Pott and members promptly stood and drank a toast to her memory. Details of funeral arrangements would be published later and members were invited to attend.

Dodson then produced a series of photographs taken at previous meetings by the late Mr Tupman who was the official photographer for the club. He sadly pointed out that only himself and Mivins were still alive from the groups in the photos, most of which were taken at the centenary lunch in 2006 and some even earlier.

Yet another temporary appointment was necessary due to absence of the P.O R & I and on this occasion the job was given to Job Trotter (no pun intended). The reading was taken from Chapter 31 and everybody paid a fine or made a donation if they were fortunate enough to guess the correct answer.

Pickwick said he and Ben Allen hadn't been able to find a suitable time or venue for the Christmas Lunch but suggested that an afternoon meeting on a Saturday or Friday might be possible; they would look into this and report back later.

The next item on the agenda was the raffle or, as it has become known, Dodson's monthly fiddle. On this occasion, Pickwick having suggested he would like to be the first ticket, the ticket was drawn by our newest member, Captain Boldwig and, guess what, the first ticket out was Pickwick's. The fiddle was then compounded by Pickwick drawing the next ticket and, guess what, the winner was Captain Boldwig.

Dodson always claims that everybody has a chance but it is remarkable how the raffle always goes the way Dodson wants.

Several members asked about Rev. Stiggins absence and were told by Mivins that Stiggins was in hospital having been unable to get out of bed and subsequent tests showed he had broken a bone in his back. His daughter told Mivins that he had suffered a fall some weeks previously and that was probably when the damage had occurred. The hospital had advised that he should remain in hospital for about 2 weeks then be transferred to a respite centre for recuperation but no time scale had been suggested. Mivins was in touch with Mrs Stiggins Junior and would update members at the next meeting.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by another new member, Mr Fogg, who said the meeting had been an absolute shambles stumbling towards complete oblivion. Unfortunately, the member seconding the proposal, Ben Allen, was of the same opinion and suggested that the only good thing about the meeting was the pork pies brought by Pickwick.

The rendering of Good Neet Owd Friends was as bad as ever but the National anthem was more musical which suggested the members had been practising!

The Raffle raised £4.00 whilst the fines box contained £4.85.

The fines box proceeds had been counted by Tom Roker and simply accepted by Dodson so it was to Mivins surprise to find a tearful Dodson on his doorstep to complain that once again a fraudster had cheated the fines box by inserting a Canadian 25 cent coin instead of a 10p coin. Expect an inquest at the next meeting!