

**Minutes of the 1273nd Meeting of the
Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside
Social Club on 20th March, 2024**

With numbers once again increasing, the 1273rd meeting of the club was opened only 4 minutes late with Mr Fogg occupying the position of vice chairman in the absence of Pell due to sickness. He immediately adopted one of Pell's performance traits by failing to gavel until reminded by others. In addition to the members there was a guest present in the form of Andy Scutt introduced by Mivins.

There being no D.C. present, Mr Pickwick invited all members to present their own characters and this was done with remarkable efficiency (although it was suspected that, once again, under the table crib sheets were in use).

Once again there was muttering from Dodson about the complaint he had introduced at the last meeting about the negligence of the Fines Officer, on that occasion Tom Roker, in allowing somebody to introduce a Canadian 25 cent coin to the Fines Box. This introduced feverish mobile phone activity by some members who reported that the true value of a Canadian 25 cent coin was in excess of the normal fine and suggestions that the miscreant was due to receive some form of change. Dodson immediately decided to retain the coin for his own use rather than having to issue a refund.

The speedy progress through the agenda caused Pickwick to call for a rule 8 intermission and one or two of the more ancient members recalled a previous treasurer (Mr Pott) who had requested assistance from Dodson to produce a balance sheet for the club AGM. To Dodson's astonishment Mr Pott advised that he didn't have a separate bank account for the club and that all his receipts were kept in an old shoe box. For the first time ever, Dodson revealed that the balance sheet for that year was almost as much fiction as the monthly efforts of the minute writer, a suggestion refuted by Mivins. Dodson went on to say that some years later when Mr Pott was being buried, as the mourners stood around the grave he leaned over to Mivins and whispered "he hasn't paid his subs for this year" to which Mivins replied "It's a bit late to ask for them now".

Over the years there were many amusing tales about Mr Pott and Mivins recalled that Mr Pott, who was a notoriously poor flyer, had gone to the United States to visit a relative. He always had to have a few drinks before getting on a plane and on his return had carried in his hands all the way from America an expensive bottle of whisky. He was met at the Airport by Mr and Mrs Dodson who drove him home where he entrusted the bottle to Mrs Dodson for safety whilst he searched for his house keys. She duly returned the bottle to him once he had opened his front door and he promptly dropped the bottle on the doorstep. There was no truth in the rumour that after that he licked the doorstep every day.

Returning to the meeting, Pickwick said that following expressions of interest he would make enquiries about the hire of a canal boat for the summer outing and would report back at the AGM.

Tom Roker reported that the club's website was being updated but had not yet received an invoice for that.

The guest was invited to draw the first ticket for the monthly draw and immediately pulled out his own ticket; the last ticket to be pulled out was Dodson's but it was suspected that the draw had been engineered by Dodson just to prove it wasn't as bent as the members believe.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice chairman was proposed by Jem Wardle who claimed the meeting had been so bad that he couldn't think of any suitable words to describe it. Pickwick had lost control of the meeting almost as soon as it started and it was quite obvious that the vice chairman was a substitute who had learned nothing since joining the club. Rev. Stiggins seconded the motion and said he had missed a number of meetings due to sickness and didn't know what to expect but subsequently found nothing had changed, it was just as bad as ever although he admitted he had really enjoyed the meal.

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 £5.00 whilst the fines box contained £6.40.