

Minutes of the 1108th Meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Church Hotel on 17th November, 1994

Although the 1107th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club had started only 10 minutes late, the 1108th meeting reverted to form and did not start until almost 8.25 pm.

Having opened the meeting, Pickwick once again took a back seat as Dodson imposed his will on other members, on this occasion by informing Jingle that he had left the house in a hurry and had consequently forgotten the customary present from Spain for Mrs Jingle. Jingle was very downcast by this announcement because he had apparently advised Mrs Jingle that the present would be forthcoming and she would be waiting with eager anticipation only to be thwarted when Jingle arrived home with empty hands. Dodson then proved what a sadist he really is by producing a miniature bottle of pernod which he said was to keep the peace with Mrs Jingle — the equivalent of giving a child who is expecting a bicycle from Father Christmas a hoop and stick!

Control of the meeting momentarily passed from Dodson to Tupman who claimed he was sitting at the foot of the table because he had a bad cold which he didn't want to pass to Pickwick — he didn't mind the other members getting it. Dodson immediately regained control by accusing Tupman of being improperly dressed in a pullover rather than a suit and with no club badge or tie. Tupman immediately lifted his pullover to reveal a club badge pinned to his braces and claimed this satisfied the club rules which did not indicate where the badge had to be worn. This argument, though correct, was not considered acceptable so Tupman was fined twice, once for not wearing a club tie and once for not knowing the rules. Members agreed that Tupman's lack of knowledge of the rules or his being prepared to bend them to suit his requirements boded ill for the coming year when he occupies the chair.

The fine having been paid, Jingle elected to examine the coins put in the fines box by Tupman to ensure their validity in this country — unfortunately this examination rapidly reached the realms of farce when Jingle discovered he had brought his wrong glasses and couldn't see the coins properly so he had to pass the fines box to Dodson.

Obviously feeling overlooked because he hadn't been on his feet for at least 30 seconds, Dodson decided to volunteer as POC for the evening — possibly in an effort to minimise the drinks bill. This was immediately accepted by Pickwick who realised he had more chance of controlling the meeting with Dodson out of the room.

It was noted by members that Winkle was wearing a plaster on his head and Winkle decided to answer the curiosity of members by announcing that he had been to the hospital for a biopsy because of a skin complaint. Weller suggested the biopsy had

been performed by an Indian doctor who was more familiar with scalping white men. .

Winkle then introduced his guest and gave a short address on the failure of other members to bring guests. By this time Dodson had reappeared and after distributing the drinks asked Winkle why he had a plaster on his head. Members were equally divided on the question of whether Dodson should be fined for not being aware of Winkle's problem, it being argued that being out of the room when the explanation was given was insufficient grounds for remission of the fine. However, Pickwick is obviously frightened of Dodson and agreed that Winkle should repeat his explanation solely for Dodson's benefit and that the fine should not stand.

The introduction of members to guests was presented by Jinks and was followed by a complaint from Tupman of collusion between Dodson and Jinks which resulted in a favourable description of Dodson's character and an unfavourable description of Pell; Weller suggested the book had been rewritten since the last meeting. In reply, Jinks identified the chapter and verse of the quotations, adding that Pell had nodded his head in agreement when his character was analysed by Jinks and was obviously happy with the reading. He felt that Tupman's behaviour was shameful in questioning both Charles Dickens writing and Jinks interpretation of that writing. Members agreed that Tupman should be fined, rejecting his argument that Jinks had said to Dodson after the reading "That will cost you a tenner", because everybody knows it is impossible to get a tenner out of Dodson.

Jinks complained that criticism of his attendances reported in the minutes were unjustified and was supported by Tupman who claimed the minutes were wrong. Mivins immediately pointed out that the minutes were never wrong although he accepted they might need amending. The members supported Mivins, claiming that the Pickwick Club minutes might be inaccurate but they were never wrong.

The P.O.R. & I was read by Weller; so many of the members were able to answer the inquisition questions correctly that Weller decided to fine everybody for being too clever and himself for making such a mess of it by asking easy questions.

To prove that the meeting was back on course again, the 9.00 toast was taken at 10.40 p.m. and was followed by the raffle when Pickwick drew his own ticket followed by Dodson's - yet further evidence of the fiddles which accompany the raffle each month.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Weller who said he hadn't been able to attend for some time and had been pleasantly surprised at the luxurious surroundings, the light, the warmth, even the tables were more or less level! The meeting had been well conducted by Pickwick, members had answered the

Inquisition questions correctly and the vice-chairman (who, incidentally, was giving him a lift home) had performed admirably. Seconding the vote of thanks, Winkle suggested Weller must have been at a different meeting; there had been no contribution from either the chairman or the vice chairman and he had assumed from his clothing that the vice chairman had come to the wrong meeting. Even when censured for wearing a safari suit, Dodson had at least worn a club tie and it would be a bad day for the club if casual clothing was allowed to become acceptable at meetings.

Pickwick declined to comment on the vote of thanks but Tupman thanked both the proposer and seconder for their refreshing comments even though both had obviously forgotten how to propose a vote of thanks properly. He also thanked Dodson for remembering, immediately prior to the vote of thanks, to hand Weller the list of meeting dates which had been in his possession for weeks!

Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem.

The raffle raised £5.50 and the fines box contained £2.25.