

Minutes of the 1181st meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 18th January, 2007

The 1181st meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club commenced with Mr Pickwick expressing the hope that the members had enjoyed a happy Christmas and New Year.

It was suggested that a P.O.C. was required and Horatio Fiskin volunteered to assist Sam Weller who had already cadged a sheet of paper from Mivins on which to record the drinks order. Tupman hadn't realised that Mivins had supplied the paper and congratulated Weller for remembering to bring a sheet of paper with him, thus proving he wasn't paying attention to the proceedings. Jingle had already indicated that he was likely to be late in arriving at the meeting so at Grummer's suggestion, Weller included a pint of bitter on the list in anticipation of Jingle's arrival. There were a number of complaints that Weller was deliberately delaying procurement of the drinks order, even to the extent of returning to the room to ask for money from Dodson after going downstairs to the bar. Before any decision could be taken on this matter, Pickwick's mobile phone rang so Pickwick decided that a contribution to the fines box would be appropriate on the understanding that this was a donation rather than a fine. It was noted by members that this was the first contribution to the fines box in 2007.

Jingle arrived at 8.17 p.m. and was promptly advised that a pint of bitter had been ordered for him; Jingle responded that he no longer drank pints, since his illness he was restricted to 'Units'. There was a long discussion as to whether Jingle should be fined for late arrival with some 50% of the members thinking that a fine would not be appropriate. Tupman disagreed with this point of view claiming that on every occasion when he had not been present at the start time he had been fined and he saw no reason why Jingle should not be dealt with in the same manner. Mivins agreed with Tupman suggesting that Jingle's phone call to Grummer was a clear indication of intent to be late which made the offence more serious. To make progress, Dodson paid Jingle's fine but Tupman was left to pay his own fine for being inhospitable. Jingle said his being fined was very cruel bearing in mind the difficulties he had experienced in getting to the meeting. Jingle then advised Pickwick that following his recent illness, his doctor had limited his drinking to no more than two units per day. However, he had been saving up all week and thought he could probably manage about eight units this evening.

Tupman was asked to present the introduction of members but suggested that on this occasion members should all introduce their own characters; most members thought this was not a very good idea and Jingle suggested Tupman ought to be given a sleeping tablet to prevent him making such stupid ideas in future.

The introduction of members led to a number of fines; Dodson, Grummer, Smangle and Dodson again were fined for interrupting the D.C., Weller and Mivins were fined for snitching and Fiskin was fined for playing with a digital camera. Half way through the introduction, Jingle interrupted the proceedings to announce he had lost the Fines Box. In fact, everybody could see that the Fines box was in the hands of the D.C. so Jingle was fined for an unnecessary interruption.

Magnus reported that he had written to Philadelphia Pickwick Club and had received a considerable number of enclosures with the reply. He read the reply and handed round the enclosures which caused much discussion during the meal break. Dodson, supported by all the members was congratulated on his efforts which not only linked this club with Philadelphia but also identified another Pickwick club in Somerset.

Tupman then congratulated Dodson on reaching his 70th birthday and Magnus who had reached 69; he added that they were both miserable fatherless gentlemen for failing to purchase a round of drinks for the members.

The P.O.R & I was read by Weller and was taken from Chapter XII. Jingle expressed surprise when questions were asked, not having realised that this was the P.O.R & I. he then went on to complain that Snodgrass hadn't been fined – at that point Snodgrass hadn't even been asked a question! It didn't make any difference because eventually everybody was fined, as usual. Tupman complained that the reading had been so quiet that the only thing which enlivened the proceedings was when Dodson scrambled across the floor chasing a fallen coin which threatened to elude him.

Jingle interrupted the D.C's efforts to nominate a member to propose the vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman, to ask what was going on because the vice-chairman had introduced several items which should have been introduced by Pickwick himself. It was suggested that Pickwick had done this deliberately to allow the vice-chairman to practise. Weller said this was against all Pickwickian principles because it meant that the vice-chairman would then get things right. The vice-chairman explained that the main reason for the activities being passed to him was because Pickwick hadn't realised they were his responsibility. Pickwick's response was so convoluted that Weller suggested that the club appoint a matron so that gas and air could be administered to members when things got beyond control.

Eventually, Snodgrass was nominated to propose the vote of thanks but claimed he was totally dishonoured by being asked to perform this task. His employment meant he was abroad much of the time and thus had attended few recent meetings; he was wondering why he had bothered to attend this evening. He asked what Pickwick had done to help members: when the meeting started some members were upstairs, some downstairs. The meeting had been so poor most members had been reduced to trying to drown their sorrows. Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said he thought Snodgrass had been harsh. Below the nick members had been kept informed of what was happening by the vice-chairman but those members above the nick hadn't known what was going on because of Pickwick's poor performance; Tupman suggested that members would have had more guidance if Pickwick had been issued with a white stick and a guide dog.

'Good Neet Owd Friends' was led by Smangle and Grummer and the National Anthem was sung by all.

The raffle raised £6.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £8.34, 5 Belgian francs and a coin of unknown origin with an Arabic inscription.