

Minutes of the 1187th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club On 17th January, 2008

The 1187th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was opened at 8.04 p.m. although the vice-chairman wasn't paying attention and Pickwick had to gavel several times before there was any response.

The only member who had brought a guest was Weller who made it quite clear that he felt other members had let the side down by failing to find people willing to attend. His guest was a former member of the gendarmerie at Bolton and was known to several other Pickwick members, particularly Dodson and Tupman, who had also been associated with that occupation in that area.

Grummer surprised other members by insisting on paying £1 into the fines box for failing to bring the mace to the Christmas Dinner – most members hadn't even noticed this omission!

Ben Allen volunteered to act as P.O.C and after 'borrowing' a piece of paper on which to record the order for drinks managed to get the order wrong; most members thought this was due to him watching Weller when he occupied that position and naturally assuming that getting the order wrong was part of the job. However, all was revealed when Pott indicated that he had decided not to order during this round of drinks.

Tupman then announced that he had visited America during the Christmas period and had visited the pub where the Philadelphia Pickwick Club holds its meetings. The pub is called 'The Dark Horse' and although there was no meeting at the time of his visit, he was able to see and take photographs of the actual meeting room which he passed round to members. Weller advised members that this was not Tupman's only claim to fame; whilst he (Weller) was visiting his dentist he had been looking at a copy of 'Lancashire Life' in the waiting room and had found a photograph of Tupman and his lady friend who were attending an upmarket social function during the previous month. (The dentist must be equally upmarket because the edition of the magazine was the January edition – normally the reading material in similar waiting rooms is about 3 years out of date!). Tupman explained that the function was a book signing by Les Dawson's widow who was a friend of his companion for the evening. At this point Jingle complained that there was too much talking and not enough fining and suggested that Pickwick get a grip on the members – presumably Jingle's job depends on the contents of the fines box at the end of the evening.

Pickwick then asked Grummer to perform the introduction of members to the guest; Grummer refused on the grounds that he wasn't the D.C. so Pickwick then invited the D.C., Tupman, to perform the task. Tupman also refused on the grounds that by inviting Grummer initially, Tupman had been slighted by being considered as second choice. Eventually it was agreed that Tupman would introduce those members above the nick whilst Grummer would introduce those below the nick. During Grummer's introduction he mentioned that Dodson had once been a member of the 'Sons of Temperance' and Dodson's response to this information led to a fine being imposed. Grummer also advised members that he and Mivins regularly visit a flea market at Salford and on a previous visit had seen a video entitled 'Brick Lane'; whether this was relating to the Brick Lane branch of the

United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association was never revealed because this video was priced at 50p which was far higher than Grummer and Mivins are ever prepared to pay for flea market items.

The Secretary reported on various items of correspondence including a letter from Alfred and Sheila Jingle thanking members for their presents in recognition of their golden wedding and also for the regular presents of Mau-Mau which had brought much pleasure over the years. Also received were communications from Rick Bravo in Philadelphia and Peter Barnes from London, both of which had been acknowledged in verse. Tupman said that as the poet of the club he wished to resign because the poems sent by the Secretary were impossible to live up to.

Tupman advised members that the collection taken at the Christmas Dinner and at a similar organisation to which some of the members belonged had raised £80 in memory of the late Peter Roberts who had entertained the club so well in the past; this had been sent to the Hospice where Peter had been looked after.

The P.O.R & I was read by Weller from a handwritten document which he claimed was Chapter 39. When Tupman complained about Weller mumbling instead of reading properly, he faced a further fine because Pickwick said Weller's mumbling helped to increase the contents of the fines box. It goes without saying that everybody failed to answer their question and consequently helped to increase the weight of the fines box.

The raffle initially followed identical lines to the last meeting in that the first ticket chosen belonged to the vice-chairman whilst the second was the P.O.C, however, there the similarity ended and the remainder of the prizes were more equitably distributed for a change.

In proposing the vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman, Jingle said he thought the load should be spread more fairly. He had been forced to present the vote of thanks at the Christmas meeting and it was becoming more and more difficult to find something nice to say when Pickwick and the vice-chairman made such a mess of the meeting every month. Similarly, something should be done about the raffle at the Christmas Dinner; very rarely does Jingle's table do well at the raffle and even when he does win a prize, he tends to leave it somewhere so never benefits from the raffle! Tonight's meeting was the usual shambles; Pickwick had failed to control the meeting and even Jingle's whiskey hadn't got fresh ice in it, only the frozen stuff. The meeting had been a world tour with comments about Philadelphia, Kenya, New York, Whitby and Spain but what this had to do with the Pickwick club nobody knows. Still, it was now a new year so perhaps we should start with a clean sheet and forgive Pickwick and the vice-chairman their many errors although whether the guest will want to come again is anybody's guess. Seconding the vote of thanks, Pott said he had really enjoyed the evening with good food, good friends and an excellent control of the proceedings by Pickwick.

The vice-chairman responded by asking how could one reply to such eloquence from Jingle and Pott, particularly the latter who had clearly recognised the sterling qualities of the club's leaders, but he thanked both for their kind words.

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

The Fines Box contained £8.08 plus a variety of foreign coins whilst the raffle raised £7.00.