

Minutes of the 1189th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club Held at the Moorside Social Club

The 1189th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was very sparsely attended, only 8 members being present when Daniel Grummer, who was occupying the chair in the absence of the real Mr Pickwick opened the meeting. For the first time in a long time, Pickwick stood to address the meeting and advised members that any infringement, real or imagined, would be severely punished and that fines would be levied in abundance!

Dodson, no doubt bearing in mind the poor attendance due to the inclement weather, announced a free evening but Pickwick insisted that a vote be held before such a recommendation could be implemented and it was not surprising that the proposal was carried unanimously. It was also noted that, once again, Snodgrass was absent in foreign parts and was thus unable to take advantage of the free evening. It was also noted that Dodson was due to be fined for failing to attend the last meeting but in view of his proposal for a free evening Pickwick declared that the fine would be revoked.

Jack Hopkins must have heard on the grapevine that a free evening was in progress because he arrived at this point and was promptly fined for being late.

Ben Allen volunteered to act as P.O.C. and immediately cadged a piece of paper and a pen from Mivins on which to record the drinks order.

Jingle reported that he had had a cataract operation 3 weeks previously but had also lost a hearing aid costing £52; the connection between these two events was unclear but no doubt Jingle knew what he was talking about. On the subject of sight problems, Mivins then told members about an incident which had occurred some years ago at a Manchester Waterworks depot. All the workmen had to be tested to ensure they were not typhoid carriers and the tests involved taking blood and other samples. The doctor who was due to take the blood samples had arrived in a brand new convertible with the hood down because of the warm weather and had parked his car close to the site of the work. Whilst he was performing his duties, a crane driver who was subsequently found to be suffering from tunnel vision managed to swing a hopper full of concrete into the side of the convertible where it tumbled over, filling the car interior with concrete.

To while away the time, Ben Allen told of a patient who had arrived at the hospital from a nursing home called 'Merry Meet' whilst Dodson topped this by telling members that he had been married in a church called 'Happylands'; Jack Hopkins said he had also been married in Happylands.

After the reading of the minutes, Dodson said that he had taken time out from his holiday to ring the club in time for the 9.00 o'clock toast but that it had not been minuted. Members remembered the call and Mivins was asked why it had not been minuted. He explained that Dodson had actually phoned at 7 minutes past 9 and if he had reported this Dodson would have had to be fined for calling 7 minutes late. Pickwick felt that this was merely an excuse and fined Mivins twice, once for the omission and once for trying to get Dodson into trouble.

The Secretary mentioned the names of several members who hadn't attended a meeting for some considerable time and then outlined communications with the Philadelphia club. He compared the fees in Philadelphia with ours – a joining fee of £63 plus an annual subscription of £95 and wondered how Dodson managed to balance the books!

The Philadelphia club had also arranged what they called 'a frolic' between 10th and 15th September, 2008 to which members were invited. Finally, the Secretary pointed out that the next meeting at the 'George and Vulture' would be held on 8th April, 2008. Pickwick announced that he would be unable to attend as he was involved in some expense due to the recent gales and might be short of cash. Members expressed their appreciation of the Secretary's work during the past year, particularly in the way he had extended contacts with other Pickwick clubs.

The P.O.R & I was read by Jack Hopkins who chose meeting 482 held on 10th October, 1939 as his source. Dodson, Mivins and Jingle successfully answered their questions but were still fined, it being suggested that they were around when the meeting took place and therefore had an advantage over younger members!

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was given by Mivins who said the meeting had been extremely poor both in attendance and performance; members who had heard Grummer was in the chair had stayed away because of his reputation for levying unfair fines, as witness the double fine against Mivins. Most of the meeting had been taken up with members telling stories of their experiences or jokes and the occasional foray into Pickwick matters was incidental rather than planned.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Dodson said he noted Mivins' remarks concerning the severity of the fines but would ensure that at the next meeting Grummer would be fined to the limit of his wallet. He thought Mivins was being unkind and to emphasise this swung his arms around and knocked his raffle prize over. Once sanity had been restored, he said that although it had only been a small meeting, Pickwick had performed well in front of some of the more important club members and within minutes of the meeting starting, the fines box contained £8.00. Admittedly this speed of contributions couldn't be maintained but it was still a credible effort in view of the reduced numbers.

Pickwick responded by explaining the difficulty of controlling a meeting with so few members due to the absence of banter but added that Manchester Pickwick Club is now on the map due to the efforts of the Secretary, Fiskin and other club officers; for that reason he and the vice-chairman would toast the health of the members

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

The Fines Box contained £13.00 whilst the raffle raised £4.00.