

Minutes of the 1190th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club Held at the Moorside Social Club on 18th September, 2008

Like meeting 1189, the 1190th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was sparsely attended, there only being 10 members present when the meeting opened at 8.00 p.m. precisely.

Weller was asked to act as vice-chairman and when he was approached by Dodson for his subs complained that he had been short changed by Dodson but Smangle said this was a ploy often tried at his pet food stall and was known as the £20 trick. Weller said he didn't care what it was called, he was still out of pocket. He then complained about the centenary tie which he had purchased during those celebrations; the problem was that his tie appeared to be about 7 inches shorter than other Pickwick ties. Dodson said the quality or quantity of the ties was nothing to do with him, they had been obtained from a contact of Smangle's, all Dodson had done was sell them. Grummer said he had also had a quality problem with the tie he purchased because the Pickwick badge had been 'lob-codded', however, because nobody knew what 'lob-codded' meant the argument was allowed to lapse.

It had been noted that Dodson was sitting below the nick, away from his usual position where he can affect what goes on by persuading Pickwick what course of action to take. Both Jingle and Dodson claimed that even at this early stage Pickwick was making a mess of the meeting because he didn't have Dodson sitting beside him to guide him through the pitfalls of running a meeting and Smangle, who was sitting beside Pickwick was insufficiently experienced to give worthwhile advice.

Whilst on the subject of the club's centenary, the guest, Harry Hamilton, a home brewer of note, had produced a bottle of wine labelled "Brewed to commemorate the Centenary of the M.P.C. 1906-2006". This was placed amongst the raffle prizes as the 'Star Prize' of the evening.

Whilst on the subject of celebrations, Jack Hopkins, Dodson and the guest Harry Hamilton were congratulated on each reaching their 50th wedding anniversary. Mivins suggested that the congratulations be extended to cover Smangle's van which looks to be 50 years old, but Smangle didn't appreciate this comment and suggested that although he had managed to avoid Mivins on the last two occasions he had seen him crossing the road, the next time he might not!

The introduction of members to the guest was carried out by Grummer; his description of the office occupied by Dodson's staff was questioned by Dodson who claimed it wasn't as bad as described. Mivins was asked to consult the book and claimed that both were correct in part. For this reason, Dodson was fined for interrupting the D.C.

In view of the small number attending it was suggested that in order to remind members when a meeting was due, all members should have the mobile phone numbers of all other members but Pickwick ruled that all members have the ordinary phone numbers of other members and the cost of trying to introduce mobile numbers would give Dodson a heart attack.

Members were aware that Dodson had been complaining about a bad leg for some time and much fun was had at Dodson's expense. Despite this, Dodson claimed that he was severely incapacitated and then ruined his claim by knocking his drink over and catching it before it hit the floor. Weller commented 'not bad for a cripple' and suggested that the DSS might be interested in Dodson's mobility if he was intending to claim benefit.

Due to the absence of the Moorside Club steward on leave, the excellent buffet had been prepared by Dodson and Grummer, both of whom received the accolades of the members. There was some discussion about whether the meat pies should be halved or left whole on the buffet; Dodson claimed they should be left whole but Weller said this was only because Dodson could put a whole pie in his mouth at once and that for more genteel members, the pies should be halved. The result was undecided.

The P.O.R & I was read by Jack Hopkins; Dodson took a long time to reply to his question but Weller said the delay was to be anticipated because Dodson had a bad leg. All members were fined for failing to answer their question correctly and Jack Hopkins paid a donation.

The P.O.C. invited members to renew their orders for drinks but Weller said he was driving and could he have the money instead; Dodson's response to this warranted an immediate fine.

There was a long discussion about the Christmas Dinner: as in previous years, the meal had been booked at Breightmet Golf Club on 5th December but another group to which some members were attached had recently had a meal at the golf club and discovered that new catering staff had been appointed and that the meal left much to be desired.

Although it was clear that some members at that meal had fared better than others, there was no doubt that standards had slipped and the entertainments officers were looking into alternative venues for the Christmas dinner. Possible venues were put forward for their consideration and it was agreed that they would report their decision to the next meeting.

The visitor said that whenever he attended a meeting, it always seemed to be chaotic but when he heard the minutes of that meeting it invariably seemed well organised and he wondered who was daftest, him or the members. Dodson said this was understandable because two thirds of the members were mad and the other half were no better! The visitor then told members about the armed bank robber who accidentally lost his mask as he tried to escape. He immediately turned to the man at the front of the queue and asked whether he would recognise him again and when the man replied in the affirmative, shot him. He then asked the next man in the queue and on receiving a similar answer shot him also. In response to his question, the third man in the queue said he hadn't seen anything, but added, "I'm certain my mother in law did".

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Mivins who said that it was clear that Pickwick needed the help and advice of Dodson who had moved below the nick because Pickwick had made a complete mess of the whole evening whilst the vice-chairman had benefited from Dodson's advice and performed in true Pickwickian fashion. In fact, so poor had Pickwick's performance been that unless he had improved by the middle of next year, it would probably be necessary to replace him. Seconding the vote of thanks, Dodson whilst agreeing with the sentiments concerning the benefits of his advice and experience, said that Pickwick had performed reasonably in the circumstances, having received no useful help from the President. He failed to understand

Mivins' praise for the vice-chairman whose gavelling sounded as though he was playing the xylophone and bore no relationship to the agenda items. In all, bearing in mind it was Pickwick's first meeting in the chair, he had probably done quite well and although it wasn't the best meeting, it was far from being the worst.

'Good neet owd friends' and the National Anthem were sung by all and resulted in the comment from Ben Allen that he thought more practise was needed before the club stood any chance of winning the new T.V. programme 'Last choir standing'.

The Fines Box contained £8.34 whilst the raffle raised £5.50.