

Minutes of the 1193rd meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 15th January, 2009

The 1193rd meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club opened with Dodson suggesting that Pickwick ought to make a donation because when opening the meeting he had failed to notice that there was no Vice-chairman in position. Pickwick advised Dodson that he had already made arrangements for Weller to occupy the Vice-chairman's position and that Dodson himself would pay a fine for not paying attention to the proceedings. Dodson then complained that Weller, who was sitting next to him, hadn't told him of the appointment, but Weller replied that he had done it deliberately because Dodson had beaten him at cards on the previous evening.

Despite the fine, Dodson suggested that the club should have a free evening and this was supported by all present. Tupman suggested that Dodson's proposal was to celebrate his birthday which, like the card game, had been on the previous day. With his customary meanness, Dodson had failed to buy a round of drinks for the card school and this was his way of providing birthday drinks at no cost to himself. Weller had bought a bird house for Dodson and this was displayed to all members.

Dodson then told members that on the previous Monday, he and Grummer had caught a tram to Altrincham for a day out. They had wandered round the town centre before turning into a pub where they had a pint of beer each and enjoyed some banter with a group of darts players. They then decided to visit another pub for further refreshment and as they moved away from the darts group, Grummer failed to notice a step and fell full length with his leg bent underneath him. It took four men to lift him up; fortunately, there was no serious damage to his leg but once again his ribs had taken the main brunt of the fall. Later that evening they decided to visit the Moorside Club but Grummer wasn't feeling very well and went home early. He was unable to go to work the following morning and the Doctor has subsequently confirmed that he had fractured his ribs.

Whilst regaling the meeting with his tale of Grummer's misfortunes, Dodson had been idly looking through the visitors book and advised members that it had not been kept up to date; in fact, the last entry was in December 2006. Members were asked to try and remember who they brought to meetings so the book could be updated.

Grummer said he thought the club should do something to celebrate Dickens' 200th anniversary in 2012 but he wasn't sure what form any celebration should take. Pickwick thought this was a good idea but rather than hurriedly seek suggestions, felt that members should go away and think about it and bring ideas to the next meeting.

The minutes recorded the fact that despite the number of members absent from the last meeting on overseas ventures, no phone calls had been received. Smangle said he had thought about it but the time difference in India meant that it was impractical, but he had drunk a toast to members that evening. Pickwick said he hadn't even thought about the Pickwick Club whilst in Kenya but was prepared to pay a donation for telling the truth.

The Secretary produced a scroll which had been prepared by Rick Bravo from the Philadelphia Club which had been sent to this country for signature by four eminent Pickwicks from the U.K.

Because of this scroll, memories turned to the club's badge of office which had replaced an earlier badge stolen from a member's car after a meeting, the member in question being the crime prevention officer for the local police! Grummer had produced this badge following the theft and was also responsible, along with Dodson, for a couple of the statuettes which occasionally grace the table at club meetings. He said the plinths on which the statuettes stand were originally two of the legs off a billiard table which stood in a room where he was employed and which had not been used for many years. He had sawn the legs off in the hope that management didn't suddenly decide to organise a billiards tournament and converted them into attractive plinths for the statuettes. Pickwick said it was interesting how Dodson and Grummer had been involved in nefarious activities on behalf of the club and wondered how future billiard players would cope with the adverse slope on the table.

The 9 o'clock toast was taken exactly on time with particular reference to Mr Pott.

There was considerable debate about the Christmas Dinner which everybody had enjoyed despite the terrible meal about which everybody had complained. Tupman said he had written to the golf club secretary who had replied that he agreed with every one of the comments which had been echoed by another group who were in attendance on the same evening. Similar complaints arising from other events at the club had resulted in the caterer being replaced by the caterer currently operating at Prestwich Golf Club. The Secretary orally offered to supply £100 of drinks next time if this club continued to hold their dinners at Breightmet and in view of this Tupman had provisionally booked the third Friday in June and the first Friday in December for the 2009 Summer Outing and Christmas Dinner accordingly. Another organisation to which several members of this club belonged was due to have a meal at Breightmet under the new regime and if this was not satisfactory, Tupman would seek another venue and cancel the provisional arrangements referred to above.

The P.O.R & I was performed by Jack Hopkins and, once again, all members were fined with Jack making a donation.

Proof of the unfair nature of the raffle came when the winner was Dodson, the organiser!

In proposing the vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman, Dodson said he didn't see how he could really perform this task; for all the control exercised by Pickwick he might just as well stayed in Kenya. He had failed to appoint a P.O.C so members were without drinks when the time came for a toast and had surreptitiously appointed a vice chairman in a deliberate effort to get Dodson fined. The vice-chairman had gripped the gavel as though he was in charge rather than Pickwick and even this vote of thanks was marred by the constant interruptions from the P.O.C who was collecting glasses and distributing drinks, by other members doing their own thing rather than paying attention and by Grummer who was busy making bird noises with Dodson's birthday present. Possibly the incompetence could be put down to 'jet-lag' but it was to be hoped that there would be an improvement by the next meeting.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Mivins said the meeting had been a huge success with much excellent control from Pickwick and the Vice-chairman. On arrival, members were setting out the room under the direction of Pickwick and the appointment of Weller as Vice-chairman was a master stroke, he being the loudest gaveller in the area. The P.O.C. was also excellent despite his having to borrow a pen and paper from Mivins – this was probably a throwback to the previous P.O.C, Weller, who also

failed to equip himself properly for his duties. All in all, a meeting to be cherished by all those present.

Good neet owd friends and the National Anthem were sung by all.

The Raffle raised £5.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £10.26.