

Minutes of the 1195th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 19th March, 2009

With only a dozen members present it was clear that some 'shuffling' of jobs was necessary, not least that of vice-chairman so Pickwick decided to approach Weller and ask him to carry out that task. Unfortunately, although Pickwick spoke to Weller several times he was ignored until, eventually gaining Weller's attention, Pickwick advised him that he was to occupy the vice-chairman's position only for Weller to refuse the honour. Pickwick seemed to be surprised by this refusal but was placated by Tupman who said he would take the role of Vice-chairman and Ben Allen who agreed to act as P.O.C.

The toast to Mr Pickwick was sung and Pickwick suggested that the improvement in harmony noted at the last meeting hadn't been maintained. Dodson pointed out that Tupman had sworn during the toast; Tupman agreed this was so and although he explained his reason for using bad language, was still fined by Pickwick who claimed there was no justification for bad language, particularly during the toast to our leader! He also fined Dodson for 'peaching' and invited the fines master to also collect a fine from Brother Tadger who arrived at that moment for being late. The frequency of fines at this point led to complaints from the members and it was suggested by Dodson that the fines master never checked whether the money placed in the fines box was genuine or foreign; Jingle replied that he had been handling money for so long that he could tell the value of a coin by the sound it made when it landed in the fines box so a check wasn't necessary.

Mivins introduced his guest by saying that he had attended many summer outings and Christmas dinners but never an ordinary meeting - he was promptly fined on the grounds that no Pickwick meetings are ordinary.

Grummer had recently returned from a holiday on the Isle of Wight and had brought a present for Dodson, a golliwog key ring. He said the shop from which it was bought claimed that the ban on golliwogs had been so beneficial to sales that he had great difficulty in keeping the place stocked. During a conversation, Pickwick referred to the club as the P.C.; Tupman said this was incorrect and that the correct designation was M.P.C. Pickwick agreed that Tupman was correct, apologised for his error, made a donation to the fines box and then fined Tupman for drawing his error to the attention of members.

Tupman was then invited to present the members to the guests but pointed out that Ben Allen was absent from the meeting getting drinks. Pickwick said that didn't matter because by the time Tupman reached Ben Allen's seat he would have returned from the bar. Tupman responded that on this occasion he had intended to commence the introduction with Ben Allen but was told by Pickwick to get on with the job. Tupman claimed that Pickwick was insisting that the introductions went ahead at that particular time because the next proper item on the agenda was another toast and some of the members hadn't got a drink and so would not be able to participate.

Pickwick made noises suggesting a fine would be levied if the introduction was delayed any further

and Tupman began his usual excellent presentation. During the presentation he referred to an occasion when Pickwick was watching children playing; Dodson immediately claimed that Pickwick was obviously a dirty old man and was promptly fined. This caused further problems because Weller claimed that Dodson had only put 2p in the fines box and for a while the meeting became even more chaotic than usual.

The Secretary reported that some pen-pictures were still required for the website and gave details of correspondence received from Rick Bravo in America and Peter Barnes in London. He said that the planning for 2012 would be considered at a meeting in London on 1st April, 2009.

The P.O.R & I was taken from Chapter 26 and resulted in every member being fined for either failing to answer correctly or answering the question and thus being deemed to have cheated. There were also a number of fines levied for interruptions during the reading and inquisition.

Grummer reported on the health of Mr Pott and agreed to maintain contact with Mrs Pott. There was a short discussion about the summer outing on 19th June at Breightmet Golf Club and members were asked to identify how many places they would require.

One problem confronting the club was the appointment of the next Mr Pickwick if the current vice-chairman wasn't able to take up the position. It was suggested that the newer members shouldn't be appointed until they had served as vice-president and that a former Mr Pickwick should be asked to serve, the nomination being Mr Dodson. Tupman objected to this saying that the current Pickwick was like Atilla the Hun and Dodson's appointment would be like Genghis Khan taking over.

When asked if they would like to say anything, one of the guests, Harry Hamilton said he felt sorry for the fines master having to run about collecting fines because there were so many! He went on to relate the story of 2 old ladies who were invited out by a man who wined and dined the first lady then took her into the woods and ravished her. Because of this, the second lady thought she ought to refuse the invitation but her friend advised her to accept the date but wear old clothes.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Dodson who complained that Pickwick won't take advice and whenever members try to advise him, they get fined. This was no way to run a meeting and although Pickwick had occupied the chair for 12 months, he had learned nothing and usually chose the wrong officers to support him. The only thing he did correct was to appoint Ben Allen to act as P.O.C and even then Ben was a volunteer rather than a direct choice. He dreaded to think what the guests thought about the performance.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Weller said he knew Pickwick had done well. Starting below the nick some years ago Pickwick had worked his way upwards until he became top of the pile - with emphasis on the word pile. His main job was to get the parrot, Dodson, off his shoulder and back below the nick where he belonged and where he could be controlled by the vice-chairman who had done a wonderful job in supporting Pickwick. He admitted the fines officer had been busy but pointed out that members were only fined when they deserved it.

Pickwick thanked the proposer and seconder for their kind words but said he had never heard such a load of rubbish and rambling incoherence from the proposer or a more rational presentation of the facts from the seconder.

Good neet owd friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The Fines box contained £8.74 whilst the raffle raised £7.00.