

**Minutes of the 1197th meeting of the
Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club
on 21st October, 2009**

The 1197th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club commenced at 8.05 p.m. with all members being welcomed by Mr Pickwick. Mivins arrived at 8.15 p.m. and suggested that the vice-chairman, Ben Allen should pay his fine for being late because it was his hospital which had caused the delay. Ben immediately offered to pay the fine but Pickwick said the late arrival was justified and no fine would be levied. There was some delay as the drinks order had not arrived so various members were invited to entertain their colleagues whilst waiting and a number of risqué stories followed which resulted in the appropriate fines. It was suggested that the delay in obtaining drinks was because Dodson had volunteered to act as POC and any delay reduced the number of rounds which could be consumed and, consequently, the total outlay to the club.

During the introduction of members, Grummer, who performed with his usual excellence, referred to a number of the members who practised medicine as being 'herb doctors'. Mivins told members that he had recently been reading the life story of one of his wife's ancestor who had eventually come to live in Salford and who practised as a herb doctor in the Swinton and Pendlebury area, often staying at the Royal Oak on Bolton Road. He gave brief details of the ancestor's interesting life and explained that he had learned his trade whilst serving in the navy, simply by treating his shipmates and noting what worked and what didn't!

Dodson referred to the introduction by pointing out that Grummer had suggested many charges in cases involving the firm of Dodson and Fogg were 'cooked up' charges without admitting that it was usually the police who cooked up charges and that Grummer was the policeman, not Dodson or Fogg. Grummer claimed he was employed by the mayor of Ipswich and was obliged to do exactly as he was told by the mayor. To add insult to injury, Dodson then referred to Mrs Mivins' ancestor as a 'witch doctor' and Pickwick thought this was going a bit too far and merited a fine, as proposed by Dr Slammer.

Dodson and Grummer continued to argue about the introduction at great length; in the end Pickwick decided he had had enough and fined them both for arguing on 'spurious grounds' and thus delaying the meeting. Dodson continued to argue, claiming that the fine was because he had argued with Pickwick and was more in spite than justified. This merited a further fine and a diatribe from Dodson, the main tenor of which was that his advice to Pickwick in the past had been excellent but that since he had been forcibly removed below the nick, meetings had gone downhill. The fines box was, once again, pointed in Dodson's direction.

After the minutes had been read and approved, Pickwick remarked that the glasses were empty but Dodson claimed he had only volunteered to act as POC for the first round. Smangle then volunteered to assist Dodson and the drinks order was taken.

Winkle apologised to the guest for the number of rude jokes earlier and said he felt Pickwick's control of the meeting was fully in line with his own thinking. He firmly believed that all members who disagreed with this comment should be fined.

Pickwick agreed with Winkle's sentiments and fined him for being so perfect; he also fined any member who indicated disagreement with Winkle's comments.

Winkle sought permission to visit the toilet but on the way was heard to use a swearword, thus meriting a fine. The fines officer, Jingle, followed Winkle into the toilet, fines box in hand and was heard to be remonstrating with Winkle about the offence and the fine. On returning to the meeting, Weller complained about Jingle's pursuit of him into areas which should be 'off-limits'. Unfortunately, he referred to Jingle as Dodson and incurred a further fine.

The Secretary reported that he had received a note from Peter Barnes confirming that the date of the meeting in London was to be Thursday, 29th October and that a subsequent note requesting resubmission of the names of those attending. Smangle said rail fares were high and he was prepared to drive Pickwick and Grummer to the meeting. He also reported a communication from the Moorside Club agreeing to Wednesday meetings on the appropriate months.

Dodson reported that the proposed price for the Christmas Dinner at Breightmet was prohibitive and that discussions with the golf club were continuing. In the meantime, Grummer had made enquiries at Smithills where the prices were more reasonable but where a £100 deposit was required. Members agreed to leave the arrangements to Dodson and Tupman but to reconsider arrangements for future years.

Due to the lateness of the meeting, it was decided that there would be no POR&I but that each member would pay a 20p donation to the fines box.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Dodson who said normally Pickwick didn't want to hear what Dodson had to say but now he was expecting Dodson to say something nice about him. Pickwick seemed to run the meeting like a cabaret. Dickens lived in the 19th century and we are like tenants from that era in this club. He wished Pickwick would listen to the members instead of taking advice from the President. The vice-chairman was trying to learn his craft and was utterly confused; Pickwick should be leading his vice-chairman in the correct ways of running the club rather than fining, fining, fining. That was no way to run the club because there was no 'Oomph' evident. Seconding the vote of thanks, Fogg said that Pickwick's fines were exorbitant and seemed to be charged by the minute. If the vice-chairman could give more hammer, things might improve so Fogg was prepared to bring 2 blocks of wood to the next meeting so both Pickwick and the vice-chairman could produce more Oomph in future.

Pickwick said he didn't want to follow in Dodson's paths of righteousness but thanked both members for their kind comments.

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

The raffle raised £6.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £7.64 plus 20 Hungarian Forints and a 50p bingo token.