

**Minutes of the 1199th Meeting of the
Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club
on 20th January, 2010**

Due to the absence on holiday of the current Mr Pickwick, the chair was occupied by the President, Smangle, who opened the meeting promptly at 8.00 p.m. Dodson and Tadger volunteered to act as P.O.C's and proceeded to make the usual mess of the drinks order; after several checks where members were asked to repeat their requirements it was discovered that the missing drink was Jingle's! Whilst this confusion was being sorted out it was suggested that Pickwick should invoke rule 8 but because Pickwick didn't know what rule 8 was that idea also fell flat; the meeting was off to a good start!

To try and create a bit of progress, Mivins suggested that Pickwick ask Dodson what language his P.C. was currently communicating in but Dodson was busy trying to sort out the drinks and the request was ignored. Grummer told members that some time ago Dodson had tried to fix Mivins T.V. only to find that it would only communicate in Turkish so Dodson obviously has communication problems all round.

Dodson refuted these allegations of technical failure but admitted that whilst his P.C. now communicated in English, the spellchecker would only work in French. He went on to tell members about the problems he was experiencing as a result of his new Sky TV contract, the dish and other associated equipment having been installed by a workman who admitted he was a plumber by trade. The workman advised that the equipment couldn't go on the roof, nor could it go below the floor, Health and Safety being quoted for these difficulties, and the problems were aggravated by the fact that according to the plumber/installer, the phone was in the wrong place!

For some reason it was decided that the presentation of members to the guest should be shared between the two M.C's, Grummer and Tupman. Grummer led the way and introduced his half of the membership in his usual excellent manner. Tupman's presentation was equally excellent but it must be admitted that in recent months his imitation of the voice of Magnus' lady friend has become so lifelike that doubts are being expressed about Tupman's orientation.

It had been noted that Tupman had been wearing a scarf below his jacket and several members assumed this was because he had forgotten to wear his Pickwick tie. However, at the conclusion of his presentation of members and in response to questions as to why he was still wearing a scarf, he removed it to display a T-shirt from the Dark Horse Inn where the Philadelphia Pickwick Club meetings are held. This had, apparently, been given to him as a present after a relative's visit to the U.S.A.

The toast to the visitors was a sham because several of the members were missing whilst others were waiting for drinks to be brought.

Members were reminded that at their last meeting they had made a collection in aid of the Christie Hospital; similar collections had taken place throughout the Moorside club with the result that Nat Winkle was able to announce that some £3000 had been raised.

There were a number of correspondence items reported by the Secretary; first of all, a letter had been received from Peter Barnes about the October meeting which several members had attended and this was followed by a six-page letter from the Mayor of London about arrangements to celebrate Charles Dickens bicentenary in 2012. Rick Bravo had indicated his intention to visit this

country in 2012 although the actual arrangements were not yet available. Rick had also got a new website but unfortunately the Secretary was not yet able to get into it. Finally, he reported that he had received papers about the Swansea Pickwick Club and also the Pickwick Club of Corsham, the latter being a club for nudists!

The P.O.R & I was taken from Chapter 40 of the book and, as another departure from the norm, Pickwick decided that everybody would pay a fine of 20p with those unable to answer their question having to pay 40p; naturally there were more 40's than 20's going into the Fines Box.

There was a prolonged discussion about what should be done by this club to celebrate Charles Dickens' anniversary in 2012, the consensus being that we should hold our celebration as close to the 11th February as possible, possibly at Nantwich. Pickwick felt that this was being premature because we don't know what is planned in the London area and Tupman suggested it might be better if the members went, en masse, to London to visit some of the places mentioned in the book and meet members from other Pickwick clubs. Eventually it was decided to leave this matter until after the summer recess when things might be clearer.

The Secretary then produced the former Joe the Fat Boy's encyclopaedia of people and places; Joe had worked on this over a number of years and the Secretary thought it might be a good idea to have it printed. This was discussed by members but in the absence of any knowledge of printing costs it was decided to make further enquiries before any decision was taken.

The raffle was apparently proceeding peacefully when Weller complained that Dodson was opening the raffle prizes before deciding which one he wanted to win. Dodson said this was untrue, he had already selected his prize and was merely checking that there were sufficient prizes left to ensure everybody got one.

The quality of the meeting was summed up by the guest who said he had enjoyed the meeting but didn't have a clue about what was going on.

Over the years Dodson has insisted that there are several nice things said about him in the book although he has never actually produced concrete evidence to support that claim. Tupman had been leafing through the book and suddenly announced he had found Pickwick's definition of Dodson and Fogg as "Mean, rascally pettifogging robbers". There was no response to this from Dodson.

The Vote of Thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Weller who claimed that Pickwick had let himself down in the presence of guests by making such a complete shambles of the meeting. There had been no continuity at all, long periods where members were wondering what was going on, a failure to keep to the agenda and at one point looking at photographs when members were seeking progress. Gavelling had been almost non-existent and the whole meeting had been poor from start to finish. Both Pickwick and the vice-chairman needed to buck up.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Rev. Stiggins said it was customary for the seconded to oppose the proposer of the motion but on this occasion he couldn't find anything good to say about Pickwick's performance. Many times it had been said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely and the truth of this statement was clearly reflected in the evening's performance.

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

The Fines Box contained £7.24 whilst the raffle raised £8.00.