

## **Minutes of the 1202<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2010**

The 1202<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club wasn't a huge success even though it started on time and with Mr Pickwick looking very spruce. The basic problem was that neither Mr Pickwick or the members had any idea of what was going on. Pickwick tried valiantly to establish his authority by appointing members to the various jobs needed to ensure a strong meeting but, unfortunately, most of the appointments were square pegs in round holes and, trivial though it may seem, some of the appointees were more concerned that the tables were unsteady and the drinks might spill rather than their allocated duties.

The problems were aggravated by the need for the acting Deputy Chairman to use a tin of 'Brasso' instead of a proper gavel to acknowledge Pickwick's call, and when there were arguments about whether Pickwick's toast was to be 'sung' or 'drunk' the future of the meeting seemed doomed.

Jingle was taken to task by Hopkins who claimed that despite the earlier discussion, Jingle was still singing the wrong words (it was subsequently discovered that Jingle's hearing aid battery was failing so he probably couldn't hear what he was singing!).

It was decided that each member should introduce his own character and, strangely, most were performed excellently which showed that members were fully conversant with their characters although a certain amount of poetic licence needed to be allowed in the case of Smangle who was carried away by his experiences in the Fleet prison which, according to his description, was similar to an off-licence with such things as cigars, beer, lager, etc. readily available from the prison shop! Not to be outdone, Jingle's explanation of his character was long and rambling, meandering through most of the situations described in the book whether jingle was involved or not.

Members have become accustomed to the fact that whenever Dodson is asked to act as POC, the space between drinks becomes longer despite whoever is appointed as his assistant, in this case, Mr.Fogg. On this occasion, in addition to the complaints about delays in ordering drinks, when those drinks finally arrived there were problems in deciding which drink was which so members were regaled with comments such as "I think this is lager, or it might be shandy, can you try it? If that's the shandy, who's got the lager? Did you want ice and lemon with your G & T?". After a lengthy sort of alcoholic 'pass the parcel', members finished with the drinks they ordered and the meeting could continue.

Pickwick decided to excuse himself and disappeared into the toilet; he reappeared shortly afterwards counting banknotes and was promptly asked by Smangle what he had been doing in the toilet to earn that cash; to date there has been no response to the best of my knowledge.

Introducing a more sober aspect to the meeting, Sam Weller told members that Tony Weller was due to go into hospital on 19<sup>th</sup> September for a heart operation; members expressed the wish that Tony would have a successful operation and a speedy recovery.

The Secretary reported three items of correspondence, two from Rick Bravo and one from Peter Barnes. The first letter from Rick Bravo was an invitation to a 'Summer Frolic' at the waterfront home of Mr Muzzle and contained a list of the food and drink which would be available on that occasion. Rick's second letter suggested that several members of the club would be travelling to the UK for the 2012 celebrations. Peter Barnes had also referred to the 2012 celebrations and contained an invitation to a meeting in London on 29<sup>th</sup> September to consider some of the suggestions, one of which was for a Grand Dinner at the Connaught Rooms. Unfortunately, it was thought unlikely that any members would be able to attend at such short notice.

Dr. Slammer read the POR & I and questioned the members on that reading; answers were varied but generally everybody paid a fine or donation. The reading was followed by a discussion led by Tupman about the Christmas Dinner which is to be held at Breightmet golf Club on 3 December.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Mr Fogg who claimed it had been an excellent evening but then damned the performance by suggesting that Pickwick would improve as he went on. Despite this he said the evening had been most pleasant. The vote of thanks was seconded by Jingle who said he would do his best but was in urgent need of a new battery for his hearing aid. He suggested there had been an unruly crew present at the meeting and that the main problem had been caused by members below the nick, all of whom should have known better. He claimed that he had never attended such an unruly meeting in his life, nor one so disorganised. Pickwick needed to get a grip quickly and stop being so lenient for the sake of the Fines Box which was almost empty. Pickwick needed to treat the other members more harshly and clamp down on any efforts to confuse the meeting. Despite that, he felt Pickwick had done a marvellous job!

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 £4.45.