

Minutes of the 1204th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 17th November, 2010

The meeting was opened at 8.05 p.m. with Dodson trying to influence the Fines Officer by bringing goodies from Spain; usually these take the form of a tin of Meow but on this occasion, in addition, there was a tin of sardines because Dodson claimed that Meow was in short supply. Weller said the sardines would be just as good as the Meow because it was known that 'pussies' liked sardines.

Smangle, who had brought a guest, was fined for not wearing a club tie or badge and despite his entreaties, the fine remained, all his pleas being regarded as weak.

The meeting was already very disjointed so it was no surprise when Rule 8 was invoked and Tupman was allowed to tell members a joke. This was followed by Smangle advising members that it takes 1 hour for every unit of alcohol to disperse and that most motorists booked for drink driving were caught the morning following their drinking session; Tupman suggested motorists were probably better off driving immediately after a 'session' rather than waiting for the following morning.

Whilst Rule 8 was still in force, Dodson told members about a card game at Little Lever where Grummer was taken for a ride; Grummer claimed that Dodson had offered to help him but it just shows that nobody in his right mind should play cards with a group of ex-coppers.

Returning to the meeting proper, Smangle introduced his guest as a plumber and various derogatory comments about the club were voiced; however, Jamie, the guest seemed to be enjoying himself and appeared to ignore the comments.

Smangle was then induced to perform the introduction of members to the guest and proceeded to do so in his usual inimitable manner whereby the introductions bore no resemblance to the characters as envisaged by Charles Dickens!

Commencing with Alfred Jingle, Smangle claimed Jingle was a 'lesbian' but after some thought changed the description to 'thespian'; he claimed that nobody liked Dodson and Fogg and suggested that Dodson looked like Alastair Darling, the politician with his white hair and black eyebrows. Moving on to Grummer, he claimed he was as bent as Dodson and Fogg whilst Bob Sawyer was older than everybody present. He claimed that Nat Winkle used to do marathons and that Mrs Winkle did a marvellous buffet, and advised members that Tracy Tupman had a girl's name "like the one who got knocked off the X factor". Mivins was in the Fleet Prison and did the minutes every week and he couldn't say anything about Peter Magnus "but this is him".

Smangle then decided to take a number of photographs but was told he should have got permission from Tracy Tupman, the official Club Photographer. Smangle apologised and sought the appropriate

permission, citing as his reason the fact that Tupman was obviously on his last legs and the club would need to appoint a new photographer before long so he was merely making his play for the job.

After the minutes had been read, Dodson referred to the saga of Tony Weller's continually deferred operation which had been outlined in those minutes by his son, Sam Weller. Dodson advised members that the operation had, at last, taken place and that Tony Weller was recovering well, aided by a bottle of medicine from the club.

Tupman and Dodson then referred to the fact that they had been absent from the last meeting and had thus missed Jingle's birthday drink for all members and asked whether it was too late for them to take advantage of Jingle's offer.

The meeting was rapidly turning into a benefit for Smangle who next volunteered to perform the P.O.R & I; unfortunately, the book had been taken by Dr. Slammer for rebinding so various suggestions for the performance were put forward, the least offensive being that Smangle did it from memory. Eventually a copy of the book 'Dicken's London was found and the reading was taken from that. Virtually everybody had to pay a fine, including those whose questions were from a section of the book not covered by the reading!

For some unknown reason, Tupman then told members about the 'Franklin' expedition seeking a sea passage round the arctic seas which resulted in their demise, prior to which they had been reduced to eating their own shoes when the food ran out. Mivins referred to a report of a recent Russian expedition which had succeeded in traversing the arctic seas using specially built ice-breakers for the purpose. The suggestion was that convoys led by ice-breakers could use this route to the far east rather than having to go round Africa or South America.

Grummer indicated that he had provisionally booked 10 rooms in the Crown at Nantwich for the 11th February, 2012 celebrations, and Tupman said the Christmas Dinner was booked at Brightmet Golf Club on 3rd December, 2010.

At this point, the Chairman's gavel fell to pieces (probably due to boredom) and had to be repaired. Smangle proposed the Vote of Thanks to the Chairman and vice chairman by indicating his concern about Pickwick's performance which obviously needed, but didn't receive, constant advice from a previous incumbent such as Smangle himself. The meeting had been very disappointing and the vice-chairman had been conspicuous by his failure to echo the chairman's gavel on most occasions.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Weller suggested Pickwick had performed to the limit of his ability whilst the vice-chairman had been a little bit slow - although he admitted the vice chairman was a little bit slow.

'Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £7.00 whilst the Fines Box contained £10.91.