

Minutes of the 1205th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 19th January, 2011

The meeting was opened at 8.06 p.m. with Dodson announcing that this was to be a free evening; Tupman suggested that this was simply an expedient to avoid having to buy drinks for members to celebrate his own birthday. Mivins said that it was nothing to do with Dodson's celebrated meanness, it was simply that Snodgrass had gone to Kenya for 3 weeks and Dodson always organises a free evening when Snodgrass is absent. It was realised that Jingle wasn't present so Tupman phoned him to let him know it was a free evening. Jingle admitted that he had forgotten about the meeting despite a reminder from Shiela Jingle, and felt that at such short notice he couldn't really attend.

Dodson agreed to act as P.O.C. because members were dying of thirst and the opening toasts couldn't be taken in the absence of drinks. During Dodson's absence at the bar, Tupman and Weller told members that the Sicilian barber, one of the regular guests at Summer outings and Christmas Dinners, should have been on holiday in Tenerife but on the day of departure had had a heart attack and was now recovering; there was no truth in the assertion that the attack was caused by the reduction in the number of raffle prizes he won at the recent Christmas Dinner.

Whilst waiting for the drinks to be brought a number of members below the nick were fined for swearing, a feature which is never seen above the nick.

Once the drinks had been received it might have been assumed that the meeting would follow the agenda but instead, a considerable time was spent discussing non-Pickwickian matters; to try and introduce some sense to the proceedings Pickwick suggested introduction of Members but as there were no guests there was no particular justification for the introduction, and for that matter, no particular interest.

At 8.45 p.m. on the dot, the door opened and Jingle, as immaculate as ever, appeared with a drink in his hand. He explained that he felt that members should always be ready to attend meetings, particularly when a free evening had been announced, and only regretted arriving late and thus missing the first free round. Jingle's dapper appearance is legendary and several members wonder if he sleeps in his best suit in the hope that somebody will ring and offer to buy him a drink!

Pickwick then decided to invoke rule 8 and invited the Secretary to entertain members; he did so by reading from a document which purported to report Nelson's last words, brought up to date by modern legislation. This caused much hilarity and many were the requests for copies of the document.

Grummer then told members about the recent military parade in Manchester: there he had met an Admiral who asked him where he had served and on being told 'Aqaba', asked whether it was O.K. Grummer responded that Lawrence of Arabia had occupied it in 1917 but left after only 3 days! The

Admiral then asked if anything of interest had happened whilst Grummer was there and Grummer replied that they had a courtesy visit from H.M.S. Daring, adding that 'that's a Destroyer' resulting in a glare from the Admiral who said "I know it's a Destroyer".

Tupman had recently returned from Spain and had brought a gift of Calamaris for Jingle in the hope that this would 'sweeten' Mrs Jingle. Dodson interrupted by suggesting Jingle check the date on the tin because he said that the particular brand Tupman had brought was on special offer 2 years ago when he was there. Jingle examined the tin but then advised that this wasn't one of the special offer tins because it was dated 1958!

Referring to the minutes of the last meeting which contained a complaint from Grummer about being 'fleeced' by a posse of retired police officers, Dodson said it should be recorded that on a subsequent visit to the card school Grummer was the one doing the 'fleecing'. Grummer admitted he had done well on that visit but insisted it was due to him ignoring Dodson's advice!

The Secretary reported that he had sent Peter Barnes details of the intended visit of this club to The Crown at Nantwich for the 2012 celebrations and had received a reply referring to the London arrangements and expressing the hope that some of the American members would be able to attend.

The P.O.R & I was presented by Tupman and was taken from Chapter VI and involved a Clergyman's poem entitled 'The Ivy Green'; understandably, everybody was fined for failing to answer their question.

At 10.55p.m. somebody reminded Pickwick that we hadn't taken the 9 o'clock toast.

The Vote of Thanks was presented by Dodson who said how poor the meeting had been; he had hoped that things would improve in the new year but sadly that hadn't happened and the meeting had been controlled by Tupman rather than Pickwick who had shown too much favouritism and not enough management. He thought Weller showed great honesty by actually paying a fine for an offence which Pickwick hadn't even noticed and this act actually prompted Tupman to do the same which was fortunate because if the fines box had relied on Pickwick, it would have been very light. He could only hope that things would improve in February and March.

Seconding the Vote of Thanks, Jingle said he thought Pickwick had performed excellently; anybody who could get money out of Dodson must be doing something right and Pickwick's control had led to members questioning their conscience when the subject of fines was raised. The refurbished book didn't look very refurbished but was still better than nothing, and something needed to be done about the vice-chairman's gavel which was obviously too heavy because he hadn't been able to use it very often. He apologised for being late but explained that many people had pulled together to get him to the meeting - unfortunately he didn't know how he was going to get home!

'Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £5.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £8.37.