

Minutes of the 1207th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16th March, 2011

The meeting was opened at 8.04 p.m. with Smangle acting as Vice-chairman due to the absence of the current holder of that position. It was suggested that as Snodgrass was absent it should automatically be a free evening but Dodson refused to listen to the members, pointing out that the next meeting would be the AGM which was always a free evening; he added that he wouldn't authorise a free evening whilst his friend Snodgrass was absent.

In view of the increasing amounts being won on the Euro lottery, Weller suggested that members should contribute and it was agreed that £4 per head would be appropriate; the members, all being optimists spent the next few minutes discussing how the winnings should be shared out!

Rule 8 was invoked and Grummer related the tale of a trip to Derbyshire many years ago when the children of Grummer and Mivins went on their first ever scout camp. Being free of encumbrances, it was suggested that the Grummer and Mivins families should go for a drive that evening and Derbyshire was chosen as the target. The evening was enjoyable but refreshment places were few until, in the distance was seen a welcoming light. Pulling up in the car park, entry was made to the hostelry which appeared to be deserted. A lady eventually appeared but on being asked about refreshments indicated that there were none to be had apart from crisps. Faced with this problem, things appeared to be sparse until two buxom ladies dressed in their finery appeared for a breath of fresh air - it seemed that there was a wedding reception in progress and on being told of the refreshment problem they suggested they would bring some sandwiches from the reception. The sandwiches duly appeared along with the husbands of the two ladies in question; drinks were purchased for the party and during the conversation it was suggested that the Mivinses and Grummers should join the wedding reception. Buttonholes were produced and the party joined during which both Grummer and Mivins danced with the bride.

The wedding party joined the Pickwickians and the conversation revealed that the groom was Latvian, as were several of the guests. They had been forced to join the German army during the war and had been brought to this country as prisoners of war and had subsequently remained here, working in the quarries in Buxton. All bore tattoos on their arms showing their numbers and blood group from their army days.

Weller responded by producing a police magazine which purported to outline the various qualities of different police ranks; for example the chief constable could leap tall buildings with a single bound, walk on water, was more powerful than a steam locomotive and faster than a speeding bullet. The police constable on the other hand usually bumped into buildings, sometimes recognised a steam locomotive, wasn't allowed to handle a gun in case he shot himself and invariably fell in the water. Between these two extremes came the chief inspector who could leap tall buildings with the wind behind him, was as powerful as a shunting engine, could fire a bullet under supervision and can walk on water in an indoor pool.

Peter Magnus reported a communication from the Philadelphia club who had ordered silk ties worth £2500 but they had not been delivered because the manufacturer had gone bankrupt. The company had recently been resurrected but the deliveries still hadn't taken place.

The meeting still seemed to be more interested in stories rather than Pickwick matters with Weller telling the tale of a deaf and dumb man who had gone to Blackpool with a group for a few days holiday. He had got separated from the group and eventually finished up very drunk, at which point some neighbours who were in Blackpool for the day found him and decided to give him a lift home in their car!

At this point Jingle arrived wearing slippers; he claimed that these were because he was having problems walking but Weller suggested that it was in the hope that he could slide into the meeting quietly without anybody realising he was late and thus avoid the fine.

There had been some complaints about members rising to their feet and interrupting the meeting; Grummer said it was noticeable that the main offenders were the older members who had to interrupt and say their piece before they forgot what they were going to say.

After discussion about the summer outing there were complaints about the shortage of beef at the last buffet and it was suggested that the main reason for the shortage was Dodson whose loaded plate made the other members jealous. Dodson resented these remarks and claimed that he had only taken his rightful quantity of beef but that it had been placed on top of a portion of salad and thus looked more substantial than it really was.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Tupman who reminded members that Winkle had suggested the meeting should be conducted as a musical and there were certainly plenty of tracks; unfortunately, they were so widespread in subject matter that nobody would be able to make sense of them. He had decided to propose the vote of thanks himself because he didn't think any other member would be prepared to do so because the meeting had been so poor with more time being spent setting up a lottery ticket than on proper business. Similarly, there had been so many unjustified fines that members might try to get their own back if asked to perform this duty. Rarely had there been a poorer meeting.

Seconding the motion, Dodson said he could find little to say because he had spent most of the meeting on P.O.C. duties and was thus out of the room most of the time.

'Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £6.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £7.97.