

Minutes of the 1208th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 21st September, 2011

The 1208th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club turned out to be a nightmare for the Minute Writer because so little business took place that the notes taken amounted to little more than half a page, so imagination has to come to the fore on this occasion.

The meeting, which was poorly attended, was formally opened at 8.07 p.m. with Ben Allen in the chair and Smangle occupying the dual role of Vice-Chairman and P.O.C. Numbers were rather low and comments were made about the members who preferred to go to a football match rather than attend a club meeting, especially when several members who were classed as 'sick, halt and lame' had made the effort to attend. There followed a long discussion about the agony suffered by gout sufferers, the effectiveness of the various treatments and the frequency of taking medication. To those of us who are in the peak of fitness, these discussions were less important than making progress at the meeting, but Pickwick is a medical man by profession and allowed his professional interests to override the needs of the club.

Smangle then told members about his grandson and was promptly invited to purchase drinks for the members to wet the baby's head. This short intermission was followed by further medical discussions, this time on the subject of 'dead bodies I have known', most of which involved police activity.

Smangle was then invited to present the introduction of members, probably on the grounds of his previous efforts in this field. On this occasion he took the easy way out by simply announcing the Pickwickian name of each member without explaining the role of that member. There was a short discussion on whether the introduction had been sufficient, it being suggested that many members didn't know their characters whilst others were too ancient to remember who they were and needed the monthly reminder to keep them au fait with the situation. However, at this point the food arrived and members decided that food was more important than a theoretical discussion so the matter was dropped.

The second half started in similar fashion to the earlier part of the meeting with Pickwick failing to control the members who decided that they would invoke rule 8 and tell funny stories rather than getting on with the meeting. Pickwick's vice chairman was of no use because he was spending much time wearing his second hat as P.O.C and was out of the room for a lot of the meeting.

Eventually Pickwick put his foot down and insisted that the meeting progress with the P.O.R & I which was performed by Dr. Slammer whose inimitable style meant that nobody was able to answer their question correctly and the fines box profited accordingly. To be fair, Dr Slammer agreed to make a contribution to the fines box.

In the absence of Dodson, the raffle was organised by Tupman and for the first time in many years

the raffle tickets were quite dry and although there were still some suggestions that a fiddle had occurred the proof was lacking, Tupman obviously being a better fiddler than Dodson.

In any other business, Grummer reported that Mrs Mivins had died recently and the club had made a contribution to charity in her memory. Mivins thanked the club for their generosity. Tupman reminded members that this year's Christmas Dinner would be held on 2nd December at Breightmet Golf Club, commencing at 8.00 p.m. as usual. He reported that, once again, new caterers had been appointed by the golf club and a new steward was also in post. Early indications were that the catering was an improvement on last year.

Pickwick apologised for failing to attend the last summer outing but explained that he had been in Ireland attending a family funeral.

Grummer reminded members that the February 2012 meeting at Nantwich to celebrate Charles Dickens bicentenary was fast approaching and he would need to know who intended to attend by the November meeting. Three members who had previously not put their names down indicated their intention to attend and several members added further to the cash already held by the Treasurer.

Jingle said that he and Mrs Jingle had been invited to a presentation at Sedgley Park for their daughter who had completed 20 years civilian service with the police. Members offered their congratulations to Mr and Mrs Jingle and to Jingle junior.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was presented by Snodgrass who said he was stuck for words. He had employed a chauffeur to transport him 20 miles to get to the meeting and the result had been no meeting but a number of jokes under rule 8. He had never been to a meeting like it; it was a complete shambles and aggravated by the absence of bitter. However, it had been most enjoyable provided you forgot what was supposed to be happening. He was wondering whether it was advisable to hire a chauffeur for the next meeting.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said it had been an excellent meeting well supported by a first-class P.O.C and P.O.R & I.

All members decided they should contribute £1.00 to the fines box.

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

The Fines box contained £12.86 whilst the raffle raised £4.50.