

Minutes of the 1209th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 19th October, 2011

The meeting was opened promptly at 8.00 p.m; this was a concession to members because the new Mr Pickwick had suggested opening the meeting early so he could fine all members for not being present when the meeting opened! He was advised in no uncertain terms that such action was not acceptable. Dodson immediately volunteered to act as P.O.C. presumably so he could keep close watch on the volume of alcohol being purchased; he also reported on the condition of Sam Weller who had recently suffered a heart attack whilst abroad and had just returned to this country. Snodgrass said he had arranged to call on Weller in the near future.

It was noted that Smangle wasn't present even though Grummer and Mivins had been told of his intention to attend. With Pickwick's permission, Grummer contacted Smangle by mobile phone and was told Smangle had forgotten the meeting but would be present very shortly.

When the first round of drinks appeared, Pickwick said because his drink was cheaper than those of other members, he should get a refund of his subs; Dodson said on that basis Mivins was due an even bigger refund because his drink was cheaper than Pickwick's. In any case, the more experienced members know that once Dodson gets his hands on the subscriptions, there is no way a refund is going to appear!

Grummer advised members that Smangle had recently bought 100 Viet Cong camouflage suits and would, no doubt be wearing one tonight. When Smangle did arrive, after paying his fine for late arrival, he was asked about the camouflage suits and said he was selling them at £10 as 'Dog walking suits'. There was a minor problem in that the waterproofing tended to transfer itself to any other garments the person was wearing but he was sure that if put in the washing machine for three or four times everything should be fine. Ben Allen suggested the camouflage suits would be excellent for people intending to take part in further riots because they wouldn't be capable of being identified.

Mivins commented on a reference in the minutes to Mr and Mrs Jingle attending a presentation to their son by the Chief Constable for completing 20 years service with GMP. Jingle had subsequently telephoned to apologise for the mistake because the presentation was to his daughter and a presentation to his son for similar service had not yet taken place. He claimed that the mistake was probably due to his being sober at the time.

Dodson said that the 'Fines Box' figure in the minutes for the last meeting was incorrect being 40p too low. At the same time, he complained about the number of fines Pickwick was giving him when he was only trying to help a new Pickwick to overcome teething difficulties. Even when Dodson had suggested that each member introduce his own character, Pickwick had refused — probably because he didn't know his own character, and this dictatorial attitude showed a weakness in Pickwick. Ben Allen excused Dodson's tirade on the grounds that he was still in a state of euphoria after

Manchester City's win last night. He added that he understood that many travel agents were reluctant to arrange transport for City supporters to overseas matches because the last time City were in Europe their supporters tore all the sails from the masts and threw the cannonballs over the side of the ship.

Dodson and Winkle said they had read recently that 'Pickwick Papers' was originally instigated by a man called Seymour and had been 'acquired' by Dickens. Seymour subsequently shot himself! Sam Weller telephoned at 9.00 p.m. to wish all members good luck; Pickwick and the members reciprocated these good wishes.

Winkle was asked to perform the P.O.R & I but declined and Smangle offered to perform this task but then realised he had left his glasses at home and couldn't read the book. Eventually the job was taken by Snodgrass who performed an excellent reading which resulted in fines for everybody for failing to answer their question. The only exception was Magnus who answered correctly and was fined for being a know-all.

The next round of drinks was paid for by Jingle to celebrate his 81st birthday. The raffle was once again a fiddle, evidenced on this occasion by the first ticket drawn not having been issued to anybody. Dodson came out with the weak excuse that he had inadvertently torn out the extra ticket and it was suggested that in future Dodson shouldn't be allowed to have a drink until after the raffle.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Jingle who claimed he needed total silence to prepare himself for the ordeal. The first meeting of the new season had been a disaster with the fines box requiring a mobile crane to lift it and he didn't know how the fines total had reached such a level with so few members present. This had been the second meeting and he was feeling much the worse for wear after Pickwick's performance. The vice-chairman is supposed to learn the job by being Pickwick's deputy for 12 months but he can have learned little on this occasion which has been a complete shambles. He doubted if any members would want to go to Durham on this showing. (It was subsequently realised he meant Nantwich).

Seconding the vote of thanks, Dodson said he didn't know who the Chairman was because Pickwick had refused to describe his character, but would remind members that subscriptions were now due. He wondered whether members had made a mistake in appointing the current Mr Pickwick who seemed to have little respect for the members, on occasion telling members to 'shut up'. It was quite obvious that his stay in the Fleet Prison had done little to improve his manners. Despite this, Pickwick had done a grand job and the vice-chairman would do well to follow his lead.

'Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £5.00 whilst the Fines Box contained £6.88.