

Minutes of the 1214th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Club on 17th October, 2012

The 1214th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club commenced on a serious note when Pickwick advised the members that the toilets were being modernised and that it would be necessary for any members needing to visit them to go downstairs to the toilets adjoining the billiards room. After this important announcement, the meeting commenced at 8.04 p.m. when Winkle began to collect subscriptions in the absence of the Treasurer (Dodson) who was visiting Spain; it might be appropriate to audit the club's accounts on his return. At about this time a text was received from Dodson suggesting that if the 'float' he had left with Winkle wasn't sufficient, a supplementary subscription should be collected from members - nice to know that even on holiday Dodson has the interests of the club at heart.

Pickwick having recently had a knee operation, members agreed that he should remain seated during the meeting - the problem of negotiating the stairs to reach the 'gents' would be dealt with when or if it arose. There being no P.O.C, Smangle volunteered to act in that capacity and proved his efficiency by producing a sheet of paper on which to record the orders and a pen with which to record them. Unfortunately, that was where the efficiency ended because it took three attempts to resolve the first drinks order!

On this occasion there was a guest brought by Grummer who was introduced as a member of the Committee at the Moorside club, so a comprehensive introduction of members was necessary for his benefit; this was performed with the usual expertise by Tupman. Grummer then advised his guest that Smangle had bought a number of Viet-Cong camouflage suits and was selling them cheaply from his pet stall on Swinton Precinct. These suits were advertised as 'dog walking suits' and were ideal provided the weather remained fine - if it rained, the wearer was likely to find his white 'y' fronts also became camouflaged.

It seemed that Dodson had complained about the number of false donations to the fines box and the fines officer had been warned to take special care in case a washer was placed in the box in lieu of a coin of the realm. Grummer immediately took umbrage at this comment which he felt was aimed at him. He explained that he and Mivins had recently entertained Dodson and Mrs Dodson to lunch to celebrate their wedding anniversary. After lunch the party had visited a garden centre and during the visit Grummer had found a bright new washer on the ground and had put it in his pocket. He claimed that he was a sentimental character and had thought the washer to be a fine memento of the lunch. Unfortunately, a few days later during a friendly game of cards at the Moorside club, Mivins had discovered the washer amongst his winnings. Winkle had been accused of putting the washer in the kitty even though he didn't possess it and the suggestion was that Mivins might try to 'unload' his winnings to the fines box at this meeting. Mivins claimed he had already got rid of it to Winkle, but its present whereabouts was unknown. Slammer said it was a pity the washer was lost because the exhaust on his car was rattling badly and he thought the washer might be his.

The Secretary reported a number of communications from USA which indicated that the Philadelphia

Club would be visiting London between 25th October and 4th November and enclosing an itinerary for their visit and an invitation to join them at the Park Lane Hotel. Rochester Pickwick Club advised that the Texas Pickwick Club would be visiting UK at the same time. The only other letter was a request from the Charles Dickens Statue Fund suggesting a donation in excess of £25,000 would be appropriate! It was thought that this was a 'scam' so the request was ignored.

In the absence of Dodson, the raffle was organised by Winkle who collected the 50p's as he went round the table. On reaching Mivins he was running short of change so told Mivins to hand his 50p to Tupman and then moved on without issuing a raffle ticket (perhaps this is something Dodson could introduce). On being reminded that Mivins hadn't got a ticket, Winkle gave Magnus' ticket to Mivins and gave Magnus a new ticket. After the raffle, Tupman said the ticket given to Mivins won one of the earlier prizes whilst the ticket handed to Magnus was one of the last ones drawn and thus gave Magnus virtually no choice of prize. Despite this problem, Grummer claimed that the raffle had been exemplary and that all the tickets had been dry.

Grummer's guest thanked the members for entertaining him and said that as a committee member at the Moorside Club, he would ensure that the toilets were finished before the next meeting and would also buy a book about Dickens.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Smangle who claimed that the meeting had been atrocious and he was annoyed about the scorn poured on his haircut. Pickwick had little idea about what was happening and was being manipulated by Ben Allen which had resulted in a considerable number of fines for Smangle. As far as the vice-chairman was concerned, he might as well have stayed at home for all the good he had done. The vote of thanks was seconded by Weller who said Pickwick had struggled up the stairs with the aid of a stick due to his infirmity so that members could have a good evening and he had been well supported by the vice chairman who had performed almost perfectly even though unused to gavelling. They had both been helped by the stand-in treasurer in the absence of Dodson. On the subject of Dodson, he suggested it might be appropriate to ask why Dodson always went on holiday when a club meeting was scheduled; Pickwick agreed with this comment and asked that it be included in the minutes.

Good neet owd friends was sung by all and was followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £7.00 whilst the Fines Box contained £4.51 plus 1 euro.