

Minutes of the 1215th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Club on 21st November, 2012

Attendance at the 1215th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was rather poor with several of the regular attenders being absent. Whilst there was some excuse for Pickwick who had apparently been transported to our penal colony in Van Diemans Land and for Peter Magnus who was on a three line whip to attend his mother's birthday party, no such excuse could be made for Dodson who was attending a football match – it appeared that he had paid for his ticket before the date was arranged and all members know what Dodson is like where money is concerned! it seems quite significant that since Pickwick's arrival, Australia has suffered the worst bush fires for years but no doubt the Australian authorities will soon realise the cause and send him back to us.

With Rev. Stiggins occupying the chair, the meeting commenced promptly at 8 p.m. with a number of members being fined for late arrival; Smangle, Weller, Ben Allen and Sawyer complained that the fault was not theirs because there was a new barmaid on duty and she wasn't as quick as the usual lady. Pickwick decided they should have anticipated such a problem and arrived earlier. Smangle claimed this was victimisation and was fined a second time.

It was announced that the toilets modernisation was completed; several members decided it was necessary for them to visit even though they must have seen gents toilets in the past; the general consensus was that the plumber had done a good job, particularly as the smoke alarm was no longer bleeping like a budgie.

By this time it was decided that the meeting ought to start, so Weller volunteered to act as P.O.C because most members had brought drinks with them but had emptied them whilst waiting for the meeting proper to start and had nothing with which to drink a toast to Pickwick or anybody else for that matter and a further delay occurred whilst drinks were obtained. As soon as the drinks were handed out, Slammer attempted to start the meeting and was fined for taking the Chairman's role. Slammer tried to gain some sympathy by announcing he had been fitted with a defibrillator and wasn't allowed to lift anything heavy but, of course, sympathy doesn't apply in the Pickwick and he was fortunate not to be fined again.

Smangle introduced his guest, Alan Wallace, and explained that Alan was the person who managed to keep his van on the road: Weller said it was about time Smangle bought a decent van and saved Alan the trouble of trying to maintain the heap of junk pretending to be a company vehicle.

Snodgrass produced a newspaper article which suggested that Dickens enjoyed a drink and indicated the vast amount of drinks left in his cellar when he died. It was agreed that this club was correct in keeping up the tradition of drinking started by Dickens.

Grummer advised that Jingle was absent because he had lost his hearing aid and felt that there would be little sense attending a meeting which he couldn't follow because he couldn't hear.

Members accepted this as a legitimate excuse but were unhappy about Dodson's excuse which they thought flimsy and decided that he should face a double fine at the next meeting. Smangle complained that Pickwick wasn't levying sufficient fines and was promptly fined for trying to teach Pickwick his job.

Tupman read a letter from the club secretary explaining to the Dicken's Statue Fund why this club were not prepared or able to contribute towards the cost of the proposed statue. He was then accused by Snodgrass of trying to model for the statue because of the length of time he stood preparing to read the P.O.R & I which was from Chapter 54. As usual, the inquisition raised much needed funds for the fines box.

There was a long discussion about the Christmas Dinner and transport arrangements. It was agreed that the cost of a mini bus couldn't be justified because of the low numbers travelling from the Salford area and provision of a taxi was also rejected on the grounds that there were sufficient car places in vehicles belonging to members who were intending to use their own vehicles and appropriate arrangements were made.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice chairman was proposed by Snodgrass who said that despite his previous time in the post, this year Pickwick hadn't had much experience in control, and unfortunately it showed. Unfortunately, the temporary Pickwick hadn't known he would be in the chair and had been hoping for a quiet evening, only to suddenly find himself in the hot seat. This made it particularly difficult for the person nominated to propose the vote of thanks because control of the meeting had been non-existent. Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said he felt the meeting had been a huge success and that members had appreciated the virtual absence of fines, although he appreciated that Dodson would not be happy about this. He felt that if the Australian authorities could be persuaded to hold the real Mr Pickwick for another three months the current reserve would be a welcome replacement.

Good neet owd friends was badly sung by all and was followed by the National Anthem
The raffle raised £6.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £7.77.