

Minutes of the 1216th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16th January, 2013

Once again, the meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was lacking a leader with Mr Pickwick enjoying life in the warmer climes of Australia, whether as a holiday maker or enjoying some time at 'Her Majesty's Pleasure' is not clear. As a result the chair at the 1216th meeting was once again taken by the President, Rev. Stiggins, who adopted the role of Pickwick for the evening.

The meeting opened at 8.05 p.m. with a report from Dodson that he had received a phone call from Australia suggesting that the real Mr Pickwick was hoping to be back for the February meeting, but this did not release Dodson from the fine Pickwick claimed he had been instructed to levy by his counterpart in Australia for Dodson's absence from a recent meeting in order to attend a football match. Snodgrass claimed the members at the previous meeting had considered this offence to be so serious that a double fine was merited but Dodson said he was not going to pay any fine until the real Mr Pickwick returned when the matter could be sorted out. This angered Pickwick who insisted that the fine be paid at once which resulted in Dodson confiscating the fines box.

Pickwick then announced that he had been threatened by Dodson and Grummer over this matter and that further fines would be levied for this further offence; however, because Dodson had the fines box, little could be done to enforce the fine. Weller said he knew the recent increases in gas prices were causing the general population of this country severe hardship but he didn't consider this to be sufficient justification for refusing to pay the fine. Eventually, to make progress, the fine was temporarily withdrawn until the next meeting and Dodson surrendered the fines box to Snodgrass who had volunteered to act as Fines Master in the absence of Jingle.

The meeting followed its usual chaotic course until the time came for Grummer to perform the introduction of members, which was done in his usual excellent manner but, unusually, in an anti-clockwise direction. Members congratulated Grummer for his presentation but Weller claimed it was incorrect to label Mivins as a thief when all he was doing was appropriating a tip for services rendered, money which would have been passed over automatically if the customer had not been thinking of other things at the time. When Grummer introduced Dr Slammer he rested his hands on Slammer's shoulders; Slammer said he didn't know whether this was a sign of affection or whether Grummer was trying to switch off Slammer's recently fitted defibrillator.

Weller had volunteered to act as P.O.C and when he checked on the list of drinks required, Pickwick asked him to find out the score in the Manchester/West Ham cup replay whilst he was at the bar. Weller said he wasn't interested in football but was prepared to contribute to the cost of having Pickwick treated for this affliction.

In the meantime, Dodson had been fined for another offence and paid up without complaint, an

action which Pickwick said should have been recorded on film as an acknowledged 'first'. At this point Dodson was asked to speak about his recent trip to Spain which had resulted in the first of his unpaid fines. He reported that the whole trip had been a disaster from start to finish. The intention was to arrive in Spain in early afternoon so that he and his companion could call at a supermarket to obtain supplies but delays at the airport made this impossible and it was dark when they arrived. Further delays followed as they tried to book a hire car and when they did finally get on the road, they discovered that serious flooding had made their intended route impassable with motorways flooded and bridges washed away. Eventually they reached their destination using side roads after midnight, having had no food or drink and found all restaurants and shops closed. The owner of a nearby cafe who they knew gave them some milk, eggs and bread even though his cafe was closed and that was all they had to exist on until the following day. Subsequent conversations with locals expressed surprise that they had managed to reach their destination because of the widespread flooding which was bad enough to result in worldwide reports.

The Secretary said his mother was very pleased by the birthday card sent on behalf of the club by Grummer and reported that he had received a communication from an American Pickwickian who was intending to visit this country; Grummer suggested we could arrange a special meeting to accommodate this Pickwickian if necessary, but the Secretary said the ball was in the American's court to let us know when he intended to visit. Members were then entertained by a discourse about 'cockblockers' or 'corkblockers' from the Secretary but the comments were so hilarious that the minute writer forgot to record exactly what these items were!

After the raffle which, strangely enough, was won by Dodson, the organiser, Dodson advised members that Grummer who was already well known for appropriating patterned drinking glasses had now extended his activities and was collecting chopsticks; Grummer claimed this wasn't stealing because they would have been thrown away at the end of the meal and he was simply saving them the effort - funny really when you recall that earlier he called Mivins a thief for a similar activity!

The vote of thanks was by Dodson who expressed pleasure that the proper Mr Pickwick would be back in office next month to replace the poor reserve who had stood in during his absence. He had shown no integrity whilst in the post preferring to talk about past offences and it would be good to see him moved on. The only member above the nick who had performed admirably was the Secretary and the reserve Pickwick should consider himself fortunate to be sitting next to him. It was only through spite that the fines box was taken from Dodson and given to somebody with no ability and the insignificance of the vice-chairman's contributions bodes ill for next year when he occupies the chair.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Ben Allen said he must have attended a different meeting because he thought Pickwick had performed excellently and was well supported by the vice-chairman, the fines officer and the P.O.C.

Good Neet Owd Friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The fines box contained £3.65 whilst the raffle raised £5.00.