

Minutes of the 1219th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 18th September 2013

The first meeting of the new session was rather a sombre occasion because most members were aware of the recent death of Alfred Jingle, one of the stalwarts of the club. Jingle had been a member for many years and could always be relied upon to make the meetings go with a swing, particularly when members were slow in paying their fines - as Fines Master he was second to none. Similarly, his erudite vote of thanks to the Chairman and Vice Chairman always left everyone in stitches as they tried to fathom out what he had said. Accordingly minuting his comments was impossible.

On this occasion members were pleased to welcome members of Jingle's family as guests - these included his sons John, Mark and Phil plus an adopted member in the form of Terry Hand. John explained the events leading to Jingle's demise and gave details of the funeral arrangements to which all members were invited. (On the day, several members were unable to attend due to holidays etc, but the club was well represented with 7 members being present at the crematorium.

The meeting opened at 8.07 p.m. with members standing for one minute in memory of Jingle, after which Dodson announced that the evening would be a free evening to celebrate Jingle's membership. Several members pointed out that Snodgrass was present and it is almost a precedent that free evenings are only held in Snodgrass's absence provided Snodgrass paid his subs early whilst the rest of the members and guests enjoyed a free evening.

The absence of Jingle meant it was necessary to appoint a new Fines Officer and the job was given to Ben Allen, with Sam Weller volunteering to act as P.O.C. for the evening. At the same time it was announced that Nat Winkle had been forced to resign for personal reasons - Grummer explained that Winkle couldn't guarantee attendance and felt it was unfair to hold office under those circumstances.

Over the years it has been customary for the 9 o'clock toast to be taken whenever Pickwick remembered to do so with the result that it rarely took place at the time appointed - indeed the minute writer can count on the fingers of one hand the number of occasions on which it had been taken on time. On this occasion there was no excuse because Grummer had mixed in with the raffle prizes a military alarm which sounds reveille at the appropriate time. The only problem was the amount of time it took Grummer to locate and switch the damn thing off, but at least the toast was taken on time.

Dodson complained about the minutes on the grounds that he was being victimised by Magnus who had him censured at the last meeting. He pointed out that other members had missed meetings without being censured, quoting the example of Pickwick himself who had missed several meetings whilst in Australia and Snodgrass who made frequent trips to Kenya. Members considered these allegations but decided that there was a vast difference between members being on holiday or on business trips and those members (Dodson) who chose attendance at a football match in preference to a Pickwick meeting.

Dodson then complained that a suggestion that he had called Snodgrass by the name of Slammer was incorrect, but at that moment the food arrived so members were more concerned with enjoying their food than in any complaint from Dodson.

The Secretary reported that he had received no correspondence other than responses from Fiskin and Smangle concerning Jingle's death.

The POR&I was taken from an appropriate chapter of the book which reported the elopement of Jingle with Rachel, the related questions were answered mainly incorrectly, but even if correctly answered everyone in time-honoured fashion paid a fine. The Inquisitor also made a donation.

Tupman said that today he had seen an advertisement at Botany Bay village saying that Father Christmas was arriving that afternoon; this reminded him that the Pickwick Christmas Dinner was to be held at the Breightmet Golf Club on 6th December and that all names should be submitted to him at the November meeting.

When the guests were invited to address the meeting, John Ennis thanked members for their expressions of sympathy and asked whether it would be possible for him to become a member with the same name as his late father; members thought that this was an excellent idea and agreed that John's name should be put forward at the November meeting.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Tupman who said that Pickwick had done nothing to merit any such vote whilst the vice chairman had spent the evening banging his knobkerrie even when there had been no corresponding gavel from the Chairman. Nobody had taken any notice of the Chairman's pronouncements and the few members who bothered to stand when they addressed the chair showed what little respect they had for the bearer of that office. Tupman's only regret was that he couldn't do the vote of thanks like Jingle used to do. Seconding the vote of thanks, Snodgrass said how good it was to see members of the Ennis family and their adopted brother and he hoped that they would let Sheila know we were all here to support her. Unlike Tupman, he thought that Pickwick had done a good job this evening, as had the Vice Chairman, adding that the knobkerrie which he was banging was in fact a rongo.

Pickwick and the Vice Chairman responded that they thought the positive comments were well merited whilst the negative ones rolled like water off a duck's back.

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

The raffle raised £7.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £4.80.