

Minutes of the 1221st meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on Wed 20th November 2013

The meeting was opened at 8.05 p.m. Dodson immediately apologised for failing to bring any Miau or calamari for Mrs Jingle but explained that he had met with almost insurmountable problems on his recent trip to Spain. He had gone there for his annual trip with another member, Mr Lowton, who has a holiday home there and had intended to purchase his usual offering for Mrs Jingle but unfortunately Lowton had fallen down some steps and injured his shoulder. Although help was immediately offered, there was the problem of language difficulties but eventually Lowton went to the local hospital where he was told he had broken his shoulder in two places. This information was so distressing that he had to have a couple of brandies to calm down after the shock of the accident and Dodson used the same excuse to have a couple of brandies also.

The introduction of members to guests was performed by Grummer with his usual excellence but the presentation was marred by Snodgrass's claim that Grummer was taking too long. This reminded Pickwick that Snodgrass had arrived late for the meeting and although he had sent notice of his impending late arrival he decided that a fine would be appropriate. Snodgrass said he felt that there was no point in arriving on time because he was an hour late and didn't appear to have missed anything.

The meeting was even more 'bitty' than usual and when Mivins tried to read the minutes of the last meeting he was prevented from doing so by Dodson, who pointed out that several members were missing; when asked where they were he said they were in the toilet and Tupman suggested they be fined for failing to seek permission to leave the meeting. The fines were levied and the usual discussion about whether or not the miscreants were in credit with the fines box followed. It may be recalled that the fines officer some years ago ruled that whenever a fine was levied, whatever was put in the box was that fine and that members could not ask for credit if their only coin was in excess of the fine.

Eventually, Mivins was able to start reading the minutes but once again was interrupted, this time by Tupman's mobile phone ringing. Tupman apologised but said this was an urgent message he had been waiting for and he volunteered to pay a fine for interrupting the meeting.

On eventual completion of the minutes, Tupman complained that his name had been mentioned in connection with the placing of a Mexican coin in the fines box; he had told Mivins of his intention to do this so that the blame would rest on Dodson who had recently visited Mexico, but was disappointed that he should have been snitched on by another club member. He also pointed out that at the last meeting he had not worn a club tie or badge but nobody had noticed so he felt that all members should be fined for not paying attention, or, alternatively, not knowing the club rules.

The 9 o'clock toast was taken at 10 p.m. after somebody had realised that it hadn't been taken earlier - rarely is it taken on time but it doesn't usually take an hour for members to realise that it hasn't happened.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the Vice was presented by Snodgrass who said he would have liked to say what a good job the pair of them had done during the evening but that would have been a lie because the whole evening had been very poor. He had, in fact, arrived an hour late due to other commitments, but wished it could have been two hours so that he would have had to face less of the evening and less of the abuse which he had suffered. He had travelled to the meeting in dreadful weather and was wishing he had turned the other way and gone home instead.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said it had been one of those nights when nothing seems to have gone right, but at least Pickwick could be congratulated for volunteering to stand in when the real Mr Pickwick could not attend. The meeting had been good despite the problems and Pickwick had suffered from the poor performance of the vice-chairman, who himself was also a 'stand-in.'

After the toast had been taken, Pickwick was asked for his comments on the vote of thanks and promptly blew a raspberry; the vice chairman said he had stood in due to the absence of the regular appointee and although he had done his best had received nothing but abuse from the members. He referred to Grummer's suggestion that both he and Pickwick had volunteered for the job and pointed out that there was no volunteering about it - they had been press-ganged into the jobs with no chance of refusal.

Good neet owd friends was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem.

The raffle raised £4.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £5.34.