

Minutes of the 1223rd meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 19th February, 2014

The attendance at the 1223rd meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was better than the last meeting, by a total of 1! Once again, the chair was occupied by Jack Hopkins with Ben Allen in the vice-chairman's seat and Sam Weller acting as P.O.C. with assistance from Dodson.

The meeting commenced with a complaint from Dodson that the meeting number was incorrect; his records showed that the correct number should have been 1222. He referred to his records of subscriptions collected at meetings to prove his figures were correct but then discovered that in 2011 he had missed a number out so the correct number was as indicated. He apologised for this mistake but initially refused to pay a fine because he said he was being victimised. Eventually he was persuaded to pay and then announced that as Snodgrass was absent it would be a free evening, admitting that he felt guilty at Snodgrass missing out yet again. He also admitted that he had intended to tell his 'stand in' at the last meeting which he had been unable to attend to offer a free evening but forgot to pass this advice on, which was why this evening was to be free.

Tupman advised members that Dodson had been offered the opportunity to go to Anglesey for the current week but had rejected the offer in favour of attending the Pickwick meeting. Tupman felt that this was commendable and clearly displayed Dodson's priorities between having a week's holiday with his wife or going to a football match.

Dodson, whose interest in food is secondary to his love of finance, then told members about the various restaurants on the island and compared their qualities. He particularly mentioned a relatively new restaurant called the 'Oystercatcher' which was owned by the Timpson family of shoemaking fame and which was reputed to be very good.

Dodson was in fine form this evening and went on to produce a written copy of the song 'Uncle Joe's Mint Balls' which had been the party piece of the former Nat Winkle; most members were surprised to see it had so many verses having only heard the first two when Nat performed.

Once again Dodson took the floor to explain that 'Miau' was difficult to obtain in Spain, (possibly because of the drug of a similar name) but that 'Calamare' was the same thing and that despite suggestions to the contrary cost just as much.

Magnus said there was no correspondence but that he had two items to show members; the first was a DVD of 'Pickwick Papers' which members might like to borrow and the second was a series of mounted photos of members which was passed round the table so the members illustrated could admire themselves. Dodson then produced a photo dating from 1978 which he said could be dated because Mivins had hair! He added that he was particularly handsome in those days but Magnus said the mirrors in the Dodson house must have been flawed.

The P.O.R & I was performed by Tupman who selected page 758 for the reading; this section referred

to events affecting the Pickwickian characters after their main adventures outlined in the book and , as usual, everybody was fined, even those who knew the answers.

Tupman told members he had stayed at a hotel identified in the book called 'The Leather Bottle' in Cobham. This produced reminiscences from other members about pubs in which they had stayed where the rooms were named after Pickwickian characters.

This was obviously Dodson's evening because he won the raffle. That isn't particularly unusual because he organises the raffle but what was interesting was that in organising this month's fiddle, he found the ticket lost by Mivins last month.

Grummer proposed the Vote of Thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman, admitting that he couldn't understand why they needed to be thanked for such a poor performance. Numbers had been low so it shouldn't have been difficult to control the meeting but discipline had been so lax that members had been asked to contribute 50p each because otherwise the fines box would have been empty. Dodson seconded the vote of thanks by suggesting that Pickwick's trip to Australia last year when he should have been in the chair meant he didn't have sufficient training to do the job properly and his vice-chairman who had received plenty of training during his year of office hadn't realised that acting as vice-chairman didn't exonerate him from his proper task as President to advise Pickwick - all in all, a pretty poor show due to the incompetence of the officers in post. He said he wouldn't mention the fact that Pickwick hadn't been fined for his absences in Australia, but did, and suspected that there had been some collusion between Magnus and Pickwick to introduce the 'voluntary' 50p donation to the fines box.

'Good Neet Owd Friends' was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £4.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £7.66.