

Minutes of the 1225th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 17th September, 2014

The September meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club was better attended than the last meeting when only 4 members were present at the official start time although that number increased to 7 later. The role of Mr Pickwick was taken by Jack Hopkins and the comment was made that he missed so many meetings when he officially occupied the chair through holidays in Australia that he was merely catching up. Ben Allen occupied the vice-chairman's place and the P.O.C's were Dodson and Weller.

The Secretary read a letter he had received from Grummer apologising for absence because he was on holiday and found the possibility of a day trip to Guernsey more appetising than a Pickwick meeting despite the lamb hot-pot at half time. Members agreed that Grummer had explained his absence correctly, in writing to the Secretary, unlike others who simply went to football matches and that a fine for non-attendance would be inappropriate.

Tupman indicated to members that he was not wearing a Pickwick tie and volunteered to pay a fine for that offence. He suggested that other members should be fined for failing to notice he wasn't wearing the appropriate tie but this was ignored on the grounds that he was so muffled up that it wasn't possible to see that omission.

Referring to the earlier paragraph about members attending football matches in preference to Pickwick meetings, Dodson pointed out that Manchester City were on T.V. in the snooker room but, unlike some members, he was at the meeting. However, he subsequently admitted that if his son had not been overseas, both of them would have travelled to Germany to watch the match live; naturally this admission was deemed unacceptable and the appropriate fine was levied, much to Dodson's disgust. Tupman claimed that the admission was only partly true because Dodson's attendance would have depended on whether or not his son was paying for the tickets!

Dodson grudgingly paid his fine, only for the Fines Officer to point out that he had only paid 10p when the correct fine should be 20p. Dodson argued that this was incorrect demanding to know when the increase had been agreed; he was told by Mivins it had been in place for some time but had been formally ratified at the A.G.M. He then argued that he couldn't be expected to pay the increase because he wasn't at the A.G.M and was unaware of the alteration and even claimed that Mivins was being economical with the truth. However, Mivins was able to turn up his notes of the A.G.M. which confirmed the increase. Even then, Dodson claimed Mivins could have added to the notes simply to prove the point.

Tupman reported that Smangle had given up the Golf Club job in Cornwall and was now working as a long distance H.G.V. truck driver; he had indicated that if the work ever brought him to the Manchester area when a Pickwick meeting was scheduled, he would do his utmost to attend.

Referring to the minutes of the previous meeting, Dodson said that 'Miau' was not available in

certain parts of Spain, possibly due to a similarity of name with certain drugs, but he would endeavour to produce suitable replacements on future trips.

Also in the minutes was a reference to copies of the 'Uncle Joe's Mint Balls' ditty which was the party piece of the former Nat Winkle. It was suggested that Weller had promised to bring copies for all members although this was questioned by Tupman who said he thought it was just the one copy for him. Weller apologised for failing to produce the relevant copies but promised them for the next meeting. Weller then went on to ask whether Mivins had finished with the copy of the 'Police Gazette' which contained an article describing the qualities of various police ranks. Mivins produced a copy of the actual article which he read to the members but claimed he had returned the original document to Weller some time ago.

Dodson said he had a bad leg and because of this had almost been prevented from going on a cruise. Weller said he was aware of many people with leg problems who had travelled on ships over the years without any adverse effects - Long John Silver sprang to mind as did several other pirates so Dodson would have been in good company.

There were a number of comments about the small numbers attending meetings in recent years and the question as to whether we should reduce the number of meetings or seek alternative venues or agendas was discussed at great length without any decision being reached.

Tupman announced that the Pickwick Christmas Dinner would be on 5th December at Breightmet Golf Club but prices were not yet available.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Rev. Stiggins who said that despite the low numbers, Pickwick had once again failed to control the meeting which had descended into chaos. There had been no support from the vice-chairman who seemed to think his only duty was to gavel in response to Pickwick's gavel and had not even done that job properly. Seconding the vote of thanks, Dodson reminded members that Pickwick had missed a number of meetings when he was in Australia and still hadn't caught up with the requirements of the post of Chairman. Fines had been levied so unequally that Tupman and Mivins had fined themselves rather than be left out. All in all, a very poor show which begged the question, who appointed him?

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

The raffle raised £4.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £5.45.