

# Minutes of the 1226<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Once again at the official start time for the October meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club there were few members present although, again, the numbers increased to 7 shortly afterwards so that the meeting was able to commence by 8.37 p.m. In his usual mercenary manner, Dodson noted the sparsity of numbers and announced that it would be a free evening, particularly as Snodgrass was not present.

There had been a number of complaints about the fines levied at the last meeting, Dodson claiming that he seemed to be personally supporting the fines box. Unlike certain members he was not prepared to name, he never complained or refused to pay even when the fine was unjust, as when he was forced to attend a football match rather than a club meeting.

During the discussion of the complaint about fines, Hopkins who had occupied the chair when the fines in question were levied constantly referred to Dodson as Dobson and there were suggestions that he should pay a fine for these errors. However, Dodson pointed out that following the theft of the club's original regalia the engraver of the replacement badge of office had not only put the face of Charles Dickens instead of Mr Pickwick on the face of the badge but had recorded one of the members responsible for the replacement as 'Dobson' so Hopkins was, to some degree, innocent of the charge. Could this have been one of the few occasions when the senior member of 'Dodson & Fogg' got his client off on a technicality.

Noting that the ever present Secretary, Peter Magnus, was absent, Pickwick decided to ring him; Magnus himself answered the phone and admitted that he had completely forgotten the date and asked that his apologies be accepted.

Pickwick decided to invoke rule 8 and told the tale of a visit with two other Pickwickians to an apartment in southern Spain owned by one of the members. After a very convivial evening the party were making their way home when they saw a light being shone in the roadway which they ignored. Some minutes later they were stopped by a vehicle with blue flashing lights, the occupants of which were obviously the ones shining the light previously ignored, and a pistol was pointed at the drivers head. Dodson, a front seat passenger tried to get out of the car and was ordered to get back in. Despite the fact that all three occupants had been drinking heavily, when asked by the police officer they denied they had been drinking even though the car must have smelt like a brewery. A second question about drink was also denied and they were eventually allowed to continue their journey.

The 9.00 p.m. toast was taken at 9.20 p.m. and was followed by another toast; instead of a toast to absent members Pickwick suggested a toast to present members who had taken the trouble to turn up, although he accepted that some absent members could justify their absence.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved; in 'matters arising' Weller's comments about Long John Silver's nautical experience compared with

Dodson's leg problem were well accepted despite Dodson's protestations that his leg still wasn't right.

Once again there were comments about the reducing numbers at meetings and whilst it was accepted that other organisations were suffering similar reductions in membership, ways of combatting this problem were discussed without any decision being reached other than trying to attract younger membership.

On the subject of trying to attract new members it was suggested that the club should have an 'awayday' next year and a number of different venues were discussed. No 'spur of the moment' decision was wanted but members were asked to think about the suggestion for further discussion at a date early in the new year.

Dodson had looked in the fines box and claimed that once again he had contributed most of the contents. He was told by Pickwick this was because he was too argumentative but felt that he was being picked on. He likened himself to a man at the bottom of a deep well and was thus the target of everything thrown in that well. However, to even things up Pickwick declared that there were too few members present for a meaningful P.O.R & I so instead he was going to fine all members 20p, then Dodson wouldn't be able to claim nobody else was paying.

It was announced that the Christmas Dinner would be on 5th December at Brightmet Golf Club, as usual, and that the cost would be £17. Some names were taken by Dodson but it was agreed that further names should be given at the November meeting.

The Vote of Thanks was presented by Weller who said he thought the meeting had gone well and had been well managed, a comment which raised a few eyebrows, and for some reason there was no seconder although all members toasted Pickwick and the vice-chairman for their control of the meeting.

'Good Neet Owd Friends' was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem. The raffle raised £3.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £4.66.