

Minutes of the 1229th Meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16th February, 2015

Once again at the official start time for the meeting there were few members present but on this occasion it could be argued that it was not the fault of the latecomers. The problem was that new security arrangements at the Moorside club required all members to use a magnetic fob to gain access and as most of the Pickwick club were not members and thus had no fob, they had to wait until a member arrived and was able to arrange access for them. Having said that, there is a button on the door which, on being pressed warns the barmaid that there are people outside waiting to gain entry, but the notice is fairly small and can easily be missed.

Entry problems having been sorted, it became necessary to appoint a Mr Pickwick for the evening due to the unavoidable absence of the current incumbent; Jack Hopkins was volunteered to occupy the chair and the vice-chairman's seat was taken by Rev. Stiggins.

Pickwick declared the meeting open at 8.14 p.m. and promptly fined the stand-in vice chairman for failing to answer the gavel after three attempts to gain his attention -perhaps new batteries in the hearing aid might be useful.

The meeting opened with a report from the Secretary that he had received a letter from Jingle recommending John Chester for membership of the club and suggesting the name Mr. Pott. This recommendation was approved and John Chester became a member of the club with the name Mr. Pott. Jingle then agreed to act as P.O.C. for the evening and took orders for drinks. Unusually, he had provided his own paper for noting the drinks order, probably his police notebook, unlike Weller who always asked for a sheet of paper if requested to perform that role having filled his spare police notebooks many years ago.

Dodson reported that in accordance with custom and practise, Grummer was ill at his son's home in Scotland but on this occasion the problem couldn't be blamed on an excess of the Scotch spirit; the doctors had diagnosed a virus infection but it proved to be so severe that he still wasn't 100% when he came home a week later.

In view of there being a new member present it was agreed that each member would introduce their character and with tongue in cheek, Dodson suggested that Pickwick would advise Mr Pott about his character. The introduction went well and proved that most members knew their characters even though some were seen to use 'crib' sheets.

Dodson then explained how he became club treasurer as a result of trying to help a previous Mr Pott; he had agreed to help out when it became obvious that the earlier Mr Pott had little idea of how to present a set of accounts to members but when Pott claimed to have receipts for all club expenditure Dodson found that they were all contained in a shoe box with no resemblance of order. It followed that Dodson's first Treasurer's Report was mainly fiction rather than fact.

Mivins was asked to present the P.O.R & I on the understanding that the inquisition would not take place and that members would each contribute £1.00 to the fines box. He chose to read an extract from the book about the introduction of Mr Pott to Mr Pickwick to give some idea of the character to the new member.

Stiggins then told members about the recent holiday he spent with Pickwick in Whitby; Not only did Pickwick insist on sleeping with the window open but he also bought some kippers which he put in the bath to keep them cool before bringing them home. Stiggins said it was a wonder he didn't catch pneumonia the way the wind whistled through the open window and Pickwick's only reaction to Stiggins complaint was that he liked to hear the waves on the shore. In response to a comment from one of the members, he admitted that the kippers were vacuum packed so it wasn't necessary to keep the window open to avoid the smell.

Ben Allen said he wanted to treat members to a drink in remembrance of his father and proceeded to give Dodson a tea bag!

In the absence of Tupman, Dodson told members that the summer outing this year would be on 5th June and the Christmas dinner on 4th December; names would be taken nearer the date.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was presented by Ben Allen who said the meeting had been a complete shambles; Pickwick had been late and the vice-chairman might just as well have been late for all the use he was. Ben had not been at the last meeting which was a good thing because after a meeting members remain confused for days. It had been suggested that the rules should be read to the new member but from experience the rules seemed to be so flexible that they weren't worth the paper they were printed on, assuming they were actually printed, and Pickwick seemed to make things up as he went along. Even the agenda seemed to be flexible and Pickwick constantly needed to be advised as to what he had to do next.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Jingle said he echoed all Ben Allen's comments. In order to get to the meeting on time, the new member, Mr Pott had set off walking so he didn't need to drink and drive and it was likely that it would take him 3 hours to get home afterwards which begged the question, was it worth it, certainly not on this evening's showing. There had been too many interruptions and late gavelling.

Pickwick refused to respond to the vote of thanks and the vice-chairman said he felt that the criticisms were unwarranted.

'Good Neet Owd Friends' was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem after which Pickwick suggested that a few rehearsals might be advantageous because the rendering hadn't matched the quality of the earlier 'toast to Mr Pickwick'.

The raffle raised £4.00 whilst the Fines Box contained £11.45.