

Minutes of the 1233rd meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 20th January, 2016

With nearly a dozen members present, it was clear that a P.O.C appointment would be necessary and nobody was surprised when Dodson offered to perform that function, not least because it was known that certain drinks brought with them a sticker which could be exchanged for free drinks once the card was full. It was claimed that Dodson was an avid collector of such stickers although Dodson suggested it was for the benefit of members by reducing the overall cost of the meeting.

For some unknown reason Pickwick decided to open the meeting at 7.58 p.m. without realising that this constituted grounds for an appeal if he subsequently tried to fine latecomers and as Weller hadn't appeared at this point the stage was set for some fun when Weller did appear. Unfortunately, Weller didn't appear so the fun and games were avoided.

Having gavelled to commence the meeting there was no response from the vice chairman who was holding a private meeting below the nick. A further three gavels from Pickwick were necessary before the vice chairman chose to respond by gavelling then inviting the members to sing the toast to Mr Pickwick. For no apparent reason Rev. Stiggins then started to sing the 23rd Psalm with many members joining in and it was only with great difficulty that the correct toast was given; even then, Tupman decided to sing what could only be described as a descant whilst there was no way of describing the tune that Grummer was singing!

Once again the vice chairman failed to respond to Pickwick's gavel because he was taking part in a private meeting but once again Pickwick displayed his leniency by failing to impose a fine. There was some discussion about former members who no longer attended meetings but who had indicated their wish to remain in membership, one of whom was Smangle who was reported to be driving HGVs and occasionally visiting the north-west. Tupman had a mobile phone number for Smangle and tried to contact him without success but left a message. Dr. Slammer said he would call on Smangle later in the year when he was in Cornwall.

Pickwick then announced that he had won £250 in the police lottery; this annoyed Dodson who said he had been paying £5 each month to the lottery for years without winning a thing but Pickwick said it was so long ago that Dodson was in the police, he wouldn't have earned sufficient to be able to afford £5 each month! There were suggestions that when Dodson joined they were known as the Bow Street Runners. Tupman said that what Pickwick was forgetting was the number of alternative sources of income Dodson had.

At this point Tupman's mobile phone rang and it was Smangle returning his call. Tupman and Smangle spoke for a few minutes with Smangle saying that he hoped to attend the next Pickwick meeting and Grummer offering accommodation if needed. The mobile phone was passed round the members so they could see the property Smangle was living in, but unfortunately Dodson dropped the phone and the picture changed so some members still don't know where Smangle lives.

Pickwick then announced item 4 on the agenda, only for Stiggins to point out that we were actually on item 5 and that Pickwick had announced the wrong item 4 times. Pickwick said he had only announced the wrong item 3 times.

After taking the 9 o'clock toast exactly at 9 o'clock, the minutes were read and Grummer referred to an earlier discussion and said that Dodson had volunteered as P.O.C. at the last meeting which proved he was after the stickers; Tupman said we ought to be thankful that Dodson was prepared to do the job despite his great age and that he hadn't volunteered just for the stickers. This suggestion brought cries of "Oh yes he did", "Oh no he didn't" etc. until Snodgrass said that at long last the pickwick meetings had been reduced to a pantomime, a conclusion he had reached many months ago.

Grummer then advised members that Dodson had recently had a birthday and Dodson replied that Grummer hadn't sent a birthday card. Grummer said he had forgotten about the birthday until the actual day when he had gone out especially to buy a card which he had personally delivered; he added that Dodson had mentioned his birthday several times during the previous fortnight so there was no way anybody could forget.

Tupman announced that the summer outing would be on 21st May, 2016 with the Christmas dinner on either 2nd or 9th December. The Christmas dinner would be at Breightmet Golf Club but the summer outing might be at Nantwich; Pickwick and the vice chairman would visit the possible venue and report to the next meeting.

In proposing the vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice chairman, Tupman noted that numbers were much lower than in earlier years so the job should be quite simple but anybody could see the meeting had been a complete shambles. The meeting had been so bad that Pickwick had been forced to ask all members to put £1 in the fines box to cover his deficiencies. The vice chairman had failed spectacularly to gavel on many occasions but that could probably be due to his being accustomed to joiners hammering on site so he could be excused for his failure. Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said Pickwick was developing the art of allowing the meeting to flow whilst the vice chairman was gavelling so quickly after Pickwick that the sounds were simultaneous; in fact, Pickwick's only fault was his leniency in awarding fines.

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

The Fines box contained £18.16 whilst the raffle raised £5.50.