

Minutes of the 1234th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 17th February, 2016

Despite the fact that there were only 7 members and one guest present, Pickwick insisted on opening the meeting dead on 8 o'clock, on the basis that the absentees were known to be away from home and unlikely to be in attendance. On seeing the low attendance, Dodson announced that a free evening would follow, then volunteered to act as P.O.C; in similar fashion Magnus said he was prepared to act as P.O.R & I.

The toast to Mr Pickwick was sung in tune for a change and was followed by each member introducing his own character because both the D.C. and his deputy were absent. Fortunately most were able to at least give an outline of their character although some descriptions were rather sparse.

There had been an article in the Daily Mail about the actress Miriam Margolyes and Dodson reminded members that some time ago she was involved in a programme about Charles Dickens and was written to by the Secretary; unfortunately, his letter did not even receive an acknowledgement so Miss Margolyes is not the flavour of the month at Manchester Pickwick Club.

Referring to recent references about his volunteering to act as P.O.C. simply to collect the stamps issued for pints of beer, Dodson said he had always collected stamps and he saw no difference between postage stamps and beer stamps. Magnus, who is also a stamp collector said this simply confirmed his opinion that Dodson wasn't a collector, he was an investor! This led to a number of comments about collecting with the vice-chairman indicating that he collected watches and motor cycles whilst Pickwick said he collected wives having already had 2 and was currently looking for a third.

The vice-chairman asked members to note that his gavelling had improved since the last meeting when he had come in for some criticism and admitted he had been practising.

During a lull in the proceedings, Dodson told members about the occasion when the previous Alfred Jingle had attended the summer outing at the Grants Arms. In those days there were so many present that most members travelled by coach and Alfred had missed the bus home even though it was in the early hours of the morning. Dodson and his guests were travelling separately and were still in the bar when Alfred appeared claiming that the bus had gone without him. Dodson said they would take him home so Alfred had another pint whilst waiting!

On the subject of this year's summer outing, Pickwick announced that he and the vice-chairman had been unable to visit the hotel in Nantwich which had been suggested as an alternative venue but Tupman had phoned to obtain details; The price for bed and breakfast was £84 per double room and there were no vacancies for Fridays or Saturdays although Sundays were available. Tupman said this was not suitable because some members were due at work on Monday morning. Tupman also pointed out that the selected date (20th May) was cup final day and Dodson said it was also his granddaughter's birthday, so it was unlikely he would be able to attend. Other members also said that date was not suitable so the following Friday (27th May) was suggested as an alternative date. Tupman said he could probably arrange for the summer outing to be held at Brightmet golf

club if no other venue could be arranged but would need to move quickly. The Christmas Dinner was already arranged at the golf club on 2nd December.

Members were reminded that the Steward and his wife would retire at the end of March and it was suggested that the club should give them a present. Their retirement would mean that there would be nobody to provide a meal at the A.G.M.; the vice-chairman said he would ask his wife to provide a meal.

Pickwick said how quiet it had been with Grummer being absent and Hopkins said it was obvious who were the ones who caused all the trouble at meetings.

Members had expressed interest in having another race meeting at some future date, probably at Haydock. The vice-chairman promised to look into the possibilities and suggested that he should investigate the cost of being in the stands.

The guest thanked members for making him so welcome and said he had been a guest on about 6 occasions in the last 25 years. He had enjoyed the meetings so much he wanted to become a member. This led to Dodson explaining the occasion when Grummer became a member and explained the initiation ceremony. Grummer had been primed for this by being told his character was to be Tom Roker, the holder of the keys at the Fleet prison. Having learned all about the character of Tom Roker, imagining his surprise when the time came for his introduction and he was told his pickwickian name was to be Daniel Grummer, about whom he knew nothing!

Proposing the vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman, Hopkins said that Pickwick had done an excellent job in maintaining order throughout the meeting and had also ensured a good profit in the fines box. Seconding the vote of thanks, Stiggins agreed with Hopkins assessment of the meeting but said that the vice-chairman's assessment of his own performance with the gavel was not quite as good as he thought although he had supported Pickwick well.

'Good neet own Friends' and the National Anthem were sung although not as well as the opening toast to Mr Pickwick.

The Fines box contained £14.26 whilst the raffle raised £4.00.