

Minutes of the 1235th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16th March, 2016.

In recent meetings the fact that Pickwick insisted on commencing the meeting on time has been recorded in the minutes; the 1235th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick club was unusual in that the members were called to order 3 minutes early at 7.57p.m., possibly a first in the annals of the club, at least since the minute writer joined. The reason for the early start was soon evident because the Secretary reported that he had received a formal letter from Pickwick recommending that Mr Terry Hand become a member of the club with the Pickwickian name "Ben Allen". This was unanimously approved by all present and a new Ben Allen was admitted to the club.

In addition to his normal duty as Treasurer, Dodson agreed to act as P.O.C. for the evening whilst Stiggins was asked to act as vice-chairman in the absence of Mr Pott.

The police training of Mr Pickwick enabled him to take control of the meeting which rattled through the agenda at high speed, so much so that it was necessary to introduce rule 8 to slow the proceedings down. Mivins spoke about a recent visit to Portsmouth where he had been shown round Fort Nelson, the repository where various artillery weapons are stored and maintained; these ranged from 16th century guns and naval weapons up to the present day, including guns captured in recent conflicts such as the Falklands war and the attack on Saddam Hussain. Grummer then told members of an occasion some years ago when he was asked to provide a towing vehicle to transport a 25 pdr field gun from Belle Vue to Salford Crescent for a Gala Day. He took Mivins, who had served in the Royal Artillery, with him to help with the item and recalled driving down Market Street in a Matador breakdown vehicle towing a gun past all the astonished shoppers.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and Grummer proposed they be accepted until Dodson pointed out that Grummer hadn't been present at that meeting and couldn't propose their acceptance. Eventually they were approved and Dodson then suggested that most of the characters in the Pickwick Papers were bent in some way or other; in fact, he claimed that Dodson was one of the few genuine characters in the book.

Grummer then told members about a visit to the London Pickwick club by himself and Smangle; after a relatively small meal one of the club officials, Henry Hawksley, advised members that the cost of the meal was £57 each - Grummer thought this was slightly overpriced!

Due to the approaching retirement of the Steward and his wife, Dodson had purchased presents from the club for their services to the club during their tenure; these were presented by Mr Pickwick.

It was reported that the summer outing would be held at Breightmet Golf Club on 27 May and that the A.G.M would be on 20th April.

There being no correspondence, the Secretary performed the P.O.R & I, and as has become usual in these circumstances every member was fined for either failing to answer his question correctly or showing off by providing the correct answer.

Stiggins thanked the Secretary for providing him with a resume of his character, then Dodson told the tale of taking the former Mr Pott drinking. Mr Pott, who was an undertaker by profession was always very smartly and formally dressed and Dodson introduced him to the landlord as a High Court judge who was anxious to see how the general public spent their free time. The landlord was suitably impressed and introduced his wife to the "judge". Free drinks for Dodson and Pott became the rule until a member of the public who knew Mr Pott told the landlord who he really was, resulting in both Dodson and Pott being barred from the pub. He also told members that after Pott's death members were standing round the grave at his funeral when Dodson suddenly said "He hasn't paid this year's subs".

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Slammer who said the meeting was so good it had been a pleasure to be present at such a well-controlled meeting.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Grummer said Slammer had obviously attended a different meeting because the one Grummer attended was a complete shambles. Pickwick had occupied the chair for 6 or 7 meetings during the year and had obviously learned nothing. He was trying his best but it wasn't good enough and the fines box had suffered to the extent that all members had been forced to put £1 in to make the amount look respectable. On the other hand, the vice-chairman had been drafted in at short notice and had performed admirably.

To suggestions that rehearsals would be advantageous 'Good Neet Owd Friends' was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem.

The raffle raised £5.00 whilst the Fines Box contained £13.50 plus 200 Escudos.