

Minutes of the 1247th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 21st March, 2018

The March meeting was slightly better attended than the previous two meetings but it was still necessary to appoint a temporary vice-chairman in the absence of the permanent holder of that position. Tracy Tupman was the one chosen for this honour.

It had been hoped to introduce a new member at the meeting but he was unable to attend so his membership would have to commence at the next meeting when annual subscriptions would be due. Dodson said he wouldn't have demanded a subscription from him for only one meeting in the current term but several members were sceptical about Dodson's statement.

The meeting actually commenced at 8.05p.m. and within seconds the fines box had received its first donation when Grummer was fined for swearing. This was closely followed by two fines for Dodson for similar offences and Pell was fined for trying to give Dodson an alibi. This brought about questions concerning the repeated presence in the fines box of Dirhams rather than coin of the realm and Alfred Jingle protested his innocence despite being the only member who had visited a country where Dirhams were the local currency. He admitted that he had committed the original offence and had been punished by being forced to repurchase the offending coins at the treasurer's exchange rates, but claimed he had nothing to do with the subsequent offence. After considerable discussion Jingle was found not guilty when Hopkins admitted he had seen the coins in question by Jingle's seat and had purloined one of them and returned it to the fines box. This caused laughter all round and Mivins admitted seeing the offence committed so both he and Hopkins were fined. There was a suggestion that Dodson had also known who put the coins in the box but in view of his previous fines he was excused on this occasion.

Tracy Tupman then reminded members that apart from the A.G.M., the next outing for the club would be the Dingley Dell meeting. Like the Christmas Dinner, this was not counted in the numerical list of meetings, being a separate occasion. For the benefit of newer members, he described what happened at the first Dingley Dell when one of the guests, a reverend gentleman regaled the gathering with the tale of a returned convict from his term of transportation. During his years away his mother had died, his father died immediately on his return and none of his former friends recognised him. He got a job digging graves in the local churchyard but died within three years of his return.

For no apparent reason the conversation turned to cattle and Mivins told members about a retired farmer he met some years ago who commented on the size of cattle; he said his worst injury in all his years of farming was when a cow leant against him in the barn which resulted in nine broken ribs and a long stay in hospital. Dodson said that when he used to go fishing in his younger days most of the ponds he visited were in farmers' fields and were usually shared with heifers which could be quite alarming. Mivins commented about a fisheries bailiff who parked his car in a field whilst he checked the licences of anglers along both sides of a river. This had taken some time and when he returned to his car, he found that the cattle had licked all the

paint off it leaving bare metal. Fortunately, the rivers authority agreed to pay for it to be resprayed, but issued a notice advising all staff to avoid parking vehicles anywhere near cattle!

Following the P.O.R & I which, as usual, was beneficial to the fines box, Tupman mentioned the Dingley Dell outing arrangements and this led to a discussion about other possible outings during the summer. The favourite suggestion was a bowling afternoon but enquiries about that suggestion had not been successful; an alternative was a visit to 'Owd Nell's' leaving Salford at about 10.00a.m. with 'elevenses' followed by a bowling afternoon, then a meal and finishing with the evening in Cleveleys. This was thought very acceptable if possible and Mr Jingle and the Secretary were asked to investigate the possibility of introducing this idea in July or August.

Dr Slammer then showed one of his birthday cards to the members and read the entry inside. Members felt this was blasphemous and the appropriate fine was levied even though Slammer wasn't the one who wrote the offending comments.

The vote of thanks to the Chairman and Vice-chairman was proposed by Pell who said the whole meeting had been a shambles due to the incompetence of Pickwick and Tupman, although he agreed that Tupman was only standing in for the appointed vice chairman; all the same he felt that Tupman had been a member for many years and should know how to keep order amongst the members. Apart from constantly losing his place on the agenda and thus confusing the members, there had been a considerable number of inappropriate fines and this was probably why members were putting foreign coins in the fines box.

Rev. Stiggins seconded the vote of thanks by suggesting that Pickwick had done a good job bearing in mind the constant undermining of his control by members below the nick who should have known better and who had taken advantage of a temporary vice-chairman.

The singing of 'Good neet owd friends' was no worse than usual but the National Anthem was, once again, much better, Pickwick commenting that members obviously knew the words to the latter.

The Raffle raised £5.00 whilst the fines box contained £5.99.