

Minutes of the 1249th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 17th October, 2018

The 1249th meeting actually commenced at 8.02p.m. and members were pleased to see Tracy Tupman in attendance despite the serious illness which had been reported at the last meeting.

After the introduction of Martin Maynard as a new member with the Pickwick name Tom Roker, Nat Winkle was appointed as P.O.C. and after the glasses had been charged, the meeting was able to start with the usual toast to Mr Pickwick.

Before any further action could be undertaken, Dodson complained that the photographs being circulated by Alfred Jingle included one of him with Old Trafford football ground as the background; this led not to any sympathy from members but an instant fine for Dodson who then produced a plastic bag containing several Dirhams which had been finding their way into the fines box in recent meetings. Jingle admitted he had been the offender on the first occasion but felt that he was being persecuted for subsequent offences when he wasn't responsible! Several members admitted they were aware of those who were responsible at later meetings and that Jingle was innocent of all but the original offence.

After performing the introduction of members with his usual expertise, Tupman told members that he had been advised that his illness was terminal and was likely to give a life expectation of somewhere in the region of six months plus.

The introduction had mentioned a hostelry called the Leathern Bottle which was still in existence; Pickwick instantly 'googled' this and advised members that Charles Dickens was a regular visitor to this establishment where he normally occupied rooms 2 or 6.

For no apparent reason the meeting then began to discuss the presence of German prisoners of war in the Bury area during the mid-1940's when the most dangerous position was the guard escorting them through a predominantly Jewish area to or from their camp. Several of the older members remembered the camp which was near the Manchester to Bury electric railway line and recalled the prisoners singing as they marched along. Mivins had served in Germany in the late 1950's where German troops still sang as they marched and he recalled being on guard duty at night when the Germans were on night marches and their voices could be heard on the still air long before they arrived at the camp gates. The gates were at the bottom of a slight slope and on one occasion one of the soldiers dropped his steel helmet as they marched down the slope; the helmet rolled down the slope until Mivins stopped it with his foot and then handed it to the soldier as they marched past, the only comment being "Danke" as the helmet was collected.

The minutes of the previous meeting had recorded Grummer being embarrassed for complaining about Jingle's adverse report on the quality of Mrs Pott's dumplings, only to discover that he had been set up by Pickwick and Jingle. Pickwick reported that Mrs Pott's dumplings were up to their usual standard as members would discover when the meal was served. He was quite correct!

At this point Tupman announced that the Christmas dinner would be held on 7th December at Brightmet Golf Club and Dodson would be collecting names at the next meeting.

The Secretary had perused a copy of the Pickwick minutes for 1915 and suggested that one page of these minutes from earlier meetings of the club should be read at each meeting to remind members of earlier times at the club. This was agreed unanimously.

It was good to see that the recent phenomenon of the 9.00p.m toast being taken at 9.00p.m. was ignored on this occasion with the more traditional pickwick like time of 10.42 p.m. being substituted.

The P.O.R & I was performed by Dr Slammer who complained about his knees throughout the reading but who still managed to fine everybody for failing or correctly answering their questions; in the case of those answering correctly, the fine was because they had thus embarrassed their colleagues who were not able to answer correctly.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Jingle who said the meeting had been conducted in an orderly manner and well controlled by Pickwick and the vice-chairman; new members must have been most impressed and would have noticed the rapport between Pickwick and his vice-chairman which was almost telepathic.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Dr Slammer said the only time the meeting was in control was when Jingle went to the gents and Pickwick and the vice-chairman were not subject to his interference or 'advice'. Despite that, the meeting had gone well and it was good to see more members present.

For some reason, the singing of 'Good neet owd friends' was omitted on this occasion but the National Anthem was sung with gusto.

The Raffle raised £5.50 whilst the fines box contained £11.50.