

## Minutes of the 1251<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2019

After some confusion regarding the actual time, watches not having been synchronised, the 1251<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club actually commenced at 8.06 p.m. with Tom Roker being volunteered to act as P.O.C and a toothless Tracy Tupman acting as Vice-Chairman. Tupman was armed with a fearsome looking club which he explained was a 'Rongo' from East Africa which had been brought as a present by Snodgrass from one of his trips there.

On the subject of presents, Grummer told members he had received for Christmas a special bottle of Chivas Regal whisky costing £140 and was scheduled to spend a week in a bothy in the north of Scotland where he would be following a 'Whisky Trail' through 5 distilleries, checking the samples of course.

Tom Roker said he had read the book so Dodson suggested he should introduce the members, however, this was thought to be a little unfair as Roker was a new member; with there being no guests present it was decided that each member would introduce his own character and this line was followed with all members presenting their characters well, although Tupman claimed that Dodson had been misleading in presenting the case of Bardell v Pickwick and its result in order to enhance the reputation of his character! Stiggins also complained about having to present his character without adequate prior notice, explaining that he had an excellent 'crib sheet' which he hadn't brought with him, thinking it wouldn't be needed.

It was then announced that Daniel Grummer had written to the Secretary to say he no longer wanted to act as D.C. in the absence of Tupman and he was thanked by Pickwick, Jingle and the members for serving in this capacity for many years. He reminisced about matters which had occurred during his service in the club, in particular the problem which followed the theft of a car belonging to the Manchester Police Crime Prevention Officer who was a club member and whose car contained the club's memorabilia, all of which was lost. He and Dodson had tried to replace as much as possible from a variety of sources; for example, the badge of office which Pickwick wears whilst the meeting is in progress is a brass pendulum weight from a longcase clock suitably engraved, although the engraver didn't have a picture of Mr. Pickwick so substituted one of Charles Dickens instead and spelt Dodson's name incorrectly on the reverse. Another item obtained by Grummer was the turned leg sawn off a large table which bore a plaster figurine of Mr. Pickwick.

He also told members about a previous member, Tom Roker, whose job entailed associating with various members of Manchester's underworld and who was invited by them to a London trip. The trip was superb with the very best of food, drink and, if desired, girls, and on the final morning after breakfast Tom was wondering how much the trip would cost him when the organiser produced a deck of cards and announced that, as usual, the person dealt the lowest card would pay the whole bill. Tom hadn't been aware of this arrangement and his heart sank when he received a four only to be relieved when another guest collected a two!

On another occasion he had entered the wrong room in a hotel and found a blindfolded man tied to a chair — naturally he left the hotel quickly.

Dodson's well-known fiddles, shown on the agenda as the raffle, exceeded themselves on this occasion because there was a mix-up which required all the raffle tickets to be returned to Dodson and then re-issued — there are obviously no limits to his fiddles!

A discussion then took place about this year's venue for the summer outing and it was agreed that Jingle, Pott and Grummer would investigate 'Curleys' before a decision was made. It was also agreed that there would be a boat trip, probably in August and possibly travelling towards Leigh this time. In addition, Pickwick announced he would try to organise a 'whisky tasting trail' in Manchester later in the year.

By this time it was getting rather late so the 9.00 p.m. toast was taken at 10.45 p.m. although this was not unusual — in the past on a number of occasions the toast has taken place in the early hours of the following morning, but that was when members didn't need as much sleep and the meetings regularly lasted until the early hours of the next day

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was presented by Jingle who said he had been looking forward to the evening but it had turned out to be a nightmare. The vice-chairman had been totally inadequate and his rongo useless. Tom Roker, the new member had performed his duties well, but the other members had let the side down completely. Seconding the vote of thanks, Roker said Pickwick and the vice-chairman had been like Muffin the Mule, being manipulated by others with no thoughts or control of their own. It had been a pleasant evening but the members had been sadly let down by their leaders.

Both 'Good neet owd friends' and the National Anthem were sung with gusto but little musical ability.

The raffle raised £5.50 whilst the fines box contained £5.10 plus a broken key.