

Minutes of the 1276th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 19th February, 2025

Members were happy to see the smiling face of Solomon Pell greeting them when they arrived at the club for the 1276th Club meeting. It had been some 12 months since Solomon was able to attend due to health problems. Possibly due to the many conversations with Pell, the meeting wasn't able to start until 8.04 p.m. and even then, many of the members didn't have a drink available with which to perform the first toast of the evening.

It was then discovered that the wealthy landowner Jem Wardle had failed to bring a raffle prize so the first fine of the evening was rightly directed in his direction.

This prompted the replacement for Dodson as raffle master to start issuing raffle tickets and collecting money early which confused everybody but was probably a clever ploy by Dodson's stand in, Fogg, to avoid or at least delay the usual complaints about the raffle being fixed.

It was then realised that both the shutters in the bar were open thus exposing the members to view of everybody in the body of the club. Attempts by the barmaid to close one half of the shutter were unsuccessful but fortunately Ben Allen was able to bring his extensive training in the Fire Service into use and eventually the offending shutter was closed.

After being feted by the members Pell then blotted his copybook by swearing and, like Jem Wardle, was rightly fined, but tried, unsuccessfully, to put a shopping trolley token in the fines box, thus meriting a further fine.

Pickwick and the vice chairman had already lost control of the meeting so several members voluntarily paid fines for misdemeanours which had gone unnoticed possibly the first and probably the last time since 1906 for such action.

The members then discussed the club website and Jem Wardle (who can do joined-up writing) said it was necessary to speak to former member Steve Robinson who set up and maintained the current website to discuss proposed changes. He had seen the recent invoice for the website which was for 2 years and would speak to Steve about that.

The meeting then adjourned whilst Jingle and Allen collected refreshments from the Chinese chip shop for the evening's chip butties.

When the meeting resumed the POR & I was performed by Jem Wardle who had prepared questions from Chapter 10 of the book and levied fines from all members for both correct and incorrect answers.

There were a number of suggestions for the summer outing this year, some of which were discounted on cost grounds, but Jingle and Allen agreed to make enquiries about a possible outing to take place in either July or August and to report back as soon as possible.

The raffle then took place and to nobody's surprise, the first ticket out was Jem Wardle whilst the unfortunate loser was Ben Allen.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice chairman was proposed by Solomon Pell who said he had been away from the club for 12 months and had expected things to have improved during his absence; unfortunately that was not the case. Nothing had changed and the meeting was as poor as ever. The sandwiches he had been looking forward to were not available and were replaced by chip butties — a clear example of laziness on the part of Jingle. After being reminded that the toast also covered the vice chairman, he said that officer hadn't even done enough to be noticed which was why he hadn't been included in Pell's original comments, apart from one occasion when he had gavelled on time nothing had really registered.

Fogg seconded the vote of thanks by suggesting that Pell's long absence from the club had probably clouded his judgement of what had been a splendid meeting with first class control from Pickwick aided by excellent responses from the vice chairman.

Good neet owd friends and the National Anthem were butchered, as usual; in fact. Mivins was fined for poor singing, a fine to which he didn't object knowing what his singing is like!

The fines box contained £4.00 whilst the raffle raised £7.70.

The fines box had been emptied and checked by Ben Allen but Dodson subsequently discovered that one of the 10p coins was, in fact, an American $\frac{1}{4}$ Dollar. This should have been noticed by Ben Allen who ought to be fined for negligence at the next meeting.