

**Minutes of the 1281st meeting of the Manchester
Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on
16th June 2026**

Present: Ben Allen, Jem Wardle, Job Trotter, Captain Boldwig, Fogg, Tom Roker

Apologies: Dodson, Jingle, Mr Pott, Dr Slammer, Solomon Pell, Rev Stiggins

The meeting was opened at 8.00, with Ben Allen representing Jingle, who was “otherwise engaged” for “family reasons”. No speculation requested. Captain Boldwig on the gavel, showing Ben Allen just how to bang on cue.

Fogg, as our new treasurer showed his new piece of equipment, the “purple purse”. He quickly gathered tonight’s fees, and decided once again that there would be no free night tonight. Dodson, missing because Mrs Dodson has had a nasty fall would be most impressed. Slammer is keen to return as soon as his damaged leg will let him. Job Trotter has suggested he offer Slammer a lift as he lives nearby.

The toast to Mr Pickwick was actually done later in the meeting, because the chair was distracted.

The minutes were read by Tom Roker. They were broadly accepted as accurate, but Fogg felt that Jem Wardle’s vote of thanks recognising Roker as an inspired choice as the new minute writer was “somewhat gilding the lily”. A slanderous remark from a dodgy solicitor.

Rule 8

Since no one was particularly hungry we decided to just have a drink. Ben was curious about the numbers in the u3a, Jem said in the region of 500. Some discussion re new members, possibly from u3a, and Ben said he had a colleague called Lee, who he was hopeful would join.

Some discussion about the meaning of the word “flarch”. Roker finds it a useful word.

Captain Boldwig a bit slow on the gavel. Has he peaked already?

Correspondence. Jem Wardle as new secretary was again pleased to declare that there was none.

Reading and Inquisition. Jem Wardle said he had taken pity on us, and that tonight’s reading (from chapter VI (6) would be a short one. Job Trotter was the only one to be correct. Fines were levied, and it seems that our fines master Job Trotter wanted to inspect each coin before it was put in the box. It seems that Tom Roker had inadvertently handed a Jordanian quarter dinar to him, thinking it was a 50p piece. It had the same shape and size. This oversight eventually cost poor Tom another £2, on top of the 50p. As an aside, later Tom checked online and its value lay between 54p and £4.00 depending on its age. Ha!!

Captain Boldwig managed to bang almost in time with tonight’s chair.

Any other business

Jem Wardle said the website had been renewed for another 2 years, at a cost of £73, and there was another annual charge of £8. This has been covered by Fogg.

The website has drawn in 231 visitors, mainly from the UK, but some from as far away as the USA and Japan. Most impressive.

Jem Wardle mentioned that there was to be an outdoor presentation of Pickwick Papers at Dam House, Astley on Saturday 11th July. He has put the details on the WhatsApp group.

A discussion was held about having a booby prize for the raffle, as this would add a little spice to who actually got the last ticket. The idea of this jeopardy seemed to go down well with members. Tom Roker will bring the booby prize, a particularly fine (but empty) bottle of Salford Rum.

Discussion also had about the possibility of a canal boat trip for the members. This may well be subsidised out of the club funds (Fogg permitting). Roker to look into this and post options on WhatsApp.

The Toast to Mr Pickwick was sung fairly well considering. However as mentioned earlier in the minutes, it should have been item 2 on the agenda, and therefore was extremely late. It seems that the chair had mixed this up with the Toast to Charles Dickens, which we immediately followed with. We got this right this time as we'd phoned Dodson for the correct ending.

Ben Allen says he will look at getting the toast printed so we don't forget it again.

The raffle

First out of the hat was Captain Boldwig, followed by Roker, Job, Ben and Jem Wardle. Fogg had forgotten to bring a bottle, and duly fined, managed to get the last ticket, and therefore no bottle. Not even the 19 Crimes, justice indeed.

The vote of thanks

Roker was invited to give his thoughts on the state of tonight's meeting. He felt that he had been unjustly accused of attempting to fiddle the fines box, and had been over-harshly treated. He noted that the chair was no substitute for Mr Pickwick, and that mixing Item 2 with item 11 was an indication of his need for more training. He also noted that Captain Boldwig had started well, slowed down in the middle, and was decidedly tentative with the gavel towards the end. Possibly his bad knee had something to do with it.

Jem Wardle stood (after last month's fine for sitting) and said he felt it had been a useful evening. He congratulated Ben on having to stand in with no script, praised the fines master for his diligence, and commented that he thought "Fred" had done a good job with the gavel. This incorrect name cost Jem a fine, as did his comment of "bugger" when it was pointed out. We saw Jem's little coins bag for the first time this evening.

Good neet owd friends was sung fairly well for a change. Despite the agenda still listing point 17 as "The Queen" we decided to settle on "The King", and also did a pretty good job of it.

Raffle raised £6.00

Fines £7.50

A good night for all

A reminder that the new website is now live. It's to be found at **manchesterpickwickclub.uk**