

**Minutes of the 1184<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club  
on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2007**

The 1184<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club commenced at 8.07 p.m. with the chair being occupied by the properly appointed Mr Pickwick, although the subsequent proceedings suggested that a 'stand in' might have made more of a success of the job.

There being no official P.O.C. Mr Pott volunteered for the job and for the first time in living memory the drinks order was correct first time. This 100% record was, however, not maintained as the evening wore on.

Dodson had taken advantage of the confusion surrounding the new Mr Pickwick by announcing that meeting subs had increased to £5 although guests would, in future, be free to try and get more members to bring guests. He then realised that Weller had brought a guest with him and was particularly grateful when, in answer to a suggestion from Tupman that he had only brought a guest because he knew the guest would be free, Weller claimed that his apparent guest was, in fact, an Honorary Member of the club. Dodson claimed that the guest wasn't an honorary member but the guest informed Mr Pickwick that he had been made an honorary member some time ago so Dodson was fined for questioning a guest and Mivins was asked to try and identify when this event had happened. If the guest and Weller were correct in their claim, this put a completely different complexion on the matter because members have to pay. Dodson's next problem was that his records had no current honorary members listed and in any case, he said, an honorary member would have a pickwickian name so the solution he suggested was that the guest, Ron McClusky, should become an ordinary member in order to give him a pickwickian name. This suggestion was agreed unanimously and Grummer performed the introduction, giving Ron the pickwickian name Bob Sawyer. Bob thus became liable for subs, to Dodson's delight.

The money having been collected from most members some difficulty was experienced when trying to extract cash from Jingle who produced a variety of small change but was still unable to reach the necessary £5, falling £1 short. On the other hand, Joe the Fat Boy announced that he was prepared to pay the subs for Jem Wardle and the money was handed to Dodson with a flourish; this might have been seen as a grand gesture by Joe until Dodson announced that Joe himself was in arrears with his subs and that the money proffered had been set against his debt rather than Jem's. Joe then announced that he was getting married in the near future and would be moving from the area; this would make regular attendance difficult but he wished to retain his membership and promised to attend whenever possible. Members drank a toast to Joe and his bride to be.

Grummer was then asked by Pickwick to introduce the members but suggested that Tupman would feel besmirched if that job was given to another member; Pickwick asked Tupman how did he feel about this and was informed that he did indeed feel besmirched, so Pickwick changed his mind and asked Tupman to perform the introduction which he did in his usual excellent manner.

The 9.00 p.m. toast was taken late as usual, 10.20 p.m. on this occasion and was led by Grummer; unfortunately the toast Grummer was singing was the toast to Charles Dickens and the founder members of the Manchester Pickwick Club rather than the correct one so he was fined for leading the other members astray.

Grummer then informed the members that he had visited The Crown hotel in Nantwich in response to suggestions from some members that an overnight visit to that hostelry would be a good idea. His enquiries had revealed that an overnight stay in February with breakfast would cost approximately £35 each, dinner being extra. There was some discussion about whether this could take the place of the usual summer outing but Grummer said this was not a good idea because the cost would discourage members from inviting guests and the income from guests raffle ticket purchases was fundamental to the club's finances. A similar suggestion that the decision about this outing be deferred until the A.G.M. was also considered unacceptable because at that time of year the hotel is usually fully booked. Pickwick said he would collect names of members wishing to take part later.

The steward at Moorside Social club had indicated that he would be on holiday when this meeting took place so the buffet for the evening had been prepared by Dodson and Grummer. As far as quality was concerned, suffice it to say that on this occasion there was nothing left for the ordinary social club members, everything having been consumed by pickwickians. Ben Allen thanked Dodson and Grummer for catering for his special diet and Pickwick thanked both members and asked that this be recorded in the minutes.

Dodson was taken to task by other members who wanted to know why he had appointed himself as advisor to the new Mr Pickwick and claimed this was his right as a past president of the club, at which point roughly 75% of the other members claimed they were also past presidents and had equal rights to advise Pickwick!

The Secretary said he had received a number of E-mails during the summer recess, one of which was from Horatio Fiskin tendering his resignation. Whilst there was some surprise from members about the reason for this, Pickwick said he knew Fiskin was involved with a motor cycle group and understood the meetings clashed, but could not claim that to be the real reason for the resignation which came 'out of the blue' and other possible matters might also be the cause.

Several other E-mails were from Rick Bravo, (Philadelphia Pickwick Club); these were read to members and mainly involved amusing anecdotes but included was a suggestion for a possible joint meeting in Philadelphia. He also advised that Jane Monk (Cedric Dickens' daughter) had sent the Philadelphia club two prints from the Audobon Society which had belonged to Cedric and were greatly treasured by him.

Peter Barnes had reported on the joint meeting of 4 Pickwick clubs and talked about the possibility of a celebration of Charles Dickens 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. Included was an invitation for 2 members to attend a meeting at the George and Vulture on either 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> October. After some discussion, Pickwick and Grummer expressed interest in attending and Dodson agreed the club would contribute something towards the costs of attending. It was agreed that the Secretary would respond to the invitation and seek clarification over the date of the meeting, the location of the venue and a list

of convenient hotels, after which Mr Pickwick would make the necessary arrangements for himself and Grummer.

Unfortunately, the time had been reached when the social club closes so the meeting was called to an abrupt end with many of the items on the agenda left undiscussed including the vote of thanks to the chairman and his deputy, which was probably appropriate in view of the confusion generated by these two members and orchestrated by Dodson.

The Fines Box contained only £7.01 whilst the raffle raised £6.50.