

MANCHESTER PICKWICK CLUB

Minutes of the 539th Meeting held at Headquarters
Mitre Hotel, on Thursday, 30th March 1944.

A bad start to a good meeting; no pots, no fire, no bar, no Julia. Mr. Wardle and the Secretary wandered through a maze of cellars, tried keys in different doors to find the hidden treasure, i.e. the mugs and jugs, but without avail. All members were grumbling at the want of a fire and this was remedied by the hostess who apparently borrowed a bucket of coal from some other hostelry. Presently Mr. Wardle arrived upstairs to say that he had been successful in company with the lady of the cellars in finding the mugs; beer was brought up and everybody being served Mr. Pickwick opened the meeting.

Mr. Fogg rose to his feet and said that Podder was guilty of severe ~~exhibition~~ favouritism having amply filled the mugs of Alfred Jingle and Podder, whereas he, Mr. Fogg had received a very meagre measure. The Chairman in pointing out that the top of the table had also suffered to the same extent as the vice-chair, fined the vice-chair for irrelevant remarks; fined various members for not wearing badges and in particular Mr. Trundle who wore his badge on his coat, but had in the chairman's opinion deliberately hidden it under his overcoat.

The minutes of the 538th meeting were read and received on the motion of Alf. Jingle supported by Ben Allen. George Nupkins said he had thoroughly enjoyed the last meeting and would have proposed the minutes be accepted but he apparently was not there according to the list of members and therefore, felt himself debarred. The Secretary apologised for this lapse and placed his penny in the box. Apologies for absence from Job Trotter and Solomon Pell were read and then Mr. Pickwick said he wished to know whether George Nupkins' correct title was the Inquisitor or the Inquisitator. George Nupkins looking round in amazement affirmed the Secretary's name of Inquisitor.

Mr. Wardle pointed out ^{that} ~~Mr.~~ Mr. Pickwick ~~had~~ stated he was taking a new line when he opened his remarks and Mr. Wardle was anxious to know what line. The Chairman asked for the reason for the enquiry and the vice-chair called on Mr. Wardle to sit down. The Secretary thought Mr. Fogg was usurping the chairman's functions but the chairman upheld the vice, saying he was sometimes on his side. The vice-chair seemed overwhelmed by this remark of the chairmans and asked for a special note to be made in the minutes.

The chairman now called on Ben Allen for an item and at the request of a large number of the members he gave "The Deathless Army" which was loudly applauded.

The vice-chair now rose and said he hesitated to get to his feet to say that Mr. Trundle appeared to slumber during the last item, in this remark he was supported by Mr. Wardle and George Nupkins, the latter stating he almost expected a snore. Mr. Trundle brushed aside these accusations and said he could almost repeat the song. Mr. Pickwick supported Mr. Trundle saying that he, himself, could appreciate music better with eyes closed and was supported by Mr. Lowton. Mr. Pickwick thereon decided that the vice-chair and Mr. Wardle should be fined for making an unjust accusation.

An interval was now called and thereafter the vice-chair rose to propose the toast to the visitors; for once he did not dip into his mug before speaking. He said the visitors had all been with us before and he hoped they had enjoyed themselves in spite of the opposition to the top end of the table. All visitors were welcome and in particular the members appreciated the visits of those who entertained us.

Mr. Lowton rose to a point of order and said that in his opinion the vice-chair had appealed to the visitors for support in the battle between the top and bottom end of the table; he thought he had discerned tears in their eyes, and in his opinion the vice-chair should be fined which was duly carried into effect and immediately after the chairman fined Mr. Stiggins for calling him, Mr. Pickwick, "Bert."

He then called on Mr. Langford who told us amusing tales of Insurance Men and then addressing Mr. Fogg as "the bone of contention" asked if he would oblige. Mr. Fogg after protesting as what he called derogatory title gave us "The Gentle Maiden" and "Fishermen of England" which were greatly enjoyed. He was followed by Mr. Burn, a visitor who sang "From Inverness to Fell" and "When Song is Sweet". We heard a little of Mr. Burn at the last meeting and the present effort fulfilled a promise he then gave. His items were especially enjoyed by his fellow artist, Mr. Fogg.

Horatio Finkin then gave "A Grudely Man" and there were many queries and interruptions regarding his title, the way he was styled in the minutes and the way he was addressed. Mr. Pickwick pointed out that Mr. Burn may also be addressed as Mr. Burn and being supported by George Nupkins he eventually fined Mr. Wardle one penny presumably for unseemingly interference. Mr. Burn then gave us "The Lute Player" and "Phil The Fluter's Ball", two fine items rendered in great style and for which Mr. Pickwick tendered the thanks of all members.

George Nupkins now appeared to be dithering between the table and the door and eventually catching the eye of Mr. Pickwick said he hoped in a minute to bring in a friend. The Company waited a little while but the friend failed to materialise and George waved the chairman to get on with the programme, pending his friend's arrival so Alfred Jingle obliged with "Brahn Boots" and "The Dangerous Age", the former appeared to be a new one as far as the Pickwick Club was concerned, but both items were thoroughly enjoyed by the meeting.

The vice-chair now addressed Mr. Pickwick and said was it necessary for him to address Ben Allen during the last item. The chairman denied having addressed Ben Allen, saying it was merely a gesture, his mouth may have moved but no sound came and he promptly fined the vice-chair one penny. The vice-chair said he was cut to the quick by the harshness of the chairman but, said the result of the gesture would now be apparent as he proposed to call on Ben Allen. Ben Allen gave a little discussion of eyes behind glasses, being apparently still worried about his friend Trundle. George Nupkins however, stating that beaming eyes behind glasses can now be seen and Mr. Trundle's eyes were not visible. Mr. Trundle however, indignantly asked whether or not he was to be allowed to close his eyes if he felt so disposed and the matter was allowed to rest with that.

Mr. Watson now replied on behalf of the visitors stating that he had enjoyed his evening as he had enjoyed many previous evenings, he wished to thank the Club for so pleasant a night. Mr. Langham tendered his thanks to the vice-chair who he said had provided entertainment for the Company, he did not agree with all the criticism of the vice. He had not been able to offer much entertainment tonight but would avail himself of some other opportunity. He expressed his thanks to the members as did Mr. Burn who finished off with the tale of the gentleman who had been courting seventeen years and finally proposed.

Mr. Pickwick now called for the toast to absent friends and on the representation of members fined himself, the toast should have been absent members. He then called on George Nupkins for a reading and George prefaced this with an extract from "Through Soviet Russia" being an account of the presentation of Mr. Pickwick at the Russian Theatre in Moscow. This reading was much appreciated and thereafter George went on to the meeting of Job Trotter and Alf. Jingle by Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller and the drinking of the pot of Porter. The debate ensued as to the quantity of a pot of beer or porter and George pointed out that this had varied greatly since the time of the occurrence he had just related.

Mr. Pickwick now called on Alf. Jingle for more entertainment and Alf. responded with the "Englishman" and "Midnight in Shoreditch" the former by general request, these items were as usual rendered in Alf's excellent style.

The annual general meeting was fixed for the 25th May, 1944 and it was decided to hold fortnightly meetings at the Mitre Inn up to that date.

Mr. Pickwick now called attention to the replica of Mr. Pickwick in p to the stand on which he was mounted which had been reburished by Mr. W. behalf of the Club. He tendered very many thanks to Mr. Wardle for his h