

MANCHESTER PICKWICK CLUB

Minutes of the 541st Meeting held at Headquarters
on Thursday, 27th April, 1944

Mr. Pickwick was in attendance tonight and after a few preliminary drinks at the bar led the way upstairs when after the mugs had been found and "kitty" collected he declared the 541st meeting open and immediately fined members for smoking without permission, but neglected to fine himself until his attention was called to his own shortcoming. The vice-chair was lucky, he was about to light up and it was a point to consider as to whether he should be fined for 'intention', but the chairman in his wisdom ruled in his favour. Lowton had not as yet put in an appearance and Mr. Pickwick was debating whether or not to proceed with the minutes when in dashes Lowton - pays his fine - and the vice-chair rose with his accustomed grace (What a sight! - Never knew he had it in him!) to propose the toast to Mr. Pickwick.

The minutes were read and George Nupkins proposed they be accepted, remarking that it was the first time he had considered them worth proposing. He thought they were well written and well read. Mr. Wardle added his mead of praise and as the Chairman remarked praise from Mr. Wardle was indeed praise.

Mr. Pickwick now called for correspondence but was reminded that he had not asked for anything arising from the minutes and there were apparently errors. For instance, the 541st meeting had been quoted instead of the 540th. The Secretary said this was a typing error and was promptly fined 3d. for passing the blame. "Trial by Jury" had also been mentioned instead of "H.M.S. Pinafore". Mr. Jingle got up to excuse the Secretary's error saying, that "Trial by Jury" had been inadvertantly used in the debate and was promptly fined for not using basic English. The Hon. Saml. Slunkey was very anxious to have the minutes corrected as he was of the opinion that the future generation reading such minutes would come to the conclusion we were an ignorant lot. Horatio Fizkins, for some reason known only to himself, suggested the minutes be read again but the Chairman called on Mr. Fogg for a song and the members applauded "Why should'nt I" and "Smiling Through."

The Secretary then accused Mr. Stiggins of inattention as he was looking through the window with his mind obviously on other things and Mr. Wardle accused the Secretary of "tittering" though he was not asked for a definition of that term - both were fined 1d.

Horatio Fizkins called upon for a recitation started off with a "Soliloquy to an Ale House Pot" but his memory weakened half-way through and having no Lowton to help him out he clutched his brow whilst members looked on in obvious anxiety - all to no avail so he went off to "Friezland Ale" that favourite of Tony Wellers and barring the missing out of one verse managed this to the pleasure of the assembly.

Mr. Pickwick was reminded that the correspondence had not yet been dealt with and apologies were received from Solomon Pell. It was also reported that Tracy Tupman and Dr. Slammer were in hospital and the Secretary was instructed to write them on behalf of the Club.

The Summer Session was now discussed and all members were in favour of having their summer meetings in June, July and September respectively. It was suggested that the June and July meetings be held at the Old Trafford Bowling Club and the September meeting at the Charlton Liberal Club. The matter of arrangements to be left to the Executive.

Ben Allen sang for us two songs "Bill at Sea" and "Sylvia" and was warmly complimented by Lowton.

George Nupkins was accused of slumbering during the recital but said he was merely following the example of Trundle who appreciated such items better with his eyes closed which impelled Alf. Jingle to remind us of the historic occasion where Trundle slept through a long reading by Pott at Dingley Dell.

The Chairman called on Mr. Langford for a peroration and was fined himself for using large words. Mr. Langford obliged with the "Speech of Henry V before Agincourt" and "For England". He unfortunately caught the memory lapse from Fizkin, nevertheless we enjoyed his items.

Mr. Overton then gave us "Little by Little" and "Bit by Bit" but he was also bitten by the memory bug, then the Chairman asked "Duggie" to sing and after he had paid his fine Alf Jingle gave "It's a Good World after all" with more hesitations followed by "Three Blind Mice"; after which he gave "Mandalay" by Kipling, the latter item especially in his best style.

Then the Chairman said he was looking for talent but George Nupkins suggested that as he had brought sufficient music to last all night he might entertain us himself and this he did in rare style with the "Bells of St. Marys," to the usual tincan and glass jangle accompaniment. It is a debateable point whether Mr. Pickwick or the members enjoy this item most.

The Vice-Chair now proposed the toast of our Visitors saying it was quite apparent we do welcome visitors. He gave them a very hearty welcome to the Club, saying some had been before but we hoped to see them all again. He ~~expressly~~ expressed thanks to those who had helped to entertain us and trusted all had enjoyed themselves in true Pickwickian fashion.

The visitors all expressed their appreciation and then Mr. Langford told the story of the windscreen wiper.

The toast to Absent Members was drunk with special reference to Tracy Tupman and Dr. Slammer and was followed by that to Charles Dickens.

Mr. Pickwick here interposed a tale which brought a strong remonstrance from the Vice-Chair who said he deplored the telling of tales between the toast and the reading. George Nupkins prefaced his reading with a tale regarding the catching of ~~burglars~~ burglars which brought a further protest from the ~~Chairman~~ Vice-Chair and then got on with his reading which relates the journey of sundry Pickwickians to Birmingham to interview Mr. Winkle (Snr.) and the antics of Bob Sawyer on the roof of the cab.

Mr. Pickwick was going on to other business when the Vice-Chair who was evidently in a very critical mood said that he, (Mr. Pickwick) gave much praise to those at the top end of the table but had not said a word in ~~any~~ commendation of George Nupkins' most excellent reading, which of course all had enjoyed. Mr. Pickwick looking a bit flabbergasted bowed to the storm and then explained that he want Horatio Fizkin to sing "Good Neight Old Friends" before the departure of some of the visitors who had to leave early.

Horatio obliged and the visitors seemed most impressed. Thereafter Ben Allen gave "The Sea Road" followed by Alf Jingle in the recitation of "McBrae's System" and Mr. Fogg in the songs "Captain Mac" and "Invictus" all of which items were greatly enjoyed.

It was now time for the King and after this had been sung Mr. Pickwick closed the meeting.

Present: Mr. Pickwick, Podder, Ben Allen, Mr. Trundle
Mr. Wardle Alf. Jingle, George Nupkins,
Horatio Fizkin, Rev. Stiggins, Hon. Saml. Slumpkey
Mr. Fogg, Mr. Dodson and Mr. Lowton.

Visitors: Mr. Langford, Mr. Carter,
Mr. Overton Mr. Broadhead & Mr. Taylor