

MANCHESTER PICKWICK CLUB

Minutes of the 510th Meeting held at  
Headquarters on Tuesday 7 October 1941  
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This was the first meeting of the 1941-42 session proper and a rather sparsely attended meeting was indicated when Mr. Pickwick gathered his five fellow members together and sought the meeting room where he duly declared the 510th meeting to be opened.

But the Pickwickians continued to arrive to the great benefit of the poor box, the final muster being thirteen.

Mr. Pickwick called for the minutes of the 509th meeting which were read and on the motion of Sgt. Buzfuz seconded by Snodgrass accepted.

Sam Weller referred to his promise at the 507th meeting to find some photos which he thought would be of interest to the Club. He was sorry he had been unable to find them but would make a further search.

Tony Weller now awoke to a sense of his responsibilities as Vice Chairman and called for a toast to Mr. Pickwick.

Sam Weller enquired after Bantam, but no one had any recent news of him and Sam went on to speak of a book on Pickwick papers which he thought would be of interest to the Club.

The talk ran on old times and Mr. Pickwick recalled the old Pickwick Club at Middleton and in particular of a cricket match at Middleton which the Pickwickians of that day had attended. He thought it would be interesting to read the minutes relating to that match and the Secretary promised to look them up if he could have a clue as to the probable date. After some scratching of heads the year was fixed as 1924 or 1925.

The date of future meetings was discussed and after some argument as to the merits of lunar months as opposed to calendar months it was proposed by Snodgrass that the meetings be held at intervals of four weeks to accommodate the moon. This was accepted and Mr. Pickwick intimated that if it was found impossible to hold any particular meeting he would endeavour to hold an informal meeting in its place.

The Secretary raised the question of subscriptions for the coming year, pointing out there was some wealth in hand but it was decided the usual fee should be paid and any surplus money devoted to a 'do' when we were again at peace.

George Nupkins asked the Secretary if he had received any written apologies for absence and on being informed in the negative called the attention of the Meeting to a lack of courtesy to Mr. Pickwick and the Club.

Mr. Pickwick said he had rung up the Secretary on the day of the last two meetings but had been informed he was not available. The Secretary expressed his regrets but pointed out he had a home address and there was a perfectly good postal service.

Tony Weller had not broken voice to any extent during the evening but now said he wished to speak on a subject near to his heart and this was the Annual Xmas dinner - was there any reason why it should not be held this year. After discussion it was agreed that except for a possible lack of appropriate food and the possibility of an air raid there was no reason why it should not be held and it was proposed by Sgt. Buzfuz seconded by Mr. Fogg that the dinner be duly held on Tuesday 16 December 1941

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or the nearest available date, the arrangements to be left to Mr. Pott and the Secretary and Sam Weller promised to do his utmost if there was any turkey difficulty.

Pott came in at this moment, late, and happy without any apparent reason for either and was promptly fined. He demurred at being fined explaining he had only looked in to leave again, but Mr. Pickwick patiently explained that the fact of looking in was to cost him his kitty and a fine and after again expostulating Pott paid. It was then explained to him that the Xmas dinner was being discussed and Pott rushed off to interview mine host regarding this important matter.

Tony Weller - apparently satisfied with a good night's work, presented his apologies to Mr. Pickwick and left, Mr. Pickwick nominating Sgt. Buzfuz to the Vice Chair and asked if any member had any interesting Pickwickian experience to relate.

Snodgrass promptly obliged by reading extracts from "What they said at the time by Kingsland" being reviews of Dickens works in 1837/8 1842/7, 1859 1861/6 and 1870 from which it was gathered Dickens was regarded by the newspaper critics as a very mixed blessing. Of Pickwick Papers, W.M. Thackeray said "It contains true characters under false names; and like Roderick Random, an inferior work, and Tom Jones (one that is immeasurably superior) gives us a better idea of the state and ways of the people, than one could gather from any more pompous and authentic history.

The Quarterly Magazine on Pickwick Papers in 1838 stated "Mr. Dickens writes too often and too fast; on the principle, we presume, of making hay whilst the sun shines, he seems to have accepted at once all engagements that were offered to him, and the consequence is, that in too many instances he has been compelled to "forestall the blighted harvest of the brain", and put forth, in their crude, unfinished, undigested state, thoughts, feelings, observations and plans which it required time and study to mature - or supply the allotted number of pages with original matter of the most commonplace description, or hints caught from others and diluted to make them pass for his own. If he persists much longer in this course, it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell his fate he has risen like a rocket, and he will come down like a stick"

Mr. Pickwick thanked Snodgrass for this extremely interesting item and then called on P.O.R.I. for a reading.

George Nupkins prefaced his reading by remarking that as this was the first meeting of the session he had thought it appropriate to give the opening chapter of Pickwick Papers.

Now it is not known whether George has been practising in secret places or taking lessons in elocution but his reading brought down the house. Snodgrass was on his feet as he finished but Mr. Pickwick muttering "No this is mine" proceeded to shower compliments on him naming him a worthy successor to Snodgrass which is, of course, the compliment of compliments.

Snodgrass followed up with a very fine appreciation and Sam Weller finished off with a reference to the glorious tribute from Snodgrass to his successor. Snodgrass now took up Mr. Pickwick on a point of order. He had been on his feet before Mr. Pickwick spoke and should have been given precedence.

Mr. Pickwick objected, he had desired to compliment Geo. Nupkins from the Chair.

Most members took part in this discussion. It was

generally

generally agreed that Mr. Pickwick should have allowed Snodgrass to speak. Mr. Pickwick on the principle that Mr. Pickwick can do no wrong, refused to be convinced.

Toasts to Charles Dickens and to absent members were drunk and Mr. Pickwick expressed his regrets at having to leave the meeting.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Pickwick for his able conduct of the meeting was proposed by Sgt. Buzfuz seconded by Sam Weller and Mr. Snodgrass was elected to the vacant chair and called on Alf Jingle for some entertainment.

At the request of the company he gave Old Ben Shuttleworth and was accompanied by Sam Weller. It was pleasant to hear the piano again, we have suffered in that respect since Lawton joined the forces and the members shewed their appreciation.

The talk ran on cards. Dr. Slammer describing a marvellous Solo hand which had failed to get a trick.

Sam Weller described an occasion when he had also failed to get a trick with a Stone Dyed Solo, but with the next two hands got Misere avoir and abundance declared.

After one or two more tales Mr. Pickwick again called on Alfred Jingle who recited "Somnambalistic bliss" to the great content of the members present.

Mr. Pickwick now declared it his intention to close the meeting and after Sgt. Buzfuz had proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair the King was toasted and the meeting closed.

PRESENT - Mr. Pickwick, Sgt. Buzfuz, Podder, Snodgrass, Tony Weller, Sam Weller, Peter Magnus, Mr. Fogg, Dr. Slammer, George Nupkins, Mr. Pott, Alfred Jingle Mr. Dodson.

Apologies for absence were received from - Jack Hopkins and Bob Sawyer.

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*Sam Weller*  
4/11/41