

Chapter 1



1878, The First Year



Abel Heywood, one of the founding members of the Manchester Anglers Association, took annual spring fishing holidays with a group of friends.

In an address that he later made to the Manchester Anglers he said that “they had enjoyed themselves so much that they wished to reproduce in smoky Manchester the delightful evenings that they had spent in the country after each day’s angling. At these country meetings every man did his part, contributing to the common stock of intelligence, observation, or story, and the result was such an entertainment, as those who had participated in would never forget.”

They wished to continue these happy and innocent evenings, so a preliminary meeting of a few gentlemen interested in angling was held at the Clarence Hotel Manchester on May 6th 1878, after which an invitation was sent out to certain “High Profile Gentlemen” in Manchester.

“It has been suggested that you may wish to join such an Association, and in that case I shall be glad if you inform me, as early as possible, of your being present at the next meeting, which will be held at the Clarence Hotel Piccadilly on Friday May 24th 1878 at 7-30 in the evening. The proposed Subscription is One Guinea per annum”.

Such was the interest that at the first meeting that the following council was elected.

Colonel John I. Mawson,
E. G. Simpson and Rev. William White,
George S. Woolley,
Abel Heywood Jun.
Samuel Buckley, F.R.C.S.,
Charles Estcourt F.C.S.,
David Reid,
Henry Vannan M. A.

President
Vice Presidents.
Treasurer.
Hon. Sec.



Council 1879

Robert Burn E G Simpson

Charles Estcourt Rev William White Dr Henry Vannan Thomas

Harker

F J Faraday

Col Henry Mawson Abel Heywood jnr

David Reid

George Woolley

Most of the men on the Council were prominent in Manchester Society. Many of them belonged to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. A short biography on each of them gives an idea of their life and position in society.

“Colonel John Mawson C.E. was born in Salford in 1822. He was sent to the Grammar School at Drigg in Cumberland where he began his love of the countryside and angling.

Col. Mawson began his business education as an engraver when he acquired the art of etching, intending to finish in London as a picture engraver, but from close application to work and the use of the magnifying glass became temporarily blind, which affliction, though soon passed through, caused him to abandon all intention of further progress in engraving.

Afterwards he served an apprenticeship to the well known engineer Mr Bateman, with whom he worked for thirteen years; then after that period till the present he has constructed as engineer several waterworks, railways, &c., in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, which have firmly established his professional fame, and founded for him a well deserved and lucrative practice. He now stands in the first ranks of his profession and has the entire confidence of his confrères, by whom he is much esteemed as an umpire in reference cases”

In 1851 feeling strongly on the subject of national defences, Mr Mawson endeavoured to start a rifle club, and succeeded in obtaining a meeting of gentlemen at Kersal Moor, but nothing permanent was effected until In May 1859 when he succeeded in forming a volunteer regiment, afterwards named the First Manchester Rifle Volunteers, and was the first volunteer who ventured to appear in public in uniform. He was ably supported by the late Mr Robert Chadwick and other gentlemen possessed of wealth and influence, and how the movement has flourished to the present time we all are witness. He assisted the late Colonel Deakin in the formation of the second Manchester, and also Major Henry in that of the third Manchester, and had the honour of being requested by the then Press Company to be their Captain.

Colonel Mawson afterwards formed the seventh Lancashire (Manchester Artillery) Corps, and filled all the offices in rotation from Lieutenant to Hon. Colonel, which commission he still retains.”

From the magazine “MOMUS” of September 22nd 1881

The 1881 census shows the President, Colonel John Isaac Mawson C.E. to be living at 8, Birch Lane, Moss Side, Manchester. He was 58 at the time and according to the 1881 census was born in Salford. He lived at the address given above, with his wife Ann, aged 60, who had been born in Wolverhampton. Also living in the house were two sons Arthur G., 24 years old, a Locomotive engineer, and Hector, aged 19, a banker’s clerk. Both sons had been born in Manchester. There were also two female servants living under the same roof, one a cook and the other a housemaid.



Edward George Simpson, or E. G. as he seemed always to be called, was born in 1847 in Yorkshire; by 1881 he was married to Annie F Simpson who at that date was 28 years old. They had one son who was born at Brooklands --- George H. who was aged 5. This small family in 1881 was shown by the census to be living as lodgers at Deyne View off Prestwich Road, in Prestwich. Edward's occupation was given as "Solicitor and commissioner for oaths". The 1891 census shows the family to be living at Elmwood near Fog Lane south Manchester. Perhaps in 1881 he was on the move. He gave as his contact address to the Manchester Anglers "Mount Street, Manchester".

E. G. Simpson was a vice President for some years from the start of the club and was President in 1883. He contributed an early Paper on "Rod Fishing off the Isle of Man" and later gave papers more than once on "Legal points for Anglers".

When David Reid challenged the authority of the "Rivers Board" on the river Wye in Derbyshire in the early 1880s he was represented by a "Mr Simpson" in court. In one of many stories of angling trips written by Manchester Anglers, where they used nick names for the participants, a member of the party is alluded to as the lawyer to the Association and this may well have been E.G. Simpson.

William White was one of the two first Vice Presidents of the club and although not mentioned as being in the first seven members, was an early recruit to the club and took the chair at monthly meetings when Colonel Mawson was away.

Both William and his wife were born in Scotland as the 1881 census shows. At that time he was 54 and his wife, Marion J., was 51 years old. That he had travelled abroad was shown by the birth places of his children: - Jane M. aged 24, a governess born in India, Peter R. aged 21, a Warehouseman in cotton goods born in Scotland, Murry G. aged 19, a Cotton dealer and salesman in Printed goods, born in Manchester, Minnie aged 17, a Scholar born in Manchester. There was one Scottish female servant

William lived at 25 Greenhill Street Chorlton on Medlock and an examination of the occupations of his neighbours at the time shows that it was not quite as 'classy' a neighbourhood as those in which his fellow anglers, mentioned above were living. He is described as a Clergyman (Unofficiate) and always bore the title Reverend. He was a keen fisherman and was one of the instigators of "The Raid to Kirkcudbright" and also provided some poetry for the club. He disappeared from the angling scene in the early eighties and this was perhaps on the call of duty to some far flung area of the Empire.

George Stephen Woolley was the son of James Woolley, a chemist and druggist who also supplied chemicals and colours to the cotton trade, he was a good friend of John Dalton who lived with the Johns family for many years. James Woolley had married one of the orphaned nieces of the Johns family

At the census of 1881, George Woolley, a widower aged 44, was residing in Cavendish Road, Broughton in Salford with his daughter Grace aged 9 who was born in Broughton. Also in the household were George's two younger brothers Herman aged 36 and Harold aged 30. George, with his two brothers ran a chemical company called James Woolley, Sons and Co. The address supplied to the Anglers was 69 Market Street and this no doubt referred to their place of work. Also in the household in Cavendish Road were three female live in servants.

From the beginning of the Anglers Club George S. Woolley was the Hon. Treasurer and was held in high regard by his friends. Abel Heywood, the club secretary, was his brother in law and in one of Abel's pieces written in about 1891, he relates that he had known Harold Woolley for about 45 years.

Abel Heywood junior At the census of 1881 Abel Heywood junior, who had been born in Manchester in 1840, lived at 3 Wellington Street, Higher Broughton, Salford. He gave his occupation as “Publisher and Printer employing twenty men and ten boys”

Abel junior had four children all born in Salford or Manchester, his wife Catherine had died the previous year aged 34. Abel’s sister-in-law Jane A. Woolley aged 27 and born in Salford also lived in the house. They had three female servants; namely a cook aged 28, a children’s ward aged 20 and a house maid aged 22.

George S. Woolley, the treasurer of the Manchester Anglers’ at this period, was Abel’s brother in law. Perhaps Jane Woolley shared her time between the two motherless households that were only about half a mile apart--- a sad scenario.

Being a Printer and Publisher Abel had the know-how and the facility to further the interests of the Manchester Anglers. He related in his paper “The first Year of the Association 1879” that he realised that to get the club running successfully the media had to be used. Because of his contacts he was able to supply plenty of copy to the local and National Press for their paragraphs. He knew the problems with visiting reporters who often did not take down the facts correctly; he had the contacts and the skill to provide reports to be published, untouched, or edited. It is in fact that because of these reports in the papers, the early activities of the Manchester Anglers can be reconstructed. Internally he did all the correspondence and prepared the monthly “summonses” to meetings in a delightful layout and quality. No other person could have done this without the back up of a printing firm and the real cost for a short run of printing (never more than fifty in the first year) is incalculable. The ability to communicate in the highest quality must have been one of the reasons why the club was considered to be of the top flight so early in its existence. Abel also wrote “five sixths of the contributions to the first MS. Magazine.” When it came to the publication of “Anglers’ Evenings”, his firm did the printing and he had no doubt had more than a small hand in the editing.



Abel junior had inherited the printing business from his father **Abel Heywood senior** who was born in Prestwich in 1810, the oldest son of a weaver who died when Abel was very young. At the age of nine he went to

work in a warehouse in the town centre for 18d a week. He was educated at a Sunday School in Bennett Street, and in 1828 started the radical paper *The Poor Man's Guardian*. He educated himself by attending classes at the Mechanics Institute. Abel set up a penny news room in Oldham Street where Henry Hetherington’s *Poor Man’s Guardian* was sold. On several occasions he was imprisoned and fined for distributing the sheets cheaply, i.e. without the official Government Stamp, or Stamp Tax, which would have made it too expensive for the working people he wanted to reach. Instead of the Government Stamp, each copy of the paper bore the words Knowledge is Power and the paper was distributed around the city secretly in boxes of biscuits or chests of tea. The Stamp Act was repealed in 1836. For selling this and other radical publications he was twice imprisoned. In 1841, Abel senior was elected treasurer of the National Charter Association and he sat on the Executive Committee until it moved to London in 1842. He played an active part in the proceedings leading to the incorporation of the Borough of Manchester in 1838. He became a councillor and, in 1853, an alderman. He was chairman of the highways committee for nearly 50 years. He was twice mayor of the city, in 1862, the year of the cotton famine, and in 1871 when the new Town Hall was opened. His newspaper and publishing business prospered, and innumerable radical journals, books and pamphlets were published by him. He was justifiably proud of his record as a radical and said at a banquet in his honour at the town hall in 1891: “I for one was a fierce rebel against the conditions of things which prevailed.” He died in 1893.



Charles Estcourt F.I.C. F.C.S. was the Manchester City Analyst and was closely connected with the Water Works where his tracks probably crossed those of Colonel Mawson. His address as far as the anglers were concerned was 8 St James' Square, Manchester.

Charles had a wife Anna Estcourt (Stewart) aged 39 and her birth place was given as "Goswick ?" (sic) Lancashire, as was that of a daughter aged 16 called Millicent Estcourt. He also had a son, Frank, aged five months. There was one servant in the household; namely, Sarah (Amah) Dupre aged seventeen. The houses in Burlington Street where he lived had more servants than householders.

Charles Estcourt published papers on 'The Pollution of the River Irwell' and 'The Pollution of the Air with Coal Smoke'.

David Reid was another original member of the Association. The 1881 census shows him to have been an Ironmonger employing twelve hands and living in Lyme Grove Bowden, Altrincham; a very prosperous area in those days. He had been born in Manchester and was aged 41 at the time of the census. Living with him were his wife, Ellen aged 41 also born in Manchester, and his mother in law aged 61 who had been born in Levenshulme and was a Hatter's daughter. David had no less than eight children all born locally. There were two female servants living in.

The club had a great debt of gratitude to him for not only did he read Papers on such topics as Greyling Fishing and A Holiday in Pen-y-Bont but he also compiled the Scrap Book and was Editor of the Manuscript Magazine, which contained original articles in song, prose, and verse contributed and often written up by the authors themselves. These articles were accompanied by original drawings, mainly in pen and ink, and much ornate calligraphy. He resigned from the Council in 1884 but continued to have an active part in the club for some years

Henry Vannan M.A. was a Scotsman and a member of the first Council. The 1881 census said that he lived at 75 Withington Road Manchester and gave as his occupation as "Teacher of English (School). He was 35 years old at the time and lived with his sister Harriet aged 32 who offered no occupation. The household was completed by two female Scottish servants, a cook aged 28 and a house maid aged 24.

Henry was another enthusiastic fisherman and also contributed to the publications "St. Boswells and the Tweed" and "Fishing days on the Aberdeenshire Don." Both being published in "Anglers Evenings. In 1884 he resigned from the club since "he was unable to attend meetings".



The Rule Book

By the end of **July 1878** a small book of Rules had been published which stated that
 “the object of the Association is to further such measures as may tend to promote the practice of angling,
 and the breeding and preservation of fish, and to afford the members opportunities of meeting together in
 a social manner for the exchange of ideas and experiences”.

It also stated that meetings would be held on the second Tuesday in each month. At first the meetings were held at the Clarence Hotel in Portland Street in Manchester and later as membership numbers grew, moved to the nearby Albion Hotel on Piccadilly. Before each meeting a reminder was sent out giving the date, time and agenda, including the title of the paper to be read. When the meetings were at The Albion Hotel members could take tea at 6.30, (for 2/9 or plain tea for 1/6), the meetings being at 7.30pm.

Each paper which was read at the monthly Meeting was reported by the local Press. No doubt Abel Heywood had alerted their reporters to ensure that the Association received full coverage in their papers.

Aug	“Let Patience Have her Perfect Work”	Col. Mawson
Sept	“Trout Fishing in Norway”	Mr Abel Heywood junior.
Oct	“Rod Fishing in the Isle of Man “	Mr E.G. Simpson.
Nov	“An October Day among the Grayling with observations on Derbyshire streams, and the requirements of our Association”	Mr David Reid
Dec	The Mind of Fishes	Mr F.J. Faraday F.L.S.

David Reid, as the Archivist, requested that after each paper was read to the Meeting the author would write it out in the Manuscript book. Among the entries were poems and songs, many using the rhythm and tunes of well known pieces.

‘The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna’ by Charles Wolfe, was used by Abel Heywood after his trip to Kircudbright in 1878, when he wrote under the pseudonym of ‘Peter Plagiartist’,

“The Raid of the Two”

Anglers’ version

Not a rise had they seen, not a fish had they got,
 When the two on their homeward course hurried
 The one on his ill luck was pondering, hot
 And t’other was very much flurried.

All day they had fished from the morn to the night,
 From the Deuch and the Ken were returning
 To Dalry with creels that were empty and light
 And cheeks that with grief were red burning.

Few and short were the words that they said,
 And those were all spoken in sorrow,
 They saw the black clouds gather thick overhead
 And knew they’d have worse luck tomorrow.

Loudly they groaned o’er the raid that was gone,
 And President White they upbraided
 But little he recked, sitting smoking at home,
 Thinking o’er what he’d done when **he** raided.

Quickly but sadly, away they came back,
 With hands neither scaly or gory
 They spoke but this word, why that tale’s all a crack
 And the fish in the bottle’s a story.

Original version

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
 As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
 Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
 O’er the grave where our hero was buried.

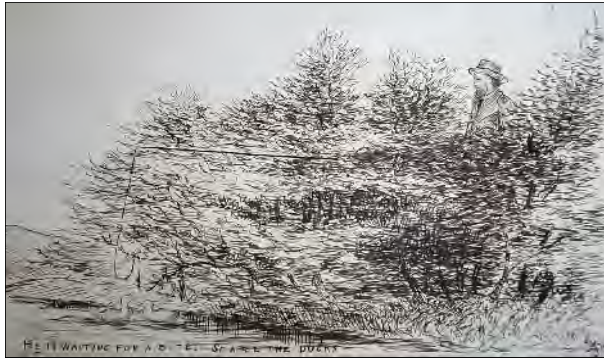
We buried him darkly at the dead of night,
 The sods with our bayonets turning;
 By the struggling moonbeam’s misty light
 And the lantern dimly burning.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
 And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
 But we steadfastly gaz’d on the face that was
 And we bitterly thought of the morrow

Lightly they’ll talk of the spirit that’s gone
 And o’er his cold ashes upbraid him,--
 But little he’ll reck, if they let him sleep on
 In a grave where a Briton has laid him.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
 From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
 We carved not a line and we raised not a stone
 But we left him alone with his glory.

Some of the contributors were good artists and added sketches to their reports. Colonel Mawson drew a series of cartoons which told the story of a fishing trip.



Trout Fishing in Norway

Mr Abel Heywood junior read a paper in **September 1878** about his trip to Norway. He was to visit that country several times in later years and to contribute articles on his experiences to the *Manchester Anglers*.

The following is part of a newspaper report published soon after the meeting.

Abel Heywood intended to give practical advice on how an angler's holiday of sixteen or seventeen days might be spent in one of the most interesting, picturesque and cheapest countries in Europe. He recommended sailing to Bergen, thence by cariole and by a stage of water to Dale.

"The cariole is the carriage peculiar to the country, only holding one person and is in appearance something like a sitz--bath, cocked at the end of a pair of long shafts and mounted on wheels. You sit in the bath with your legs stretched out before you, your seat being not more than a few inches high; or you can rest your feet on the crossbar, or even dangle your legs between the wheels. Caprioles are hired with horses from stage to stage which are from four to sixteen miles apart and at the 'stations' or houses where horses are obtained the traveller can generally get food and a bed. There is no land of Liberty like Norway. Your little horse will carry you at a gallop over the whole country; no toll-bar stops the way and there is hardly anything to pay.

It was after six o'clock before we reached the station at Dale, we first all asked for something to eat. They had nothing, neither eggs nor bread, nor milk, nor meat—nothing but some flav-brod, a dish of raspberries, and some coffee and so we dined off these delicacies, and then began to think of supper.

Let me tell you it is no easy thing to have a lad who can hardly understand a word you say, handling your landing net. 'Gently' you bawl as you carefully wind your fish in, and in response your assistant, with a clumsy slash of the net, frightens the fish away into the midst of the water again, and there is your hope of supper and breakfast twenty yards out and still running."



"The Compleat Angler"

The 'Bible' of the Angler of Victorian times was Izaak Walton's 'Compleat Angler or the Contemplative Man's Recreation' written in 1653. In it he used the form of a dialogue between an experienced angler named Piscator and his pupil Viator. The book details methods for catching, eating, and savouring all varieties of fish. He also added quotations, songs, poems and anecdotes.

Many of the contributions to the *Manchester Angling Manuscript* followed Izaak Walton's ideas.

John Mawson wrote as 'Bezonian' (knave or rascal) and also as 'The Skipper'

Abel Heywood wrote as 'Crabstick'

John Currie wrote as 'Corydon'

In his paper read at the meeting in 1878, "Let Patience Have Her Perfect Work", Colonel Mawson, the President, quoted from Izaak Walton.

"I will conclude this dissertation upon the virtues practised by true fishermen, by referring all men to the writings of Izaak the Good.

'Lastly, but remember as firstly, Do nothing in haste,
Use the best tackle,
Keep your head cool.
Your back and feet dry and warm,
Your heart in charity with all men.'

Transport

The advent of the railways broadened peoples' horizons, and enabled them to get out of the town and to enjoy the clean air of the countryside.

The Railway Companies offered cheaper fares for club members to certain fishing venues, so a Manchester Angler's Membership ticket was issued to be presented at the station to obtain a discount.

“The following facilities for travelling are offered by the Railway Companies to the Association.

The fares are in all cases for a return:----

Great Western –Return Tickets at one fare and a quarter, from any Station on the line.

Midland – Miller's Dale, 2s. 9d.; Rowsley ,(Passengers to Bakewell have to book to Rowsley) 3s. 9d.; Derby, 6s. 1d.; Burton, 6s. 7d. ; Trent, 7/- ; Nottingham, 7s. 3d.; Lincoln, 8s. 9d. ; Collingham, 8s. 9d.. From Colne (the extremity of the Lancashire and Yorkshire line) northward--- Skipton first class, 2/-, third class 1s. 2d. ; Settle 4s. 7d. and 2s. 9d. ; Hawes Junction, 7s. 11d. and 4s. 10d. ; Langwathby, 13s. 2d. and 8s. 2d.; Armathwaite, 14s. 10d. and 9s. 2d.

London and North Western --- *From London Road:* Holmes Chapel, 2s. 6d. ; Sandbach, 2s. 9d. ; Crewe, 3s. 6d. ; Worleston, 3s. 9d. ; Nantwich, 4/- ; Wrenbury, 4s. 6d. ; Whitchurch, 5/- ; Ellesmere, 6s. 3d. ; Macclesfield 2/- . *From Victoria Station:* Preston, 3s. 3d. ; Galgate, 5s. 3d. ; Lancaster, 5s. 9d. ; Windermere (*via Kendal*), 9/- ; Rossett, 4s. 7d. ; Ruabon, 5s. 10d. ; Llangollen, 6s. 8d. ; Bala 9s. 6d. ; Corwen, 7s. 10d. ; Oswestry, 6s. 6d.

Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire--- Derby (*via Macclesfield*), 6s. 1d. ; Doncaster, 6s. 6d. ; Althorpe, 8/- ; Worksop, 6s. 6d. ; Retford, 7s. 6d.; Torksey, 8s. 6d. ; Lincoln 9s. 6d. ; Nottingham (*via Retford*) 7s. 3d.

Cheshire Lines Committee --- Plumblet, 1s. 8d. ; Lostock, 1s. 10d. ; Coddington, 2s. 6d. ; Northwich, 2/- ; Chester, 3s. 10d.

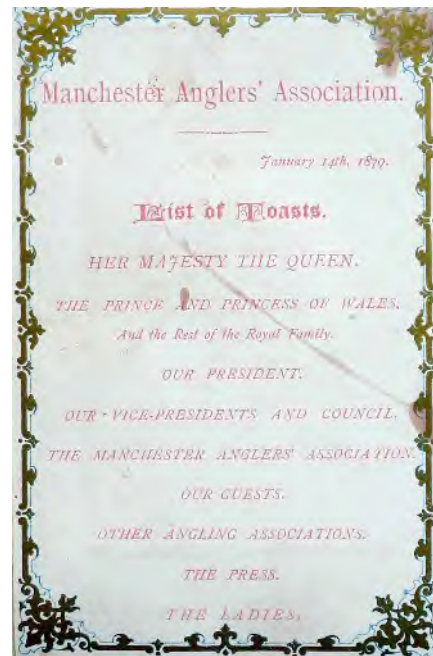
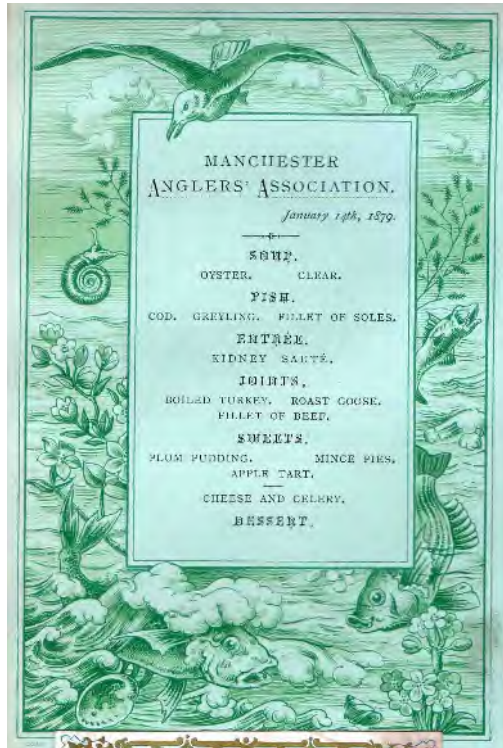
Lancashire and Yorkshire—To any Station.”



“Two creels and two landing nets are kept at the Rutland Arms Hotel, Bakewell (where fishing tickets are to be obtained). The creels &c., are in charge of the “Boots,” who will deliver them to members on production of their ticket of membership. The baskets &c are intended for members only”

The First Annual Dinner, January 1879

A dinner was held at the Clarence Hotel, Piccadilly, on 14th January 1879 at six o'clock in the evening, There was a charge of Five Shillings each, exclusive of wines, and members had the privilege of introducing friends. To add to the interest of the evening, each member was requested to exhibit his rod, reel, tackle-book, and basket, as well as any pictures, choice books, or interesting angling gear which he may have possessed. Morning Dress was to be worn.



After Colonel Mawson had given an address on the need for patience when angling, Abel Heywood the Secretary read his report reminding the Members of the ideals of the Society. He detailed the papers read at the meetings since the inception of the Association.

One of the later speakers, a Mr Corbett, suggested that a target for the Association should be the cleaning up of the river Irwell which flowed through Manchester. River pollution was to feature frequently in the newspapers at that time.

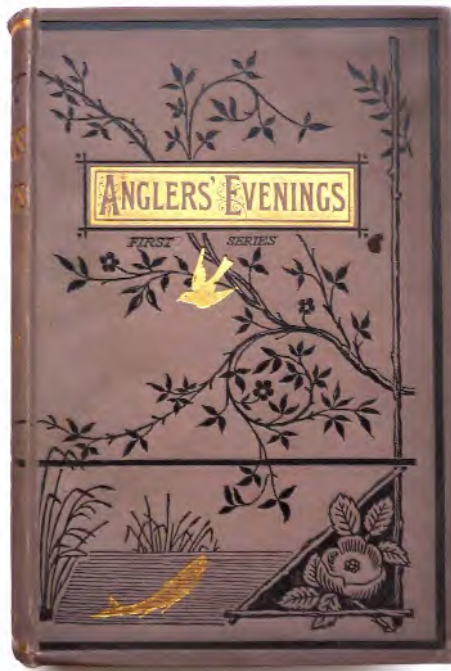
In his address Alderman Grave, ex-Chairman of the Waterworks Committee suggested that new legislation was needed to prevent land owners from blocking up the estuaries of our rivers for their own selfish ends and so preventing fish from migrating up rivers to spawn. The riparian owners had no incentive to improve the productivity of their waters when they believed that the majority of the fish were taken while entering the rivers. Some suggested that netting should stop at weekends to allow fish access to the rivers. The newspapers printed responses stating that much fish for sale to the general public was caught in the nets set across estuaries.

There had been so much interest in the equipment exhibited at the Dinner that the members were asked to bring their fishing tackle to the next monthly meeting and again at the next Annual Dinner in 1880.

Anglers' Evenings

In his address to the meeting in **August 1879** Abel Heywood, the secretary, reviewed the past history of the Association and considered its prospects and intentions. He invited an opinion from the members on future policy.

‘There is a way, and the most efficacious of all in my opinion, by which we may extend a proper knowledge of our Association and its objects, and that is by the publication, in a volume, of the papers or portions of them that have been read before us. I know it was the hope of some of the earliest members that the papers which would come before us, should be of such excellence as to merit publication, and the time has come now when we must settle, whether like other “learned societies,” we shall print our proceedings or not. That we could make an interesting volume, no one who has heard the bulk of the papers which have been read before us can doubt; but I may remind you that should we decide on a volume of Transactions, much editorial work will be needed, and if one is desired for the end of this year or the beginning of next, the selection of an editorial committee ought to be made at once, and its labours begun without delay.’



By December that year the first volume of Anglers' Evenings was in preparation, being edited by F.J. Faraday, a Manchester Angler. One cloth-bound copy was to be given free to each member; extra copies would be 3/- for members, 8/6 for the public. An edition in calf leather was available for 5/-. Anyone ordering books could have them delivered by the Small Parcels Delivery company in Manchester and for some distance around for 2d each, up to 7lb weight.

The books would be issued by Abel Heyward's publishing company.

Frederic James Faraday F. L. S. (Fellow of the Linnaean Society) was editor of the three editions of Anglers' Evenings. In 1881 he was living in Victoria Street, Levenshulme. He was born in Manchester in 1846 and was an “Insurance Broker”. At the time of the census he and his wife, Lucy (two years older than him) had five children. There was one servant living in.

He read papers to the M.A.A. monthly meetings on such subjects as the “Mind of Fishes” and “Prehistoric Fishing”. In 1887 he lectured the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (Professor W. C. Williamson F.R.S. in the chair) on “a Fish Breeding house” which was set up by the M.A.A. in Ribblesdale.

Soon after the turn of the New Year 1880 the first edition of the first series of "Anglers' Evenings" was published. There were many reviews in the press, these were almost all unanimously complementary. The following review appeared in 'Ben Brierley's Journal 17th January 1880.

Anglers' Evenings

"A handsome little volume with the above title has appeared in Manchester this week, published by Messrs. Abel Heywood and Son. The title of the book is descriptive of its contents, for it is composed of sketches, stories, verses and experiences by members of the Manchester Anglers' Association, which have been read at the evening meetings of that body. It is probable that as many angling books are bought by readers who never caught a fish, as by the fishers themselves, for whom the works are mainly written. In many of them there is the fragrance of the meadow-sweeping winds, the waving tree, the tuneful birds—the touch of nature in fact, that appeals to all readers, be they anglers or not. "Anglers' Evenings" will not be an exception; the volume is not by the most part by professional writers, and those who write know what they are writing about, and there are evidences of a love of nature as well as destruction.

The Manchester Anglers evidently go about the world; neither the Irwell nor the Bridgewater Canal are enough for them. Thus Mr Abel Heywood Junr., takes them to Norway, Mr David Reid to Derbyshire, Mr Edward Corbett lingers by Th' Owd River, and probably the only man in the Association who can boast of having caught fish in it, which feat he actually does recount in a most interesting Article. Mr Harker tells of fish in Wensleydale, Mr Kenderdine of the Eden, Mr Bantock has a lengthy account of the paradise of fishermen—Sutherland: Mr Henry Vannan, M.A. fishes on the Tweed and "The Raiders" wrote several humorous chapters on their doings in Kircudbrightshire.

As well as these there are a quaint essay by Col. Mawson, "The mind of Fishes" by F.J. Faraday F.L.S., a wonderfully moving story of a conger eel by Edwin Waugh, a valuable chapter on "The Bibliography of Angling", by Charles Estcourt F.J.C., "Fish out of Water" by Crabstick, several poems and lastly, what professes to be, and apparently is, a letter from a lady who has accompanied her husband and his friends on a fishing expedition to the north of Scotland. To the non-angler this will probably be the most entertaining Chapter of the book, the impatience and disgust of the lady who is deserted from day to day for the sake of a few wretched trout, is told with great spirit and humour.

The Manchester Anglers are much to be congratulated on providing us with so entertaining a volume, which we do not doubt that a public beyond the Manchester one will read and appreciate."

'Anglers' Evenings' was so well received that a Second Series was published in 1882 along with a reprint of the First Series. One of the few criticisms of the First Series was the lack of pictures, this problem was addressed in the new book. In 1894 a Third Series was published.

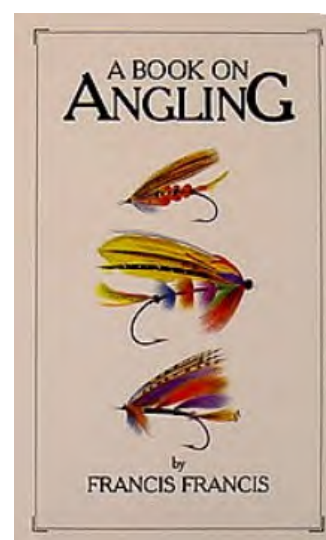
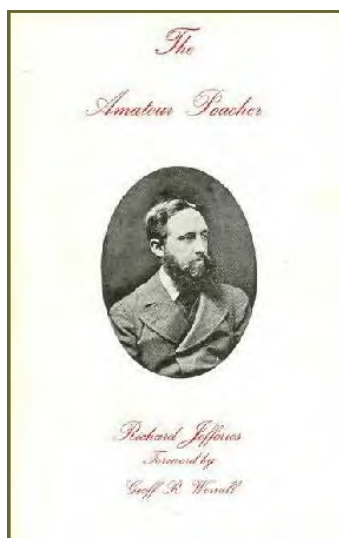
The Library

In **August 1879** Abel Heywood proposed that a Library of fishing books should be set up. The Library grew over the years, but the problem of storage was always present. After the Second World War the problem became more acute, lending had ceased, the library was stored temporarily in the office of a factory in Ashton. In the 1950s it was resolved, after a valuation of the whole library of less than £100, to sell the collection. Mr Morris a fishing member bought the books. At the beginning of the 21st Century a considerable portion of the library came up for sale at the Bonham Auction House where one book by Pritt sold for a five figure sum.

“The Library should contain books which we might occasionally wish to consult, that on account of their price, do not find their way to all our shelves. The great objection to the purchase of books is, that as we have no local habitation, books can only be available on the evenings of our meetings, though of course they could be lent from meeting night to meeting night.

The following books have been purchased for the Library, and can be had by applying to the Librarian, Mr Robert Burn, 1a, Charlotte Street.”

Amateur poacher,
Bertram’s Harvest of the Sea.
Buckland’s log of a Fisherman and Zoologist.
Francis’s Book on Angling.
Henderson’s my Life as an Angler.
Houghton’s British Fresh Water Fishes Volumes one and two.
Manley’s Fish and Fishing.
Pennell’s Angler Naturalist.
Prime’s I Go a Fishing.
Ronald’s Fly Fishers Entomology.
Stewart’s Practical Angler.
Wilcock’s Sea Fisherman.



At the monthly meetings in 1879 papers were read to the members. Afterwards the following were entered in the Manuscript Book.

‘The Yore and Swale’ by Mr T Harker
‘St Boswells and the Tweed’ by Mr H Vannan
‘A Raid on Kirkcudbrightshire’ by Rev, William White
‘The Eden at Armathwite’ by Mr Kenderdine
‘The Bibliography of Fishing’ by Charles Estcourt
‘The Lochs and Rivers of Sutherland’ by Mr William Bantock
‘Angling in the Irwell—past memories and future hopes’ by Mr Corbett

A talk by Mr Corbett on angling in the Irwell was well received causing great debate and provoked much correspondence after it was reported in the newspapers and periodicals. Abel Heywood had done his work well and sent reports to many publications.

Pollution

In his talk “Angling on the Irwell” at the **October** meeting, Mr E Corbett described how as a child he had fished in the centre of Manchester in a clear river where he could see his line right to the bottom.

An article was published in a newspaper prompted by his talk. The writer said that prior to 1820 salmon were caught in the centre of Manchester, in Northenden and in Didsbury. The water was clear and pure, there were roach, perch, chub, pike, trout, minnows and ‘shoalers’ and eels in all the streams and brooks. There was enough water coming from the hills to keep the water and river bottoms clean.

Then gas tar was allowed into the river from the gasworks, the surface of the water was covered in an oily coloured film. The fish were killed and all along the river people were picking up the dead fish. 3 cwt were picked out of the water at Didsbury Mill and the same at Northenden Mill, the famous Salmon Fishery at Warrington was devastated. He said that there are no pollutants of rivers more deadly than the refuse from the manufacture of gas.

For some years after there were no fish in the rivers, but after 1825 gas tar was found to be a valuable commodity so was no long disposed of; fish reappeared but never in such great numbers as other pollutants had increased, the Mersey had become a dirty river.

At the same time the number of mills, bleachworks, dyeworks and printworks had multiplied, all discharging their refuse into the watercourses along with a similar increase in sewerage from the population who worked in these factories. Ammonia water, waste from cotton mills, dyestuffs, soap, chemical refuse, ashes and cinders along with sewerage were discharged into the open sewers. The water from the hills was no longer sufficient to clean the rivers.

Mr Charles Neville of the Strines Calico Printing works in Marple said that he put many pollutions into the river, and he thought that if arsenical salts and other chemicals which acted as disinfectants were not put in, the sewage would be unbearable.

The Rev. Mr White replied that he thought the sooner it was unbearable the better, but doubted whether manufacturers put their refuse in from benevolent motives.

The City Council were urged to find ways of dealing with sewerage and factory waste. Mr Corbett hoped to see clean rivers again before he died.

The Manchester Guardian in typical Victorian fashion wrote

“The day is however not far distant when we shall learn better, as we have done in the case of gas refuse and cotton waste. When waste of fuel has also ceased, smoke will no longer cloud our atmosphere and blot out the sky; the river restored to something like its original purity, will bring health instead of disease in its course; and last of all these beneficent changes having been brought about, the streams will once more be full of fish, and the patient angler will be seen on Irwell’s bank again pursuing his healthful and harmless sport. We heartily wish that Mr Corbett may live to see it”

"Stray Hints to Young Anglers by an Old One"

It is of no use fishing where there are no fish, hence the first thing needful for a young Angler to learn, is in what description of water fish are to be found. It is also useless fishing when trout can see both you and your tackle; hence if you want to fill your basket, avoid places where there are no fish and glassy pools.

Do not imagine that the fish are like men, and will rise most readily at the biggest bait, far from this, **they** see the hollowness at once of tempting profits, and give the go-by to what the angler imagines must appear a large and appetising mouthful of fur and feathers. Gnats and midges rise more fish than cockchafers and dragonflies.

If your fly is bitten to pieces but still rises fish, leave it alone, if it is good enough for the fish, it is good enough for you.

Do not fish carelessly, if you are tired, lie down on the bank and go to sleep; if you slumber over your fishing, a trout will come while you are napping and will not favour you again, when he has discovered that there is a fool at one end and a fraud at the other.

If you tangle your flies don't fume, but straighten them out quietly, the best fisher tangles sometimes, and if one tells you **he** never does, he is lying.

You can never see the whole of your cast of flies, or you are a poor thrower, if you see a fish rise beyond what you suppose to be your throw, strike, and you will sometimes find you throw further than you think.

Don't count a fish yours till he is in your basket, and if wish one ever to repose there, treat him gently when you have been fortunate to hook him.

Believe half of what you see and nothing of what you hear; big baskets frequently dwindle to a few small trout when the tale is sifted; it is unpleasant to find your friend to be as big a liar as other people.

"Crabstick" (Abel Heywood)



Gold and Bronze Carp, illustration from Houghton's Fresh Water Fishes

Annual Dinner 1880

The annual dinner was held at the Albion Hotel in January 1880. It was attended by the Fishing Council, Fishing members, several ex Mayors of the City Council, one being Alderman Heywood, Senior and representatives of the Press.

The report in the 'City News' said that

“In addition to the display of members fishing equipment there were several cases of preserved fish which had been caught by the members, large perch, examples of salmon and trout and half a dozen superb specimens of enormous pike. Another interesting feature was the programme and bill of fare, composed and printed in the Antique style”



After the Toasts and Speeches there was an entertainment of Anglers' songs.

“The singing throughout was capital. A fine old catch, written by Izaak Walton and set to music in 1659 by Henry Lawes had been arranged for the occasion by Mr Henry Stevens with a pianoforte accompaniment and second tenor part. It was sung by three of the members.

Another song told how

T'was the Manchester Anglers in Council agreed,
That when spring came again they'd go north of ye Tweed,
And that weather defying, or colde, wet or dree,
The'd take down their rods into Kirkcuberee.
CHORUS They alle came together, they came in ye night,
Reid, Currie, Heywood and Vice President White;
They waved their rods high, crying “Now we are free
We are all going a fyshing beyond Lockerbie”

But the greatest musical success of the evening was a tenor song, written for the occasion and sung by Mr David Reid, the chorus of which taken up with immense gusto by the company was as follows

We'll all go a-fishing today,
When nature looks smiling and gay,
And we'll leave the rude throng, that goes jostling along
And we'll all go a fyshing today.”

The Fishing Cottage at Penybont Farm, Carrog near Corwen, North Wales

An etching found in Anglers' Evenings
which was made by
H. Watkinson from the drawing made by
'Bezonin'.
'Bezonian' was Col. Mawson, his original
drawing can be found in the Manuscript
book.



At the **August meeting in 1879** Abel Heywood suggested that the Association rent a cottage on the banks of a stream where fishing is free, or can be had on a daily or weekly payment. By the following February, Penybont, a cottage at Carrog in North Wales had been rented. A sub-committee was set up to manage the Fishing House, there were strict rules for its use. 2 shillings per head per night, 3-7 nights per booking for bed cooking and attendance, Guests could only be relatives not friends; a double bedroom was available to families for 20 shillings a week and could be rented for a fortnight should there be no other bookings which would take precedent.

"Pen-y-bont is situated on the banks of the river Dee, at Carrog, is within a few yards of the railway station, and the same distance from the river. The rooms hired by the Association are one sitting room and three bedrooms, two of the latter containing two beds each, making a total of five beds. The double bedded rooms are divided by a curtain.

The landlady of the fishing house provides cooking and attendance, and a fire when necessary, without fee from members. She will also purchase provisions if desired to do so, and will supply ordinary farm produce at reasonable prices. In order that as little trouble as possible may be given in the House, it is hoped that the members will arrange to have meals together. Members are particularly requested not to offer any gratuities on their visits, but a collection will be made at the close of the season from those members who have visited the House.

The map on the wall of the sitting room of the fishing house shows the water over which members may fish on obtaining tickets. It will be seen that the house stands pretty nearly at the head of the Glyndyfrdwy fishery and at the foot of the Corwen fishery. The former extends about twelve miles, the latter about four miles. Tickets to fish either water can be had at the Grouse Inn, on daily, weekly, or monthly terms.

Copies of the Rules and Regulations of the two fisheries are in the Club Scrap Book, and on the walls of the fishing house. Members are particularly requested to conform to them in every way.

Carrog is approached by the Great Western Railway from Manchester. Distance, sixty three miles; time about three and a half hours. Return fare (anglers ticket) 7s 10d. Time allowed three days. For a longer period, ordinary tickets must be taken.

The tenancy commences March 1st and expires October 31st."

George S. Woolley (The Club Treasurer) reported on his visit to Appleby.



"Having just returned from Appleby where I spent a few days very pleasantly, I think it better to lose no time in jotting down my impressions of the place which might be useful to my fellow members of the M. A. A. I left Manchester on Saturday the fifteenth accompanied by a friend (a non angler), and on arriving at Appleby we proceeded to the "Tufton Arms" kept by Mr Longrigg. The house is a good one apparently of modern construction but the management might be better and the cooking is open to improvement. Still an angler might be in worse quarters. It is only fair to state that the Hotel was exceptionally full and as the "Hiring Fair" was held on Whit Monday the resources of the place were severely taxed.

Sunday morning was devoted to a quiet ramble along the banks of the Eden. You will be surprised to learn that the water was terribly low and in a very unfit state for Angling, but it is without doubt a beautiful stream and full of fish. The surrounding scenery is well wooded and very charming, Appleby Castle a quadrangular building, the four corners capped with turrets, stands above the town surrounded by fine trees, makes with the river winding below it, a fine picture.

Hearing that the Castle Otter Hounds were to meet at Lazonby on Monday morning and as the water seemed in a hopeless state for Angling we decided to avail ourselves of an opportunity, which might not occur again. We therefore took the train to Lazonby and soon found the dogs, which were engaged in searching every nook of the river for their prey. Nothing however was found, still we had an interesting time of it, as the dogs were on the scent two or three times. On Monday night we were joined by two Manchester friends, one being a fellow member. After dinner we were curious to learn something about the Hiring Fair, but of course the business of the day was concluded and nothing but fuddling going on amongst the Seniors and dancing amongst the juniors. This last was carried on in the large room of the Hotel. A brass band performing in one corner and various beverages being supplied in the other. A master of ceremonies presided in the centre who called out the name of each dance at the top of his voice, and demanding a fee of one penny from each couple before he permitted them to join the giddy throng. Then to see "Humphrey" and "Dorothy" go through a Polka or a "Square Eight" whatever that may be, as if they were assisting at an assembly of Dervishes, was fine to look at.

On Tuesday we sailed out to try the river. First we tried Fly, but with such a low water and bright sun, nothing could be done. Then we tried the "deadly worm" and managed to get two trout of about six ounces each. As we passed the stills we could see lusty trout and heavy chub sail away as we approached.

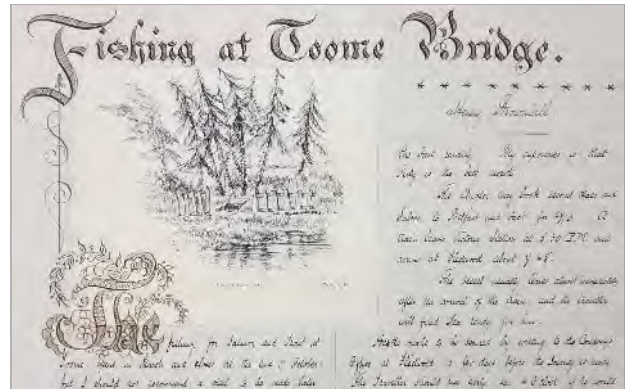
Wednesday morning looked more like fishing, and again we set out in a trap, down the river to Kirby Thore our party increased by the arrival of a friend of mine, an excellent angler. I put on a hair cast with Dun and Black Spider, as it was evident that nothing but the finest tackle would do any good. Before long I hooked what was evidently a heavy fish in a strong sun. Owing to my fine tackle it was a long time before I could get a sight of him, but after about quarter of an hour, I coaxed him onto a "gravely shallow" and landed to my great disappointment a chub of one and a half pounds in weight. Besides this I only secured half a dozen trout from four to eight ounces.

As the weather showed no signs of changing we decided to leave Appleby on Thursday morning to spend the remainder of the week at the "Lakes" from whence I have nothing of interest to the Association to report.

Papers read and topics discussed at the meetings in 1880
(Title pages from the Manuscript Book)



February 'My Last Day in Dumfriesshire',
Crabstick (Abel Heywood)



April 'Trout fishing in Lough Neagh and the river
Bann at Toome Bridge' by Henry Brownbill

March Conversations on artificial fly making with practical illustrations, other members to give examples of knot tying and horsehair-line making.



May 'The Meres of Shropshire, what Red Hackle and Stargazer saw, said and did there during their visit in November 1879'



August 'The Anglers' stock of Artificial Flies' by Mr Robert Burn

July 'One way to the Tweed' by Crabstick.
A new Combination trout reel by Mr David Reid

October 'Angling Memories'
by Mr Henry Vannan

November 'Carrog and neighbourhood' by four members



At the **August** meeting Abel Heywood bemoaned the fact that finding reasonably priced fishing within a short distance of Manchester was difficult. As a result the Committee made further enquires and secured fishing on the Bollin, south west of Manchester.

“The Bollin

Through the kind permission of James Knowles, Esq., the members are at liberty to fish the right bank of the Bollin at Warburton, from the Railway Bridge down to the junction with the Mersey. Route: from Oxford road to Heatley Station, which is a quarter of a mile from the river. Return fare (angler’s ticket) 1s. 3d.”

“The River Dovey, Merionethshire, Wales

The Association also has permission from several proprietors, for its members to fish the upper waters of the Dovey. Making the Buckley Arms Hotel, Dinas Mawddwy, the head quarters, members will be in the centre of several miles of fishing, in magnificent scenery. Maps can be seen, and full information obtained on applying to the Hon. Sec. of the Fishing Quarters Committee”

