

Chapter 2

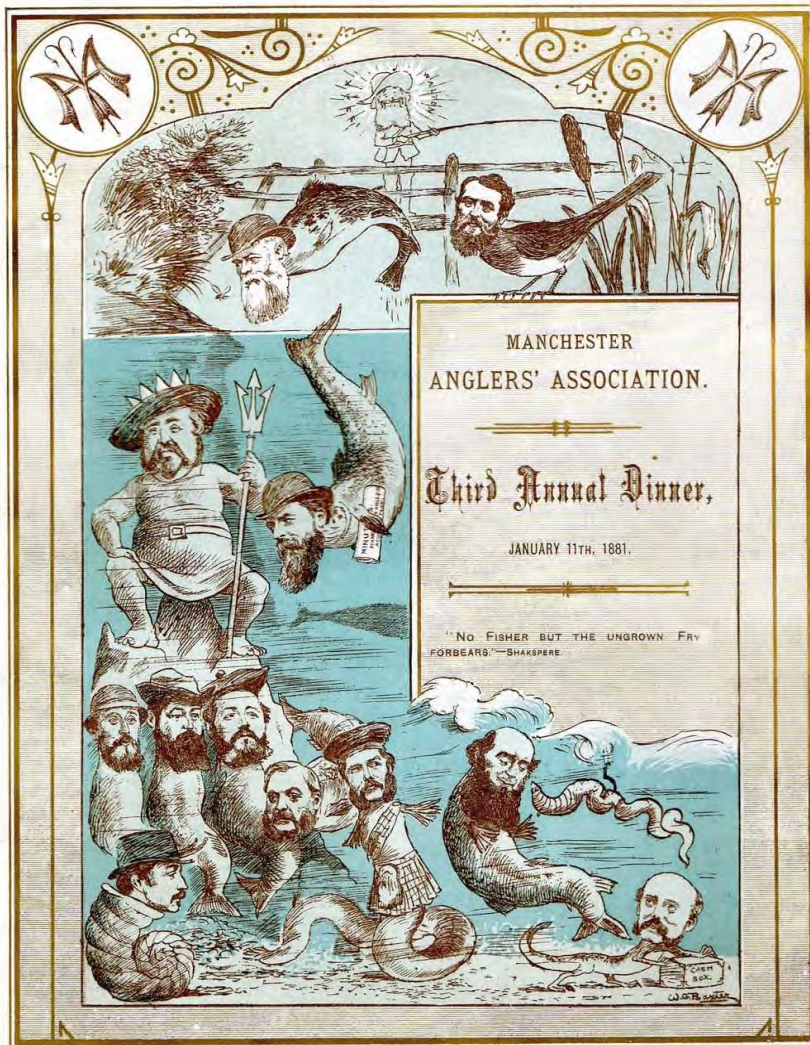
1881—1884



The Third Annual Dinner 1881

The Annual dinner was held as usual at the Albion Hotel in Manchester in January 1881 and attended by 80 members. Mr Francis Francis, Fishing Editor of 'The Field', gave the toast and said that the M.A.A. "is far and away the premier Angling Society of England. Angling is an unmixed good, it forms a bond of Brotherhood, a freemasonry all over the world, it should be pursued in the simple spirit of old Izaak."

In his reply Colonel Mawson the Chairman said that the Manchester Anglers had representatives in every department of art and science, among them professors, artists, literary men, musicians, pisciculturists and many others. They had the most delightful evenings at their monthly meetings. They met like brothers and he only wished that more of their members would attend; they would have good reason to re-



Thomas Harker
Charles Estcourt

Col. John Mawson (Chairman)
Abel Heywood jun

Robert Burn
E G Simpson
David Reid

Rev William White
Dr Henry Simpson
Henry Vannan

F J Faraday George Wooley
(Treasurer)

The dinner menu was decorated with cartoon portraits of members of the Council. The artist was W.G .Baxter, who was the illustrator for the satirical weekly magazine 'Comus'. He later contributed to 'The Sketch' and drew Ally Sloper, the first comics superstar. Baxter died of T.B. in 1884 aged only 32.

The programme for the evening included 'Three Jolly Anglers', a new song which had been written for the occasion. Other items were song sung by talented members, and well loved items sung by the members.

"We'll all go a fishing today" became the Association's song.

"We'll all go a fishing today"

by George Davies

the tune "The Hunting day" was composed by William Williams
This is a selection of the many verses

On a fine fishing day,
When 'tis balmy as May,
And the trout in the river do rise,
Many rods will be there
And all trouble and care,
Will be banished at sight of each prize;
See! Anglers are wending their way,
Their skill by the streams to display,
Let us leave the rude throng,
That goes jostling along'
And we'll all go a fishing today.

Chorus after each verse

We'll all go a fishing some day,
When nature looks smiling and gay,
And we'll leave the rude throng
That goes jostling along
And we'll all go a fishing some day.

There's the Vicars old church
Left alone in the lurch'
There's a time for all thing he doth say
I'll wed them tomorrow
For joy or for sorrow
But I must go a fishing today;
Dear friends for your welfare I'll pray
My duty 'tis now and away
I've a touch of the gout,
That I must get without
So I'm off for some fishing today.

Lawyers finished his brief
With a sigh of relief,
And turns to his head clerk to say,
"You will name to John Brown,
That I'm called out of town,
For I must go a fishing today;
Write Thompson those costs he must pay,
With Jones we'll no longer delay,
And our client old Tait
He can very well wait,
Until after my fishing today.

There's the Doctor's old drag
With his fast trotting nag,
Quick, his visits he's going to pay,
For he means when he's out
To prescribe for the trout,
For he must have some fishing today.
If sent for, he's left word to say,
A pressing case calls him away,
When Jane answers the bell
Why of course she don't tell
That the Doctors' gone fishing today.

Mr President too,
Mr Vice, sirs, and you
Brother Anglers, allow me to say
As your years may increase,
May your pleasures not cease,
Or grow dull on a fine fishing day,
And when you're too old for the fray
May your grandchildren talk of the way
How you killed the big trout,
Or the salmon got out
Long ago, on a fine fishing day



The Council for 1881

Colonel John I. Mawson, President;
George S. Woolley, Treasurer;
Abel Heywood Jun. Hon. Sec;
Charles Estcourt F.C.S., David Reid, E. G. Simpson , and Henry Vannan M. A were re-elected.

New to the Council were Mr Robert Burn, Thomas Harker, Rev. George Sumner and Joseph Thwaites.

Robert Burn became an important cog in the running of the association. He was the Librarian, was on the Pen-y-bont fishing committee and later became the Fishing Secretary for the Ribble where he supervised the erection and running of the hatchery. The 1881 Census showed that his true residence was at Carlton Hill, Great Lever and it must be supposed that 1a, Charlotte Street, off Mosely St. was his business address where, according to the census, he was a Paper Merchant. Over the years this address was most useful to the club as a central point of communication.

In 1881 Robert Burn was aged thirty six, he was born in Smedley Lancashire. He was married to Ruth H. Burn aged 35 and they had the five children: - Ellen B. 9, Edith B. 7, Amey B. 5, Margaret 3, and Percy B. Burn aged 1 who later became an M.A.A. member; all the children were born at Little Lever. There was one servant living in.

A **Reverend George Sumner B. A.** can be found living in Lower Darwen in the 1881 census. He was aged forty and was born in Burscough. At the 1881 Census he gave his occupation as “Curate Lower Darwin” His wife was called Nancy and was one year younger than him. They had one child William aged three who was born in Lower Darwen. Two relations, a mother in law and a niece lived in the same household. He gave his contact address to the M.A.A as St. Luke’s college, Cheetham, Manchester.

Joseph Thwaites (born in Sharples) lived at Springfield, Great Lever in 1881. His Contact address with the Anglers was Woodside, Great Lever.

In 1881 he was aged 42 and gave his occupation as “Finisher of cotton goods employing 17 men, 10 women, and 5 boys”. His wife Helen was a year older than he was. The Thwaites lived with Helen’s father who was registered as Head of the Household. Thomas Holden was aged 71 and a Solicitor, being the Registrar of the County Court of Lancashire, for Bolton and Leigh. The household had three servants, a cook, a housemaid waitress and an under housemaid.



Thomas Harker was the Director of Rylands and Sons, which was the largest textile manufactory in the UK at that time. Thomas Harker, born in Yorkshire in 1830, lived in Withington in Manchester in 1881 with his wife Ann, 7 children and one servant. Thomas Harker was a larger than life figure, he was known for his loud laugh and great sense of humour. Although he was born in Yorkshire he liked to be known as a Scot. He was a President of the M.A.A. and Council member for many years.

After the speeches Mr John Krauss read a paper on Salmon fishing which was reported in The City News.

‘Salmon Fishing on the Ribble’

Mr Krauss has talked with a man who caught a twenty four pound salmon in the Mersey, has taken trout in it himself, and perch, pike, gudgeon, and dace from the same river in the neighbourhood of Stretford; but these things are of the past, and the nearest river left to the salmon now is the Ribble.

The country in North Lancashire is picturesque, undulating, wooded, and well watered. There are many Roman remains of roads, castles, forts, and bridges; many old churches with their ancient monuments and their chained books; and there are the abbeys of Whalley and Sawley. The inhabitants are primitive in manners and ideas. No man is known by his own name. All are nick named. A man named Salter was all his life known as “Swapper”, because once finding a scare crow with a better hat than himself, he “swapped” hats with it. Not only is he Swapper, for life, but his sons are Swapper’s sons. “Hold hard” is another nick name Mr Krauss has met with. The people are honest, hospitable folk, and keen sportsmen.

In this railway age, and especially since the opening of the Chatburn line, the whole district is easily got at, and there are plenty of good, homely, cheap inns. The Ribble is composed of three streams-- the Ribble from Whernside and Ingleborough in Yorkshire; the Hodder from North Lancashire, between which county and Yorkshire it for some distance forms the boundary; and the Calder, which flows through Whalley and which is a very much polluted stream, though salmon still pass through its waters. The river is called “Big Ribble” from the junction of the Hodder downwards. From that point to Ribchester Bridge, it is a fine succession of pools and streams, with deep rocky holes and many very large boulders, behind which the salmon always lie. These fish are seldom taken less than five pounds in weight, and the commonest weights were seven, then ten to twelve, sixteen, eighteen, twenty two or twenty three, and sometimes even up to forty pounds. The largest ever taken with rod and line Mr Krauss believes to have been twenty nine and three quarters pounds in weight. The greater part of Mr Krauss’s records of the river refer to a period fourteen or fifteen years distant. At that time the river abounded with sea trout, termed locally “sprods” and “morts” The former being the first year’s fish, the latter the second. There were also large numbers of chub, and Mr Krauss has seen eight or ten of these fish landed from one rock, and following soon after has taken as many more from the same spot. It had at the same time a capital supply of river trout. Eels found occupation for a good many people, and there were good perch up to two and a half pounds, also bream, which the Bolton anglers used to go to Ribchester to catch; and ruff were taken in the nets. In the old time fishing for smolts, i.e., the “ungrown fry” of the salmon, was much practised, and this destructive sport was carried out by Manchester men, who would take their hundred or two hundred in a day. The year 1866, on account of the great floods, was the best ever known on the Ribble. In their report the conservators said of that year that upwards of fifteen thousand salmon were taken in the river and its tributaries. One man caught in one day with rod and line no fewer than ten fish, and hardly any fisherman returned unsatisfied. The conservators believed the resources of the river to be almost inexhaustible. They could ensure an increased supply of fish, and expected to be able to show such sport to the rod fisher as is only to be found in the great northern rivers the Tweed, the Tay, the Spey and the Laxford. In the Ribble the salmon fishing begins with the first flood in June. There is no early fishing, and though there are probably not so many salmon in June as July, there are more caught, because they rise more readily to the fly. The river is favourable for angling because of this free rising, and on this account more fish are caught with rod and line than in some other rivers in which there are many more salmon.

River pollutions, however, even where the fish are able to exist, puts an end to angling; the salmon will no longer rise to the fly. The great pollution of the Ribble, which is caused by a single manufactory, has recently been forbidden by law, and the polluters will shortly be under an injunction to restrain them from continuing their defilement. When this happy time comes, the river may regain some of its former reputation as a salmon producing stream and the great value of its fisheries will, it is hoped, revive. Mr Krauss gave some interesting information as to the habits of salmon and sea trout, much useful advice to the salmon angler, and recorded many a success on this great Lancashire river.

Fishing on the Ribble

At the same meeting it was announced that the Council had rented fishing on the Ribble. To some members this announcement came as a surprise since it implied the desertion of Pen-y-Bont by the Club. The occupation of the house at Carrog had been very comfortable, both the local scenery and people had been most pleasant. Such was their enthusiasm for the countryside around Carrog that a number of articles and poems, some written in a very flowery style were entered in the Manuscript book and in 'Anglers' Evenings'.

The real driving force in the decision was the fact that there appeared to be very few fish available to be caught in the river near the Penybont. As was usual in Victorian days, an extensive set of Rules for the Ribble fishery was set out at the same time as the fisheries announcement was made.

"The Council has made arrangements for the fishing in portions of the Ribble, to be enjoyed exclusively by the Association.

The nearest railway station is "Horton in Ribblesdale" on the Midland Railway. Express trains, L. & Y. from Victoria Station, may be used as far as Hellifield, whence stopping trains can be taken to Horton. The most serviceable trains are from Manchester at 10 a. m. and 2-25 p.m., arriving at Horton at 12-20 a.m. and 5-22 p.m.

There are three inns where accommodation may be had: the Crown and the Golden Lion at Horton, and the Bridge End Hotel at Helwith Bridge, in the centre of the fishing. From the landlord of the latter house the Association rents part of the water over which it has acquired rights to fish, and the house is situated on the banks of the stream. At these inns arrangements have been made for members of the Association to be accommodated at the following prices per day.

Breakfast with meat	1s. 3d.
Lunch	6d.
Tea-dinner	1s. 6d.
Bed	1s. 0d.

The landlord at Helwith Bridge will send a trap to hold four, to meet any train at Settle (4 miles), or at Horton station (3 miles) at a cost of 1s. per mile
Fares, available for three days are to Settle 5/7 and to Horton 6/3.

The Keeper Robert Walker, whose house is close to the bridge in Horton, will give all particulars."

Members were again reminded of the permission which had previously been obtained for fishing on the Bollin, the Wye at Bakewell, in the River Dovey and in the Dee in Wales. Now that the Penybont cottage was no longer rented for the anglers, other places to stay near Carrog were suggested.

In **October** a special meeting was called to discuss the arrangements which had been made with the land owners to allow Manchester anglers to fish 14 miles of the Ribble from Ribblehead to Elwith Bridge (now Helwith Bridge).

"To insure the excellent fishing the Council have good reason to expect, an efficient watching, and probably some stocking will be required, and this will entail considerably more expense than the funds annually provided by the Association will supply.

To meet the deficiency there will be a recommendation from the Council that for the future the Association consist of eighty members at a two guinea subscription, and that in addition there be included any present members who may wish to be considered literary members only, retaining all rights they have at present, on the guinea subscription, but having no fishing rights."

Programme for 1881

Feb	“Salmon Fishing in Lancashire”	Mr John Krauss
March	“Reminiscences of Tweedside and a few hints on fly fishing”	John O. Mackenzie
April	“Up or Down Stream Fishing”	Mr Robert Burn
May	“Early Days”	Mr George Davies
June	“Trout Fishing in the Lower Don Aberdeenshire”	Mr Henry Vannan
July	“The Wye and the Wherefore”	Rev. George Sumner
Sept	“Our National Water Supply as it may affect Anglers”	Mr Edward Corbett
Oct	“The Conditions of Vision in Fishes”	Mr Abel Heywood
	“Analysis of Rivers Bollin and Ribble”	Mr C Estcourt” F.C.S.
	“A Day on a Staffordshire Mere”	David Reid
	“Days in Derbyshire”	Mr F Kenderdine
Nov	“Legal Points for Anglers”	Mr E.G. Simpson

The papers read at the monthly meetings in **1881** reflected the fishing trips and holidays taken by some of the members. There was another exhortation from the Secretary Abel Heywood, asking for more written items for the Manuscript book. He said that there were members who were capable of writing articles but were afraid to put pen to paper in case of criticism. It is noticeable that there were only about half a dozen anglers who were confident enough to send in items of prose, poetry, songs or artistry.

The City News reported in September.

“Without attempting too much detail Mr Corbett said he might state what a national water supply should be, by saying (that) it must be as complete as the Post Office service within the whole of the British Isles. Every populous place should have its local supply system connected with the national supply, and with complete means for receiving and distributing over its whole area. The more scattered houses and farms should have the means of supply, so that farmers and their stock may have pure water, and this being directly or indirectly for the general good, should be met by a general rate. General charges might be lessened by rent being charged for special uses, such as supply for breweries, manufactories and power. The amount of power from source to sea is very great, and its being brought into use is one of the many means of improvement, which may, by careful engineering, be brought into play. After being used for power, the water might be again employed for various manufacturing, farm or domestic use. The highest lands in the country would be used as collecting grounds, and the best means taken for impounding the heavy rains falling on such places. These high lands are abundant in Scotland, Wales, Cumberland, Yorkshire and in the belt of high land from Cornwall to Kent, near the southern coast; in all these districts there is a rainfall exceeding thirty inches per year, and in some exceeding seventy five. A space more than sufficient for a collecting ground might be had at several hundred feet above the sea level. All water in excess of the normal dry weather supply should be taken out of the streams and impounded in a series of reservoirs connected together in groups by mains laid well out of the reach of frost. From these supplies, service reservoirs at lower levels would be filled, and until all were charged no flood water would be allowed to go into streams; in this way, floods and their disastrous effects would scarcely occur. The spread of sanitary knowledge would prevent the town streams from being used as sewers, and a complete system of sewage collecting will be in existence not only for towns, but also for the scattered and isolated houses and all sewage producing premises. “

Victorian 'Recipes'

In the days before carbon fibre, nylon and plastic, various recipes were tried to lengthen the life of fishing tackle.

George Woolley who was a "Chemist" by trade offered this to the members.

"To waterproof fishing lines.

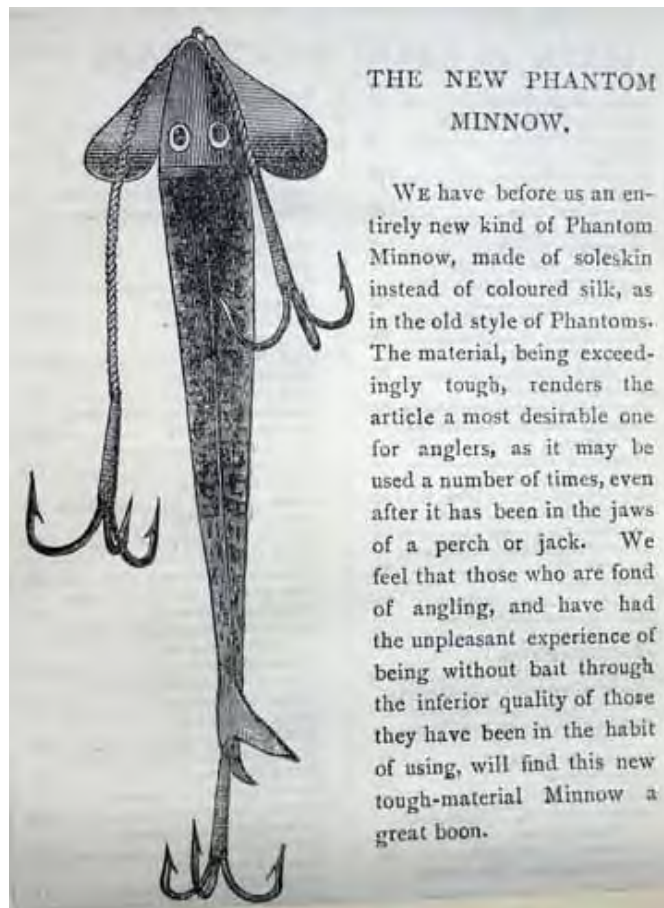
Oil dressing, Add one wine glass full of gold size to ten spoonsfull of raw (not boiled) linseed oil. Steep line for two hours. Hang up to dry then steep again for two hours more, after which hang up and expose to air until the line is usable."

"To tan a Brown Colour. Fish lines, Cords, Fish baskets—and all fishing goods that have to stand water and also good for colour. Boil one or more pounds of "Cutch" in water—then immerse for a shorter or longer period, according to shade required."

"Preservation Fluid for Minnows etc.

Alum 100 parts, Salt 25 parts, Saltpetre 12 parts, Carbonate of Potash 60 parts, Water 1000 parts. Dissolve as far as possible by the aid of heat, allow the liquid to cool, and then filter it. To ten parts of the clear liquid add four parts of Glycerine and one part of Methylic Alcohol. Minnows saturates in this liquid will maintain their color form and flexibility for many days; they also appear to gain in toughness; but this point requires further investigation."

"Glaswegian and West of Ireland salmon prefer shrimps, but must be boiled and well salted. A salted minnow is by many preferred to fresh. Salted salmon roe, the diabolical bait of the Tweed is commended by Stoddart for its destructiveness is well known, and a Bolton trout is incapable of refusing that most delicious morsel, a boiled and well salted cockle."



Fishing in Norway, read at the December meeting in 1880.

It is not often that the Ladies were mentioned in the doings of the Manchester Anglers as women were not members, however the Mary the wife of Charles Neville went to Norway with her husband in 1879. She did not much enjoy the experience and wrote a piece which was included in the Second Series of "Anglers' Evenings".

Charles Neville and his wife lived first at Mile End Hall then in Bramall Hall near Stockport.

But to continue the exciting narrative of our doings and sufferings. We reached the river about eleven o'clock, and C. and his rod waded out into the middle of the stream at once, and commenced operations. I selected the softest-looking stone in the neighbourhood, and sat down, after carefully scrutinising its surroundings to make sure there were no peripatetic hordes of spiders, ants or tadpoles lying in wait to make a study of me. The ground was more or less a swamp, but fortunately it had ceased raining, and wreaths of mist floated amongst the trees on the river side, like the ghosts of departed anglers. I sat there, with an umbrella by my side and a Tauchnitz novel on my lap, the very incarnation of Patience on a monument. By and by a gleam of sunshine managed to struggle down to earth. Some of the dense clouds lifted, and I caught a glimpse of the magnificent mountain in front of me. I called to C., urging him to admire the lovely view. He was standing nearly up to his waist in a pool, whirling the feather-brush over his head at intervals. "Ugh!" was all the response I received. Then for a season I devoted myself to my book, until I was aroused by something moving, and discovered that the Philistines were upon me in the guise of a colony of ants running about my boots. To jump up, shake the dust off my feet, and look for another resting place was but the work of a moment, and I moved lower down the stream to C., who was fishing patiently with expectations which had not then become realizations. He crept slowly along, casting his fly with care and judgment over each likely looking spot, and

reminded me, in his absorption and earnestness, of a horrible German picture of the Evil One fishing for souls with a golden bait.

I think that somewhere about this point I must have fallen asleep, for I was suddenly roused by hearing an unearthly shout. I jumped up, thinking C. was drowning, but it was occasioned by nothing so trivial! That bunch of feathers floating so tranquilly on the water had disappeared! There was a splash—a commotion—the glimpse of a vanishing tail—and then the sound as of a whole cotton mill at work as the reel whizzed round, and the salmon darted down the stream, with C. after it. Would that I had the pencil of an artist to depict that exciting chase! C.'s face was glorified, and he was so utterly oblivious of all surroundings that I might have drowned myself within five feet of him, and he would have been none the wiser. Boulders, pools, and trees were as less than nothing in his wild and breathless career! He scrambled over every obstacle that fate or nature placed in his way, skipped hither and thither on the slippery stones, tumbled into unobserved and treacherous pools and scrambled out of them again, and hopped over tree roots with the agility of a young and playful gazelle. I gazed after him with horror and amazement, but spoke not a word, for I knew I might as well expostulate with the winds, and attempt to check them in their courses, as try to stop a man at one end of a salmon rod when he has a fish "on" at the other! After a frantic rush down stream for some distance, the salmon suddenly pulled up and "took a

header" to the bottom of the river, where it lay, like a lump of lead, in the sulks. Pulling at it was like pulling at Old Norway itself, for move a fraction it would not. I thought of going to the rescue, and offering to stir it up with my umbrella, or throw stones at it, but after mature deliberation judged it more advisable to keep my ingenious plans to myself—gratuitous advice is never valued in this world. Suddenly the salmon changed its mind, and dashed up stream again with the same energy which had characterised its descent; I have, however, but a hazy recollection of the next half-hour, for the river, C., and the fish seemed inextricably muddled up together in one huge commotion.

I thoroughly admired my husband's firmness, coolness, and skill, but I was strongly reminded of the hero of *Kavanagh*, who once delivered a lecture upon "What Lady Macbeth *might* have been, had her energies been properly directed." Imagination failed me when I attempted to picture what C.'s talents would have made him had he been a philosopher instead of a fisherman, and I could but mourn over the loss the world had sustained.

After infinite patience and tact on the one hand, and infinite obstinacy on the other, the man (and the gaff) proved too much for the fish, and when I had scrambled down to the scene of the battle I found C. in an exhausted condition, embracing a salmon which to my excited imagination, seemed to weigh about a hundred pounds. I must say that as far as personal appearance went, the fish had the best of it, for it was

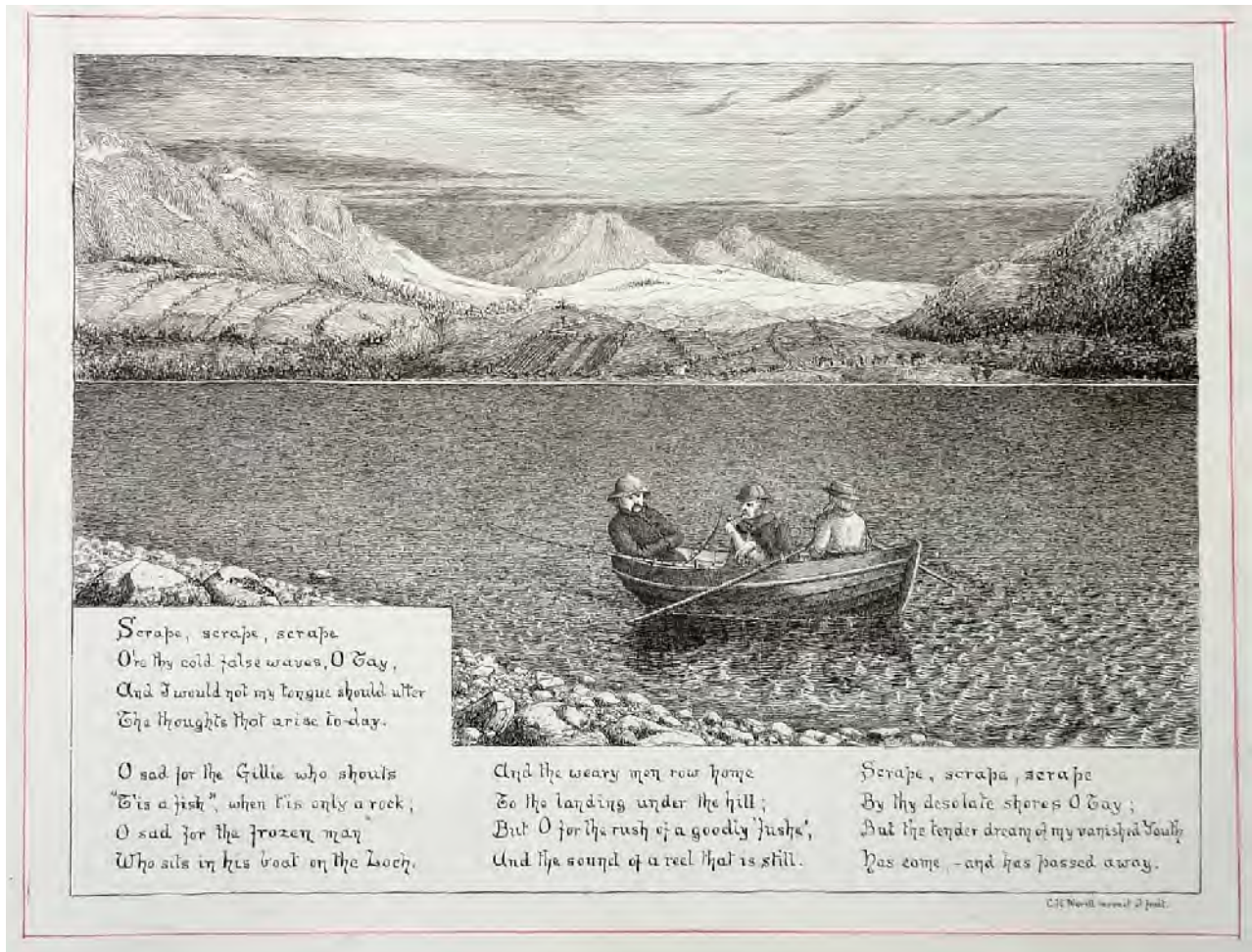
clean, whilst C. looked as if he would never be a respectable member of society again. He was soaked through and through, and what with mud, slime, and fish scales, he looked—well—an angler!

Ah! my dear, I can but remark of fishing, as the Irishman remarked of spinach, "I'm glad I don't like it, for if I did I should eat it, and I hate it." * *

C. says that neither before nor after the capture did he present the "ruffianly" appearance which I have ascribed to him, and that the fish did not weigh a hundred pounds. * * * * *

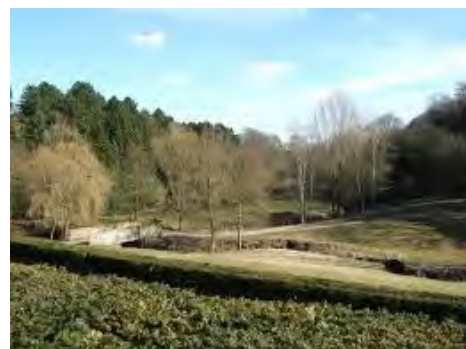
From 'Angler's Evenings'

Charles Neville illustrated the poem that he wrote based on the Alfred Tennyson poem 'Break, break, break, On thy cold gray stones, O! sea'



Charles Neville

Thomas Henry Neville, a wealthy calico printer and owner of the print works at Strines near Marple bought Bramall Hall and park near Stockport for his son Charles in 1882. Charles, who was then the active head of the printing works had been living at Mile End Hall in Stockport since his marriage. Once at Bramall Hall he made many improvements to the fabric of this aged building and years later had several fishing lakes made in the park and stocked them with trout so that he could indulge his chosen sport on his doorstep.



“Paternoster or Patience rewarded”

By George Davies, illustrated by W.G. Baxter.

A noted angler oft had tried
A certain pool without success.
All sorts of days he thither hied
In hope kind fortune would him bless.
He fished at morning and at eve,
He fished when he was wet or dry
Or hot or cold, yet did not grieve,
He could not get one fish to fry.

He tried all sorts of flies he knew,
Our angler ere had tried before.
Fished when 'twas calm or when it blew.
Fished with long cast or close in shore;
Tried brandling on the larger lob,
Tried wasp-bait, minnow all in vain.
He neither got a rise or bob
Tho' fried with heat or drenched with rain.

One evening as he lay in bed,
Between the sheets all snug and right,
A beauteous form came near his head,
And he beheld a wondrous sight.
A night he would not soon forget,
Or could not if in deed he would.
A spirit form his vision met,
And by his bedside stooping stood.

And thus he said or seemed to say
“Dear Paternoster, I have seen
“Your patience tried from day to day,
“Beyond endurance too I ween.
“There is a trout, which you must catch.
“But by one bait can he be foil'd.
“Get that and then you are his match,
“But keep it dark, 'tis cockle boiled'.”

Next morning got up in his best
Top hat, dress coat, frilled shirt and kids.
The market Pater goes in quest,
And for a lot of cockles bids;
And hurries home to get them boiled.
Determined he will not delay
For fear the 'Tip' by chance be spoiled,
If he should waste a single day.

But setting out he met a friend,
Who thus addressed him, “well I wis,
“Your wits are severely the far end,
“to fish on such a day as this;
“you will be *crabb'd* there is no doubt,
“or any rate be up a *tree*.”
Says Pater, “I shall kill a trout
As sure as two and two are three”.



He sought the pool without delay,
Withrod and creel and trusty line.
So eager was he for the fray,
Some hours before his dinner time;
He chose a likelt looking place,
Might hold a goodly trout or two
That would his breakfast table grace
Like work of art or of virtue.

Nine hours he sat upon a stone.
Nine hours without a blessed bite.
Nine hours and by himself alone.
Nine hours now verging into night.
Nine hours of unrequited hope.
Nine hours so slow and yet so fast.
Nine hours, but by the Holy Pope,
The Pater's got a bite at last!

His line flew out with lightening pace,
His subtle rod was bent in twain.
Both left and right the fish did race
With mighty rush, but all in vain.
It leap't, it sulked, and almost fled;
It was a grand and glorious sight.
And glorious was that fish when dead,
A trout of nearly three pounds weight.

The Pater laid it in his creel,
And moralising thus began,
“By Temperance it is we feel,
“What Temperance can do for man,
“Thro' Temperance I sought this pool.
“By Temperance I had my wish,
“Thro' Temperance my head was cool,
“By Temperance I killed this fish”

“Thro' Temperance the ardent fire
“Of early manhood is preserved;
“Thro' Temperance each fond desire
“Is in the bounds of prudence curbed.
“Thro' Temperance my heart is proof
“Gainst wiles of widows however clever,
“And will not yield for their behoof,
“That is to say, well hardly ever!”

The moralising's at an end,
He homeward truded, a happy figure,
And as his steps did thither bend
He felt at least two inches bigger.
To tell all things is not my wish,
To write all things is not my duty,
But Pater did not keep the fish,
A widow had the speckled beauty.

“On a Staffordshire Mere”

By David Reid

The following abridged version of a paper read to the Association in October 1881, shows how the party used the train to carry themselves and all their impedimenta. The party changed trains at Macclesfield and the final destination would appear to be Rudyard Lake, a canal feeder reservoir near Leek.

The style of writing used for humorous papers and the use of pseudonyms is particularly annoying in the 21st century when trying to discover who went on this “out”. ‘Carbon’ was George Sheffield, a known artist (well known even today when some of his pictures sell for thousands of pounds).

The ‘Prior’ was possibly the Rev William White, a fishing member who seemed to be involved in quite a few of the angling expeditions in the early 1880s. ‘Bulrush’ was David Reid and ‘Bellario’ or ‘L’ was a lawyer, possibly E G Simpson who was fond of fishing trips.



Scene ----- London Road Station, Manchester. A Midsummer Day 1881.

On the platform:- ‘Friar Tuck’, ‘Carbon’, ‘Bellario’ and ‘Bulrush’ with angling impedimenta.

The occasion of this meeting was one of those delightful and oftentimes **the** most enjoyable of angling outs, a few hours together on one of the sweetest spots in North Staffordshire – a secluded Mere. The friends were invited by the owner of the fishery, ‘Bellario’. The party being well chosen was in consequence a success. ‘Tis a curious fact, how often in a fishing party, you have a cleric, a lawyer, an artist and a merchant. The cast is good, and as a rule works well. It was so on this occasion.

“Got all the tackle? Live bait eh? ‘Bulrush’.

“Oh yes all’s safe, a splendid lot of live bait – minnows and gudgeon perfection and could not be surpassed, all alive in the guards van”. The tackle will do for the whole party, rods, lines, trolling bait paters for perch and live bait tackle for pike.

“You have secured the worms and dace all right ‘Bellario’ ?” asked ‘Bulrush’

“No sorry, Richardson says at last moment, dace none!” None you say? Then we are done for, for one of our best baits, oh! this is bad, well certainly the worms will be right; splendid some hundreds of lively fellows, no perch will refuse them. But oh confound it, why! Why! I’ve left them in the left luggage office”

Oh! hang it “this is too bad” cried they all. Why what shall we do?

“Well” said ‘Bellario’ “I am sorry but they are indeed a splendid lot, and you’ll say so”

“Dang it man what’s the good of that, we want them here, but they are in the left luggage office and good one’s too, we shall get them again” – clearly remonstrance was of no use.

“Ah” ‘Bellario’ one for your “order good government method.”

“Blow the order growled ‘B’ Where’s the worms, where’s the dace”?

These worms like a famed curly tailed pup were, but now are not, that is to say that any angler curious to know the verity of this story will enquire with the clerk of the L & N W left luggage office he will doubtless be told more than the writer knows or **dare** enquire after, for the fact was, that several days of the fearful tropical heat that followed the expedition passed before these worms were thought about. When, oh fearful thought!, what the state of that left luggage office, or the temper of the usually courteous Sharratt might be and the reception the anglers might get, has resulted in the worms being left there to this day.

“Change here for “Choke”, “Shorltown”, “The Lotteries.” Dirty carriages and no dividends cries

Carbon, come out old fellows come out of this”.

“Change here Gemlen” cries the guard, “bait alright ‘Bulrush’ mind the live bait”
Away went ‘Bulrush’ and found the porter just in the act of refilling the can, when

“Stop him, stop, hold on”

“Why wots up” said his mate

“Why that’s the water that killed the fish the other day, “try tother tap”

The fact is true, that at this station there is water so impure, taken directly from the canal, that Lady de Trafford the other day with a lot of valuable fish for store purposes had the water replenished here, with loss of not only these store fish but also of many that lived in the stream. A sight met our anglers view before entering the station just spoken of, that caused many expressions of sorrow viz the junction of the head waters of the Bollin. One tributary issuing forth from the town bearing all the defilements and impurities that bad government in these days allows, its waters **black thick and uninviting** and its merry music hush as if for very shame as it glides silently and slowly by, to where its bright sparkling sister descends from the hills, singing its cheering song,

Soon they pass the head waters of the Dane, here a most splendid and prolific trout stream, and in a few minutes they view their Mere--- a peep of as beautiful a bit nature as could be desired. The Mere is about three miles long and about half a mile broad, its margin beautifully broken up into bays, small headlands and miniature precipices combined with shelving gravely shores, receding fields and meadows, now beginning to show promises of a rich and beautiful harvest. One end of the Mere, the narrowest, is banked up with romantic broken hills and rocks, quite a Rhine-like view on a small scale, or better still, some bit of Western Highland scenery. The grim and picturesque Scotch Fir on the crags lending grandeur to the scene; rich green woods from the waters edge, climbing to the top, anon here and there a dwelling and more artistic still an old ruin, here a broken and disused fountain, there a quaint rural structure on the margent green, the far off hills closing in the scene. The water of the Mere at its narrowest part, **deep black and dour**; at the broad and upper end it is dotted over with innumerable water plants, the white lily now in full bloom, the reeds, rushes and numberless kinds of wild plants forming near the shore a fringe of beauteous pattern. On the water are varieties of wild fowl in great numbers, in the air the “wood notes wild” of feathered songsters are heard. The whirr of the partridge, and the rush of the pheasant fill up the scene and down in the waters hidden from all save the anglers eyes of faith, their quarry.

“Here we are at last”

and the train glides into “Reedsmere” Station, luggage all out etc. etc. Here a cry from ‘Bulrush’ calls the attention of the party to him.

“Where’s my carpet bag? my Gladstone? Where is it “L” did you fellows not book it along with the other luggage while I was looking after the bait? Eh, What!”

And the horrible truth revealed itself to them, it had not been taken out and was now speeding on its way to Euston. That bag held all that was necessary to ‘Bulrush’s’ comforts be it wet or dry; but worse still it contained the tackle for the whole party, all the special rig that had taken days to prepare --- Bait tackle for Pike and Perch—Spinning and bottom fishing, boxes, books, every confounded item that was necessary for this fishing. The light and shade depicted on the faces of those four fellows was “curious” then the thunder that followed was fearful. The good old ‘Prior’ raved, “L” danced with vexation, ‘Bulrush’ was uncontrollable, while ‘Carbon’ laughed, chaffed and danced with fiendish glee. ‘Bulrush’ swore that if ever again he relied on a lawyer or the profession he’d “be blowed”,

“Talk about order, good government, method” said he” “Ah confound everyone of you for beguiling me from my bag.”

Here was a state of things in a few hours. No dace, worms in Manchester and tackle away to “Mugby” junction. Nothing left but the can with the gudgeon, even they seemed to kick the livelier at the prospect of release.

“Jolly idea cried ‘Carbon’ we’ll have the bait fried for “tea”

on hearing which ‘Bulrush’ vowed he would pitch any fellow into the Mere who dared to touch a fish.

“Wire Stafford! Rugby! Euston!”

So that train was wired but no use; seven days afterwards a note reached ‘Bulrush’ that all was right.

If ever a mess was made on an angling, out here was one, but ingenuity fell soon to work and a scratch rig was soon made up from what could be borrowed, stolen or given to them; and after a quieting and soothing cup of good tea, were afloat and the fishing began. Trolling brought one pike to the basket. The programme was adhered to as well as the broken down kit would allow

Then the clouds that had been threatening for some time began to lower, dark shadow came, and a thunder storm broke over the Mere accompanied with wind that endangered the boat, so shelter was obtained after struggling against the elements for some time. Perch fishing at anchor was decided on, which in a sheltered bay soon proved successful. Some time was spent in this delightful way accompanied by song and story, the waves kept up a lullaby motion of the boat, especially soothing and delightful to the anglers; the fishing was good—lovely sparkling fellows from half a pound each upwards, were being at regular intervals hauled aboard. And so evening came on. Then the pull home,

the Supper, the pipe and the after chat "The Angler's evening"

Congratulations on the successful ending of a day of such disaster, then the 'Prior of Walsingham' took his 'Nap' and very refreshing it seemed to be and after counting up his treasures off to bed; for three a.m. was the rising hour and the whole four kept time like true anglers.

The early morn, need we describe it? Who but the angler knows the true delight of early morn? Our friends were woke by the lark's sweet song, the cooing of the dove, the music of a thousand throats. The morning meal was ready for them and after refreshment, soon were afloat. The plan of attack was followed as well as the elements would allow, for the early part of the day, heavy driving rain with wind compelled shelter. Good trolling ground was tried with success. 'L's' rod soon showed life, the top nodded intelligence, and the reel gave sweet music, but alas the learned 'Bellario' lost his case. Then a fine Perch took the spinning gudgeon after which capture they settle down for the day at the perch and the fun began in earnest, thus the pleasures of the day were enjoyed in fullness until the sun passed its meridian. The afternoon drew apace and the evening shades came on. The pleasures of a quiet day were realised to the full, surrounded by all that was enjoyable and elevating to the mind. Anecdotes were told and gradually the Waltonian feeling (always present with anglers when they are in the spirit) prevailed. Conversation ensued eg. Fly versus Bait fishers, Trout v Perch and Pike fishers and it was unanimously voted that there is much false sentiment anent bait fishing that trout fishers are guilty of. "Truly" quoth the 'Prior' "I maintain that the kind of pleasures we are now enjoying are more in keeping with the contemplative mans' recreation, than at full speed thrashing a river, floundering over rocks and stones, and with alas, how many times poor results. Methinks" he continued, "there is more refreshment to body and mind in the golden mean than choosing the great extremes. I mean not to disparage trout fishing so called for 'tis a noble sport in all senses, but trout fishing and real sportsman like pike and perch fishing may well go together". I need not recall to your memories my brethren the numberless delightful pictures of this sport from our common Father's writings. We should all remember that the most beautiful fishing idyll ever written, viz the "Complete Angler" had its inspiration absolutely from ground or bait fishing, and this leads me to tell you my brethren, that our friend and brother 'Carbon', in praise and thankfulness and in honour of these few hours we have so happily spent together has offered to ' illustrate some of these scenes and incidents of fishing by his pencil which shall be devoted to the embellishment of our magazine, an offer that does credit to his heart and we shall be much beholden to him for the same.

The sport now became grand, no uncommon thing for all four rods landing fish at the same time. 'Carbon' beat them all and the fun of the thing was 'Carbon' getting hold of a rod deprived of the top piece all together. "'tis too long he said, the butt and the middle piece will do well enough" So tying a half length of gut to one of the rings he started fishing and the biggest fish fell to his share. Anglers note this fact, the oscillation of the boat riding at anchor, first blown to right then to the left, but the fish were always found **underneath** and they the larger ones too, and the most bites were obtained there. The shade of the boat doubtless for some cause or other offered attraction to the fish.

The time of parting now came, the rods were packed, lines housed, up with anchor, and a pull for home. The catch was counted; **seventy** brace of good fine perch, including one pike, a very happy and successful termination to a day of pleasure. The last catch of the day was the home train. They "landed" 'Bellario' at Prestbury; The 'Prior' at Cheadle with 'Carbon' in strict charge of his Reverence, and "Bulrush" was also safely landed at London Road Station; but the greatest catch of that day and what you who hear me will agree to I doubt not are the exquisite illustrations of the trip fulfilled by 'Carbon'.

Colonel John Mawson

In the autumn of **1881** it was announced that the Annual Dinner which was to be held in January would be postponed due to the inability due to illness of the President Colonel Mawson to attend. John Mawson retired to Cumbria soon after this announcement and died in 1885. He was a well liked person as shown in several angling songs written by his friends. The postponed Dinner was finally held in October 1882.

At the **AGM in January 1882**, Colonel John Mawson stepped down as President.

The position was filled by Mr E.G. Simpson.

The other Officials elected for 1882 were:-

Vice presidents,	Thomas Harker, and George S. Woolley
Secretary,	Abel Heywood junr.
Treasurer,	George S. Woolley.
Council Members:	Robert Burn, Charles Estcourt, John O. Mackenzie, David Reid, Frank Glover, Joseph Thwaites, and Henry Vannen.

John O. Mackenzie, a new Council member, was born in Perth in 1832. In the early 1880s he was living in Bowden on Langham Road with his wife Mary H. Mackenzie, born 1843. Living with them was John's niece Mary Thornton. In a neighbourhood where it was customary to have plenty of staff, there were two female servants in the household. John gave his occupation as a Wholesale Cloth Merchant. In May 1883 and 1884, he and E.G. Simpson represented the M.A.A. in the National Angling Competition at Loch Leven in Scotland. In 1885 he emigrated to New Zealand, and sent a paper on Trout Fishing in Otago New Zealand, which was read to the Manchester meeting in 1886.

Programmes in 1882

Feb	A.G.M.	
April	"Three Day's Camp Life in Norway"	Mr Harold Woolley
May	"My First Experiences of Horton in Ribblesdale"	'Upstream'
June	"Early Recollections"	Henry Vannan M.A.
Oct	"Early Recollections" part 2	Henry Vannan M.A.
Oct	Annual Dinner	
Nov	"A Week in Dalwhinnie and Loch Ericht"	Mr Kincaid
Dec	"Fly Fishing; Salmon v Trout, a contrast with a few practical hints"	Mr J.O. Mackenzie

“My Dear Old Friend”



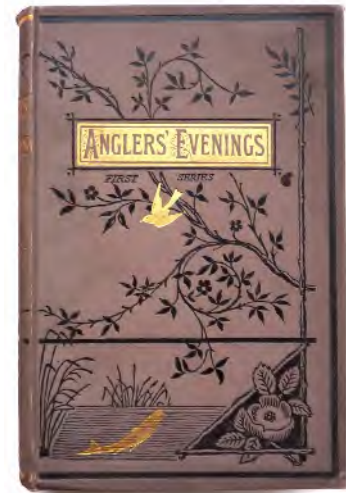
Its many a year, my old friend John,
Since you the fly first threw.
O'er the rippling brook, O'er the mountain
tarn, O'er lake or streamlet blue.
But many a lusty trout since then
Has fallen to your feather.
And yet it seems but yesterday
Since we were boys together.

There's pleasuring in remembering, John
The fish that there we slew,
And every time we tell the tale
We'll add an ounce or two.
Old time with us has kindly dealt
But though we're tough as leather
We're not so slender as we were
When we were boys together.

We cannot fish forever, John
But this much we can say
That though our angling days must fade
Like summer clouds away.
Yet till that time, with rod in hand
Blithely we'll bound the heather
And laugh and sing just as we did
When we were boys together.

‘Anglers’ Evenings’ Second Series

In **January 1882** the Second Series of Anglers’ Evenings was published. As with the first series there were many reviews, most of them mixed (there had been no adverse comment to the first series). The Fishing Gazette was complementary, they liked the spirit of the book. Their only criticism was that an Index giving the names of rivers, and places mentioned in the work would be a great boon.



The Saturday Review’ on January 21st 1882, got right to the heart of the criticism.

"The second series of papers by member of the Manchester Angling Club seems to us, on the whole, neither so interesting nor so well written as the former volume. There is far too much of an excessively and provokingly feeble sort of humour. If the associated anglers are capable of being amused by the mild jests printed here, and if they expect readers to laugh with them, we must congratulate them on the simplicity of their tastes, while we can not but admire their ignorance of the world. The great jest is for the fishers to give each other nicknames. We select as specimens, Red Hackle, Coach, Coached, Stargazer, Squills, Quills and Bills. Anglers in Manchester may laugh consumedly (sic) over this sort of wit, but it rather chills and depresses the reader and the amateur who happens not to be a Manchester man. Then there is a good deal of fun perpetrated in what we take to be some local dialect in a highly advanced condition of phonetic decay. This is the kind of thing we mean. “ ‘Well,’ Bill sheawts eawt, ‘thee put the propendikeler in thisel,’” and so forth. Without the aid of a Lancashire Dialect Society, the humour about thisels, whatever they may be, is lost on the public. After the jests in *patois* the fun of a worthy fisherman who calls his paper “The Wye and the Wherefore” seems intelligible and civilised. Several of the papers, for example, one on the meres of Shropshire tell only of not very exciting perch and pike fishing. There is a singular essay of three fishers who went forth in a four wheeled cab, and fished with strange selections of live bait in a reservoir. This story, no doubt, contains some local chaff, intelligible enough in Manchester. But if the Anglers’ Association wish to make their volumes generally acceptable, as we think the first was, papers that contain fishing lore worth knowing, or adventures of a more exciting nature than perch and reservoirs can supply-----"

More than a hundred years later it would seem that the criticism of the “ Saturday Review” was fair and to the point. The Manchester Anglers with their Victorian enthusiasm and with their “self compliments” on how far they had got in a very short time were slowly becoming inward looking. Today the nicknames are an irritation in that they mask the identity and character of leading members of the club around the 1880s although at the time no doubt these nicknames scarcely concealed the true identity of the person and, in fact, it can be safely assumed that concealment was not the object of this exercise since for instance in the “Raid to Kirkcudbright” the names are given in the song although not directly connected with each individual. With regard to the dialect; even the older members of today’s society, who were used to dialect in their youth would find difficulty in unravelling the meaning of some of what seems to be a rather hybrid rendition of the way the uneducated talked around 1880.

Perhaps the more literary members took this criticism to heart because it was over ten years before the final series of Anglers Evenings was published. Slowly but surely the number of papers read decreased, perhaps due in part to the fact that there may be one Paper in most people, but two or three are more difficult to find. Also once the Club was established on the Ribble, the experiences of some members became more parochial. Soon Meetings ceased during the summer months and it would seem that almost as many “Anglers’ Evenings” occurred at the Golden Lion at Horton as happened in Manchester.

At the **May the meeting** at the Albion Hotel, Piccadilly in Manchester a short Paper was read entitled “My First Experience of Horton in Ribblesdale,” by Up-stream. Mr Reid introduced some remarks on Silk Worm Gut, with specimens; and Mr David Reid gave an account of his appearance before the Bakewell Magistrates on the charge preferred by the Trent fishing Board of fishing for trout without license.

Mr Reid’s brush with the law was reported in the “Courier” April 28th 1882 :-

“A case of considerable importance and interest to the numerous visitors and anglers who visit the Bakewell Fishery was heard before Captain Smethers and Mr F. Craven at Bakewell, last week. The Bakewell water is a private fishery of the Duke of Rutland, and has been preserved for a long period at his sole expense; but the Trent Board of Conservators have recently claimed over the stream, and have extracted a licence from every one angling in it. Mr James Leigh, Wye Bank, Buxton; Mr James Reaper, High Street, Manchester; Mr Thomas Holme, Hulme; and Mr David Reid also of Manchester, all having refused to acknowledge the authority of the Trent Board, they were summoned to appear as above stated. Mr Reid alone defended the case, and was represented by Mr Simpson, of the firm Simpson and Hockin.

The case was considered a test one, as upon its decision the interests of riparian proprietors of the whole Wye valley as well as the anglers who visit will be largely affected. Mr Eddowes, solicitor and secretary to the Trent Board, prosecuted, and said that the board claimed the Wye as a tributary of the Trent, but Mr Simpson contended that though tributary to the Derwent, which flowed into the Trent, it was not, within the Act, a tributary of the latter river“

Unfortunately this rather facile defence did not stand up on appeal, as an article in the Derby Reporter printed:-

“Mr Justice Field and Mr Justice Grove have decided that the Wye is a tributary of the river Trent under the Fresh Water Fishery Act and therefore subject to the same rules as the Trent”.

Mr Simpson, the Lawyer, was also a Manchester Angler.



Fishing near the Crown Inn
Pen drawing from the ‘Sporting and Dramatic News’

The Anglers could stay at several Inns and lodgings in the fishing area, however they seem to have taken the Golden Lion in Horton as their 'Club House'



Ribble fishing at Horton

In 1882 the anglers embraced the fishing on the Ribble with the enthusiasm which they had shown the previous year at Penybont in Wales. A map of the stretches of the Ribble where Manchester Anglers were allowed to fish was sent to the members.



This paper read at the **March meeting in 1882** gives an angler's first impressions of fishing at Horton and was accompanied by photographs taken in Horton. The two anglers photographed were not identified.

"Our Fishery at Horton

By Thomas Harker

Our Fishing commences at Ribblehead and extends to Helwith Bridge. I might say almost without interruption a distance by water of from twelve to fourteen miles. The Ribble has its rise at Widdale Head about four miles from the place where our Fishing commences. I remember being induced to visit this place about twenty five years ago, we walked a short distance from the high road and found a spring, the water from which went in opposite directions, one portion went down Widdale, and after travelling a short distance takes the name of Widdale Beck and flows on until it joins the Yore at Haws, and continues its course until it reaches the sea at Hull, and the other portion turns west, and becomes one of the main sources of the Ribble. It takes the name of Gale Beck. I have frequently walked by its side as far as Girstones



(sic) a wayside Inn about a mile from Ribblehead Station. A short distance below we come to Thorns Gill, an interesting and romantic spot, and on my first visit to the head of our waters it was here I began to fish. I found trout numerous even at this extreme point. A short distance below Thorns Gill a small stream joins Gale Beck and at this point it rates the name of the Ribble, and under that name, so full of interest to us all, flows onward to the sea. On this occasion I had the pleasure of the company of our fishing secretary Mr Burn. We desired to become acquainted with the nature of our Fishing the whole distance between Ribblehead and Horton Bridge, and very much we enjoyed this inspection, and test of our upper waters. We left Horton Station at eight o'clock in the morning, taking the whole day to cover the distance of eight miles, from the head of our Fishing to Horton Bridge. From Thorns Gill down to a point opposite Selside, a distance of four miles we found some fine streams very easy to fish, being free from wood or tree of any kind, so that with a good bold water, fishing up here must be all that could be desired. I feel sure of a fine take of trout if I can only find a favourable water.

We found the fish run larger than expected so high up the river. I have a trout quite a pound and a half in weight at Selside Lane foot, and fish half a pound upto three quarters of a pound are quite common. But I ought to tell you that these large fish were taken by what some of my friends call a "Small piece of tin". Fly fishing will be very fine with sufficient water up here, and a south west wind blowing. Then I would advise our friends to fish up from the bridge at Horton, and return home by train from Ribblehead at night. A good days work and a good opportunity of testing the theory of up stream fishing. I am sure with a satisfactory result. I would caution some of our friends, who are wading down the river, not to forget that on a wet day the flood some times comes down breast high, and unless a good lookout is kept, it is possible to be taken at disadvantage. Our Keeper Walker has observed that it takes three hours for these floods to reach Horton after a very heavy fall of rain.



I would advise all our friends who have a love of the grand, and can thoroughly appreciate mountain scenery to make a visit to Ribblehead at the first opportunity. I think I shall never forget the magnificent view we had at this point; on our right was one of the finest hills in Yorkshire, Ingleborough, on our left Cam Fell and Penyghent. If ever a man is inspired and feels truly happy, it is at such a time as this; grand scenery all round, beautiful wild flowers and ferns to be found on all sides, and the lovely flowing river at his feet. I felt I could truly say, "This world is full of beauty" and then again when I looked up at those grand old hills I was constrained to exclaim "My Father made them all". As we go down the river after leaving Ribblehead, we observe Selside, a small village on the right bank about a mile from the water side; a short distance from this



point we come to a large deep pool, into which Cam Beck delivers its bog coloured waters. Having visited Lynn Gill, and gone up as far as the bridge at the top of the Gill, I well remember with what pleasure I first beheld the wild beauty of this place. Cam Beck runs the whole length of it, and there are many waterfalls in its course. I can well imagine how grand it must be to see this place when a heavy water comes rushing down its rocky bed. Cam Beck is well stocked with trout. I know of no beck in the county equal to it. We shall never be short of trout in our upper waters as long as Mr Farrar preserves this excellent trout producing beck. All the way down from the point where Cam Beck joins the Ribble, it is almost one himself should he come across any of these gentlemen on our waters; so also will several other watchers employed by continuation of streams easy to fish for four miles to the bridge at Horton. With a favourable water this length will make a good impression on all who visit it. There is a very fine stream just opposite New Houses Tarn. I had the pleasure of having two good trout on at one time in this stream, but I failed to land them both. The Fishing from Horton Bridge down to Helwith Bridge a distance of about four miles by the river, contains many fine streams, and some very deep pools, safe retreats for many of our large fish. I like Mr John Tennant's length very much, also Mr Foster's above and below the wooden bridge. The length opposite Mr Gornalls house is a favourable place and then we come to Mr Slinger's from the wooden bridge down to the mill, a delightful piece of fishing. I am only telling you what you know better than I do, having had more time to test the quality of our Fishing. The fish we get on the lower waters are quite as large as those above Horton Bridge as far as my experience goes. There is one great advantage about our fishing, and that is we have nothing



but trout to rise at our flies; so that we are not troubled with those salm-on fry at every cast. Again we have no Manufacturers on this stream of ours, and therefore no poisonous substances to damage our fishing. The poacher only has to be dealt with and we have reason to believe that Walker our watcher will be able to give a good account of our friends the landed proprietors who take a great interest in the preservation of the river, and help us in many ways.

It may be of interest to some of our members to know how we became introduced to this Fishing. I heard through my brother-in law Mr Raws in 1880 that a friend of his John Slinger Esq. had some very good trout fishing. It stuck me I might enquire about this, knowing that our Association had a desire to become possessed of a fishing water of its own at a convenient distance from Manchester by rail. The result of correspondence with Mr Slinger on the subject led the following members to visit Horton. Mr Burn, Mr Thwaites, Mr Estcourt and the writer. This self elected committee of inspection left Manchester on the Bank Holiday in December 1880. We at once went to "Studfold" the residence of John Slinger Esq. and having told Miss Slinger who I was we had a hearty reception. Mr Slinger came in and having explained the object of our visit, he was ready to help in any way he could. He first of all let us have his fishing and then did all he could to help us with the other large owners of the fishing in the district. I must say in justice to Mr Slinger that we owe him a debt of gratitude for his very great kindness in our first efforts, and the ready way in which he helped us all the way through. Having got Mr Slinger's fishing we began to see our way to extend; our object being made known, we soon found the large owners on the river took kindly to our plan of preservation, and I must say we found these gentlemen everything that can be in the term. They not only went with us, but have worked for us, in order to make the scheme complete as well as comprehensive. We can now say we have secured a decidedly fine length of trout fishing, and I trust all our members will visit it sometime during the fishing season upon which we are about to enter. We can not hurt it with fair fishing. It must not be supposed that we have got to our present position without painstaking effort on the part of several foremost amongst whom I must mention MR E.G. Simpson, Mr Thwaites, Mr Burn, Mr Estcourt and Mr Heywood and am glad to say what has been done has given much pleasure in the doing of it, because they



felt by carrying out this scheme they were not only giving pleasure to all the members of the Association, but also to strengthen and give a solid standing to our position as anglers.

We have good accommodation at Horton, the main centre of our Fishing. The "Golden Lion" and the "Crown". Our friends have

proved the comfort of both these inns. They have been there and still would go. There is also an Inn at Ribbleshead which will be useful to us at times. There is also another at Helwith Bridge which suits us remarkably well, when fishing the lower waters. There are many places of interest round our fishing within an easy distance of Horton. Weather Cote Cave is well worth a visit, about ten miles from Horton and two from Ribbleshead. In this district of ours there are several becks and water courses that disappear suddenly and run for considerable distances underground. Horton our headquarters is not rich in historical association. The fabric of the church here is of high antiquity and it is probably as old as Henry the First so Whittaker leads me to believe. There are many places within ten miles of Horton well worth a visit for instance "Malham Tarn", "Malham Cove" and Gordale Scar a good days work. Another good days work would be a visit to Linton, Arncliffe and Kilnsey Crag. We also have Clapham with its cave a distance of about seven miles. We have Stainforth Force within a distance of Five miles. A trip by the Midland Railway to Hardraw Crag could be visited. Drysgarth Force and Leybar Shawl; this would form a day's pleasure never to be forgotten. After leaving our Fishing for a short time I must now come back. I am glad to report a great increase of fish during the last year. The fish have spawned well this season and in great numbers. I feel sure Walker has done his duty in watching well his spawning fish. I am also glad to report that Walker has taken a troublesome poacher a short time ago, and has given it into our custody. The Lady Otter is now before you and a very handsome girl she is."

It has to be remembered that during the construction of the Settle and Carlisle extension of the Midland Railway which runs alongside the river, large numbers of navvies and their families were encamped for years in the valley, the water was almost depopulated by unrestrained netting and other means. Fish were taken in nets or 'grappled' with the hand; they were blown up with dynamite or poisoned with lime; and on Sundays in low water it was a favourite amusement for parties of three or four to go up the river with sledge hammers. Every large stone in the water likely to shelter a trout was struck violently so that the fish, stunned and lifeless, came to the surface. With the arrival of the Manchester Anglers Robert Walker, the river keeper was employed so that the river was now carefully managed and with a view to replenishing the waters, a fish house was erected.



Programme for 1883

Jan	“Fly Fishing; Salmon v Trout,” repeated	Mr J.O. Mackenzie
Feb	A.G.M. “A Very Little Fishing in Iceland”	Mr Heywood
March	“Our Fishing From Ribblehead to Elwith Bridge”	Mr Thos Harker
April	“Legal Points for Anglers”	Mr E.G. Simpson
May	“An Hour’s Fishing with Charles Kingsley”	Mr G. Sumner B.A.
June	“A Visit to the International Fisheries Exhibition”	Mr J.H.de C Bellamy
July	“The National Angling Competition at Loch Leven”	Rev C.P. Roberts
Aug	“A Second Half-hour with Charles kingsley”	Mr G. Sumner B.A.
Nov	“Holidays in Loch Awe”	Mr E.G. Simpson
Dec	Annual Dinner	

Photography

By the mid 1880s many people owned a camera, the Anglers began to record events with film instead of paper and pen and ink.

The Great International Fisheries Exhibition held in Kensington in London in 1883 was attended by several of the Anglers who took photographs of exhibits. The visitors were overwhelmed by the venue and the scope of the exhibits, which varied from equipment for deep sea trawling, models of fishing craft including an Irish coracle and Grace Darling’s coble, glass fountains for holding goldfish, lifeboat men explaining how they perform their rescues, fishing lines and rods, to mounted stuffed fish of huge size.



National Angling Competition

A National Angling Competition was held at Lochleven in May 1883. The Glasgow Herald reported that from its immense stock of trout and the amount of sport that it yields, Lochleven was well entitled to be designated Scotland's premiere loch. Mr J.O. Mackenzie and Rev C.P. Roberts represented the Manchester Anglers' Association. The wind blew from the south west, the worst direction possible, the temperature was very low and rain was forecast. Rev Roberts drew position in stern of 'The Bruce' and Mr Mackenzie, also stern, was in the 'Sir Walter Scott.' At the close of the day Rev Robert had seven fish and Mr Mackenzie had two, within the average of fish caught that day. The following year Mr Mackenzie was more successful as he caught 10 fish and so won the prize for the M.A.A. He told the members about his success at the June meeting.



In spite of the excitement about fishing on the Ribble, the papers read at the meetings in 1883 and 1884 show that many of the members were still fishing far afield.

Programme for 1884

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	"Fishing on the Orchy and Upper Part of Loch Awe"	Mr E.G. Simpson
March	"Windermere"	Mr E.G. Simpson
March	"Conversazione" Fishing exhibition and musical entertainment with ladies and gentlemen friends.	
April	Member's Evening	
May	"The Art of Fish Casting in Plaster"	Mr D. Reid
June	"The Loch Leven Competition"	Mr J.O. Mackenzie
July	Open meeting	
Sept	"A Fishing Holiday in West Norfolk"	Rev St V Beechey
Oct	"Border Warfare, The River's Esk, Liddel and Redewater"	Mr D. Reid
Nov	"Hard Lines and Tight Lines on Eden"	Mr Henry Morris
Dec	Annual Dinner	

In **January 1884** the monthly meeting venue was moved to The Grand Hotel in Aytoun Street. The room was more spacious and more importantly the tea was half the price and much superior to that offered at The Albion Hotel!

The Farmers' Supper

The Craven Herald reported in its edition of **14th April 1883** on a Supper held by the M.A.A. for the farmers' of Horton whose lands adjoined the fishing on the Ribble. The Farmer's suppers became an annual fixture on the Horton diary.

"The catering was entrusted to Mr and Mrs Heseltine of The Crown Inn Horton (at which house it was held) and the way in which they performed that duty deserves great praise, everything being of a first rate character and well served. The Chair was taken by Mr Harker who was well supported by Messrs Simpson, Burns, Estcort, Heywood, Kincaird, J. Foster, Slinger and others.

After supper had been done full justice to the remainder of the evening was to enjoyment. Various toasts were given, amongst other s being that of "The Queen and Royal Family", "The Horton Fishing Association", "The Landowners", "The Farmers", and "Mr R Walker", all of which were suitably responded to.

A number of songs were sung by Messrs Simpson, Heywood, Burns, Bunce, Towler, E. Morphet, Heseltine and others and together a most enjoyable evening was spent, the whole of the expenses being borne by The Horton Fishing Association. Each one appeared to thoroughly enjoy himself, and on parting expressed a hope that they would all meet together again for many years to come."

"The Farmer's Boy"

By "Crabstick" (Abel Heywood)

"The sun had set beyond the hills
The stars were twinkling bright,
As to the "New Inn" quite a crowd
Of farmers came in sight.
And as they came the roads along
Strong men both gay and free-----e,
They were herd to say, "there's nothing here to pay"
"So we'll have such an awful spree-----e
"We' have such an awful spree.

Some men from Manchester were there,
T. Harker, Simpson, Burn,
Kincaird, Estcourt and Heywood too,
And at supper they took their turn,
They at the head of the table sat,
And filled it up to a T-----e,
And said, said they, "now is'nt this a day,
And sha'nt we have a spree-----e
Now sha'nt we have a spree.

Beef, mutton, ham, in goodly piles,
Were on the table laid.
And precious soon the farmers bold
A might clearance made.
Then Harker jump't upon his feet
As bold as bold could be-----e,
"I thank you for that cheer and am glad to see you here,
And hope you'll have a spree-----e"

New songs of turkeys, cocks and hens,
And girls who ran away,
And speeches from the Manchester chaps
Till they had nothing more to say,
Except with a cheer "You are welcome here"
So make yourselves quite free- - - e.
With liquor and the pipes, the victuals and the swipes,
For we mean you to have a spree- - - e
We mean you to have a spree.

At last the clock with dismal stroke
Gave warning it was ten,
And then friend Harker he got up
And said, saith he, "my men,
We're loath to part, but you mun go
And goo at once" said he_ _ _ e
"For its ten o'clock at night and coming on moonlight
And we've finished up our spree- - - e
We've finished up our spree".

Then off they went those farmers bold
With many a howl and cheer
And in their skins they took away
A hogshead of spirits and beer
As they did gang, they gaily sang,
As loud as loud could be- - - e,
"These Manchester men must come here again
And give us another spree- - - e

Conversazione

(a scholarly social gathering held to discuss literature and the arts)

In **March** the M.A.A. held a musical evening to which wives and friends were invited. The “Conversazione” was such a success that the entertainment was repeated the next year. A ‘Glee’ Club consisting of 4 vocalists, a piano player and solo violin player entertained the guests. At both events Evening Dress was optional.

In 1884 the City News reported that there was an exhibition of angling novelties provided by Messrs Mitchel and Co of Market Street. There was a display of stuffed fish, a case of Flies which had been awarded as a prize to the M.A.A. at the International Fisheries Exhibition, a stuffed otter (probably the one taken by the keeper and mentioned at the end of “Our Fishery at Horton”) and a stuffed heron. The last two had been poaching in the anglers’ fishing waters.

It must be remembered that in the 1880s a lot of entertainment was home spun. There was no Radio or Television or even records and many people made their own music. The Anglers were no exception and several of them had fine voices and at later meetings entertained all present with songs that they may have written themselves about angling. At the first “soirée” only one song was composed by the Anglers; but at later meetings (mainly Annual Dinners) there was a queue of songs waiting to be performed. Easter 1886 saw a trip to Cam Beck and along the way certain anglers were singing excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan’s “Mikado.” Their acquaintanceship with this music was probably due to the widespread availability of sheet music, which was in its way the entry into “The Pop Charts” in those days as new songs were eagerly awaited from the publishers.

Fish Casting

At the **May** Meeting Mr David Reid gave a demonstration of how to take a plaster mould of a fish then to make a cast . He showed specimens which had been prepared and painted to look like the original fish.. Mr Reid said that a good plaster cast had the advantage of being absolutely accurate in outline and bulk, which was not the case with taxidermy, where the skins had to be fashioned and arranged according to the skill or fancy of the operator, who sometimes showed a good result, and sometimes a deplorably bad one.

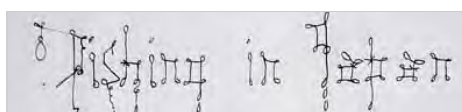


Victorian cast of a perch
by Barnes of London

In spite of the excitement about fishing on the Ribble, the papers read at the meetings in 1883 and 1884 show that many of the members were still fishing in other parts of the country.

At each A.G.M. Abel Heywood as the Secretary encouraged the members to submit papers for the monthly meetings. In 1888 he “beseeched gentlemen present to relieve him from this tribulation by volunteering papers,” he at once received promises for the full number of papers required for the year. He said “he looked upon this as the greatest kindness that could be extended to him”

It is noticeable that it was always the same men who submitted papers. Many of the anglers were still fishing in Derbyshire but they did not write about their experiences. Abel Heywood himself travelled the furthest, giving talks on fishing in Norway and Iceland. He even invented a comically mythical fishing trip to ‘Japon’, written into the third Manuscript Book (1881) and illustrated by Baxter of which the following is a short section



By Abel Heywood illustrated by W.G. Baxter

“As usual, I was much exercised in my mind as Whit Week approached, to decide where I should spend my annual holiday. I carefully read through the Manchester Directory and Johnson’s Dictionary without finding any help, but at last a brilliant idea struck me; I went to Lewis’ and bought a pound of poetical tea, which I found to be wrapped in a piece of paper giving a graphical account and a glorious picture of Japon, that settled me; I resolved to go a-fishing in Japan. Next morning I went to Victoria Station and took a third class return ticket for Yeddo by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Express and in due time after an uneventful journey, except that we got over the equator and ran full tilt into a monsoon. I heard the porter cry out Yeddo so I alighted and having partaken of a bowl of bird’s nest soup, asked my way to the Mikado.



The Lady who answered the knocker was dressed in the height of fashion, the hair was worn rough, the back in a coil from which stuck in all directions a number of hair pins and over a head dress of soiled lace or network. The lady’s face was rather red, the nose especially so, this is considered a great beauty in Japon. Over the shoulders a blue mantilla covered with large blue spots was negligently thrown. The cut of the dress was sweetly simple and short enough to show the ladies ankles. The dress material appeared to be Lancashire print, but of course that could not be. The front of the skirt was tastefully turned inside out and carried round to the back where it was secured by a ‘cringle’. The fair ones ankles were clothed in sky blue wool. The coverings of the feet were of a curious and complicated pattern. They were evidently made of leather and had buttons. Over these boots was a sloping strap tied with tape on the summit of the foot, which was attached to a thick wooden slab. The slab in Japon is however not allowed to touch the earth, from which it is raised by an oval rim of iron attached to this slab by two uprights of iron of about 2” in height. The particular dress for the foot is called locally a “Patten”. The ‘tout-ensemble’ was striking to a foreigner.

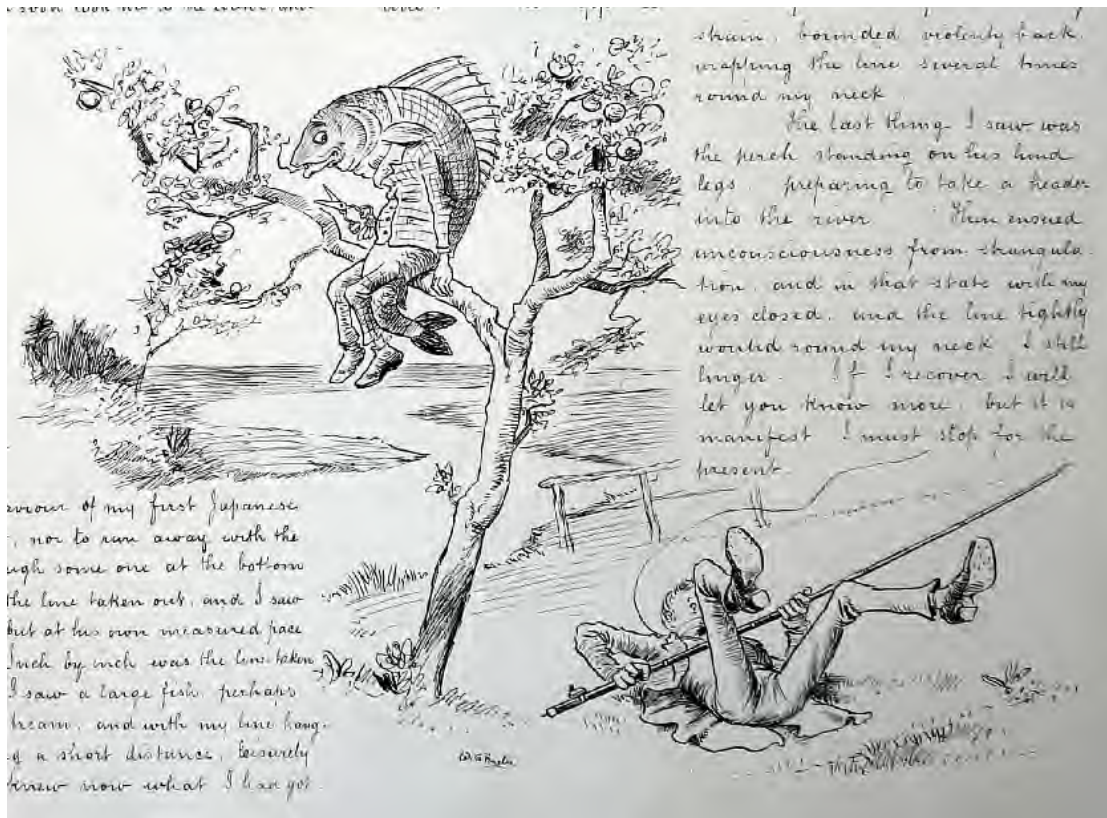


“Is the Mikado in”, I asked. “Shure he is” the lady replied. The lady clanked away and in a moment the Mikado came running out crying “Come in, come in, you’re the first Manchester Angler that’s been here”.

Tom, his servant, took me to the water and pulled out his fly book wich was filled with imitations of sparrows, cuckoos and partridges, but thinking these unsuitable I tried a cast of my own make and regret to say without success. “Aw’ll tell thee what” said Tom, “Yhee just try a grub and tha’ll ha’ one in no time” and he began to root in the ground finding a fat white grub the size of a silk worm. This Tom put on a hook and I threw it into the river. No sooner did it reach the bottom than I found I had a bite and that the fish was hooked. Soon at forty yards distance I saw a large fish, perhaps 25 lbs in weight, slowly emerge from the stream and with my line hanging from its mouth, walked a short distance, leisurely climb an apple tree. I knew now that I had a climbing perch.

Tom my, assistant brought, the blunderbush, a kind of gun used in Japon. Scarce had I spoken that the perch with deliberation took a pair of scissors from his pocket and cut the line. The supple rod suddenly released, from the strain bounced back, and wrapped the line several times around my neck. The last thing I saw was the fish standing on his hind legs preparing to take a header into the river.

Then ensued unconsciousness from strangulation, and in that state with my eyes closed and the line tightly wound round my neck I still linger



...now of my first Japanese
 ...not to run away with the
 ...ugh some one at the bottom
 the line taken out, and I saw
 ...at his own measured pace
 ...ch by inch was the line taken
 I saw a large fish, perhaps
 ...ean, and with my line hang-
 ...g a short distance, leisurely
 knew now what I had got

...stain, bounded violently back,
 ...wrapping the line several times
 ...round my neck.
 The last thing I saw was
 the perch standing on his hind
 legs, preparing to take a header
 into the river. Then ensued
 unconsciousness from strangula-
 tion, and in that state with my
 eyes closed, and the line tightly
 wound round my neck, I still
 linger. If I recover I will
 let you know more, but it is
 manifest I must stop for the
 present.