

Chapter 8

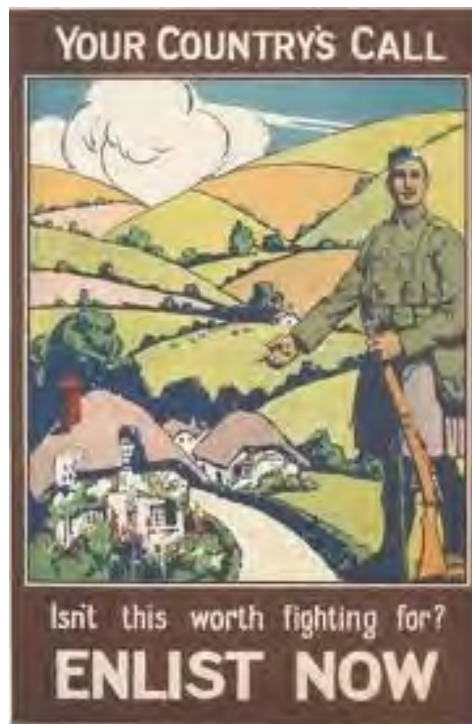


1914 – 1928



The Council for 1914

President	P W Kessler
Treasurer	Arthur R Handley
Hon Secretary	P B Burn
Fishing Secretary	Thos A Farron
Librarian and Literary Secretary	John H Lea



The First World War

The first mention of the war occurs in the Report of the Council for 1914.

The Report said that the following gentlemen were serving with the colours; Lieutenant Colonel Jebb, Colonel G.B. Heywood, Lieutenant Colonel A.J. Bailey, Captain E. Kessler, Captain W. Thompson, Captain F. Boyd Merriman and Captain J.R. Creagh.

In 1914 Captain Edgar Kessler was killed in the fighting. He was the son of the Association President, Mr P. W. Kessler .

It was decided to abandon the **Annual Dinner** in December 1914. This being the first year in which the Dinner had not been held since the formation of the Association in 1878, it was decided that those members who would, under ordinary circumstances, have been present, should be invited to subscribe to the British Red Cross Fund; £11 12s. 0d, was collected. At the February meeting in 1915 Dr Richard Marsden M.R.C.P. for the British Red Cross read a paper on "Aid for Sick and Wounded Soldiers in Time of War". He gave an explanation of the vast organisation which attends to everything connected with the relief of the war injured.

The Annual Dinner was not held in the five years from 1914 to 1918.



Programme for 1914

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	"Salmon Fishing on the Wye"	Mr J Arthur Hutton
March	"Trout Fishing in the Eden Valley"	Mr W Nelson
April	Easter Doings	members' evening
Sept	Summer Doings	members' evening
Oct	"The Luxembourg Ardennes"	Mr P W Kessler
Nov	"The Canadian Lakes"	Mr Herbert Arundel
Dec	"Running Water in Ribblesdale"	Mr P B Burn

The Report for the Council for 1914

"The later months of the fishing season were interfered with by the International crisis and the attendances at the meetings held in Manchester naturally suffered since so many members were engaged in other directions however the papers submitted at the winter meetings were of a widely interesting character.

"Salmon Fishing on the Wye" in **February** gave a great deal of information concerning the methods which made that river so famous a Salmon water.

In **March** Mr W. Nelson dealt with "Trout Fishing in the Eden Valley", a haunt well known to north country anglers and to many members of our Association.

At the **October meeting** the President, Mr P. W. Kessler gave an account of his experiences fishing in the Luxembourg Ardennes when war broke out.

In **November** a delightful lecture was given by Mr Herbert Arundel, a non member, on the Canadian Lakes, illustrated by some remarkably fine lantern slides taken from his own photographs.

In **December** Mr Burn read a paper on "Running Water in Ribblesdale", illustrated by lantern slides showing many familiar spots at Horton and many old friends in the neighbourhood."

At the Hatchery very satisfactory results have been obtained but anglers do not possess a monopoly of interest in the hatchery as is evidenced by a recent photograph, taken by the keeper, of a heron which seemed inclined to establish its headquarters a few yards from one of the ponds.

Another intruder is the large and particularly voracious *Dytiscus Marginalis* Beetle (great diving beetle). This beetle's partiality for Ribble Fry makes him a most unwelcome visitor to the ponds and very careful search is made for him on each occasion when the ponds are emptied. The consistently good results obtained in the hatchery reflects great credit upon Hunt."

Members who attended the meeting in October were treated to a talk given by Mr Kessler. He gave a report of his family holiday in Belgium earlier in the summer when they were almost caught on the other side of the channel as the war started.

At the time of the 1910 census Phillip Kessler, aged 47 was a shipping Merchant who lived in Levenshulme in Manchester with his wife Grace aged 40, two daughters Ruth aged 13 and Nora 7 and mother in law Elizabeth Ashton aged 70.

They employed a nurse, a nurse's maid, a cook, two housemaids and a lady's maid.

The following is a shortened version of his talk. The full copy can be found in the Manuscript book.

A Holiday in the Luxemburg Ardennes

By P.W. Kessler, read before members on 20th October 1914

My Wife and daughter, as spring advanced in 1914, began to talk of a holiday on the continent so the county of the Ardennes was fixed upon. One of the first difficulties was to find someone who could give information on the country as most people did not know where the Ardennes lay. The Ardennes in fact occupies three countries, Belgium, Luxemburg and a little bit of France. I was after the Belgian Ardennes.

The 9th of October saw us on the Ostend boat at Dover. A peasant passage of 3½ hours, a short wait at Ostend and then on to Namur by way of Brussels. Namur; which has come so prominently to the world since then. Little did we think when we saw Belgian Soldiers returning from their exercises, what a tragedy a few short weeks would bring upon them. Two nights at Namur allowed a day to visit Dinant, a delightful little town on the Meus, now alas a heap of ruins, and for what ? Namur has little old about it, having been so battered about by wars and sieges in the past that despite its ancient history it is practically a modern town and now, no doubt, will have to set about modernising itself anew.

The next step was to Diekirch by train through the Belgian Ardennes. With a two hour wait at Luxemburg we took a sightseeing drive through the curious and interesting old town. The Grand Duchy is supposed to be an independent state, its independence being guaranteed by Germany. It has had a varied history. The railways, since 1870 have been leased and worked by the Alsace-Lorraine German State Railway. Money matters are a terrible puzzle, prices being quoted in Franc, Centimes and sous but the currency is mostly German. There are some Belgian Nickels and some small native coins. The language is a patois leaning towards German with both German and French being spoken. The people fear the Germans with good reason as events have passed. It is a prosperous country, its share of the Customs Duties and the Grand Duchesses' private purse pay for all the requirements of the State, direct taxation does not exist.

We arrived in the evening at Diekirch and proceeded to the Grand Hotel des Ardennes, which was a large hotel, simply furnished and very clean. Such English as have discovered the place come in spring, April and May for fishing. 9 days after we arrived all the English had gone. I grieve to think of the great trials our kindly hosts had to face only a short fortnight later when, instead of welcoming new peaceful visitors, they found their hotel deserted and their roads and railways crowded with ever oncoming German horse, foot and artillery armies. My bill for 9 days for the three of us, including wine and other extras such as baths and electric light came to a little over £10. We did have the most expensive rooms but one could not call that an expensive holiday even with the railway journey thrown in.

Luxemburg and Diekirch lays itself out for giving a welcome to strangers, Diekirch is a good centre for all sorts of excursions and tours on foot, by carriage, by motor or rail. One of the most delightful ways of spending a holiday in the Ardennes would be on foot with a rucksack and small hardy rod, absolutely independent. Diekirch is situated on the river Sure or Sauer, quite a large river that flows into the Moselle at Wasserbillon on the border with Germany. The river is full of all kinds of coarse fish, pike, chub, barbell, dace. Roach and others. The natives are great fisherman, fishing with long bamboo poles with floats and some with reels. Bait of all kinds is used, live bait, worms, boiled wheat and one man I came across who was fishing with cherries. The cherry seemed a rather large mouthful, although my angler had plenty of bites and loss of cherries, he only caught one fish.

I went out one evening with my flies to see what I might get. I got to the spot where I had many rises when suddenly the river at my feet became all red and the fish seemed to go mad. It seemed that I was just by a drain where a mass of blood from a butcher's above was coming from a drain pipe, the fish were feeding on this, and my flies were of no further use. Presently I noticed thousands upon thousands of little alevins revelling in the banquet.

The Proprietress of the hotel has some miles of reserved fishing on the Upper Sure. The cheapest way of getting to this water is by train to Ettelbruck, there change and go on to Michelan. You can also bicycle, but it is very up and down hill, or if you can afford the luxury charter a motor to take you there and fetch you back. That would be the quickest means and you would be more independent, but for ordinary purposes the train serves well enough. That is the method that I employed. I went with my wife and daughter, my rod, reel, flies and lunch to take a look at this water. At Michelan you are at about the middle of the Hotel's waters. It is a fine stream, flowing pretty rapidly with frequent runs, you can fish it from the banks on either side but you cannot anything like cover the river from the banks. Wading breeches would be needed for that.

I started up stream on the left bank and came down afterwards on the right going over perhaps a mile and a half of water. It was not an encouraging day, a red hot sun and everything just as one did not want it, so my expectations were not great. However I did catch half a dozen trout and the same of chubb, but with the exception of one chubb they all went back. You are not to keep anything less than 8½ inches. I was however into one good fish who took me fishing down stream. Just as I was bringing my line back, it kicked itself off after a short struggle. After the necessary profanity I found I had a second small fish which also got away. These small trout that I caught were different from our English fish, they were brighter in colour and less heavily spotted with a sharper snout. However they resembled our own breed in putting up a good fight before giving in.

Before leaving Luxemburg I had planned to spend a day or two at Rochefort which, along with its neighbour, Han sur Leesse, had an attraction for a Ribblesdale fisherman in that the rock formation is of limestone. Most of the hotels and inns are able to offer trout or grayling fishing. I was much charmed with what I saw of the country and if I am spared to see the end of the present desolating war and anything is left to me to spend in small enjoyments I shall hope to let the country of the Ardennes have such benefit from such expenditure as I may be able to afford, and with a special eye on the poor Belgians who have suffered so greatly for their love of country and of liberty.

As my holiday synchronised with the development of the present situation which convulses the world, it may be of a little interest to hear how we completed our travels. There seemed to be no thought of war when we left Diekirch on Monday 20th July for Trier. Next morning we took the boat down the Moselle for 13 winding trip down to Coblenz, passing the vineyards on each side.

We spent the night in Coblez and on leaving next day we found the station quite crowded with soldiers. From Coblez we went to Bingen and stayed for five days, visiting Frankfort, which city my daughter had not seen. It was at Bingen on the 26th July that we learnt of the withdrawal of the Austrian Minister from Servia and a good deal of excitement immediately arose. The German view, as I generally heard it expressed, was that it all depended on Russia. If Russia caved in again as she did when Austria definitely annexed Bosnia and Hertzegovina, this crisis would pass away, but if not? Well there was no animus shown to the Britisher then and I had quite amicable discussions as to what England was likely to do in case of war breaking out.

On Monday 27th we took the steamer down the Rhine to Godenburg, a small town just above Bonn. During our stay there excitement increased. Trains came along heavily laden with mostly Germans returning from holiday resorts in the south. Guards were being placed along the railways, particularly at the bridges. When we came to leave on Friday, we had to stand in the corridor of the train as far as Cologne. Every seat was taken. Up to now I had not believed in the possibility of war. It was only on leaving Cologne, at about 3.30 that afternoon that we heard of the order declaring "a state of war" for all Germany except Bavaria. There was no doubt then of the seriousness of the outlook. Both in Cologne station and on the way to Belgium we saw some of the first signs of military conflict.

At Brussels we found the place alive with the mobilisation and next morning when we left, the station was crowded with men in uniform proceeding to their various stations. On 1st August we went on a crowded train to Ostende. The steamer was overfull but as an old traveller I was able to get my ladies very comfortably settled. Fortunately we had a very good and quick passage. It took three trains to get the passengers to London, spending an hour at Charring Cross to collect our luggage, but we had got home, we had had a narrow escape from most unpleasant experiences such as befell some of our fellow passengers.

In crossing Belgium we of course passed on the railway a great many places which have since loomed large in the public eye, Liege, Louvain, Alost, Tirlmont, Ghent and Bruges. Everywhere we saw peaceful peasantry busy reaping their crops, whilst we also saw the other side of the picture in the movement of troops and the preparation for what has since happened. Poor, poor Belgium. Surely a day of reasoning must come, even though the delay may have to be great.

So I repeat what I have already said, if at some future time I am able to go abroad again, it is Belgium that shall have the benefit of such expenditure as I may be able to afford, and particular that part of Belgium known as the Ardennes. Germany is hardly likely to tempt me again, despite old associations and the many beauties and amenities that the country has to offer when in its right mind.

Programme for 1915

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	“Aid for Sick and Wounded Soldiers”	Dr R Marsden M.R.C.P. Red Cross
March	“Discussion on Favourite Flies, members’ evening”	
April	Easter Doings members’ evening	
Sept	Summer Doings members’ evening	
Oct	“Fisherman’s Luck and Iron Blue Dun”	Mr J.H. Lea
Nov	“A Few Days Salmon Fishing on the Lune”	Mr W.J. Horsfield
Dec	“Some Angling Experiences of a Novice”	Mr T.G. Russell

As a result of the war, the Angling Association were in some financial difficulties.

Excerpts from the Report for the Council for 1915

“The Winter Meetings held in Manchester have not been so well attended as in previous years, but as so many members are directing their activities in other directions this is not at all surprising.

No new members have been elected during the year; eight have resigned from the Association, leaving the full membership at seventy five. The diminution in membership has caused the Council to consider the question of finance and some method of obtaining new members in order to replace those who have resigned and to bring the income of the Association up to the expenditure. The question of the entrance fee has been considered, the meeting expressed the opinion that it was desirable that the Council should have the power to vary or suspend the Fee. It is almost impossible to reduce the expenses without at the same time seriously affecting the quality of the sporting rights which we now enjoy.

The following year the Report said that eleven new members had been elected and seven had resigned giving a total of 79. It said that the election of so many new members as against none the previous year may have in part been due to the suspension of the Entrance Fee.

The 1917 Report said that fourteen new members had been elected so that the membership was 90. There was now a small excess of income over expenditure.

In 1918 the Council reimposed the £3 3 0d Entrance Fee and fixed the maximum number of members at 85 for the Ribble Fishery and 34 for the Lune Fishery. The Treasurer’s Report showed the financial position of the Association to be better than for some years past.

By 1919 the membership was 100, eleven having dropped out and eleven new members having been elected.



Programme for 1916

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	“The Fell Becks of the Eden Valley”	Mr William Nelson
March	“Notes on Sea and River Fishing in Cornwall”	Mr Stanley Kneale
April	Easter Doings	members’ evening
Sept	Summer Doings	members’ evening
Oct	“Grayling in Norway”	Mr Abel Heywood
Nov	“A Discussion on Useful Flies”	Mr J.H. Lea
Dec	“Angling Ways and Angling Days “	Mr P.B. Burn

Excerpts from the Report for the Council for 1916

“The tragedies of the great war have had their effect on angling as upon all other fresh air pursuits. Attendances have in fact been rather better than in 1915, and the number of occasions when the Ribble or Lune could be visited has been naturally affected. But the welcome relaxation which angling and the discussion of angling topics provide, is surely no great deviation from the path of determination which distinguishes the efforts of all in other directions. Each one of our national pastimes has provided its heroes and, when regarded from our particular point of view, it is essential for many reasons that a society of the character of the Manchester Anglers’ Association with its history and traditions should carry on. Those who are unable for obvious reasons, to take an active part in the great struggle can yet see that the minor details of home affairs are maintained and really valuable forms of relaxation kept in existence.

The following gentlemen are at present serving with the His Majesty’s Forces; Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Jebb, Captain F. Boyde Merriman, Major J.R. Creagh and Lieutenant F.J. Milne.”

Of the 79 members in 1916 five of them were young enough to be in the Forces.

Excerpts from the Report for the Fishing Committee for 1916

“Under normal circumstances the Season at Horton would probably have proved to be one of the best of recent years. The rainfall was fairly well distributed over the fishing months, each of which afforded good sport during the days when there was ‘water’.

Thirty six members visited Horton during the Season and fished in the aggregate of 250 days. Many nice baskets of fish were obtained and the reports show that the upper reaches of the river from Ribblehead to Horton compare very favourably with the lower reaches in the sport obtained. The number of fish taken from the river was 1333 as against 1160 in 1915. The figures for the Tarn being 176 in 1916 as against 183 in 1915.

The figures for the Tarn are very gratifying. It would appear that the policy of stocking the Tran with Loch Leven fish is a correct one and ought to be continued, subject to the capacity of the water. In July and August the temperature of the water in the Tarn steadily rose, reaching 72° on 4th August, with the natural result that sport during this period steadily diminished. The question of still further thinning the weeds in the Tarn has engaged the attention of the Committee. The difficulty in the matter lies in the fact that the weeds are a desirable shelter for the fish from the sun and also provide considerable insect food.

The usual routine at the Hatchery has been carried out during the year, except that no exchange of ova with the Burnsall Club has been made. In addition to the ova collected from the local becks in December 1915, 5,000 Loch Leven ova were purchased. At the sorting on 22nd January about 150 selected 2 year olds, ranging from six to ten inches, were transferred to the Tarn and a few weeks later about 400 were put into the river at Bransghyll foot and Newhouses. The Keeper had trouble during the last winter with rats which particularly attacked No 1 pond in which are kept the older fish. It is certain that some of the fish fell victim to some of these pests before the trouble was removed. 800 yearlings and between 8,000 and 9,000 fry were put in the becks and river. The daily record of wind, rainfall and temperature continue to be kept.

For the third year in succession 200 yearling were taken over to the Lune. Mr Alfred Smith was good enough to undertake the transfer and motored over to Horton for the purpose, afterwards conveying the fish to Lowgill where they were put into the river close to Crook o’ Lune Bridge.”

Programme for 1917

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	“The Development of our Salmon Fisheries”	Mr J. Arthur Hutton
April	Easter Doings	members’ evening
Sept	Summer Doings	members’ evening
Oct	“The Sunk Fly, Floating Nymphs and Midgets”	Mr J.H. Lea
Nov	“The Eden Valley”	Mr William Nelson
Dec	“Loch Ericht”	Mr P.W. Kessler

Excerpts from the Annual Report for 1917

“The season opened at Horton under exceptionally arctic conditions. Frost and snow had continued unbroken from the 8th of January and some idea may be obtained of the severity of the weather from the fact that some sheep which were overblown by snow were not recovered for nearly eight weeks. It is extraordinary to relate that they were dug out alive. Heavy falls of snow occurred at intervals until the middle of April and May was well in sight before any mild or spring like days made their appearance.



The Tarn in winter

There would appear to be a growing tendency for members to foregather at Horton during Easter and Whit week holidays. Such gatherings in past years were counted amongst the chief pleasures of our membership and embodied one of the main objects of the Association. In this connection it may be desirable to remind the members that their presence at the annual spawning and sorting operations at Horton during the winter months would be welcomed by the Fishing Committee and might not be without interest to such members.

The work of the Hatchery has proceeded as usual except that the food shortage has affected the fish so that it was found necessary to turn out the two year olds to earn their own living some months earlier than is usual in normal times. The supply of fish cake ceased and the Committee felt that the use of liver should be reduced as much as possible under the present conditions.

The food shortage has naturally attracted attention to the possibility of a supply of fresh water fish and sea fish from our rivers, lakes and ponds. Your Committee have during the year answered numerous questions put to it by the Special Committee appointed by the Government to deal with the matter. In the opinion of your Committee the supply of fresh water fish obtainable from these sources would be negligible for national purposes and the cost of procurement and distribution out of all proportion to the result obtained. The two considerations which appear to your Committee to be fatal to the success of any such scheme are that once thoroughly netted the river, lake or pond is exhausted for the period of the war and that many years would have to elapse before the damage could be repaired.

With regard to sea fish such as Salmon and Sea trout, it might be possible to extend netting operations, but in comparison with the results obtainable from increased sea fishing operations, where the supply is practically boundless, it would be unprofitable

In conclusion your Committee again venture to express the hope that we are surely nearing the turn of the long lane which has been our weary road for over three years, and that we may soon be able to enjoy our favourite recreation with a thankful and tranquil mind.”

Programme for 1918

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	“Some Aquatic Insects with slides”	Mr Leonard West
March	“The Life History of the Wye Salmon with slides”	Mr J Arthur Hutton
April	Easter Doings members’ evening	
Sept	Summer Doings members’ evening	
Oct	“An Angler’s Diary”	Mr Herbert Lindley
Nov	“Some Scattered References to Angling”	Canon Richardson
Dec	“Salmon Fishing on the Wye” (part 1)	Mr J.A Hutton

The Report of the Fishing Committee for the Season 1918

“The Arctic conditions which marked the opening of the Fishing Season, 1917, were happily absent in the early days of March 1918, and the prospects of early sport were fully justified by the results obtained. The water rose on the 18th March and remained in good ply throughout the month and until the 10th April, when the water fell and remained on the low side during the remainder of that month.

May, the fly fishers’ ideal month, proved disappointing. Very little rain fell and on most of the days the water was too low to permit of good baskets. The same may be said of June. The water remained persistently low, and the few Anglers who visited Horton during the month mostly passed the river by and put fortune to the test on the Tarn. The spell was broken about the middle of July and under the improved conditions the latter half of the month yielded the greatest number of fish in any month of the season. August provided a succession of good waters with the most inevitable concomitant of good sport. September was for the most part wet and wild, and with the water in good ply everyday good sport was assured.

Thirty-four Members visited Horton during the Season and many excellent baskets were obtained. The best basket, numbering 20 good fish, was obtained between Cam Beck and Horton on April 1st. The Angler proved to be quite justified in disregarding the significance of the date. The following are the monthly totals:

	River	Tarn
March	117	2
April	285	20
May	121	25
June	8	48
July	554	6
August	361	34
September	343	5
	1789	140

The usual stock of ova was obtained from the becks early in December 1917 and with the addition of 5,000 Loch Leven ova made up a total of 23,000. In due course 12,000 fry were put into the becks and later on 300 two year olds, in good condition and fully up to the average of size, were put into the Tarn. Although it was not deemed necessary to issue ration books for the fish, the daily feeding has been a difficult matter during the last two years. Extra care and attention have been required and Hunt is to be commended on the success which has attended his efforts. Your Committee now anticipate a return to more normal conditions, and it will be possible to retain the fish in the ponds for a longer period. This will enable the youngsters the better to fight their own way in the world.

The storm of heavy wet snow which broke over the Horton district on the 20th December last, caused considerable damage to the coverings of the ponds. In several of them the whole framework was smashed and submerged.”

The season on the Lune was scarcely up to the average in regard to the number of fish taken. The hot days and frosty nights of May and June, together with persistently low water, materially affected the fishing for

brown trout. Floods in July brought a fair run of Salmon and Sea trout, but the water in August and September was so variable, rising quickly and falling quickly, that on many days fishing was almost useless.

The water retains its popularity with the members and has been freely used by them. The accommodation in the district is unfortunately very limited and the members are indebted to the good offices of the keeper and his wife for the comfort and excellent entertainment provided for them under the trying conditions of the last year.

The record of the season is as follows;

Brown Trout	395	heaviest fish	11b 2oz
Sea Trout	30	heaviest fish	3lbs
Salmon	3	heaviest fish	13lbs

Sea Trout and Salmon have spawned well during the winter. A farmer reports that he witnessed a battle royal between two Salmon at Fleethome. The fish were both heavy and attacked each other savagely. They sometimes approached the side where he stood until they were half out of the water and splashed about in all directions.”



“To many members during the awful period which is now happily closing, Horton and Lowgill have meant a much needed and most valuable respite from the daily worries, anxieties and sorrows inseparable from the war. Your Committee earnestly hope that in the season which is close upon us we shall again be enabled to enjoy our favourite recreation with lighter hearts and fewer cares.”

Programme for 1919

Jan	A.G.M.	
Feb	“Salmon Fishing on the Wye” (Part 2)	Mr J. Arthur Hutton
April	Easter Doings	members’ evening
Sept	Summer Doings	members’ evening
Oct	“Dapping in Ireland”	Mr Leonard West
Nov	“The Dry Fly for Grayling”	Mr M.E. Broadhurst
Dec	Annual Dinner	

Although the war had ended the previous year, activities on the fishing front had scarcely resumed.

Annual Dinner 1919

“The first Annual Dinner to have been held after the five year gap due to the war, hardly came up to those of previous years, thirty members and friends being present; this however may be considered as a beginning after so long an interval.”

“The new season is rapidly approaching. Already the annual overhaul of rods, flies and tackle is doubtless taking place. At such a time the angler, like Mr Pip, has great expectations. Your Committee venture to express the hope that whether such expectations are entirely realised or not the members will have ample opportunities to enjoy “the most honest, ingenious, quiet and harmless Art of Angling.”



Logo for 'Anglia's Premiere Fishing Tackle Dealer'

Programme for 1920

1920	Jan	A.G.M.	
	Feb	“Upstream v Downstream Fishing”	Mr John H. Lea
	March	“Fishing as a Sport”	Mr John H. Lea
	April	Easter Doingsmembers’ evening	
	Sept	Summer Doings members’ evening	
	Oct	“The Limit”	Mr T.G. Russell
	Nov	Demonstration of Fly Dressing and Rod Construction	Mr John Battye

Fishing Report for 1920

In his **Report for 1920** Mr Haslam Cross said that

“Anglers are aware that the next best thing to the catching of fish is the talking and thinking about how to do it. The charm of angling lies in that: it remains an art and cannot be reduced to an exact science, thus giving rise to discussion, to the relation of experiences, to the attempted deduction of rules from the actual happenings, often alas ! To the utter confounding of the rule maker. But still the game goes on and this side of the Association’s activities holds much fascination for the thoughtful angler.”

Mr Haslam Cross went on to remind the members of the Angler’s Evenings held monthly at the Grand Hotel in Manchester, when dinner could be had there before the Meeting.

He wanted to established an Association Collection of angling flies for salmon, sea trout, brown trout and grayling used successfully on various waters. Members were asked to send specimens to the Literary Secretary stating the time of the year, the place where used and the general conditions. He said that the choice of a fly, particularly when wet fly fishing, is puzzling and it is only by collation of many experiences and patterns that some satisfactory working rule may be arrived at. A collection of this kind would always be of interest to the members at the meetings.

Once again members were asked for papers which could be read at the meetings, not necessarily by the author. They were also reminded about the extensive library owned by the Association.

The Fishing Secretary, Thomas Farron, wrote in his Report that

“ ‘The rain, it raineth every day,’ might have been said or sung with perfect truth on many occasions during the Fishing Season of 1920 at Horton

Newhouses Tarn did not yield its usual number of fish, Possibly owing to the river being so often in good ply, it has not received so much as usual of the members’ attention. The after dinner walk to the Tarn for an hour’s fishing on the edge of dusk loses much of its attraction when the evening promised to be cold and wet. On occasion, however, it fished well and repaid the angler for his trouble and enterprise.

The following are the monthly totals :-

	River	Tarn
March	85	1
April	290	5
May	296	11
June	54	8
July	407	30
August	126	21
September	68	1
	1326	77

The experiences of 1920 must have brought home to many fishers the fact that angling may be made the subject of endless observations, statistical compilations, refinements of lure and method, yet success remains unknowable and capricious as the weather—a notoriously un safe matter about which to prophesy—wherein probably lies much of the charm and attraction of angling.”

Programme for 1921

Feb	“Hackle Flies, floating and Wet, Typical and Empirical”	Mr Leonard West
March	“A Country Lad’s Apprenticeship to Angling”	Mr William Nelson
April	Easter Doings	members’ evening
Sept	Summer Doings	members’ evening
Oct	“Sea Trout Fishing in Rivers”	Mr John Battye
Nov	“Fishing Weather”	Dr N.C. Haring

The Fishing Committee reported on the Angling Season of 1921

“It would long be remembered as one of the worst on record, neither spider nor the fly proved attractive to the trout.”

In fact they said that phases of this kind are by no means unprecedented on the Ribble at Horton or on any other river. Similar bad seasons occurred in 1893, and at intervals since.

Fishing was most unpleasantly interrupted in the Tarn on the 15th September by the accidental drowning of Mr Percy K. Winter, a visitor staying at Horton, whilst bathing. The accident was seen by one of our members but it was impossible to render assistance. The Tarn was dragged daily by the police who were unable to recover the body until it rose 12 days later. Mr Winter had dived off the end of a fishing pier and become trapped in the weed.

The Secretary felt that there was little new to report but finished by saying that

“It would be less than a true Angler who would allow the recollections of the old Season, however dour, to dull the keenness with which he anticipates the opening of the new. To be at the head of a favourite stretch of river, a southerly wind and a cloudy sky, here and there the fish dimples the streams, and the long carefree day before one—what more could the heart of the Angler desire.

Members were told that Mr Beckwith Heseltine had purchased the Golden Lion and was carrying on the Hotel business. The old arrangement by which a Club room was reserved for the use of Anglers at the Hotel would not be renewed. Mr Heseltine was however anxious to do all he could for the comfort of the members staying with him.

The Club room had been reserved for the members since 1882.

Mr Abel Heywood, the only surviving founding member of the Association was made a Life Member. He was aged 81 years.



Possibly Abel Heywood fishing at the Tarn

Programme for 1922

Feb	“Some Reminiscences of the Late Archdeacon Richardson”	
March	“Spinners”	Dr T.D.W. Moreton
Oct	Summer Doings members’ evening	Mr R.B. Martin
Nov	“Some notes on Loch Fishing”	Mr F. Arthur Gillies

Fishing Report for 1923

In the **Report of 1923** a general feeling of gloom, echoing the Great Depression, prevailed. The Annual Dinner was abandoned owing to circumstances not under the control of the Committee, and the lecture by Mr J. Arthur Hutton fixed for December had to be postponed owing to the General Election.

In consequence of the poor attendance at the meetings held in 1922, the matter was discussed at the Annual General meeting in January 1923. The Council were asked to consider the future policy of the Association and particularly as to dropping the winter meetings. It was decided that the meetings should be held at such times and places as the Council should from time to time decide.

No report was made of any talks given at meetings in 1923, however three papers were read at meetings in 1924 and in 1925 a meeting was held in March where three fishing films were shown. This was possibly the first time that cinema films instead of lantern slides were shown to the members.

Programme for 1924

Jan	A.G.M.	
	“The Life History of the Salmon”	Mr J. Arthur Hutton
March	“Fishing Holidays in Sutherland”	Mr Herbert Lindley
Dec	Doings of the Past Season by members	

Programme for 1925

Jan	A.G.M.	
March	Three Cinema Films	‘Battles with Salmon’
		‘The Fly Fishes Festival’
		‘The May Fly’

Sometime in 1924 Nat Hunt, the Keeper, had an accident at the Hatchery. The members were reassured that he had made a good recovery from his operation which he underwent at Leeds. The Committee thanked Mrs and Miss Hunt for their help while Hunt was indisposed.

The End of the Monthly Meetings

With the ending of regular Monthly Meetings at the Grand in Manchester the character of the Club changed. Most of the members were living and working outside Manchester so attending evening meetings was not easy.

In 1926 the Association's Library was removed from The Grand and housed with Mr T.G. Russell, the Library and Literary Secretary, at his office at 78 King Street in Manchester, which meant that few members were borrowing the books.

Fishing at Horton and on the Lune became the centre of the Association's interests. The Members were no longer exhorted to provide papers for the Monthly Meetings. Members now only met when fishing, at the Annual Dinners or on the rare occasion of a social meeting in Manchester. There are hints in the Annual Reports that some meetings were held but no details were given.

Excerpts from the Fishing Report for 1925

"The old boat house which had stood up against about 40 winters was found to be in so unsatisfactory a condition that it was decided not to attempt further repairs but to erect a new one. The wood was purchased locally and the entire work was carried out by Hunt with one assistant. The new boat house which is a little larger and more convenient than the old one, has been erected at a cost of under £50. A thoroughly good job has been made of it and one which reflects great credit upon Hunt's work and craftsmanship.

During the back end of the year several of the fishing stages were rendered unsafe by the bad weather, and it has been decided to renew some of them and possibly to erect one or two additional stages.

Old age seems also to have affected the boat, and the Committee is of the opinion that a new one will have to be obtained. It is hoped that the stages and the new boat will be available for members early in the coming season.

The question of weeds in the Tarn is occupying the attention of the Committee and an endeavour will be made to minimise the inconvenience they cause to Anglers. It is however to be recognised that weeds are not only feeding grounds but are a valuable cover for fish in hot sunny weather.

There is nothing of special interest to report with regard to the Hatchery. The usual number of ova (about 23,000) was collected in December 1924 and in due course successfully hatched. 270 selected two year olds of good size and in good condition were taken to the Tarn and 184 reserved for the river in addition to the usual fry which every year are put into the becks as feeder for the main river.

Two more ponds have been recovered and the Hatchery and ponds generally are now in good and efficient health."

The following are the monthly totals.

	River	Tarn
March	11	1
April	203	7
May	423	14
June	134	62
July	8	38
August	251	18
September	218	35
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1248	177

The 1926 A.G.M.

The AGM which was held in March 1926 was only attended by 12 members, very poor support when the 1925 Report had given the names of 99 Members.

Excerpts from the Fishing Report for the Season of 1926

“During the year the Council has had under consideration the future management of the Association, in view of the fact that Mr W. Haslam Cross, the Hon. Secretary, and Mr Thomas A Farron the Hon Fishing Secretary, both desire to resign office. Mr Cross finds that his business engagements during the Winter months make it difficult for him to attend to the social activities which have been usual. It was with very great regret that the Council reluctantly agreed to the wishes of their two colleagues, for whose invaluable services, extended over many years, the Association is so greatly indebted. By the way of a small token of appreciation and compliment, both have since been elected Life Members. As Mr Cross has subsequently been appointed Junior Vice-President for 1927, and Mr Farron has been prevailed upon to act as Hon. Fishing Secretary for the Lune Fishery, the Council hopes to continue in the future to have the benefit of their valuable advice and experience.

Mr F. Archer Gillies has taken over the duties of Hon Secretary and Mr Wilfred Barnes those of the Ribble Fishery. Mr. Barnes is keenly interested in all matters connected with the Horton fishery and has the great advantage of possessing considerable local knowledge of the whole district in which the water is situated. The Committee feel sure that the interests of the members will under the new regime receive the same care and attention as in the past”

The appointment of Mr Barnes as Secretary brought new ideas to the Fishery. Wilfred with his practical knowledge of running factories soon realised that all was not well in the Hatcheries. He would look at the bald statistics and note that every year rather over 20,000 ova were put down to hatching. The wastage of these on hatching was claimed to be negligible as the fry were put in the ponds; but when it came to the first and second sorting only a few hundred fish of above three inches were mentioned and of these just the odd hundred or two were deemed large enough to put in the Tarn (There was always the fear that the smaller fish were being gobbled up by the larger ones in the tarn). The total number of fish reared was always dissimulated. The let-out clause being “the excess fish were placed in the beck and river” a count was never given. Wilfred no doubt noticed in reality that, of the ova laid down, only one percent were of real use in stocking the tarn and behind the scenes he was enquiring whether it would not be more cost effective to buy in two or even three year old fish. In 1927 he was still struggling against the Victorian ideals of the Club one of which was the rearing of trout.

Fighting the war on more than one front he thought that at least the efficiency of the hatchery could be improved and he arranged for Mr G. W. Shorthouse, the Manager of the renowned Howietoun and Northern Fisheries of Stirling to spend a day inspecting the hatcheries at Horton in July 1927.

Fishing Report for the Season of 1927

“Your Committee arranged with the Howietoun and Northern Fisheries of Stirling to send their Manager (Mr G.W. Shorthouse) to Horton to spend a day with us to inspect the Hatchery, the River and the Tarn, and to let us have his full report in time.

This Report has been condensed and tabulated into a set of Working Rules, which have been framed and hung up in the Fish House for the guidance of our Keeper Hunt, to whom we look for substantially better results in the future.”

The Report said that :-

“If the Manchester Anglers’ Association wish their fishery to be well managed, I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Hunt has too much to do, to do it well. No risks should be taken with the work at the hatchery. Certain work on the river could perhaps stand over for a day, but no work at the hatchery should be postponed five minutes. It is obvious therefore that some one should be in constant attendance at the hatchery and this, Mr. Hunt can not be. If then you could arrange to give him the assistance of an intelligent girl I feel that good results will follow”

Keeper Hunt needed to feed the fry four times a day, which he could not do at the same time as patrolling the River and Tarn, so his daughter was hired to help him with the mid-day feeding. In order to assist him the members were requested ‘not to expect too much service from Hunt in other directions’. On reading the Report it can be seen that Hunt’s job description had now been laid down, he could no longer work at his own pace as he had been doing.

Trout Rearing Keepers duties in connection with the Hatchery

Memo: Hatchery contains eight small-uncovered ponds or ditches for the cultivation of shrimps and snails; and also five large covered ponds for trout. For reference purposes the large covered ponds are numbered 9 to 13, the lowest number being the pond nearest the fish house.

August

Empty and thoroughly cleanse of all mud and decayed matter ponds 11 and 12. Afterwards half fill, then open the plugs, and while the ponds are emptying use brush freely so as to let go any remaining filth not previously removed by shovel. Examine the ponds carefully and make up any hole or crevice in which fry could hide. Furnish the bottom with a three-inch layer of gravel. Fill the ponds ready to receive six month old graded fish in about six weeks time.

September

Empty ponds nine and ten, grading and transferring fish to Ponds eleven and twelve. The cistern outside the Hatchery is to be emptied and thoroughly cleaned out, water is then to be turned on and the covers put back, say, late September or early October. The filter Tank in the Hatchery and new Filters must be ready for when the first lot of ova reach the Hatchery. There should be sufficient filters in number to allow every alternate one to be taken out and cleaned and put back before the others are disturbed for cleaning. The Fish house is to be thoroughly cleaned, all surplus materials, including specimens of freak fish etc. and other articles not essential for hatchery work and on which dust could accumulate, are to be removed to another building. All walls and shelves etc. should be thoroughly cleaned before the following work is commenced.

All run channels from the cistern to the hatching boxes, all taps, hatching boxes and grille fittings etc., in fact, every bit of zinc and wood coming into contact with the water supply, must be cleaned and scoured out with Caustic Soda, and when absolutely dry varnished with BLACK Bitumistic varnish (obtainable from Messrs. Blundell and Spence, Oil Merchants Hull}. The pot of varnish should stand before the fire for an hour, so as to become thin before applying. Varnishing should be completed before the end of September. Early in September all the Springlings in Nos. 9 and 10 ponds are to be graded and counted, the smaller ones being then put into no. 11 pond and the larger into //no. 12 pond. Also the one and a half year old fish in No. 13 pond must be counted and graded, and all fish over, say, five inches must be transferred to the Tarn, the others being put back into the pond until February next.

December

Stripping fish and laying down the ova. The ova must be counted when laying down. To measure the number of ova, first count how many there are in a fluid ounce, then multiply that number by twenty and you get the number in a pint. Then record how many pints and half pints are put in each hatching box. Every morning afterwards all dead eggs must be removed and a record kept of the daily of the count. There should be 5,000 in each box, as, although this will accommodate more, only this number of fry can be reared.

Conditions in the hatchery: - No strong light. No sudden change in temperature. No stagnant water.

February

Number 13 pond to be run off and two-year olds counted and turned into the Tarn and the River. The results to be expected: 500 to 600 two-year olds from 700 yearlings put in. number 13 pond to be cleaned and prepared as 11 and 12 in August in order to receive the yearlings in March.

March

Number 11 and 12 Ponds to be emptied and the best 700 fish are to be put into Pond 13 and the remainder should be turned out into the river. Results to be expected: 20 to 25 yearlings for every hundred ova originally put down. If there are any under sized and not fit for the river these may be put back into No. 11 pond until they can be put in the river in May.

April

If the fry do not keep the bottom of the boxes polished, the cleaning must be done for them. The fry commence to feed before the yolk sac is totally absorbed. A short handled spoon six inches deep and by three inches diameter made of perforated zinc, 14s gauge, No. 8 hole is to be used for feeding in the boxes. The Food is to be Sheep's Liver pressed through a cook's sieve (the skin of the pluck being first removed). Quantity: To commence with a desert spoon full to every 20,000 Fry, four times a day and the quantity to be increased as the fry take it up. Feeding is to take place at 8 a. m. —11 a.m.—2 p.m.—and 5 p.m. Strict punctuality must be observed as this is absolutely essential in order to obtain good results. The fry are to be kept in the hatchery boxes for about two months after they commence feeding. It is a great mistake to starve fry. Boxes should be cleaned out every other day. The water in the boxes is to be raised as the fry grow stronger.

May

All the fry are to put in the first two covered ponds Nos. 9 and 10 rather more into 10 than 9. They will not feed during the first day after being put out, but on the second day every endeavour should be made to get them on the feed as it is at this time that the great loss occurs. For the first fortnight they must be fed four times a day at the times indicated above. Three times a day will suffice after the first fortnight at 8 a.m.—12.30 p.m.- and 5 p.m.. This must be done until they are twelve months old, and after this, one good feed at 12.30 p.m. daily until two years old. See that the food passes their very nose. Both fry and yearlings feed best when a full number is in the pond. A feeding spoon ten inches deep by three inches diameter, made of perforated zinc, No. 8 hole, 14s gauge, is to be used, and as the fry increase in size go on to a spoon with a No. 9 hole.

Keepers other duties besides the hatchery.

1. Maintenance in reasonable repair of the Boathouse, Boat, And Tarn Staging. Also weed cutting in the Tarn.
2. Reasonable daily patrols of, at any rate, a portion of the river.
3. Planting and cultivation of new weed beds in suitable places in the river. This to be done during patrol duty throughout the year.
4. Cultivation of shrimps and snails in eight small hatchery ponds.
5. Furnishing to the Hon. Fishing Secretary of a weekly report as to the trout killed in the river and the Tarn, as also periodical reports of out-put of shrimps and snails from the hatchery.
6. Such other duties as may be reasonably required by the Hon. Fishing Secretary.

This frank Report was pointing out to the M.A.A. that since their exciting pioneering days in the 1880s, fish breeding had become a more precise and exact science. If they wished to become more successful they needed to modernise.

“Any proprietor who decides to stock artificially his reach of the river, high up, by purchasing a few thousand yearlings from a fish farm is really a “Toff” because he is presenting to his neighbour lower down, trout he can never expect to fish and he knows it. But such kindness is only a partial remedy and as already said, until the management is given to one man, of the whole length of the River Associations, proprietors and anglers will continue to be disappointed”

The Lune Fishing Report

In the **Lune Fishing Report for 1927**, mention was made of two unusual fish which were taken during the season.

“Both, to the unobservant, would have been assumed to have been sea trout. The reading of the scales however by Mr Hutton and Mr Thwaites have resulted in both being found to be salmon smolt. The first taken by the Keeper in June being 12 ins long, a very unusual size – three and a half years old. The second taken by Mr Clegg and at the end of August was almost identicle in size and colouring with the first. Interesting questions relating to these fish were discussed by Mr Ransome in his weekly article in the Manchester Guardian of 9th Sept last.”



From Volume 2 of the Manuscript Books

Fishing Report for the Season of 1928

The report for the 1928 season drew Anglers to the fact that it was the 50th season of the Association.

In order to encourage new members, the present membership of 88 was to be increased to 100, the entrance fee being suspended until further notice. As a result the vacancies rapidly filled up.

In the spring three stages at the Tarn had to be rebuilt as they had been washed away in the heavy gales.

A new footbridge was put across Blind End Beck, the old one had become rotten and beyond use.

These repairs made the expenditure for the year very heavy.

The Hatchery.

In this report no mention was made of the Howietown Report from the previous year or the list of Keepers Duties which had been made up for Keeper Hunt.

“At the Hatchery 20,000 Ova were laid down, (5,000 from Howietown and the other 15,000 from the Ribble) and hatched out, the result being a slight improvement upon last year, but not by any means what we want it to be. We hope to have far better results next season.

The sorting of the 2 year old fish was carried out on 24th February, 1928 and 137 good sized fish were transferred to the Tarn.

On the 3rd October 1928, all the 6 months old fish in the ponds were graded and counted, 2,008 being the total reared out of the 20,000 Ova. Last year the total was 970. After grading, these were put back into the ponds to come on for Yearlings in March 1929. On the 29th November 1928, the eighteen months old fish were graded and counted, the total being 222. Of these 37, from 5½-in to 7½-in were transferred to the river, the other 185 being put back into no 13 pond to come on for 2 year olds in February 1929.

The Trout fishing for the season 1928 has been only fair. There has been little rain during the months of March, April and May and consequently very little fishing done, very few fish being taken. Of the following months June was very good with a catch of 369 fish; the months of July and September being very poor.

The total number of fish being taken from the River was 1,144 as against 1,684 for the season 1927 and 1,219 for the season 1926.

44 Members visited Horton during the Season, and fished 314 days in all. Anglers using Day Tickets fished on 42 days.

The fishing on the Tarn has been up to the average, 169 fish having been taken. The best fish recorded was 1½ lbs of which size, several were taken.”

Members were advised that Minnow and Bottom fishing in the Tarn would again be permitted during the 1929 season. However ground baiting was prohibited and Members were requested to only creel fish of a good size.

During the season a new wood framework covered with wire netting was put over No 12 pond and the sides of No 10 pond were concreted as the banks were leaking.