

Songs



When the club was first formed there were some talented Anglers who wrote songs and poems to entertain the members at their monthly meetings. It was usual for members with good voices to lead the meeting in a sing-song after the business of the meeting and in particular after the Annual Dinner.

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This song was sung for the first time in public at the Anglers Dinner on 19 December 1893, which was held at the Grand Hotel, Aytoun Street in Manchester.

‘The Fish that Broke the Shank I had from Farlow’

(air “Monte Carlo”)

Written by R Godby

I once went up to Horton, but before the train I took
I sauntered, rod in hand into Farlow’s on the Strand;
And asked him to supply me with a very special hook,
That would safely bring a heavy fish to land;
An exceptionally heavy fish to land.

Chorus

As I wander up and down, between the “Lion” and the “Crown” or stroll beside the Tarn,
You may hear me spin the yarn of the night I spent near Pen-y-ghent,
Of the awful fight till morning light with the fish that broke the shank I had from Farlow.

I’d seen him jumping in the Tarn and vowed he should be mine,
And with every kind of fly, I had fished him wet and dry.
I had tried the worm and minnow, I had fished him far and fine.
I had even tried to snatch him on the sly!
I confess I’d tried to bob him on the sly.

Chorus

I thought my luck would never come, but come it did at last.
For one day I saw him rise, fairly sucking down the flies.
I slipped into the boat and made a very pretty cast
And I hooked him to my infinite surprise!
I confess that I could scarce believe my eyes!

Chorus

There were other anglers there who wished to occupy the boat.
Meekly waiting for his turn I could see the patient Burn
And I heard the kilted Harker singing gaily “I’m afloat”
As he shook his bonnet at me to return.
It was quite beyond my power to return!

Chorus

All through the day I played the fish and far into the night,
My companions all had fled even Walker was in bed.
Then the fish he turned the tables and before the morning light
He was playing **me** till I was nearly dead.
I never was so very nearly dead!

Chorus

The village cock began to crow to usher in the morn;
I was stiff as any plank and my clothes were limp and dank
When something gave way suddenly and lo! My fish had gone
Mr Farlow’s hook had broken at the shank
As to what I said my memory is a blank!

Chorus

There’s not an angler in the room I’ll undertake to say
But has often lost a trout’ large as that I’ve sung about.
Our biggest fish are all alike, they always break away
And of that there’s not a shadow of a doubt;
If there’s any scoffer here we’ll chuck him out.

Chorus

Farlow was one of the most esteemed fishing tackler suppliers of that era. Farlow had shown angling innovations at the great exhibition in 1851; their shop was at 191 the Strand. Today they are still thriving at 9 Pall Mall in London.

Walker was the indefatigable keeper of the Manchester Anglers in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Robert Burn was a true servant of the club in its early stages and besides holding many posts in the club was also the enthusiastic supervisor of the building and running of the trout hatcheries in Douk Ghyll. The 1891 census shows that he was a paper merchant. His business address was 1a Charlotte Street, Manchester!

Thomas Harker (an alleged Scot) lived at Brook house, Fallowfield in Manchester. According to the Yorkshire Post of 6th July 1889.

“Mr Thomas Harker’s native heath is Wensleydale. He is thus a Yorkshireman born and bred and a member of the great firm of Rylands and Sons. He finds time to wander off with his rod to the ‘bonnie bright Yore’ now and then and to speak and write to the honour and glory of the beautiful valley in which his boy hood was passed. As a sportsman he is equally keen with rod or gun, and, spite of business or sport, can find leisure to devote to the cause of charity. The picture [showing him wearing a thick beard and a kilt in full Highland dress]--- and it is a picture, as even he will admit when he sees it--- represents him as our special artist unexpectedly caught him recently doing Loch Rannoch. But whether in Perthshire or in the heart of Manchester, or laying down the law in the high road at Horton, Mr Harker’s cheery voice and smiling presence are always welcome. He is an ex-president of the Manchester Anglers’ Association and is the proprietor of the most magnificent approving ‘He—ah! He—ah!’[sic] in the three kingdoms



Thomas Harker



“The Bonnie Brown Trout”

written by R. Godby and sung to the tune of “The Roast Beef of old England”

When hunting men dine one is tempted to doubt
If they think other sportsmen entitled to shout,
But while I have a lung, I’ll be loyal to trout

Chorus after each verse

Here’s to the Trout of old England
And Here’s to the Bonnie Brown Trout.

Compared with the fox I will venture to tell
That the trout bears the contrast remarkably well,
He has all Reynard’s cunning but none of his smell.
Chorus

You don’t go and hunt with hound and with horn,
Nor break all the fences and trample the corn,
And leave the poor heart of the farmer forlorn.
Chorus

You don’t find him stealing a cock or a hen,
Or abstracting a lamb or two out of the pen,
He’s a soul above playing such tricks upon men.
Chorus

His diet is modest; with glistening eyes
He gives his attention to minnows and flies;
How patient his watch and how graceful his rise.
Chorus

The hunting man’s sport is upset by the frost,
And he stands by the fire and swears at the cost
Of the corn that’s consumed in the weeks that are lost.
Chorus

Not so with the angler. The skies may be ill,
But his trusty old rod has no innards to fill;
His creel and his tackle are running no bill.
Chorus

Then here’s to the Trout sirs and long may he rise
To quicken our pulses and gladden our eyes;
May he tighten our lines and fight game till he dies
Here’s to the Trout of old England,
Chorus

“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

‘Experientia docet’ (experience teaches or informs), to an air from *Patience*, was first performed in 1890 and was again written by Robert Godby

‘Experientia docet’

(Red Ant’s Nest)

An Angler sat by the river’s brim,
And leisurely watched the swallows skim
And wheel about in pursuit of flies,
While here and there a trout would rise;
But for rising fish he had no heart,
An itching sensation made him smart
He turned to see what had broke his rest
And found he had sat in a red ant’s nest.
A red ant’s nest
A red ant’s nest

The angler looked if the coast was clear
And feeling safe there was no one near
Divested himself of his lively pants
Which he shook to expel this colony of ants
But ere he could don his clothes again
He was forced to fly with all his main,
For a bull that had chanced that way to roam
Came savagely up and drove him home
He drove him home!
He drove him home!

So this tormented, nearly demented,
Angler lived to find
When a swarm of ants
Get into your pants
They can leave their marks behind.

So this poor speechless, terrified, breechless
Angler lived to find
When a bull’s on the ramp
It’s best to decamp,
Tho’ you leave your breeks behind.

Chorus
So this tormented —

Chorus
So this poor speechless----

Now anglers all who are so inclined
A moral in my song may find
If you **must** sit down and take some rest,
Don’t plant yourself in a red ant’s nest
And if you are forced in any event
To doff your nether integument
Hold hard till you see beyond all doubt
That there are no rampant bulls about.
No bulls about!
No bulls about!

When ants are biting and bulls mean fighting
Probably you may find
You’d be better off by far
Make off as you are
Than leave your breeks behind.

Chorus
When ants are biting---

The next song was **The Lost Trout**, a parody on the “Lost chord”. It is suggested that T.E. Pritt, one time Angling Editor of the Yorkshire Post, was the author. The source of the words of some of the songs above was the Yorkshire (Weekly) Post and it shows Mr Pritt’s continued interest in the Manchester Anglers towards the end of the nineteenth century. This was printed in the Yorkshire Weekly Post, 16th March 1889.

‘The Lost Trout’

Standing one day in the river
I was casting my line and flees (sic)
When I rose a trout gigantic,
That broke me with desp’rate ease,
I knew not what I was saying
Or what you will think of me,
But I said one word in anger,
Like the sound of a big big **D**

It rose o’er the noisy river
Like the bang of a showman’s drum
For my cast of flies had vanished
And my hands were cold and numb;
For that brute of a trout levanted
Like a runaway knock at the door,
And I knew we had parted forever
To meet in this world no more.
It went with four lovely killers,
Four at tuppence apiece
And bolted away into the distance
As if it would never cease.

I have fished---but I know ‘tis useless,
For that one lost trout so fine
That dash’d down the surging river
With eight pen’orth of flies of mine.
Not to mention the price of the gut cast!

Another few lines were added later viz:-

It may be only in liquor
I shall see that lost trout divine
But everyman’s pulse beats the quicker
When the Manchester Anglers dine!

“The Tempter” to the tune of “Auld Robin Gray” was written in response to the “defection” of certain members to the sport of Golf. For a very few years in the 1890s there was a golfing section at Horton. The “Links” were in Crook’s Pasture adjacent to the Ribble and Horton Beck. Both the Fishing Secretary, Robert Burn and the Club Secretary, Abel Heywood, were members and got quite a bit of reproach, often voiced in song. The ageing Walker was the disapproving River Keeper.

‘The Tempter’

by Robert Godby

I loved auld Issac weel and happy as could be,
I wandered by the crystal streams that were sae dear to me,
Or sat me on the green sward and watched the trootlets play
And fished and meditated a’ the livelong day.
I saw the lavrock rise, till fading frae my sight,
I could hear cuin like a speerit singing in the azure light,
Ole happy peacefu’ hours when I frae care was free,
Till Auld Abey Wayward he cam ‘ tempting o’ me.

I ne’er had seen a go’f ball, I didna ken a cleek
And drivers, putters, brassy spoons tae me were nocht but Greek,
And bar my dear auld Keighley I ken nae kind of “Tee”
When Abey whispered I’ mi ear “Come go’fing wi me”
I lookit Abey through, for my heart it said “nae”
But the wind was I’ the east and so I couldna fish the day-
I couldna fish the day—oh Abey fie, for shame
Why did I ever live to play that one sad game!

I didna like to argue for Abey urged me sair,
And told me twas a game in which a body muna swear
But when I played, I cried “Abey let me either D----!
Or use some less diluted phrase than “wae wae is me”
I had na played some five holes or six,
When I’d lossit a’ my golf balls and brekit a’ my sticks
My caddie mimicked Abey an said “You muna swear”!
Till blind wi rage I seized the lad pulied oot his hair.

Auld Abey pluck’t my coat tail and doucely held me back,
For my bluid was boilin’ o’er and my caddie was a wreck,
Auld Issac’s wraith upstarted and sadly said to me
“Ole man of wrath repent and come a angling wi me”
I’ll play nae mair golf for the sorrow of that day,
Lies likea shadow at my heart that will na pass away,
But I’ll tak ma rod again and a peaceful man I’ll be
And Abey don’t ye dar again come tempting o me!

A number of songs were written about the contentious issue of **Golf**

‘The Fallen Ang(e)l-er’

Air “Tit Willow” (Mikado)

I’ll tell you a tale that’s remarkably sad, of a fellow, good fellow, good fellow!
A noted old Angler who’s gone to the bad, Poor fellow, poor fellow, poor fellow
And if you will patiently lend me an ear,
And refrain for a moment from shedding a tear,
The cause of his fall you shall presently hear, poor fellow, poor fellow, poor fellow!

Old Isaak had ne’er a disciple so stout as this fellow, fellow, this fellow!
A terror he was to the grayling and trout, this fellow, fellow, this fellow!
From the crown of his head to the sole of his feet,
As an Angler he stood out uniquely “compleat”
And a prettier comrade you never could meet than this fellow, fellow, good fellow!

There was one little matter excited the wrath of this fellow, fellow, good fellow!
‘Twas to speak of a game that s played in the north, poor fellow, fellow, poor fellow!
And to learn that an angler indulged in this game
Would incite in his breast such a violent flame,
That the air became thick with the language that came from this fellow, fellow, this fellow!

But now as is very well known I suppose, Ah fellow, fellow, Ah fellow!
They have laid out some golf links just under the nose of this fellow, fellow, this fellow!
And would you believe it Aye here is the rub,
Take warning all anglers who golfers would snub,
He treasurer now of the Headingley Club!! Poor fellow, fellow, poor fellow!

The moral that is to draw from the fall of this fellow, fellow, poor fellow!
Is one that is full of importance to all of us fellows, fellows, good fellows!
Though the pleasures of angling can not be surpassed,
We should hesitate e’er at the golfers we cast
A stone, or we all may be “bunkered” at last like this fellow, fellow, poor fellow!

This was first sung at the M.A.A. Dinner 13th December 1892 soon after the start of the golfing section. There was obviously some feeling amongst the members! And other “anti” golfing songs soon appeared such as this to the tune of “The Irish Brigand”

The Anglers Lament

Alone, I wander by the stream, where we fished side by side
In the mornings not so long ago, when angling was your pride;
The mayfly danced on joyous wing, and hailed the warm sunshine,
And my flask was often at your lips and often too at mine.
The stream still prattles o’er the stones, the days are bright as then,
The rising trout may still be seen and the May fly’s on again;
But I miss my old familiar friends, and the music of their reel,
And my poor old flask untasted lies forgotten in my creel.

They tell me you have gone to play some ghastly thing called “golf”
And oh I curse “the deep damnation of your taking off”
I little dreamed that I should live to see so great a fall,
Forsaking trout to march in pairs behind a little ball.
I watched you up on yonder links, but the river runs between
And you have left its rippling charms to “push out” on the green;
’Tis hard to part with friends, and you were all in all to me.
I have no heart for whiskey now since you stooped down the “tee”.

They say that poor old Walker’s brain is fairly on the churn,
For he does not understand “them sticks what’s brought by Mr Burn.”
The Secretary he’s as bad, but I’ve heard the old man swear
That he’ll keep an eye on both these lads who sha’nt come poaching there.
He will not see his darling fish blown up with dynamite,
And he’s going to confiscate those nasty blobs of white;
And if they think they’ll fawn on him they’ll find him hard to square,
For he’ll have no rods with iron tips while he is keeper there.

This falling off of my old friends most gravely I deplore,
And oh! I’d gladly see you back upon the stream once more;
It grieves my inmost soul to see you join this golfing throng,
There’s no one now to share my flask since my old pals went wrong.
I’m bidding you a sad farewell old comrades once so gay,
But if you leave the good old sport you must go your own sad way,
You say that golfs a fine old game but I says “Damn it all,
I’ll not forsake old Isaack for a futty-perky ball.”

It is interesting to note how words of songs changed; here is a later version of the same song:-

I wander, lonely, by the stream we fished at Whitsuntide,
On a soft June morning long ago when angling was your pride.
The May fly danced on joyous wing and hailed the warm sun shine
And your flask was often at your lips and so perhaps was mine.
The stream still prattles o'er the stones the skies are bright as then
And the rising trout may still be seen and the May fly on again,
But I miss my old familiar friends and the music of their reel'
And my poor old flask unheeded lies reproachful in my creel.

And when I ask with aching heart what means this falling off,
They tell me you have taken up some cranky game called "golf"
And clothed in scarlet uniforms insane beyond recall
You march about all day in pairs behind a little ball.
The courier comes and when I ask the flowers and the bee
Where is my angling brother gone they reply "He's at the Tee."
And at that word there comes a flood of memories o'er me.
And my hand steals gently to my flask at the dear old name of "tea"

This lapse of my old angling friends most gravely I deplore
And oh! I'd gladly see you back upon the stream once more.
But its only when December comes and the anglers meet and dine
These traitors come and talk of fish who never wet a line.
I'm bidding you a sad farewell old comrades once so gay
In lunacy there may be jogs but I am not built that way
You say that golf is a splendid game but I say "D----- it all
I'll not forsake old Isaac for a fuddy- putty ball.

"tea" ... ? Keighley Tea, or whiskey



The following song may have been written as a jibe to a certain Manchester Angler, who in the early 1890s changed his affiliation from fishing to getting cricket at Headingley Leeds. It can be sung to a tune from "H.M.S. "Pinafore".

'The Captain of the C. C. C.'

When I was a lad, I used to stand
On the Castleton ground, with my book in hand,
I observed how every ball was played,
And noted all the runs that ev'ry batsman made.
He noted all the runs that ev'ry batsman made:
I scored those runs so carefuller
That now I'm the captain of the C.C.C.
Chorus --- He scored those runs so carefuller
That now he's the Captain of the C.C.C.

On seeing how well those runs I scored
They promoted me to the Telegraph Board;
And there I would sit and strain my ears
To listen for the whistle when the "TEN" appears.
He listen'd for the whistle when the "TEN" appears:
I marked those "TENS" so righteously
That now I am the Captain of the C.C.C.
Chorus --- He marked those "TENS" so righteously
That now he is the captain of the C. C.C.

As time wore on I commenced to bowl
And soon I reached the top of the pole;
For the spin and the curl that I learned from "Mac"
They played the very "Divil" when the ball broke back.
It was the very "divil" when the ball broke back.
I broke from the off so awfully
That now I am the Captain of the C.C.C.
Chorus --- He broke from the off so awfuller
That now he is the Captain of the C.C.C.

As a bowler I won so many a hat
That next I resolved to wield the bat;
I placed the bowlers in such a fix,
That ne'er a man among 'em could disturb my sticks.
There wasn't one among 'em could disturb his sticks
I punished all the bowling alike so free,
That now I am the Captain of the C.C.C.
Chorus --- He punished all the bowling alike so free
That now he's the Captain of the C.C.C.

So cricketers all who wish for a place,
In the annals of the game like that of Grace,
Although you may never become like me
The Captain of the celebrated C.C.C.
The Captain of the celebrated C.C.C.
Stick close to the game and you all may be
The Celebrated Captains of your own C.C.
Chorus --- Stick close to the game and you all may be
The celebrated Captains of your own C.C.

Golf never seemed far from the surface of the angler's minds; the following song was sung to the air "You ask me why I love" by Lawrence Kelly.

You Ask Me Why I Swear So

You ask me why I swear so when I play,
That simple looking game you watched today,
If you would know, I'd leave you first,
Go ask a boiler why it does not burst.

That little ball so guileless in your sight,
Is just an artful demon robed in white.
Go play one round with him, opious man,
If he can't make you swear nothing can.

Still I must golf and sinful as I am,
My only safeguard lies in saying D—n
If the recording Angels' on the Links
I rest in hope, that when I miss my stoke he winks.

The game was always a contentious matter as it encroached on the time territory of the Angler and various verses were produced on the matter such as the one written by 'ARGEE'. It is feared that only strong Latin Scholars will enjoy the parody!

"Donec Gratus Eram"

'ARGEE' after Horace

Rod:

Whilst I was your old favourite
And was brandished by you, deftly and tenderly;
Who so boon a companion,
Who so lavishly loved as your old fishing rod!

Angler:

Whilst **one** fish was obtainable
Whilst **one** fly could be seen—ever so small a dun !
Nought could shake my fidelity,
Nought could sever me from Izaak's old handicraft.

Rod:

Now my joints are al stiffening,
And no whirr of the reel thrills me with melody;
But, on maps of geography,
I am made to point out places of interest.

Angler:

Now the steel headed cleek with its
Fascination holds me, and in my holidays,
Off I go to the links, and there
I go crazily round, knocking a ball about.

Rod:

What if Jupiter Pluvius
Should relent, and again, angling be possible,
Will you cut this new mania
And abandon your cleek for your old rod again?

Angler:

Yes! I'll break every bally stick,
I'll throw all the white balls into the fire place;
And return to the riverside,
With my trusty old rod **Never** to Golf Again

Golfing stories appeared in some angling newspaper articles such as the following in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 18th July 1891

“Love and Golf”

Hear me swearing , fairest Phyllis!
(Golfers all know how to swear),
Though, of course, your presence still is
Most enchanting everywhere,
Links were never made for lovers;
Do not , Phyllis, deem me rude,
When I hint that man discovers
Charms at times in solitude.

Lips like yours should never utter
Ugly words that men may speak
“Driver” “mashy” “bunker” Putter”
“Brassy” “niblick” “stimy” “cleek!”
Rather read—though cultured woman
Is a thing I hate and shun—
Horace, that distinguished Roman,
Than Horatius Hutchinson.

Though in hours of dark dejection
When the disappointing ball,
Takes, if hit, the wrong direction,
Sometimes can’t be hit at all;
Though what e’re the golfer says is
Justified by reasons due,
Still I deem his Saxon phrases
Quite unsuitable for you.

Tennis be your chief endeavour,
If you really thirst for fame!
But at golf, believe me, never
Can you hope to play the game
There your “swing” but courts the scoffer,
Boors and clown your “driving” mock;
Fate, who made this boor a golfer,
Meant you Phyllis for a Crook.

Meet me then, by wood or river,
‘Mid the throng of routs or rinks;
Meet me where the moonbeams quiver—
Anywhere but on the links!
Thus of you I’ll daily ponder,
O’er the greens where’er I roam
(Absence makes the heart grow fonder;)
Only, Phyllis stay at home!

St. James’ Gazette

Prof J. P. Williamson F. R. S. friend of the anglers wrote of this

How rarely man has just the thing he wishes
Contrarily things come about
The angler **wants** but seldom has his fishes
And I want **Golf**

Arthur Conan Doyle in "To-day" 1891 entered the fray:-

"A Lay of the Links"

Its up and away from our work today
For the breeze sweeps over the Down,
And its hey for a game, where the gorse blossoms flame,
And the bracken is bronzing to brown.
With the turf 'neath our tread and the blue over head
And the song of the lark in our ears
We throw them behind us, the fetters that bind us,
The wear and the tear of the years
Ah yes
The strain and the stress of the years.

The palm and the leather come rarely together,
Gripping the driver's haft,
And its fine to feel the jar of the steel
And the spring of the hickory shaft.
We're outward bound on along, long round'
And its time to up and away.
With the wind in our teeth, and our feet on the heath,
We feel we are freemen today;
Ah yes,
We know we are living today.

Not only were songs a plenty rendered at meetings of the Anglers in Manchester, but the Anglers also gave voice to song in the evening at various fishing venues, such as Pen-y-Bont in the early 1880s and afterwards at the Lion at Horton in Ribblesdale. There a mixture of local songs and fishing songs were rendered.

Hunting songs were also sung at Social meetings especially at the Farmers and land owners Annual Party at Horton. It seems that not only were the anglers interested in fishing but some of them at least showed interest in other field sports. At Horton, in the 1880s forward, there was a pack of Beagles run by John Foster. In circulars the anglers were alerted to the days of the meets to chase Hares so that they could co-ordinate their fishing and hunting trips from The Lion. The song "The Pen-y-ghent Beagles" was first performed in the middle 1880s; a dated copy says January 1884. This hare hunting was a well organised affair. There were kennels for the Beagles, which after the Second World War still housed the Horton Moor's Gamekeeper's dogs. This same Gamekeeper delighted in showing the writer, when still in his teens, all the slate steps on the stiles that lead over stone walls from field to field, which had been put in place for the convenience of the followers of the Beagles.

The extracts that follow are from the Yorkshire Weekly Post and one other paper. The Anglers, in season, would follow the hounds over hill and dale especially at the Boxing Day Meet. 'Pen-y-ghent Beagles' was set to music by Luigi Camenara or Camerana and published by Forsyth Brothers, Regent Circus London. When sung at an Annual Dinner at around the same time, the same song appears to have been sung to the "Old Arethusa"

"A Night with the Farmers end of September 1888"

"On Saturday evening last the Manchester Anglers' Association, as is their annual custom, entertained about seventy farmers and others at the Golden Lion at Horton in Ribblesdale, where are the quarters of the association. The guests sat down to the fare provided by Mrs Nicholson, who did ample justice to the event, in the most spacious banqueting-room in Horton. Mr Abel Haywood jun, a founder and present honorary secretary of the association presided and among other members present were Mr Robert Burn, honorary fishing secretary; Mr Sydney Marsland, Mr W. H. Collier, Mr Walter Twiss, Mr G. S. Woolley, and among the guests Mr John Foster, of Horton, Major Foster, Mr Chumley, Mr John Slinger, Mr Bond, Mr Cooper, Mr Pritt of the Yorkshire Post and many others. After the supper and a few toasts had been disposed of, the evening was given up to song, the Manchester gentlemen leading the way, which by and by the Yorkshire farmers followed.

Their songs were not particularly new and were scarcely so characteristically rural as usual. "Two lovely black eyes" is scarcely what would be looked for in quiet little Horton; but the song was given in a very solemn manner by one of the large family of the Morphets and "Simon the Cellarer" another very solemn song was given by another Dalesman. The songs most popular were those of damsels who run away from their true lovers, or extremely dolorous ones. One of the former class, which never fails to bring down the house tells how

The bulls won't bellow and the cows won't low
The hens won't cackle and the cocks won't crow
The turkeys won't gobble and the ducks won't quack
And never, never will till my love comes back.

A really local song and a very excellent one too, was on "The Wensleydale Trail Hunt" in which the doughty deeds of "Spanker brave Spanker" were related. The visitors added one on "**The Pen-y-Ghent Beagles**" sung by Mr Marsland in the presence of the Master of the hunt (Mr Foster) to whom it was dedicated."

A printed copy of **The Pen-y-Ghent Beagles** exists dated January 1884. It was respectfully dedicated to the Master and Members of the Pen-y-Ghent Hunt, by a poet of unknown fame.

(I would like to hazard a guess that the song relates to true events; especially when I recall some incidents in Horton area in my youth!)

The Pen-y-Ghent Beagles

Come all ye lads in Ribblesdale,
From Ribblehead to Litton Vale
Ye Austwick carles, and Clapham tykes;
And see the Pen-y-Ghent beagles

A huntsman bold is Horton Jack,
When scent is cold, to lift a pack,
To crack a whip, or wind a horn,
A tighter lad was never born,
Than hunts the Pen-y-Ghent beagles.

'Twas he could puzzle out a scent,
He knew each hare on Pen-y-Ghent
By sight; and those he did not know,
And couldn't catch, he let them go,
And so did the Pen-y-Ghent beagles.

One day he had arranged the meet,
Should be at Austwick Cross-o'-Street,
A better place there could not be,
For hares are there in great plente-e,
To blood the Pen-y-Ghent beagles.

The little Inn was soon choke full,
All struggling the bell to pull;
And calling loud for glasses round,
To drink the health of every hound,
Among the Pen-y-Ghent beagles.

But when the time arrived to trudge,
Jack couldn't get the field to budge;
All snugly seated in the Inn,
And every one imbibing gin,
Enough to drown the beagles.

He wound his horn, 'twas in vain,
A following he could not gain,
For nought was heard amongst the din,
But shouts for Whiskey, Rum, or Gin
To drink—"The Pen-y-Ghent beagles"

Now morning waned in afternoon,
Down sank the sun, up rose the moon,
But not a soul of them had stirred,
And still the loud hurrahs were heard--
"Three cheers for the Pen-y-Ghent Beagles"

Then Huntsman Jack drew off the pack,
To Ribblesdale he took the track,
And swore that not another meet,
Should e'er be held at Cross-o'-Street
And so did the Pen-y-Ghent Beagles



The kennels in Horton where the Beagles were kept

This song was said to have been written by Grosvenor Scarr of Bainbridge; although some say it is much older and had been lost before being recollected at a later date.

The Pride of the Pack or “The Wensleydale Hound Trail”

I'll sing you a song of a capital race
A wonderful hound trail, that lately took place;
Brave Spanker, from Teesdale, was matched for five pounds,
With Butcher the pride of the Wensleydale hounds.

Chorus

Tally ho! Tally ho! Hark away my brave hounds, Tally ho!

Said the young sporting fellows on Carperby side,
“We'll run him a race that will bring down his pride,
By the swift running Tees is a far swifter hound—
Brave Spanker we'll match all the North country round.”
Chorus Tally ho! Etc.

This challenge so fearless roused Tomlinson's ire,
The sportsmen of Wensleydale rose like a fire;
“We'll back him,” they said, “as we backed him before—
Old Butcher, that hunts by the bonny bright Yore.”
Chorus

Kit Routh, Squire Chapman, and Fryer, and Parke,
Besides many others, came up to the mark;
Tom Handcock, the trainer, took Butcher in hand—
There was never a trainer like Tom in the land.
Chorus

Over valley and moor, from the North far away,
Young Spanker they brought for the sport of that day;
Said Loblely and smiled as he stroked down his back,
“Here's death to the pride of the Wensleydale pack.”
Chorus

And ah! Well a day, for the fame of Old Roy,
He had run with his own matchless pack from a boy,
Over mountain and woodland, and moor in all weather;
But now he backed Spanker and showed the white feather.
Chorus

The grey mountains basked in the sun's rosy beam,
The gentle breeze sighed over wild wood and stream;
No jollier a day for a hound trail or chase,
When Stag's Fell beheld them both start on the race.
Chorus

Ten miles did they run to Marly Ha'top,
Then loud was the shout on each mountain and height.
"Ho Butcher!" "Ho Spanker!" as each came in sight;
Grim Whit Fell re-echoed the sound of their call,
With How Bank and Nab End, and Ellerkin tall,
Chorus

Ten miles did they run to Marly Ha'top,
Ten miles did they run without waver or stop;
"Tally Ho!" shouted Loblely "I see only one
'Tis Spanker! Brave Spanker! As sure as a gun."
Chorus

Then shouting and cheering rose lustier still,
When Butcher leapt up o'er the brow of a hill;
Right ahead the brave hound turned the post like a dart,
And their cheers died in silence, and sorrow of heart.
Chorus

Then here's to brave Butcher, to Handcock and Fryer,
To Tomlinson, Parke, and the jolly old Squire;
Hurrah jolly fellows! To Teesdale go back,
You've nought like the pride of the Wensleydale pack.
Tally ho! Tallyho! Hark away my brave hounds, Tally ho!

The distance of ten miles was said to have been run in twenty eight and a half minutes!

The kind of hunting songs sung at these meetings varied. The Yorkshire Weekly Post 28th December 1889 published the following written by H. S. Lockhart-Ross:-

“A Sportsman’s Toast”

Here’s to the hunter that carried me well
When the cry of the hounds was pealing;
On the joys of the chase let memory dwell,
When age is o’er energy stealing.
Let the glass chink’
Merrily drink,
The hounds and the horse together we link.

Here’s to the day I can never forget,
On the favourite fairly extended
The winner remains in my stable yet,
Though his racing career is ended.
Fill to the brim,
Drink to him,
Whose turf recollections no sorrow can dim.

Here’s to the heathery moors of the North,
When the grouse are gallantly speeding,
Hey for the land lying north of the Forth!
No bonnier toast are we needing.
Success to the gun!
Drink till its done.
The pleasures of shooting are second to none.

Here’s to the salmon that gleams on its side,
When the rod in a bow is bending,
And the fisherman’s heart is beating with pride
As he feels the struggle is ending.
Fill up your glass,
See on the grass
That silvery salmon, what fish can surpass!

Hurrah! For the yacht that won me the cup
With her topsails airily flowing.
She was the cutter to show the others up
When a gale was merrily blowing.
Drink to my ship,
Glass to your lip,
A livelier clipper ne’er slid from a slip.

A health to a sportsman of every grade,
Its a tie that nothing can sever,
May the lover of sport be prosperous made
. In riches increasing for ever
Lift your glass high
“Sport” is the cry,
Confusion to him who the toast will deny.

‘Come Bring Your Rods’ was rendered at the Manchester Anglers’ Tenth Annual Dinner in
December 1888

Come Bring Your Rods.

Air “John Peel”

Come, bring your rods to the sweet green fields’
O come, while the grey dawn the bright sun shields,
O come, share the joy that each streamlet yields,
And we’ll all fill our creels of a morning.

Chorus (after each verse)

For the day is awake and the lark’s overhead,
The bold trouts are moving o’er each grav’ly bed,
Come! Anglers, arise, ere the dewdrop be fled,
And the Sun spoil the pride of the morning.

Just for to day let us fish, while we dream
That Care is drowned in the deep, deep stream,
And Hope kills Fear with her soft sweet beam,
As we all fill our creels of a morning.

Down where the mill-tail gently glides,
Behold how the March-brown gaily rides.
Lo! there—a “two pounder” with silv’ry sides’
Which we’ll put in our creel of a morning.

Our gentle craft is devoid of strife,
As a happy man and a loving wife,
And there is no boon like a quiet life,
Or a well filled creel in the morning.



Jack Holmes was a Yorkshire huntsman who ran Sir M. Wilson's Pack. One day a fox broke away and onto Malham Moor where he outstripped all but Rattler. The fox, being hard pressed, made for the top of Malham Cove, expecting to shelter in some of the limestone crevasses, but it was too late, for Rattler seized the fox by its brush and both rolled over the top and fell to the bottom—dead. A song recording this event was published in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 19th April 1890.

“A Malham Fox Hunt”

Come all ye bold sportsmen, who live far and near,
Who delight in fox hunting or chasing the deer,
I'll sing you a song, and no doubt it's the best
That ever you've known, or heard sung in the West.

Chorus: Tally-ho! Hark forward; away! Tally-ho!

Fine was the morning at Stainton Old Court,
Forty five gallant horsemen had met for the sport;
When the fox broke from cover, the huntsman did cry,
“Tally-ho! To the chase, for bold Reynard must die”

Chorus

Bold Jack the huntsman, dashed off like a spark,
Through the wild hanging woods, with perils so dark;
But young Clithero Bob, who cared not a pin,
Made a spring at the brook and of course tumbled in.

Chorus

The judge of these hounds soon got lost in the chase,
But we found him at Settle – his favourite place,
This brave knight of physic, and bottles and lance,
Left the huntsman and hounds to take their own chance.

Chorus

Bold Wasler was noted for always being slow,
Though the last in the chase, yet the first in the row;
But Wasler no doubt would have kept with the hounds,
Had he left his top coat, which weighed twenty-nine pounds.

Chorus

Now the sport it was good as to Malham they neared,
Bold Rattler led on, for no danger he feared;
But seizing the fox on the edge of the Cove,
They fell from the heights as together they strove,

Chorus

Full three hundred feet they both fell through the air,
The hounds at the sight uttered yells of despair;
When they saw that brave Rattler lay dead by the fox
They mourned him with howls, as they look from the rocks.

Chorus

The bright sun of summer will shine on the Cove,
While lovers of pleasure to Malham still rove;
And the feats of the chase many sportsmen will tell
As they gaze at the rock from which Rattler fell.

Chorus



Another foxhunting song from Wensleydale was composed by James Robinson of Askrigg.

“Litherskew Pasture”

Ye jovial fox hunters unto me attend,
And unto my song now attention pray lend.
For I sing not the praises of Priests or of Kings.
But hunting! Which pleasure and health always brings.

Chorus (after every verse)
Tally ho! Tally ho! Tallyatum, Rifatum, Rifaldadularatido!

As soon a poor Renny the daylight espyed,
He looked slyly round him, each enemy eyed.
Then quickly went off in the gallantest style,
And crossed river Yore with in the first mile.

Up Redbrisk pasture like a grey hound he went;
The hounds being untremmelled they quickly took scent,
Up Litherskew pasture o’er Little Fell end,
From Sargil to Suigram their course they did bend.

Then crossing Black Banks—oh Heavens! What a cry,
Said Venus to Renny “this day thou must die”
By the black sod in Cogill, to Reeth at bog’s well,
These hounds ran him sweetly John Pratt he could tell.

Then down Stoney Gill, how sweetly they sing,
And passing Crake Trees they made the dale ring,
Viewing down Saturn side, he was met by a lad,
Who said “poor Renny thy case it is bad”

Then Renny desirous once more to taste goose
Crossed Swale in the hopes that the hounds would him lose,
But nimrod and Phoenix and Butcher so true,
With Venus and Rally did him closely pursue.

Now Dolly and Lemon with whimsey so good,
Came up like true bred ones in Irelett wood,
And Renny being weary and quite out of breath
Must either go on, or prepare for his death.

Upon yon high hill above Coverdy house,
“My life says poor Renny this day I must lose!
But as I must die, put me out of my pain,
For I never shall visit a hen roost again”

Dick Fawcett and Paul through Muker they went,
Little thinking poor Renny was nigh so far spent,
Crossing Swale right ahead on to Ivelett moor
Where Renny was lying quite dead to be sure.

There were many brave sportsmen out hunting that day,
But none like Dick Fawcett and Paul cleared the way.
There were many that day lost their way on the Moss,
Whilst others like Midnight the hags they did cross.

So now to conclude, and before that I end,
I hope what I've sung will no one offend
Long life and good health to you gentlemen all,
And after each hunt, a good wife and full bowl.



Muker

“The Contented Angler” was written by Godby and went to the air of Squire Bantam’s song in ‘Dorothy’.

“The Contented Angler”

Contentment I give you and all that it brings
To the Angler who’s fully decided
To catch what he can and be thankful that things
Are such as his luck has provided.
Some miss a good rise and then swear at their flies,
Ever ready to seek an excuse;
While others don’t play their fish the right way,
Yet they wonder the creature breaks free.

Chorus:

But here’s to the man who is keen on his sport,
Who never lets patience or temper run short,
Contented and happy though nothing be caught
We’ll pledge him in wine when fishermen dine.

One tries a wrong fly, and he yet wonders why,
All the trout do not greedily take it.
Yet ask the same “feller” to eat your umbrella,
And just note his head how he’ll shake it.
Then why is it right, if his own appetite
Of the proffered umbrella fights shy.
To blame the poor trout if he turns up his snout
At a wholly incongruous fly.

Some Anglers I fear, though I hope none are here,
Treat their sport in a manner half hearted;
And think that they should see an exact £. S. d.
For the guinea with which they have parted.
To such I would say “with such feelings away,
That is not the true spirit of sport.
No sportsman is he, who will measure his fee
By the price of the fish he has caught.

The Yorkshire Anglers Association also held Annual Dinners and the following was published in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 23rd February 1889. Like many other angling and hunting songs it was to the tune of "John Peel" The Yorkshire Anglers besides having plenty of fishing in their own county also leased parts of the River Eden. T. E. Pritt was one of their Secretaries and perhaps had a hand in composing:-

"Frenchfield"

D'ye ken French field, that snug retreat,
Just where the Lowther and Eamont meet,
Where the old rooks caw, and the young lambs bleat,
And the trout rise well in the morning?

Chorus

Yes, I ken Frenchfield with the rivers near,
Where the big fish roam in the waters clear.
Come. Anglers come, let us all meet here,
Our panniers to fill of a morning.

Brougham Castle's ruins stand in view,
With the dark blue hills in the distance too,
In the Garden near grows a rare old yew,
Where the red-breast sings of a morning.

Chorus

Of streams and dubs there's a "gey fine" lot,
From Frenchfield down to the Honey-Pot,
'T would be hard to meet with a lovelier spot,
From a fly fisher's view in the morning.

Chorus

Then a toast let us drink while we're here today,
To morrow we all may be far, far away.
"Here's luck to Frenchfield and the Y.A.A."
May we all have luck in the morning.

Chorus

The M.A.A. Eleventh Annual Dinner in December 1889 saw both old and new songs sung. The entertainment started with

“We’ll All Go a-Fishing Today”

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.

Master Tom’s dropt his book,
For his rod, line and hook,
Yet his lessons he knows he must say,
But he don’t care a jot
If he learns them or not
For he will go a fishing today.
Jack sharps are in ponds by the way,
So some of his school fellows say,
And he thinks it no sin,
With thread line and bent pin
If he does go a fishing today.

Here’s the Lover whose dream,
Is to be by the stream,
When the trout in the river do play,
Though he loves the dear girl,
With the bright auburn curl,
He must leave her for fishing today.
Returning light hearted and gay,
He’ll call at the farm on his way,
For he knows very well
That his own darling Nell
Will forgive him for fishing today.

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 me 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 me 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.

There’s the Merchant at books
Pouring over with looks.
The reverse of what we call gay
He says without flurry,
(he’s ne’er in a hurry)
“That he will go a fishing today,
Without any further delay,
He eager sets out for the fray,
And again feels quite young
As he bursts into song
“Yes! I must go a 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.

Several years later the following song appeared in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 2nd December 1892 to the same tune (The Hunting Day) as above. A Footnote states “I am aware that a similar song was published ten years ago by the M.A.A. written by George Davies. This is purely coincidence and our good friend, Sampson, cannot be accused in the slightest degree of plagiarism, for he told me (probably Pritt) at the time he wrote “The Fishing Day” he had not so much heard of Mr Davies’s excellent verse”

The Fishing day

Now, the wind is sou’-west
 So be quick and get drest,
 And ‘tis off to the river we’ll go.
 For there’s Jones and there’s Brown,
 And there’s Thompson from town,
 And ther’re all landing “Whoppers” I know
 The sky is all clouded with grey;
 So slip on your “togs” and away’
 With the trout on the feed
 We are bound to succeed,
 So we’ll all go a fishing today.

As the tutor in school
 Casts his eye on the pool
 Where the trout wildly leap in the air,
 Loud he groans and he sighs
 As he watches them rise,
 And oh! How he longs to be there.
 He says “now, boys, hark what Isay,
 We’ll put slates and pencils away;
 We’ll no longer pore
 Over classical lore
 But we’ll all go a fishing today.”

Chorus to each verse

We’ll all go a fishing today,
 So shoulder your rods and away,
 For the fly is hatched out,
 And the fish are about,
 So we’ll all go a fishing today.

Farmer Giles says, “I know
 That I ought not to go,
 For ‘tis time that the ‘taters were in;
 Then the brindle cow’s sick,
 She may go to old Nick,
 For I’m off to the stream for a soin;
 There’s a trout in the weir pool they say,
 I’ll hook him and give him fair play;
 And I’ll land him alright
 Or I’ll stop there all night,
 So I must go a fishing today.”

There’s the Miller in white,
 He turns pale at the sight
 Of the anglers that pass by his door;
 And his hand stops the wheel,
 As he reaches his creel,
 And snatches his flies from the drawer.
 Says he “there’ll be Hamlet to play,
 Though I’m only a few hours away,
 There’s Micklethwaite’s corn!
 It must wait till the morn,
 For I must go a fishing to day

Then there’s old Parson Bains
 Sits cudg’ling his brains
 O’er his sermon for next Sunday morn,
 He writes “Firstly” at last,
 And there he sticks fast,
 For his thoughts to the river are borne.
 Says he “How my thoughts go astray!”
 As he pitches the goose quill away,
 “I’ll finish tonight
 What I can not now write’
 And I’ll go off a fishing today.”

Let us, anglers, up-raise
 All our voices in praise
 Of the gentlest of crafts we adore.
 And long may we ply
 Our blest art with the fly,
 And where is the heart wanting more?
 It drives care and sorrow away;
 It turns the desponding to gay;
 If your nerves are not strong,
 Or your liver is wrong—
 Why just go a fishing today.

“The Oldest of Crafts” by Robert Godby was sung the tune of “At the fall of the year”

“The Oldest of Crafts”

I propose to invite
You attention to night
To a claim that as Anglers we hold,
To take the first place
In the sports of our race,
And I'll show from the records of old.
And if I've no case
I will gladly give place,
But at present I haven't a doubt
That the earliest fish
That man ate was a fish,
And in all probability, trout.

Chorus: -
Then here's to the sport,
May it never run short,
But ever have plenty of **go**;
So fill up and shout,
“Long life to the trout”
And the oldest of crafts yo, ho!
And the oldest of crafts yo, ho!

Ichthyologists tell
Of a panic that fell
On the fishes some ages ago.
When the terror benumbed
Many thousands succumbed
To a sudden and terrible blow.
The Professors declare
With that sapient air
Wherein learned Professors delight,
That the fossils they find,
Make it clear to their mind
That this death was begotten of fright.

But, taking to task
Our Professor, we ask
“Can you tell us the cause of this fear”
Then he looks very grave
And his answer is suave
As he says “Well its not very clear;”
But the angler steps in
And he says with a grin,
“If you can not explain it, I can:
It was some wag of a trout
That had let the cat out
And announced the arrival of Man”

In the matter of streams,
It undoubtedly seems
That Eden was very well off;
And that angling began
With the very first man

We assert tho' the cynic may scoff;
For how to kill time
In that beautiful clime
Must have bothered old Adam, no doubt
Till he hit on the plan
Like a sensible man
Of tickling the Paradise trout.

In the day of the ark
When the heavens were dark
And the water had covered the earth,
The jolly old trout,
Who was cruising about
Must have thought it a matter of mirth.
For there, at his ease,
In the tops of the trees
Regaling on excellent food
He said “to my mind
‘Tis a very ill wind
That serves to blow nobody good”

Now the patience of job
Is the theme of the globe,
And that he was an angler is sure;
For he says in his book
“That you can't with a hook
The wily Leviathan lure”
As to Jonah's ill fate
Though its sad to relate
How that he to the fishes was thrown
Yet we see in this act
The remarkable fact
That ground baiting wasn't unknown.

Then we'll drink as we ought
To so ancient a sport
Let your glasses be filled to the brim;
What sportsman can boast
Of a heartier toast
Than “The Trout and long may he swim”
May he rise in his might,
And with energy fight
And when his last struggle is o'er
May he never regret
‘Twas an Angler whose net
Brought him safely at last to the shore.
With the very first man

Among many (24 according to the paper) songs sung at the Annual Farmers and Friends Supper held at Golden Lion at Horton 27th September 1890, was the following new song written by "ARGEE" (Probably Robert Godby). It reported in the Yorkshire Post.

"The Angling Englishman"

There's a sport that thrives in every land
Where breathes an Englishman,
And while he's a leg on which to stand
He'll follow it where he can,
In the Arctic belt or the torrid zone
To him it is all the same.
He wants but his rod and he'll ne'er feel lone
While he plies his dear old game.

Chorus:-

He's the keenest of sportsmen, deny it who can
Is the Trout loving Englishman.

There's a fish that cheers the angler's eye
And of him he loves to sing
And to take that trout with his own tied fly
Is as much to be wished for thing;
For the trout is a deep and artful "cuss"
And a merry old wag to boot
And he'll snap your cast without much fuss
If he gets near his native root.

Chorus:-

He's a downy old rascal deny it who can
The trout that is loved by an Englishman.

There's a friend whom anglers love to meet
When they take their walks abroad
And that same old friend they like to greet
By the side of the festive board;
For the grip of the farmer's honest hand
Fills the angler with delight,
And the health of the man who farms the land
Is the toast we'll drink tonight.

Chorus:-

He's a jolly old boy, deny it who can,
The broad shouldered farming Yorkshireman.

“The Scientific Angler” to the tune of Polly Perkins was again written by R. Godby of Rochdale. It was rendered at the Annual Dinner in December 1893 and had been sung five years before at a M.A.A. Dinner. The lyric was composed in response to the Manchester Angler’s Council handing out note books to the fishermen who were supposed to record such things as air and water temperature, wind direction, cloud cover, the state of the water, flies seen etc. etc.

“The Scientific Angler”

I’m a Scientific Angler and make it my line
Observation of temperature with flies to combine;
With barometer and thermometer and Heav’n knows what not
A vast amount of information together I’ve got.

Chorus [after each verse]

I tabulate and I fabulate with my note-book in hand,
As complete a Scientific Angler as walks on dry land.

In the crown of my hat there’s a gauge for the rain,
Anemometers revolve about the top of my brain;
With a net to catch ephemerae my equipment’s complete
And I’m scientifically clothed from my head to my feet.

Chorus

Water flies have two orders, our note-book declares;
The Neuroptera, or nerve-winged. The Trichoptera with hairs;
If the Angler’s bills are in arrear the Neuroptera he shuns,
For he scorns to simulate an interest in the family of Duns.

Chorus

I hooked a trout one day, and so hot grew the fight
That the thread in my thermometer went clean out of sight;
I was very parched, and sure enough when the fish broke my fly,
My sympathetic old barometer had marked ‘very dry’

Chorus

An example from my notebook may serve as a guide,
But the name of the angler need not be supplied:-
The wind and the weather, fish and flies, it would seem I’ve forgot,
But the whisky’s character was excellent, and the ”state of the water” –hot.

Chorus

One lesson from our note-book to heart we can lay,
Like the families of insects, we all have our day.
We are now in the larva stage; may we hope like these flies,
When our time arrives for transformation, in perfection to rise.

Chorus

Duns – a pun on the word dun – to demand debts with menaces.

A further verse was added later by Anon:-

Sometimes when we enter up our note-book at night
Our writing is remarkable some “flat” some “upright”
And we often find it difficult, though we can’t imagine why
To decipher clearly in the morning the name of each fly!

Chorus

Robert Godby introduced his song, using an air from the Mikado, by saying that it reflected “When the Angler’s Note Books duly reached Charles Estcourt, the Analyst.

“The Analyst’s Lament”

The analyst sat in his easy chair,
And smiled a paternal smile,
For the Angler’s note books all were there,
A vast and imposing pile;
With right good will he sharpened his quill’
And oh! ‘twas a sight to see
Him make preparation
For his tabulation
A model of ener-gee.

I can never look
On an angler’s book
Without it recalls to me
That Analyst’s smile’
As he tackled the pile,
For the good of Posteritee.

The Analyst tossed on his weary bed,
For fever had laid him low;
The Doctor gravely shook his head,
And said “‘twas a dismal go”
The case was bad, the patient was mad,
And, oh! ‘twas a sight to see
How he gibbered and gabbled,
And muttered and babbled
Of fishing and Keighley tea!

‘Twas a shocking result
That a man of colt,
As our Analyst’s known to be,
Should mix in his dreams
Such opposite themes
As fishing and Keighley tea.

The analyst rose from his bed of pain,
Restored to his old good looks,
But he vowed a vow, he never again
Would tabulate Angler’s books,
No pen could draw the visions he saw
Of gaping Ephemerae
That creeped and crawled,
And wriggled and sprawled,
Like the shade of a great D. T.

“An Analyst’s brain
Can stand some strain
(‘Twas thus to himself said he,)
But to tabulate all
That horrible scrawl
Is a science too hard for me.”



Yet another “exceptional” fishing song to the tune of “She wore a wreath of roses” was offered under the title:-

The Trout that Grew

I caught a trout when angling some forty years ago,
Nor then I had a passing thought of how that fish would grow.
And yet before a year was out some friend of mine had found
That little prize, I'd told him of, had gained in weight a pound.

Chorus

You know I am as truthful as an angler ought to be
But the way that trout keeps growing completely baffles me.

I often tell the story of how that trout was caught
And show by gesture how I cast and how the monster fought
And every time I tell the tale 'tis wondrous to relate
That fish adds inch to inch in length and pound to pound in weight.

Chorus

You know I am as truthful as an angler ought to be
But the way that trout keeps growing completely baffles me.

The last time that I caught him I think was in the chair
-----?-----he was sitting by and-----?----- too was there.
Perhaps it was the company in which I then was found
But I think, I said that fish of mine weighed nearly twenty pounds.

Chorus

You know I am as truthful as an angler ought to be
But the way that trout keeps growing completely baffles me.

It makes me fairly blush now, when e'er I tell that tale
For I must own that fish of mine grows very like a whale"
Yet- there he is! I see him now!! I feel that glorious run!!!
There's no escape—I swear that fish weighed nearly half a ton.

Chorus

My conscience still is spotless as angler's ought to be
But unless that fish stops growing he'll make a knave of me.

By 1891 the After Dinner songs at the Annual Dinner were considered to be one of the highlights of the gathering. “We’ll all go a fishing today”, first sung two years before was followed by “The Lost Trout”, “The Scientific Angler” then “Come Bring your Rods”, “The Red Ant” song and “The Bonnie Brown Trout”. Amongst many other songs sung between and after toasts was another one by Robert Godby (printed in the Yorkshire weekly Post 28/12/1890 and sung to the air “Here’s to the Maiden”

“Here’s to the Rod”

Here’s to the rod, and you’ll bear it in mind,
‘Tis the rod of the angler I sing of—
Not Solomon’s switch that leaves traces behind,
That memory harbours the sting of.

Chorus

Drink what you like, drink as you wish,
But fill up your glasses and drink like a fish.

Here’s to the Reel, with its music so dear,
What melody ever was sweeter
Than the rollicking whirr that entrances the ear,
And lights up our every feature.

Chorus

Here’s to the Fly, with its body of hurl,
And the wings that so neatly invest it;
And here’s to the health of the dear little girl
Whose fingers so daintily dressed it.

Chorus

Here’s to the Creel , and the Net, and the Gaff,
And whatever pertains to the angle;
And as for the man who refuses to quaff,
He’s fit from a gibbet to dangle.

Chorus

Here’s to the trout so deliciously plump,
Be he gillaroo, Leven or yellow,
All anglers will dub him a jolly old trump,
Which means, I am told, a good fellow.

Chorus

Here’s to the angler of every land,
An Herculean toast you will think it,
But while we’ve a leg upon which we can stand,
We’ll strain every muscle to drink it.

Chorus

They may also have sung the following published in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 26th October 1889.

“The Two Jovial Anglers”

I ts of two jovial anglers, and a-angling they did go,
They took their salmon rods and flies, likewise their gaffe also,
Look ye There!
They angled in expectancy, and the first thing to their mind
Was the Vale of Eamont smiling fair as any scene you'll find,
Look ye There!
One said it was fair Eamont, and the other he said “Nay”
“Its just a bit of fairy land since autumn came this way,”
Look ye There!
They angled and the y prophesised, and the next thing they did find
Was the Crown Hotel at Penrith, and that they left behind,
Look ye There!
But not before they'd both looked in, to let 'em know they'd come,
And one stood up for bitter beer, and one for milk and rum,
Look ye There!
They angled both most eagerly, and the next thing they did find
Was a tunderin' tatterin', tearin' wind of most unrighteous kind,
Look ye There!
One said it was a gentle breeze, but the other he said, “Nay”
“If it nobbut blows a lile bit more, we's both be blown away,
Look ye There!
They angled on determinedly, and the next thing they did find,
Was not a fly in all their books that took the fishes' mind,
Look ye There!
One said the salmon were asleep, the other he said “Nay”
“They're wide enough awake, owd lad, its just their little way,
Look ye There!
They angled on devotedly, when rose a mighty fish,
Up came his head, down went his tail, with one tremenjous swish,
Look ye There!
The line grew taut, and instantly, and quicker, if possible
Came back corkscrewy;* the angler he said ---hem.
(It would not rhyme with Japhet, nor Japhet's brother Shem)
Look ye There!
They angled then dejectedly, and not much to their mind
Was both their wives a sitting up for some salmon for to find,
Look ye There!
“We've waited long: what have you brought? Pray tell us now you've come
And one he murmured bitter beer, and t'other milk and rum
Look ye There!

“* This broken line is a triumph of poetic genius; the rhymers has a great future before him”

An earlier song published in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 31st July 1886.

“Three Other Fishers”

Three fishers went trailing out into the West,
Off by the railway and out of the town:
Each thought of the fly that would kill the best,
In the moor-tinted fresh that was just coming down.
For women must work , while husbands fish,
Though they don't catch one tenth of the trout they wish,
And an angler's always groaning.

Three wives sat up till the midnight hour,
And longed for the trout that would come to the town:
And they gazed at the clock, and they looked for the shower
From each creel of the bonnie trout, speckled and brown

For men will fish and women can't sleep
When husbands are wading in waters deep
And chill'd by the night wind moaning.

Three fishers came home as the clock struck three,
In the morning pale, when the fresh went down:
And the women are waiting. but none of the three
Saw aught that the fishers brought home to the town.
And women must laugh if men will fish;
For they don't tell the truth quite so oft as we wish:
So drat the whole lot and their groaning.

Fresh = Flood

“The Three Anglers”

There were three Anglers young and gay,
Sing oh! for rod and line O.
Sat fishing in a punt one day
Sing oh! For rod and line O.
They fished throughout the live long day
But ne'er a single bite had they
But still they carolled forth this lay,
This merry roundelay!

Chorus

Hey ho! nonny nonny,
Hey ho! nonny nonny.
Prithee little fish come.
We've a nice little gentle at the end of a hook
And a pretty little wriggling worm, worm, worm.
And a pretty little wriggling worm!

Full fifty years have passed away,
Ah me—the rod and line O
Still side by side , these anglers stay
Ah me---the rod and line O
Their backs are bent their beards are grey.
Yet ne'er a single bite have they.
But still they quaver forth this lay
This trembling roundelay

Chorus

But where are now those anglers gay,
Oh woe---the rod and line O
Buried side by side are they,
Oh woe---the rod and line O
They all three died the self same day,
Yet never a single bite had they,
But still they sing so old folks say,
This ghostly roundelay

Chorus

What this song, a supposed legend of the Thames by “Corny Grain”, was doing at an Associations dinner beggars belief. Imagine Manchester Anglers sitting in a punt dangling worms!?!?

Perhaps the next one by Robert Godby would put them back on course again.

“Nil Desperandum”

At the dawn of the day when morning is cool
The angler goes hopefully out.
And wending his way to the stream, or the pool
He is bent upon taking a trout.
And inhaling a sniff of fresh morning air
He sings “Nil desperandum!”—I’ll never despair.

In the heat of the day he lies to the shade
Of a willow, and there with eclat
His one little trout on the bank is displayed.
While he lovingly lights a cigar
And regaled with a whiff—Repeats the old air
And sings “Nil desperandum”—I’ll never despair.

At the close of the day when soft shadows fall
The angler returns with his prize
And his wife rather icily asks “is that all?”
And turns up the whites of her eyes.
He’s weary and stiff, But hums the old air
Singing “Nil desperandum” I’ll never despair.



On 2nd December 1892 The Yorkshire Weekly Post offered a song that extolled fishing above hunting,. It was set to the air “Jolly Jenkin” from Ivanhoe.

“The English Trout”

Let huntsmen bold their sport uphold,
And let them “Yoicks” shout sir,
But this be mine –The rod, the line,
And on the hook a trout sirs,
So game a fish
As man can wish
Is the speckled English trout.

Chorus

Then ho! for the trout
With a hip! And a shout,
Sing ho! for the trout of old England.

Both wet and dry I work the fly,
I fish year in and out, sirs
With worm and slug and beetle bug
I lure the lusty trout, sirs.
A cunning fish
A dainty dish
Is that same lusty trout.

Chorus

Tho’ years four score shall pass me o’er,
All other sports I’ll flout, sirs;
With rod and creel and line and reel,
I’ll seek the game old trout, sirs,
This angler’s pride
At the river side
Is to land that game old trout.

At Dinners, songs were also sung concerning the Association and its habits. The following sung at the Annual Dinner on 19th December 1893 and written by Robert Godby to the tune of “Hearts of Oak”, concerns a picture on the back of the menu. This depicts the “old” keeper Walker sitting next to the “new” young keeper Hunt who is standing beside him.

“The Old and the New”

There’s a page of our menu, that prompts me to write,
A song that we’ll all add to our programme to night.
It has not a name, I must leave that to you;
But I think we may call it “The old and the new”

Chorus

Here’s health to the two, conscientious and true;
Determined and steady. Ready aye ready,
To execute their duty the old and the new.

The old man is seated, his labour is done,
Well earned the repose he has faithfully won.
The foe of the poacher the friend of the frys
He has nurtured and reared with a fatherly eye.

Chorus

The young man is standing his work has begun,
His eye gives a pledge how that work shall be done,
His hand seeks the old man’s as though he would say
“I’ll trust my companion to show me the way.”

Chorus

There’s a lesson contained in the picture we view,
In youth let us stand at our post and be true;
We then like our grey headed friend on the page
May look for repose in an honoured old age.

Chorus



How the following had anything, at all, to do with the Manchester Anglers will have to be left to reader's ingenious imagination. Written to the tune from "When the children are asleep"

"The Pegged Down Match"

With a peg at every station showing where they had to go
Wrapt in earnest contemplation sit the anglers in a row
Some have rods of vast dimensions some a humble wand have got.
All are fired with one intention 'tis to win that pewter pot.

Watching for the faintest motion of the float that lies so straight
Casting in with fond devotion nubbly bits of tasty bait
Grub and gentle lob and brandling , Bullocks' brains and heaven knows what
All in eager hope of handling that portentuous pewter pot

When, at last, the match is ended and they've finished weighing in
Blows with angry words are blended all is uproar, smoke and din,
Jones's fish (which they dissected) have their innards filled with shot
And had he not been detected, He'd have sneaked that pewter pot.

In the mid 1890s a song appeared that had distinct anti Kaiser sentiments. It was written to the tune of Claribel "I cannot sing the old songs"

I Cannot Sip the Old Port

I cannot sip the old port laid down long years ago.
It makes my nose too ruddy and it agitates my toe.
And though I've several dozens in my cellar down below.
I must not sip that old port; my doctor tells me so.

I cannot quaff the old ale I quaffed long years ago.
It adds to my circumference and makes me puff and blow
And though I'm hale and hearty yet no stouter would I grow.
I must not quaff that old ale my tailor tells me so.

I cannot stand the new drinks, they are too thin for me.
In Pop I find no body and Hop ale would finish me.
I don't object to temperance or mind a cup of tea (but)
I cannot stand tea-total drinks they're poisonous to me.

I cannot make my mind up what's best for me to do. (for)
I must not drink the old drinks and **I will** not drink the new.
I still have all a patriot's pride and yet it seems to me,
That I must drink the Larger beer though made in Germany!



“On Dining” was written near the end of the century; as can be gleaned from the patriotic sentiments expressed to the music of “Rule Britannia” by Thomas Arne.

“On Dining”

When Britain first at heavens command,
 Arose from out the sea
Old Neptune said with smile benign,
 So long as Britons meet and dine
 This island shall be free.
 And Britain never shall decline
While Britain’s sons shall meet and dine.

When Kimberly was sore beset
 An Englishman was found
 Who gave his dinners as before
 And dined amid the Cannon’s roar
 And shells that burst around.
And History’s’ page shall yet enshrine
 The man who could so calmly dine.

Paul Kruger he was full of fight
 But when he heard one day,
Ten thousand puddings had been sent
 For Tommey Atkin’s nutriment
 His valour oozed away.

“Mein Gott!” ne cried “ve n’er can beat
 A foe who so much buddings eat
 Tell Joubert he must blease retreat
 Before dose men dose buddings eat.”
 Tell Joubert he must beat retreat
 Before dose men dose buddings eat.

One day I asked the Prince of Wales
 His motto to define.
“Egad” – he said and stroked his chin
 The printer’s let me nicely in
 It should have read “Ich dine”
 And long may Albert Edward dine
 And crack his jokes across the wine.

And should this little isle of ours,
 By earthquake shocks be rent
Some Englishmen you still would find
 Who’d in the ruins meet and dined
 To celebrate th’ event.
 And Britain never shall decline
While Britain’s sons shall meet and dine.

Even after the Second World War it was still customary to have a singer at the annual Anglers Dinner. Unfortunately I cannot recall that any of the verses reproduced above were ever rendered. Several lines are missing from verse 3.

Some of the songs were set to contemporary music by such as Sullivan in the Easter Idyll (which follows) and the song below set to Offenbach. With no avenues other than performance or sheet music, it makes one wonder how they so immediately utilised tunes that are in the main still popular (or at least known) today. The hand written version of this has several words starting with old German script and all the Ws are written as V and there are even some umlauts. The song it is presumed should be sung with a heavy German accent! R. Godby (of Rochdale) is credited with being the perpetrator.

Les Braves Pecheurs

Ve're Anglers bold and brave and various
 Who of ourselves tink no zmall bee
 Ze roughest elements can't tame us
 Of vind and ztorm we have no fears
 And ven our leetle children zay "Papa"
 Do zow us how zie make your zport
 Ve reel zem in; Ve reel zem in!
 Unt zow zem ow zose trouts are caught.

Zometimes ve zeek zome quiet zady nook,
 vere no-one can our movements spy,
 Unt zen we preek our bingers with ze ook,
 Unt tear uns trousers mit ze fly
 But ven we reach our homes at evening
 Ze explanation is our forte,
 Ve reel zem in! Ve reel zem in!
 Unt zow zem ow zose trouts are caught.

Zometimes ven ve've been angling all ze day,
 Unt not a leetle vish vill bite,
 Zen for a trout or two ve zily pay,
 Und take zem home mit uns at night
 Und zen uns vives zay "oh vat lofly vish"
 (Zey do not know zat zey vere bought
 Ve reel zem in! Ve reel zem in!

Zumtimes ven zitting round our tables,
 Ze conversation turns on zport.
 .Ah! zen ve tells most vonderous fables
 Of all ze grade big vish ve've caught
 Unt if zey don't believe ve bring uns rots
 Vor als zuch zgoffers must be taught
 Ve reel zem in! Ve reel zem in!
 Unt zhew zem how zose trouts are caught.

We're Anglers bold and brave, and various,
 Who of ourselves think no small beers,
 The roughest elements can't tame us
 Of wind and storm we have no fears;
 And when our little children say "Papa"
 Do show us how you make your sport"
 We reel them in; We reel them in!
 And show them how those trouts are caught.

Sometimes we seek some quiet shady nook,
 Where no-one can our movements spy,
 And then we prick our fingers with the hook,
 And tear our trousers with the fly,
 But when we reach our homes at evening,
 The explanation is our forte,
 We reel them in! We reel them in!
 And show them how those trouts are caught.

Sometimes when we've been angling all the day,
 And not a little fish will bite,
 Then for a trout or two we slyly pay
 And take them home with us at night
 And then our wives say "oh vat lofly vish"
 (They do not know that they were bought)
 We reel them in! We reel them in!
 And show them how those trouts are caught.

Sometimes when sitting round our tables,
 The conversation turns on sport.
 Ah then we tell most wondrous fables.
 Of all the great big fish we've caught
 And if they don't believe, We bring our rods
 For all such scoffers must be taught.
 We reel them in! We reel them in!
 And show them how those trouts are caught.

“An Easter Idyll”

In Horton's little inn, by Ribble's banks,
Where anglers love to rest their weary shanks,
And find the Nicholsonian homely cheer
Washed down with flowing jugs of home-brewed beer,
A goodly crew of fishermen had met,
Each had his rod, his flies, his creel, his net,
Some, too, had waders, others were without,
Then some of them were lean, while others, stout.
Of one thing all in common were possessed,
Nor did one have it more than all the rest---
“Good humor”—‘tis the Angler's honest pride,
Tho' other virtues shone out clear beside.

Who's for the life of a fisherman, boys?
Who's for a fisherman's life?
Here's to the health of a fisherman, boys!
And here's to the health of his wife!

Tho' few and far between the trout they dished,
From early morn till dewy eve they fished;
Some tried the pools, then others took the runs;
Some fished with “Palmers” some preferred the “Duns”
Some cast their flies the rippling shallows o'er;
One said “The river has been fished before.”
“Young man,” the President at once replied,
As up and down the fisherman he eyed,
“I know that what you say is honest truth:
“No matter! He who speaks, but speaks in youth!
“This time I fairly say, the Court's with you,
“Would'st have a river, like yourself, brand new?”

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

All fished their hardest and with **mighty** skill,
But ne'er a one with fish his creel could fill,
Except that genial, angling glutton,
The Kingfisher! Whom, you ask? Why, Hutton!
Both Tarn and river to his rod respond,
While some of taking e'en **one** fish, despond.
Yet, Watson, too, a word of praise deserves,
For patient work in fishing the preserves;
“Till rising to his fly, **his** wily trout
In size beats all the others---out and out!
And what if Heywood brought no fish to table!
It surely was not that he was not “Abel!”

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

Of doctors, with the party, there were twain:
God fellows! Caring nought for wind or rain.
The silvery hairs that cover Simpson's crown,
Blend hap'ly with the youth's, whose locks are brown.
True index, that we all have common aim,
The object both of youth and age—the same.
Then, there's Hodgkinson, from whom we gain
Vast knowledge, flowing from his well-stored brain;
If trout refuse his rod's enticing bend,
Did not earth her choice jewel to him send?
An opal! Of uncommon hue and size,
Is justly claimed by him as nature's prize.

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

Ere closing think of "Yum Yum's" would be spouse,
Who did, with milk, and whiskey, lazy sleepers rouse.
If here the names of some are passed, fear not,
Their faces ne'er by me shall be forgot.
Yet stay! One still must find a place in verse,
The chief! Fishers, go further, fare ye worse!
Let's toast him, then—"May Harker's reign be long!"
Who follows him can ne'er be going wrong.

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

There seem to be four lines missing at the end of the last verse of this song.

Song

By George Davies, about 1884

The sun climbs high the azure sky
The snow hath left the hills,
The rivert gently murmurs by
And music's in the rills.
The lark pours forth his matchless song
Thrush sings in the dale
And echoes sweet, the notes prolong
Repeating the old tale.

Chorus

Away then to the breezy north
Where the Anglers may delight
In gentle sports with spotted trout
Or with the Ferose fight.

Away then let us haste away
To Scotland, Land of song
Whose daughters are as lovely May
Whose sons are brave and strong.
Upon whose hills the healthy breeze
Can soothe the brow of care
Whose verdant dales with shady trees
Are fairest of the fair.

Chorus

Away then let us haste away
To Scotia's limpid streams
And with the early break of day
Fair as a Poet's dreams
Whip Pool or Loch or rumbling burn
For captives to our creel
Until the evening we return
Chorus

This song was dedicated to one of the members, Mr Kincaid.

We'll Never Say Die with a Whine

By George Davies to the tune of "The Old Brigade"
In Book 4 of the Manuscript Books. About 1884.

Where are the joys of the Anglers true
When they fish by the river's side;
Wading its shallows carefully through
To pools which smoothly glide;
Always ready and undismayed
Always merry and wise.
Danger scouting and never afraid
Seeking each speckled prize.

Chorus

Then steadily, deftly we'll handle
Steadily rod and line,
Fishing along, singing this song,
We'll never say die with a whine.

What is more sweet on a winter's night
When the wind bloweth loud and cold,
To sit by the fire when burning bright
With cronies true and old,
To talk over what we have done
And what we mean to do,
Of some rare sport or of some good fun
And friendships warm and true.

Chorus

We feel the loss of a trusty friend,
We have fished with in days gone by,
But new ones will come, a hand to lend
With willing heart and eye.
We'll share our pouch and task the flask
With brothers when we meet
With right good will, of their welfare ask,
With right good will each great.

Chorus

The Farmer's Boy

A new version by "Crabstick" written for the Farmer's Dinner. 1884.

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 heard to say,
"There's nothing here to pay
So we'll have such an awful spree.....
We'll have such an awful spree".

Some men from Manchester were there
T. Harker, Simpson, Burn,
Kinkaird, Estcourt and Heywood too.
And at supper they took their turn.
They at the head of table sat,
And filled it up to a T.....e,
And said they,
"Now isn't 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 mighty clearance made.
Then Harker jumped upon his feet
As bold as bold could be.....e
"I thank you for that cheer,
And I am glad to see you here
And hope you'll have a spree.....e
And hope you have a spree.

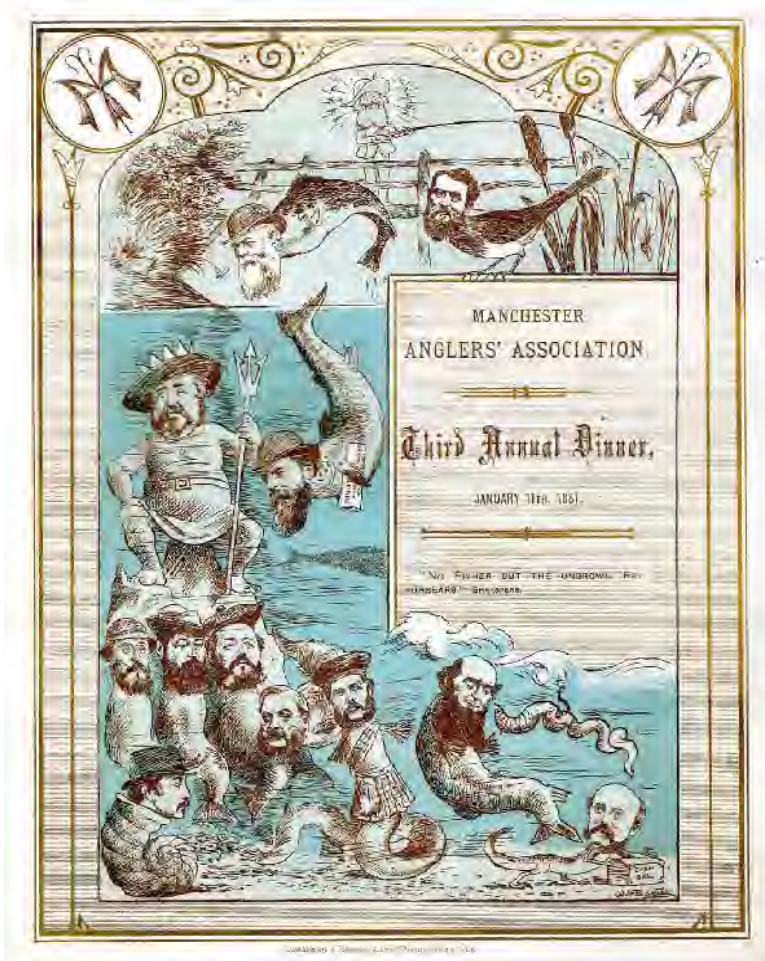
New songs of turkeys, cocks and hens,
And girls who ran away,
And speeches for the Manchester chaps
'Til they'd nothing more to say
Except with a cheer, "you are welcome here.
So make yourselves quite free.....e
With the liquor and the pipes,
The victuals and the swipes,
For we mean you to have a spree
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 loth to part, but you mun goo,
And go 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
And give us another spree"



The Crown Inn (The New Inn) 2010



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 Woooley

The Oldest of Crafts

Air, "At the fall of the air"
1888

I propose to invite For your attention tonight
To a claim that as anglers we hold,
To take the first place in the sports of our race,
As I'll show from the records of old.
And if I've no case, I will gladly give place,
But at present I havn't a doubt
That the earliest dish That man ate was fish,
And all probability trout.

Chorus

Then here's to the sport, may it never run short
But ever have plenty of GO;
So fill up and shout "Long life to the trout
And the oldest of crafts YO, HO!"
And the oldest of crafts YO, HO.

Ichtheologists tell of a plane that fell
On the fishes some ages ago.
When with terror benumbed many thousands succumbed
To a sudden and terrible blow.
The professors declare with that sapient air
Wherein learned professors delight,
That the fossils they find make it clear to their mind
That this death was begotton of fright.

Chorus

But taking to task our professor, we ask
"Can you tell us the cause of this fear?"
Then he looks very suave, as he says "Well its not very clear"
But the angler steps in and he says with a grin
"If you cannot explain it, I can;
'Twas some wag of a trout that had let the cat out
And announced the arrival of man"

Chorus

In the matter of streams it undoubtably seems
That Eden was very well off,
And that Angling began with the very first man.
We assert, though the cynic may scoff
For how to kill time in that beautiful clime
Must have bothered old Adam no doubt,
Till he hit on the plan like a sensible man
Of tickling the Paradise trout.

Chorus

In the days of the Ark when the heavens were dark,
And the waters had covered the earth;
The jolly old trout who was cruising about
Must have thought it a matter of mirth,
For there at his ease on the tops of the trees
Regaling on excellent food
He said "To my mind 'tis a very ill wind
That serves to blow nobody good".

Chorus

Now the patience of Job is the theme of the Globe,
And that he was an Angler is sure;
For he says in his book, that you can't with a hook,
The angry leviathan lure.
As to Jonah's ill fate, though its sad to relate,
How that he to the fishes was thrown;
Yet we in this act, the remarkable fact
That ground baiting wasn't unknown.

Chorus

Then we'll drink as we ought to an ancient sport.
Let your glasses be filled to the brim;
What sportsmen can boast of a heartier toast
Than "The trout and long may he swim"
May he rise in his might and with energy fight;
* And when his last struggle is o'er,
May he never regret 'twas an angler whose net
Brought him safely at last to the shore.

Chorus

* last three lines sing softly

I am Waiting

Robert Godby
Air, "The Garden of Sleep"

In the years that are gone, where I'm bald on the top
There once used to grow a luxurious crop
Of rich auburn hair that was curly and bright,
'Twas the pride of my nurse and my mother's delight;
But now it has vanished beyond my recall,
Like leaves of the autumn that wither and fall.
Oh! clustering curl! Oh ! capillary robe
I have waited for thee with the patience of Job,
Oh! hair of my head! Precious pile of my pate!
Am I ever to wait?

Lotions, washes and tonics I've tried by the score,
I have rubbed in restorers that never restore,
Mrs Allen, Macassar, and Mexican too,
All have promised renewal—but never renew.
Lov'd locks of my youth, will ye never return?
Will elixirs do nothing but blister and burn?
Oh! screen of my scalp! is it right, is it meet,
I should be a parade for the bluebottles' feet?
Oh! hair of my head! wilt thou never arise?
I am waiting, am waiting for thee
Mid the hum of the flies.

Oh! if fate would restore, but *one* tuft of my hair,
I would brush, I would comb it with filial care,
I would wash and shampoo it and keep it so bright,
I would pay a detective to guard it at night.
A joy that would fill me with rapture anew
Would be mine, should that tuft ever come into view.
Oh! nap of my nut! Treasured thatch of my brain!
Shall I never be seen at the barber's again?
Oh! hair of my head! perish'd pride of my pate!
I am waiting, am waiting for thee,
And am likely to wait.

ARGEE

Poems



Poems

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Poetry was also offered at Annual Dinners. This parody of a Longfellow poem appeared in the Yorkshire Weekly Post 7th December 1889.

“The Angler and his Fly”

I made a long cast sweep through the air,
It stopp'd half way, I knew not where;
So sudden it stopp'd, I thought it might
Have hooked a haystack in its flight.

I heard a cuss-word rise on the air,
It came from a friend—I knew he was there;
It began with a big D, was deep and strong,
And rose in the twilight loud and long.

Very soon afterwards—'tis no joke---
I found my tail fly still unbroke;
And the barb of the hook, the story to end,
Was half an inch deep in the nose of my friend.

This poem was no laughing matter as far as this I was concerned since at a fairly tender age I was standing behind my father at Rowe End Pool Horton and got hooked in the nose. This necessitated a trip to the hospital at Skipton late one Saturday afternoon. There was no one there who would take the deeply embedded hook out; so the my father went to Woolworths and bought some wire cutters and some pliers. Fortunately he had been accompanied by an Angler who in his spare time was an Anaesthetist (and E.N.T.specialist) and with the help of some Nitrous Oxide (to keep the patient still) the my father cut the eye off the hook and threaded the remnants, plus barb, into the inside of the nose, thus leaving hardly any discernible mark. When the poem above was read it was thought to be a parody not only on Longfellow but also on the poem reproduced below which the I had known from childhood:-

“A shot at Random”

I shot an arrow into the air:
I don't know how it fell or where;
But strangely enough, at my journey's end,
I found it again in the neck of a friend.

On researching, the four line verse was found to be written by D. B. W. Lewis born 1891 !

A Dream of Spring time at Pen-y-bont”

Earth her ermine mantle changes,
For the emerald of spring,
Zephyr o'er the moorland ranges,
On his balmy scented wing;-
Blooms the willow by the river,
Early haunt of busy bees;
Flows the brooklet singing ever,
'Neath the tall o'er hanging trees.

Dappled kine are in the meadows,
Lambs are playing on the hills,
Pleasant are the lights and shadows,
Sweet the sound of mountain rills;
Birds sing out of wood and bower,
Musical is earth and air,
Nature moves with magic power,
Bids us throw aside our care.

Woos us to that charming valley,
Through which runs the "Sacred Dee",
Over rocks with sudden sally,
On through deeps of mystery,
Where the noble Salmon hideth,
Or where leaps the spotted trout,
Or grim patriarch abideth,
That no angle hath found out.

Woos us to the flowing river,
Where it leaves the mystic hill,
On whose top the tall pines quiver,
Musical if seeming still;
And the spirit of Glendower,
Seems to beckon us away,
From the city to his bower,
"Come! O Come!" he seems to say.

"I have known of care and trouble,
"Fightings north and fightings south,
"Seeking "reputation's bubble",
"At the "cannon's fearful mouth".
"Here my friends is peace and quiet,
"Here no warrings after wealth,
"All is calm and free from riot,
"Here find gentle sport and health."

The Raid of the Two

By 'Peter the Plagiarist' alias Abel Heuwood

Inspired by The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna'
by Charles Wolfe,

This poem was used by Abel Heywood after his trip to Kircudbright in 1878, when he wrote under the pseudonym of 'Peter Plagiarist',

Anglers' version

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

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

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

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

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

Original version

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

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

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

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

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

Before the media took its hold in the twentieth century, entertainment was made by performances closer to hand. People could play musical instruments and sing. Many an evening was spent both at home and in the pub telling jokes, yarning and reciting poems which very often recalled recent events and people and their doings. The following poem recalls the keeper on both Wye and Derwent called George Butcher of Corbar.

‘Old Butcher’

Old Butcher is young; though he’s high four score,
He can tramp twelve miles across a rough moor,
 He can fish all day and wade up stream,
And at night as fresh as the morning seem.

Old Butcher is young; he can make a fly
 With a steady hand and as calm an eye
As though he was still in manhood’s prime,
And never has known the ravage of time.

He can spin a yarn or a sermon preach,
Or on special occasions spout a speech;
 He can fast or feast like a monk of old,
Though he likes the latter much best I’m told.

He knows each pool and stream about,
 And every stone that conceals a trout;
 Some say that he knows the fish as well,
Both where they were born and where they dwell.

To those who have wandered in Baslow vale,
Through Chatsworth’s meadows or Darley Dale,
 Or skirted the banks of the silvery Wye,
Where Haddon’s grey towers rise steep and high.

His form and garb will familiar seem,
 As the guardian deity of the stream,
With his oval face and his grizzly locks,
And his smile like that of a sly old fox.

Long may he live to pursue his art,
 For few are left to succeed his part;
And when he has gone let his epitaph be
“Here lies George Butcher—rare fisherman he.”

A recitation was given by R. Godby. at the Manchester Anglers' Dinner December 1889, perhaps about the formation of the Northern Anglers and was entitled:

“The Great Association”

At Leeds some weeks ago, but when
I can't exactly mention,
A thirsty looking group of men
Attracted my attention,
As when a swarm of bees are seen
In busy agitation,
So these men swarmed about the Queen
Hard by the
Midland Station.

And wondering what the cause could be
That brought these men together
And what they'd ventured out to see
In such unpleasant weather,
One of the group I button holed'
And asked for information;
Said he “What! Have you not been told
About the Association?”

“But first” he said, “I'll wet my throat,
My club have sent me here to vote,
But I pay all expenses”
“I've solved a problem sir” said I,
“Although I am no wrangler,
For in that throat so parched and dry
I read that you're an angler”

“This is” he said “the fiftieth year
I've followed that vocation”
I shook his hand and said “Hear, hear,
You've my congratulation.
Your silver locks are white as snow,
Yet you are straight of stature”
He stroked his beard and said, “Just so
I am a child of nature”

“And when I look around my boy,
And see this goodly meeting,
I feel a sweet paternal joy
Through all my pulses beating;
For as a father hails with mirth
The cry of his first treasure,
So this Association's birth
Thrills all my soul with pleasure.”

“It was at Horton, months ago,
We were a festive body;
And late one night, with pipes aglow,
We lingered o’er the toddy;
When suddenly within my pate
I felt an inspiration.
“My friends” I said, “let us create
A great Association”

“Up, as one man, rose all the band,
And clambered on the table,
And danced upon it hand in hand
Until we shook the gable.
And there with whisky song and joke
We pledged th’ Association
Until, at length the table broke
And changed the situation.”

“Oh! What a fall was there, my friend
Life’s short and sore uncertain;
How sudden comes man’s latter end,--
(But ther we’ll draw the curtain)
The Phoenix from its smouldering ash
Soars forth, a new creation,
So rose from that appalling crash
This great Association.”

Y. W. P. 8th February 1890

A further verse was added later:-

“And now” he said “I am your host
Champagne is my potation.
Fill up a glass and let us toast
This great Association,
And after that, we’ll sit and talk,
O’er matters light and weighty,
But first” he said “lets see the cork
All right ‘tis eighteen eighty.”

In 1878, a Vice President of the club, Rev. William Wright wrote

“The Anglers Joy”

Let misers hoard their yellow store,
Let sailors tempt the raging storm,
Let soldiers wade Thro' fields of gore,
Ambitious prize to gain;
Let statesmen plot and courtiers fawn
Give silly sots their wine;
But give to me the rolling stream,
The rod, the reel, the line.

O' ye who seek in worldly cares,
Content or peace of mind
Come learn ye from the anglers art
The bliss you can not find.
It is not 'neath the gilded roof,
It is not in the Hall.
Nor is it in your gathered gold,
The pleasure sought by all.

It is beside the wimpling stream,
Within a peaceful glen
Where silent nature tempts to stray
Afar from toiling men.
When sailing clouds obstruct the sun,
And dripping showers descend,
Besides a breezy, haunted pool
Where leafy alders bend.

How sweet with gliding step to steal
Along the margent green,
Alone, or with a silent friend
At gentle distance seen—
To drop the fly with skilful hand
By stones with moss grown grey
Where, deep beneath, the eager trout.
Awaits the floating prey.

To see amid the waters brown,
His gleaming sides appear,
And mark him dart, with many a bound,
The stinging barb to clear;
But soon the music of the reel
Grows slow and fainter still,
Then tir'd reluctant to the strand
You guide him at your will.

Not less the bliss to mark at times,
With eye to nature keen.
Unnumber'd beauties, all disclosed
As shifts the verdant scene:-
The water-crane upon the stone
With breast of virgin snow,
The heron, from her station scar'd
With flagging wing and slow.

To hear the Mavis from the shaw
Salute his brooding mate.
Or view the dimpling flies that play
Unheedful of their fate.
Where ever stays the willing foot,
New scenes and fairer rise;
Where 'er we look to bank or stream,
New pleasure meets the eyes.

Fair Annan! On thy blooming banks,
The summer's day has passed
Till the evening hush'd the ruddy scene
In purple folds to rest.-
While still I wandered by thy side,
And drank of joys my fill.
What joys so pure as those we find
Besides a murmuring rill!

“Booda Muchili”

Another poem appears in the Anglers' Evenings written by T. E. Pritt

"My Rod and I"

My rod and I are ancient friends,
Long years we've held together;
Through life's bewild'ring odds and ends,
And most in cloudy weather.
And, angel like, both keen and true,
In all good service ready;
In blustering storm or cloudless blue,
Our friendships firm and steady.

And oft my faithful rod and I
Have tramped with silk and feather,
When merry birds sang in the sky,
By woodland and by heather.
And when we part, as part we must,
And long life friendship sever,
Old time may turn me into dust,--
Till then we're friends for ever.

The "Rod and Gun" Magazine of 21st February 1891, published the following poem by an
F. G. W.

"The Earliest Trout"

O! sweet is the swirl of the stream
To fly fishers waiting and weary,
O! sweet the sun's earliest gleam,
And lilt of the merle ever cheery,
The river's soft music is dear,
O'er gravelly shallows swift straying,
And where the mild current runs clear
A pink spotted beauty is staying.
The dainty dry fly hovers out,
And dances in fairest measure;
The wisest of fish wouldn't flout,
So tempting and toothsome a treasure
A rise and a splash and a rush,
A battle 'twixt fury and reason
And here's by the sheltering bush,
The earliest trout of the season.

Who cares for the roar of the town,
The hubbubs and horrors and hurry?
Who values its smile or its frown,
Its riot and racket and flurry?
Far down in the meadows the grass
Is green, and the river is flowing;
The ripples that dance as they pass
With joy in the sun light are glowing.
The trout are alert on the feed,
'Neath pollard and rushy bed rising;
That topic's important indeed,
And choice of a fly appetising.
But nothing else matters today,
Or foreign or home--- war or treason—
Life's object's at present to play
The earliest trout of the season.

A Dream of Spring time at Pen-y-bont”

Earth her ermine mantle changes,
For the emerald of spring,
Zephyr o'er the moorland ranges,
On his balmy scented wing;-
Blooms the willow by the river,
Early haunt of busy bees;
Flows the brooklet singing ever,
'Neath the tall o'er hanging trees.

Dappled kine are in the meadows,
Lambs are playing on the hills,
Pleasant are the lights and shadows,
Sweet the sound of mountain rills;
Birds sing out of wood and bower,
Musical is earth and air,
Nature moves with magic power,
Bids us throw aside our care.

Woos us to that charming valley,
Through which runs the "Sacred Dee",
Over rocks with sudden sally,
On through deeps of mystery,
Where the noble Salmon hideth,
Or where leaps the spotted trout,
Or grim patriarch abideth,
That no angle hath found out.

Woos us to the flowing river,
Where it leaves the mystic hill,
On whose top the tall pines quiver,
Musical if seeming still;
And the spirit of Glendower,
Seems to beckon us away,
From the city to his bower,
"Come! O Come!" he seems to say.

"I have known of care and trouble,
"Fightings north and fightings south,
"Seeking "reputation's bubble",
"At the "cannon's fearful mouth".
"Here my friends is peace and quiet,
"Here no warrings after wealth,
"All is calm and free from riot,
"Here find gentle sport and health."

The Angler's Song

by Canon Beech

You Anglers all, both great and small
Who Cerrig's Inn have sought,
Join in the lay of a sunny day
To the trout you **might** have caught.

When the wind is high and a stormy sky
Sets all your arts at naught,
Then not unpraised because unraised,
Be the trout you might have caught.

From Croquet's mouth to the distant south,
An Angler's strife I've fought
But fewer still are the trout I kill
Than the trout I might have caught.

In the deeps they swim, those deeps so dim
Of mountain pools un sought,
But none shall see who 'een they be
The trout they might have caught.

This was entered in Volume 1 of the Manuscript Books dated 1878.



To The East Wind

Abel Heywood April 1879

What is it keeps my spirits low?
Doth freeze my blood wherever I go!
Doth sparkle still my path with snow!
The east wind

What pinches me to half my size?
What heedeth not my freezing cries?
But dust doth throw up in my eyes.
The east Wind

What will not let the green trees sprout?
Or let the wanton flies come out?
To sport and play and feed the trout?
The east wind.

Oh pray let this long winter go,
No longer thou torment us so!
They bitter self away pray blow!
Thou east wind.

When shall I by the river stand,
And o'er its waters wave by wand,
And now and then a troutie land?
Thou east wind

Oh may the west thy blast dispel,
And blow thee off towell
To warmer climes

Thou east wind.



From Volume 10 of the Manuscript Books.

Eheu Fugaces

The wind may howl adown the street,
The driving rain or frozen sleet
May chilly 'gainst my lattice beat.
I care not, I but lounge the while
In cushioned chair and headless pile
The ever ready log and smile
On thee Old Pipe.

Tried friend and true! In every clime,
Morning or noon or evening time,
In winter's depth or summer's prime,
To me the same. There's nought can smooth
The wrinkled brow, nor sweetly soothe
The soul devoured by care's fell tooth
Like thee Old Pipe.

And as I watch thy cloud upwhirl
With wreath on wreath in many a curl,
I scorn not clown nor envy earl,
Nor sigh for wealth; for I can hail
In fancy thro' thy fragrant veil
Old friends whose loss I did bewail
Full sore Old Pipe.

And memories come trooping back
Of olden times that were— good lack!
Ere I were grey, ere thou wast black,
My trusty friend; of happy days
By babbling burn and braken braes,
'Mid rugged rocks and mountain ways
With thee Old Pipe!

How happy we, when rod in hand,
By tweed or Tummel's pebbly strand
We lured with gentle art to land
The speckly trout. Ah me! I sigh
To think those days are all gone by
Those far off days that seem so nigh
Thro' thee, Old Pipe.

Yes! those old times are past and gone
Of those old friends there is not one
Remaining now — all, all are flown
For aye — and age creeps on; I doubt
If e'er I'll land another trout
My fire fast fails, is going out
Like thine Old Pipe!

Sonnet—In Memoriam to H.L. Rolfe

by George Davies

The chair is vacant in the studio,
The sketch reclines upon the easel now.
The busy fingers and thoughtful brow
Rest in the grave. No more shall tale of woe
Reach the sympathetic heart now laid low,
But once so prompt its lore of love to give.
Its gentle words and kindly deeds will love
In many hearts, with thankfulness aglow
With pleasant memories. His nearest friends,
They who shared his love and knew him best,
Who knew he never strove for selfish ends:
Whose pure intent could gear the closest test,
Must feel a loss t'were to make amends
Save in the thought a good man found his rest.

The Torrent's Winter Song

From Lyrics of Pen y Bont

by George Davies

Suggested by a walk up the Dingle at Carrog in Jan. 1888

I go, I go, I go
Underneath the snow.
I leap from root to root
With tremulous shock
Into the vale below.

I flow, I flow, I flow
Under frozen snow
And round the moss-grown stones,
In low dulcet tones
Sung to the vale below

I spring, I dash, I go
On the fleecy snow.
Falling into a plasm,
A pellucid chasm,
Down in the vale below.

And as I leap or flow
Over the sparkling snow,
I hang icy lustres
In pendant clustres
Above the vale below.

Both poems written in Volume 3 of the Manuscript books

Sonnet

George Davies, on seeing George Sheffield at work on his drawings

O ! To create is god-like, to reveal
To wandering eyes the potent power,
That in the compass of one fourth part hour,
Can o'er the paper by magic steel
"A thing of beauty"; yea to watch it grow
From out apparent chaos, quickly so,
To all its full and fair accomplishment,
Was something more to me than wonderment.
And this while I gazed with look profound
On water, graceful trees or flowering mound.
It seemed as though old Pan I faintly heard,
Blending his music with the running stream.
And soft evensong of some lone bird
'Till all my soul seemed wrapped in one fair dream.



The Salmon Pool.

A Country Life

“Stargazer”

A country life is a happy life,
So uncontrolled and free,
Apart from all bustling scenes of life,
And profligate revelry.
They understand not its pleasures sweet,
Who condemn the snug abode
Of the unpretending cot so neat,
Beside some quiet road.

A country life is a happy life,
In spring when the lambs do play,
And the farmer with his buxom wife,
Gets up with the dawn of the day.
And the milkmaid with bright laughing
Sings blythe as she milks the cow;
The ploughman whistles, the horses neigh
As they forward go to plough.



Spring

By "Stargazer"

When spring first dons her dainty dress,
And decks her brow with flowers.
When birds their gentle suit do press.
From out the budding bowers
We'll seek the graceful flowing stream.
Where alder boughs entangle
And care forgetting as a dream,
While we enjoy our angle.

And if the speckled beauties rise
And sport attends our leisure,
We'll not complain of smaller size,
Denied a larger treasure.
For why, as every angler knows
His art content hath taught him;
And as the gentle pasture grows
New joys are constantly brought him.

Then let us sing the Angler's joys,
By lake, or loch or river,
When free from city smoke and noise
His nerves delightful quiver.
With gentle tug of spotted trout
Or strain of salmon fighting,
Long time before the victor's shout
Or victor's eye delighting.



HILL TARN

To the
PRESIDENT
and
MEMBERS
1943 - 1944



Hill Tarn

By Harry Kershaw

I paused and gazed ere stepping from the stile,
The little lake lay cradled in the hill.
Whilst down below the hidden river ran,
To eastward rose austere the lonely fell.
To west and north, across and up the dale
More lofty giants frowned in grim disdain,
One wore a misty nimbus round his head,
Mock sanctity the witness to deceive.
Far back along the lately travelled way,
Beyond the place where sweats the quarry's crew
Who blast and bake the bowels of the hill'
Fouling the face of nature with their reek, there stood
to southward, softened by the haze
A row of jagged teeth athwart the sky,
Some fossiled ogre's monstrous jaw up thrust I
In gaping wonder as to how or why.

About this little lake the hills enfold
Afar and near, above me in the blue
The fowl a-wing pipe querulous protest,
That I should thus their privacy invade.
The scolding plover tumbling through the air,
A snipe, soft drumming with each powered dive,
The curlew flutes his clamorous rebuke
An old red cock called out "Go back— Go back"

And though removed from gaze of living men,
I seem to feel the power of unseen eyes,
Voices there were of shades, inaudible,
Whose erstwhile owners knew this place of old.
Some jeered derision of my dainty wand,
Spectres of oafs who'd blundered heedless by.
Others apprised and haply, envied too,
Revisiting the scene of past delights.
For who'd refrain, had he once known the joy
Of trembling bended rod and steel-armed fly,
From haunting such a place where he had wont
In earthly guise, tools of like kind to ply.
A pagan in his paradise, I feel
Akin the woad stained hunter as he steals
With barbed flint, thong-bound to hazel shaft,
To spear his cunning, lurking prey. Who knows?
Perchance 'twere he whose blood within me flows.

And what, my friends, despite Prelate or Pope
Could I a Pagan deep at heart desire
Than liberty to sojourn whereat will,
I, during life, had spent such golden hours?
Fain would I "ghost" some future hopeful wight
As he moves cannily along the quiet stream
Experiencing again that ageless glow
Which surely the elect alone may know.

The skilful cast, the dimpling rise, the stroke,
The lusty plunging fight, the singing reel,
And, yes, the guilty glee of final rite,
The weight within the softly creaking creel.
And yet again, the curse, as cast held high
Within the grasping hand of outstretched bough.
Or when, through feckless act the gut-point parts
To chuckle, as with dire and fell,
The hapless vendor is consigned to rudest hell.
On all these things I muse while seated quiet
Above the lake there cradled in the hill.

And as upon my journey down the dale
Held in the meshes of enchantment still,
I mutely wonder what the fates can give
To take the place of this, and here, I love.
But all such brooding thoughts are put to flight,
The hospitable threshold is now crossed,
The laughing jibes of jolly friends resound,
The day's adventures listened to and told.
And as I strip my gear—oh effort vile;
That humid fumbling struggle, hardly won,
A whisper in my ear—seduction's lure
"Now 'K 'what'll you drink old man?"

Anon, amid life's humdrum daily round,
As bent above the task that claims my days,
A mirage grows, my truant eye to fill -
The little lake there cradled in the hill.

