

Ian Balgowan Fishing Lecture Notes for Schools

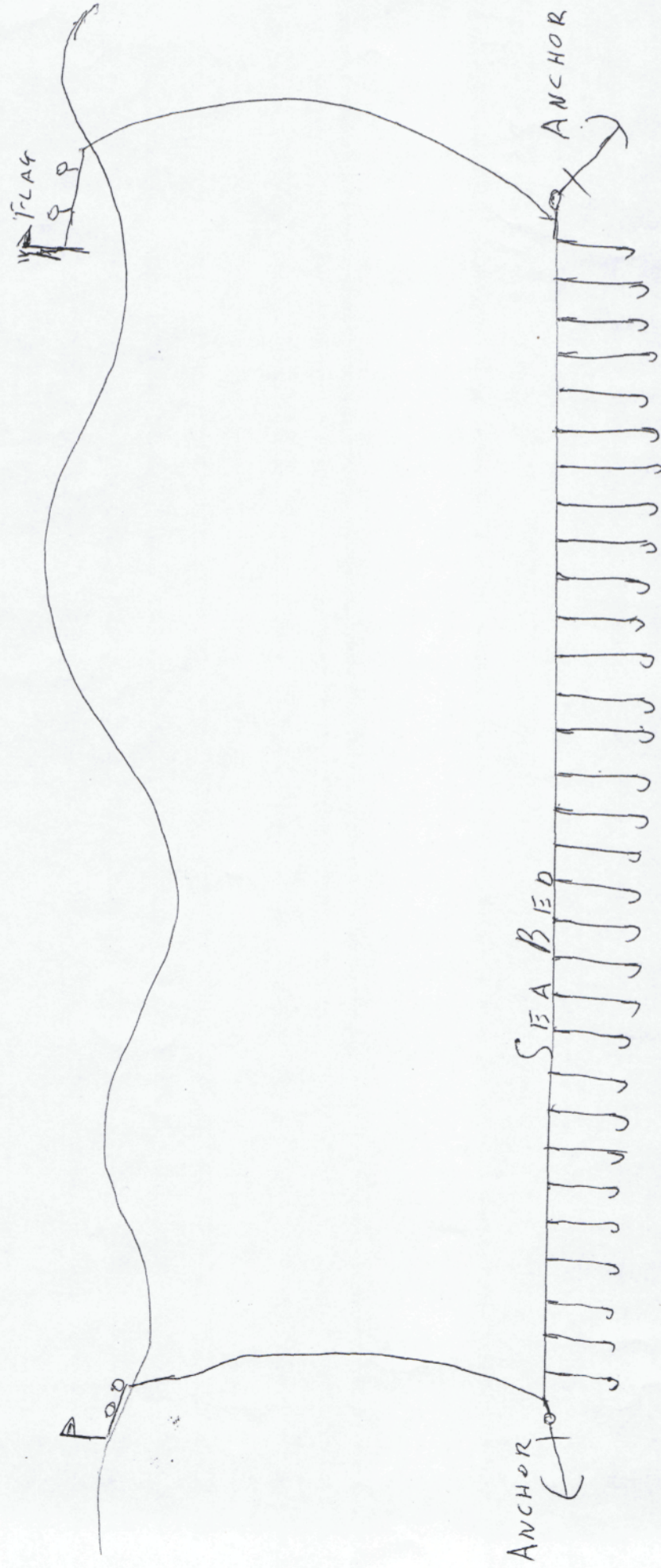
Hello boys and girls . I had better not let your teachers see what I have written , or , because of my spelling , they might think I should be sitting amongst you . Spelling was never my strong point. I have enjoyed doing what I have done , but regret not trying harder when at school. So , don,t be like me . **TRY YOUR BEST.** I will try and tell you as much as I can about fishing and fishing methods used within the Scottish fishing industry which I myself have used .

Although my ancestors were all farmers , I have been a fisherman all my working life . To date that has been over 50 years . I began going to sea on a boat called Loyalty , Whilst we were fishing off Newtonhil the boat started taking water in so began to sink . Other vessels came to our assistance to try and save the Loyalty , but to no avail . Just as it was towed onto Stonehaven harbour it sank . After that I then went on a trawler ,fishing from Aberdeen . I was a member of a trawler called Rangor . In my time there , the vessel fished mostly around Shetland, but in the summer months I spent a 14 day trip to Jceland , and an 8 day trip at the Fearo islands . When at home between trips a local man , Robbie Cormack asked me if I would like to go into partnership with him with a boat , to which I agreed as I wasn't to keen on the big trawlers . As they say , the rest is history . Our first boat , the Brothers, was a 8 metre boat ,with which we caught lobster and crab , with what we call creels . You will see one in the fishing section of the Tolbooth museum , This we did in the summer months , April till September . In the winter months we then went line fishing , using lines , -which you can again see in the museum . These lines consisted of up to 1200 hooks all baited with mussels, a very time consuming job . In november 1964 we bought a bigger boat , which was called Iona . On the 21st of January 1965 we went on the rocks , just as you come into the harbour . The boat was completely wrecked .

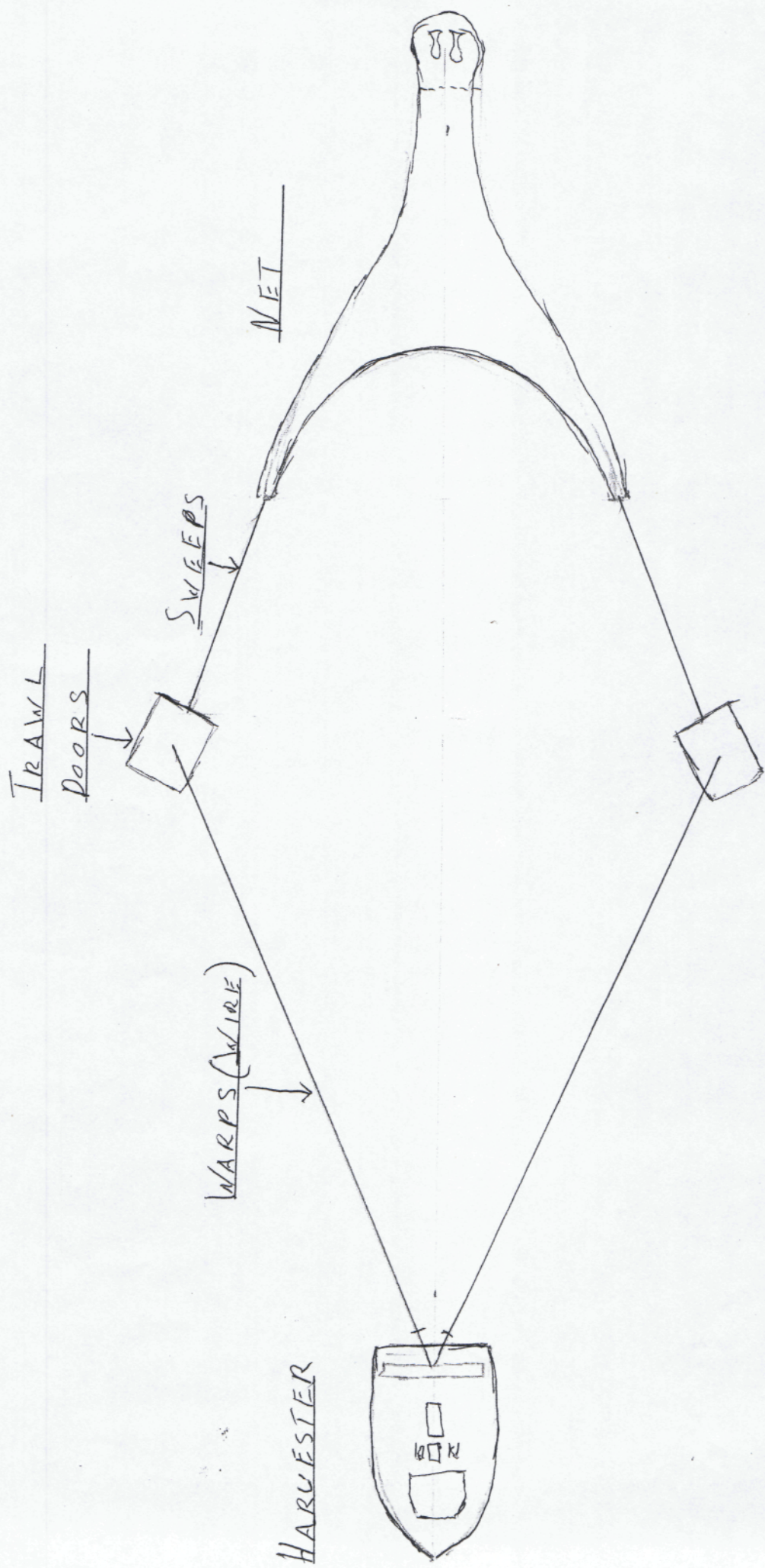
In September 1965 we got delivery of a new built boat . This boat was built for a different form of fishing . It was rigged for seine netting . With this method you use upwards of 1 1/2 mile of rope either side of a net . The ropes and net are such that they are in close contact with the bottom of the sea . The rope being pulled across the bottom sends up a sand cloud , which scares the fish into the path of the net . This method catches all forms of bottom feeding fish , such as , cod, haddock, whiting , plaice , sole , and many others . All these kinds of fish often all swim in the same areas , so you might catch some of them all together . Can any of you name any of the fish we may have caught ??? When using the seine net it needs to be sandy or muddy bottom . Although it has to be soft bottom , fish are often to be found best dose to hard or rocky bottom . The deepest water we fished in was 80 fathoms which is about 150 metres , and the farthest away we fished was about 90 miles from land . From 1965 until 1995 we fished this method with three different boats ,the smallest being 10metres , and the biggest 16 metres , all named Sweet Promise . In late 1995 we converted the boat for scallop fishing . This is where you tow what are called dredges across the bottom . This type of this gear is not easy to describe It is likened to a set of farmers harrows It is a job where many stones are also caught . I was always amazed at how many different , some beautiful, stones there were . In 1996 because of changing times we bought our present boat which is called Harvester . Harvester is rigged to fish both scallop an TRAWL gear . Now you will have heard me mention another method of fishing , called trawling . This a method which again is in close contact with the sea bed . Like the seine net it is used to catch all kinds of bottom feeding fish . The trawling method consists of a net, sweeps, trawl doors and warps . DESCRIBE . Also caught by this method is Nephrops , or to most of you better known as prawns, scampie , or langostines . There are all the same thing , Nephrops . We will call them prawns.

Prawns live in burrows in the mud , coming out to feed when the tide is turning , which it does every 6 hours , or just as it is getting light in the morning , or as it gets dark at night . Prawns can be very unpredictable as they will appear when they do not normally, and disappear when they normally appear . Also they seem to know when bad weather is coming. As I said , they are very unpredictable creatures . Had we more time , there is so much more I could tell you about my work , which at the age of 66 , I still enjoy , and hope to do so for a few years yet as long as I am able . To the best of my ability I have done some rough sketches of the methods I have described , and again please ask any question you would like me to try and answer .

How LINE WOULD LOOK ON BOTTOM



SOME HAD AS MANY AS 1200 HOOKS
STON HAVEN BOATS WERE 600 HOOKS



SCALLOP DESIGN

