

**ON IMPROVED FACILITIES FOR  
THE CAPTURE, ECONOMIC  
TRANSMISSION  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEA FISHES  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEA FISHES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649228522

On Improved Facilities for the Capture, Economic Transmission and Distribution of Sea Fishes  
and distribution of sea fishes by R. F. Walsh

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**R. F. WALSH**

**ON IMPROVED FACILITIES FOR  
THE CAPTURE, ECONOMIC  
TRANSMISSION  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEA FISHES  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEA FISHES**



*International Fisheries Exhibition*

LONDON, 1883

ON  
IMPROVED FACILITIES

FOR THE

CAPTURE, ECONOMIC TRANSMISSION  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF  
SEA FISHES

439

AND HOW

*These matters affect Irish Fisheries*

BY

R. F. WALSH

(OF KINSALEA)

LONDON

WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED

INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION

AND 13 CHARING CROSS, S.W.

1883

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,  
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

SH  
261  
.W23

MI

Exchange  
N. of Chicago  
5-27-39

*International Fisheries Exhibition,*  
LONDON, 1883.

---

CONFERENCE ON 30TH JULY, 1883.

---

EARL of MILLTOWN in the Chair.

---

ON IMPROVED FACILITIES FOR THE  
CAPTURE, ECONOMIC TRANSMIS-  
SION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEA  
FISHES; AND HOW THESE MAT-  
TERS AFFECT IRISH FISHERIES.

IMPROVED facilities for the capture, economic transmis-  
sion, and distribution of sea fishes, are, perhaps, the most  
important matters connected with sea fisheries, towards  
which the attention of the Government and of all persons  
interested in the food supply of the United Kingdom  
should be studiously directed.

It would be impossible, in the treatment of these subjects,  
to even touch on all of the great Fisheries of the British Isles.  
I therefore purpose to confine myself to the fisheries of  
the South and West of Ireland, and for reasons which I  
shall afterwards make more plain.

Before I proceed to the exposition of my ideas of the  
matters I have undertaken to write, I shall give a brief  
history of the fisheries I have elected to treat of. And,  
drawing conclusion from the facts that will be contained in  
it, I shall show that the harbours and fisheries of the South  
of Ireland have been neglected by the Government; that

the fisheries there are amongst the largest and most productive in the United Kingdom, and that the insufficiency of funds, and consequently of enterprise, and the absence of proper accommodation, are alone to blame—that those fisheries do not successfully compete with the largest fisheries of the world.

In this brief history it will be seen that the extracts contained in it point to a curious but important conclusion, and that is, that the haunts of mackerel and herring (so far as the South of Ireland is concerned) do not change, as is accepted by most authorities.

And I am glad to state that the facts recorded in these extracts conclusively prove the importance of the South of Ireland for these fisheries, and a certainty of the best results from fishing operations there.

As far back as 1665 A.D., the fisheries of mackerel, herring, and pilchards were prosecuted at Kinsale with great success. The boats and gear used by the Irish fishermen at that time are not made particular mention of, although there are records of enormous catches of fish by them. But it is evident that, in point of size and completeness, the nets and boats of the fishermen of other countries, and notably of France, were much in advance of those used by the Irish, and I am scarcely wrong when I state here that the gear and general appliances of the French mackerel fishers of that period, excepting steam, were not inferior to those now used by our most scientific English, Manx, or Irishmen,—and that unless in some unimportant matters the improvements on the appliances of that time, by our islanders, have aimed rather to imitate, more or less, the plant of the French fishermen, than to make any stride towards innovation or more completeness of system. In making this statement you will of course understand



that I do not allude to boats, for we all know well that vast improvements have been made, from time to time, on the models of that period.

In proof of the existence of great fisheries at Kinsale, in the 17th to 18th century, I give the following extracts from the 'Annals of Kinsale,' and I think they will be interesting—"14 June, 1672."—Sir Robert Southwell addressed a letter to Mr. Reeve, of Rotterdam, in which the following passage occurs concerning the Kinsale fishing: "His father . . . in 1665, took £1300 worth of fish in one pull of a net." "Kinsale, 10 June, 1739," extract from letter of D. Furzer, to Mr. Secty. Burchett: "French fishing vessels . . . now come close to shoar to the number of 200 or 300 sail, from 60 to 80 tons, having each about 400 nets from 8 to 10 fathoms long. They come about the beginning of March (if the weather be good) and stay till towards the end of May."

From these extracts it will be seen that the French fleet of mackerel boats engaged in fishing off the Kinsale coast at that time numbered about 300, and that the nets of each boat were 400 in number, each measuring 8 to 10 fathoms, or, in other words, that the nets of each boat measured about 3 miles in length. So that, apart from the appliances of the native fishing boats, 900 miles of netting were employed by foreigners in the prosecution of the fishery early in the 18th century.

Further on in the letter I have quoted concerning the French boats, it appears that the natives were under the impression that the enormous size of the nets of the Frenchmen "interrupted the course of the mackerel and tended to break their shoals." Be that as it may, the mackerel have not left the coast, and their ground to-day is the same that it was two centuries ago.

Herring fishing, too, was carried on extensively in those days, and amongst the many records concerning this fishery, I find one of which the subject even now commands great attention, and justly so; it concerns the desirability of enforcing restrictive laws for herring fishing. I shall not entertain this subject in my paper, as it is a matter of dubious benefit, but as it may be interesting to know what were the ideas on the subject of the fishermen of former days, I give the extract:—

4th Oct., 1731.—“And whereas the Herring fishery is also greatly destroyed by persons fishing in spawning time, we present that no person fish for or take any Herrings or Sprats within the limits of this corporation before 29 September or after 1 January.”

Thus it will be seen that two or three centuries ago mackerel and herring were captured with great success and with superior appliances on the Southern Irish coast.

Following the observations I made at the commencement of my paper, I shall proceed to show that on the same ground where those great fisheries existed centuries ago, the same fisheries are still carried on with success; that at all times since then the haunts of those fishes have been the same; how, for a time, the fisheries existed (to the same extent) no longer, and the manner in which they were revived and have since their revival been worked.

Shortly after 1739, the last date at which we have mention made of the presence of foreigners at the Kinsale mackerel fishery, the restrictions enforced by the Government for the protection of the native fishermen became so noxious that French and other fishermen elected to remain away. The result of this did not benefit the natives; they needed emulation, and at the same time several religious and political feuds occurring in the town, the fisheries were neglected,

Irish fishermen and others were debarred from the privileges of the English settlers, and those great fisheries remained practically dormant until some twenty-five years ago.

Then a few Manx boats were sent over to Kinsale to "try" the ground, and the success of the experiment will be seen as I detail the entire working of the mackerel fishery on that coast, of the herring fishery there, and all the *minutiæ* of the particular points I have elected to write on, under the title of my paper.

The reasons why I have selected the fisheries of the South of Ireland will be manifest when I state that I have been for many years a director of the South of Ireland (now Kinsale) Fishing Company, Limited. And apart from this, I shall show by statistics that the fisheries of this coast are of such extent and importance, that a diagnosis of their operations and a few practical observations on improvements which can be made in the methods in use for the capture and transmission of fish, and on harbour accommodation there, will be of as great utility, for the purposes of this paper, as a general history of the fisheries of the United Kingdom.

In the year 1880—not counting Frenchmen—the number of boats engaged in the Kinsale Fishery was 722; in 1881, 652; and, in 1882, 693. In size these boats averaged 27 tons each, and every boat carried *at least* 44 pieces of netting of 100 yards long, or 4400 yards of net—making in all somewhat over 1200 miles of netting for the fleet; or, in other words, the largest amount of netting in use in the world, so far as we can ascertain, at any one fishery, unless we regard the herring fisheries of Peterhead, Wick and Fraserburgh, &c., as one fishery—extending as they do, over an enormous extent of seaboard.