

Fishing for Leave on the River Thames – British fishermen tell Parliament how the EU has ruined our fishing industry.

By Esmerelda Weatherwax:

To the River Thames in London, *the* River to Londoners to support the flotilla from [Robert Burn's poem](#) Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation, later set to music.

The flotilla was expected to leave Ramsgate at 3am, Southend at 5am, pass Gravesend at 7am to reach Tower Bridge at 10am. Tower Bridge was raised to accomodate the North Sea trawlers from Scotland who led the flotila up the river; the boats then mustered in the Pool and 12 boats were allowed to continue to Westminster. Of necessity, the bridges past the Pool of London being rather low, these were the smaller boats.

It was sloppy reporting of the London Evening Stardard in their West End Final print edition to describe it as a small flotila of "about 15 trawlers". There were a lot more and the largest had to stay downriver.

We started at Tower bridge where the first people we met were fishermen and their wives who were forming a welcome and public information party. The back of this gentleman's shirt says it all better than I can. Not all of them were from Kent and Essex the two seaboard counties either side of the Thames; west country accents were also prominent.



We had to move aside to allow Tower Bridge to open in the

middle for the boats to pass.

✘ The three largest boats moored by [David Kew](#) a senior BBC director.

Then we heard rather than saw the Bob Geldof Party Boat.

A pleasure cruise on the Thames is one of the nicest things to do in London. And some of these nicely appointed boats can be hired for office parties, wedding receptions and the like. This one contained Bob Geldof the well known vocalist of the Boom Town Rats. Their theme tune for the day was The In Crowd, originally a hit for [Brian Ferry](#) 10 years later. I think I heard both versions; Brian Ferry's vocals are unmistakable.

The words are most appropriate. It sounds at first like a happy jolly song. But on a deeper level it is a paean to the superficial following of fashion and pleasure.

I'm in with the in crowd, I go where the in crowd goes...

Our share is always the biggest amount (Does this sound familiar?)

Spendin' cash, talkin' trash (our cash, one hears reports of the UK paying £55 million a day to the EU and trash – have you ever tried to read an EU directive?)

We got our own way of walkin', yeah (Yeah, yeah, yeah)

We got our own way of talkin' (Yeah, yeah, yeah)

In the in crowd

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This fishing boat is from Ramsgate in Kent. You can see it is a working boat and you can see that the men who crew her work hard for their living, dangerous, uncomfortable but necessary work and usually in their blood. Compare and contrast with the life of a pop singer and others of the In Crowd.

✘ The round glass building is City Hall, HQ of London's Mayor, the recently elected Sadiq Khan. The pointed building is The Shard (not the Sliver – although it is more than a bit sinister in my opinion) a potent symbol of the influence of Islamic finance in London.

Only a dozen boats were allowed to approach the Houses of Parliament. These left behind moored outside the former Billingsgate Fish market.

✘ That is the brown stone building with the fish weather vane. The odd looking structure in the middle is a new building nicknamed the 'walkie-talkie'. It's strange shape caused some heat anomalies when sun reflected off the glass into the street below causing burn damage. I think the problem was solved by coating the glass. But it remains an ugly thing.

At Westminster Bridge the Remainiacs had hung large banners to greet the fishing boats

✘ Note the personal animosity towards the leader of a political party. He does have an interest in the fishing industry, of course. He stood as candidate for Thanet in Kent at the last election, which covers part of Ramsgate where some of these fishing boats are based. But this was NOT his event.

✘ I keep thinking of this part of the flotilla as the Little Ships, reminiscent of the Dunkirk ships. They sailed up and down outside the river terrace of the Houses of Parliament during the period when Prime Minister's Question Time would be taking place. They tooted their hooters to make their presence known, and to drown out the sound of the In Crowd, which was more than a little trying by now.

Another hire boat arrived, The Edwardian, this time filled with Brexiteers, including Nigel Farage who had not been allowed (my source didn't know why) to join the fishing boat.

A voice which I assume was that of Bob Geldof could be heard issuing from the Party Boat, haranguing Nigel Farage, calling him a liar.

☒ Brexit supporters lined the Parliament side of Westminster bridge. At which point the Remainiacs on the other side decided it was time to move. And they demanded the space occupied by the Leave supporters. Which they were not going to get. The police dealt with it most courteously and the Remainiacs, unable to understand that you can't always get what you want, bemused that others will not bow down and indulge them, took their 15 ft banner elsewhere. Hopefully somewhere where the sun does not shine.

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The Little boats turned round and set off back down river and so did we.

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I didn't find out until I got home that Bob Geldof's antics went beyond personal criticism of Nigel Farage. He made obscene gestures at the fishermen as well, such that even Remainians on the Party Boat were unhappy and [Nigel Farage said](#) ""multi-millionaires shouting down honest working communities. Pretty disgusting"

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I didn't witness this myself but I read that, mindful of Geldof's reputation for lacking in personal hygiene, one of the [Guido Fawkes blog](#).

It's a referendum on a specific issue which is turning into something much bigger, possibly existential.