

Fishin Quotas

Ane o the mony true ongauns that disnae get reportit in politics.

Ever syne he haed been a wee laddie, Geordie Jooks haed aye kent there wis juist the twa kinna fowk in the warld; fisher-fowk an the ither kind, treds-fowk. Thon wis brocht hame tae him afore thon New Year no lang syne when the Scottish Fisheries Minister o the day, Rhona Brankin MSP, wis fair blawin aboot hou weel her negotiations wi the EU aboot fishin quotas haed gaed. She threapit that she'd won success for the fishermen in key areas. It wis juist the opposition MSPs – an the fishermen thirsels – that didnae agree wi her.

Aw this pit Geordie in mind o happier times whan his uncle “Stookie” Rob MBE BEM, wis the Preses o the Firth o Forth Fishermen’s Associe an o ae time that he haed been speirt tae jyne a delegation gaun ower tae Brussels tae lobby a better dale for the Scottish seine-net fishermen. The delegation wis heidit bi Winnie Ewing MEP, kent then as “Madame Ecosse” hersel.

The hail delegation turned up at Edinburgh’s Turnhouse Airport for the flicht tae Brussels an awthin gaed athoot ony uphaud till Uncle Rob got tae the heid o the queue an the man ahint the desk speirt him for his passport.

“Passport?” said Uncle Rob, “A’ve no got nae passport. Whit wad A be needin that for?”

“Oh but we need to see your passport sir, so that we know who you are.”

“But A’m Stookie Rob frae Fisherraw! Awbody kens whae A am.”

Weel the particlars o the rest o this stushie is a bit scant but the ootcome wis that, efter some desperate phone conversations wi the Scottish Office at St Andrae’s Hoose, a temporary traivel document wis wheeched oot tae the airport an the delegation wis able tae get on its wey.

Efter aw the ongauns at the EU wis ower an duin wi, Mistress Ewing thocht she haed won ane or twa inlats for the fishermen. True, they’d haed tae gie up a wheen forbye but no as muckle as it micht hiv been an she wis feelin quite joco waitin in the airport for thair return flicht when she gaed ower tae Uncle Rob an said, “Well Robert, and what did you think of my speech yesterday afternoon?”

Uncle Rob taen her gently bi the elbae, looked her in the ee an said, “Weel Mistress Ewing. A micht as weel be honest wi ye hen. A think ye ken as muckle aboot seine-net fishin as ma erse kens aboot snipe shootin!”

Geordie disnae ken for shuir but he thinks thon wis the end o the conversation but he daes ken there juist the twa kinna fowk in the warld an he haes let it be kent that this wis a true story for he haed gotten it strecht frae Stookie’s ain guid-dochter.

Ane ither thing that cam oot o thon trip wis that Uncle Rob haed chynged intae a clean fisherman’s guernsey afore leavin the hotel tae gaun tae the airport at Brussels

an here, did he no gaun an forget tae pack the ane he haed taen aff. The hotel manager haed an awfu job tryin tae track doon the name an address o the “Strange jovial gentleman who couldn’t speak a word of English or French.” sae he could post it on tae him.