

Fishing vessel demos in Thames, Clyde and South West

Fishing for Leave supporters blast CFP

Demonstrations of fishing vessels supporting the Fishing for Leave (FFL) campaign for the UK to pull out of the EU were due to take place this week as the EU referendum campaign moves into top gear, reports **Tim Oliver**.

A flotilla of boats was set to sail up the Thames on Wednesday (15 June), and a demonstration was being held in the Clyde on Friday (17 June). Boats from Northern Ireland were due to join up with the Clyde fleet at Greenock and then sail up-river to the BBC Scotland headquarters opposite the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre where the fishing shows used to be held.

FFL leader Aaron Brown told *Fishing News* he expected around 60 boats in total to take part in the Thames and Clyde flotillas – around 30 in each.

Dick James from the Northern Ireland FPO said he expected six or eight Northern Ireland boats would join the Clyde flotilla, and there could be more depending on how many NI boats were fishing the Clyde.

As *Fishing News* went to press 19 local boats were definitely joining the Thames flotilla and had registered with the Port of

London Authority (PLA). Four boats from the South West and several from Scotland were also due to join the Thames armada. The four South West boats were the Interfish

beamers Admiral Gordon and Admiral Blake, the 12m crabber Freedom and the small trawler Boslo, which was part of a Thames armada in 1975.

Scottish boats included the big demersal trawler Atlantic Challenge and the pelagic trawlers Christina S and Resolute. These three ships were booked to go through Tower Bridge at 10am and to tie up alongside HMS Belfast for 12 hours before departing on the next tide at 10pm.

Darryl Godbold of Leigh-on-Sea, who has organised the Thames armada in conjunction with FFL leader Aaron Brown, said boats from Hastings, Thanet, West Mersea, Leigh-on-Sea and Holehaven would be sailing up the Thames. They would be starting from Southend at 5am and steaming up the Thames on the flood

SHORE DEMO AT TOWER BRIDGE

A demonstration ashore will also be held to support the Thames flotilla. The meeting point will be outside The Tower Hotel on the north side of Tower Bridge at 9.30am, ready for the arrival of the boats at Tower Bridge from about 10am onwards. T-shirts and banners highlighting the plight of the industry under the EU/CFP will be provided.

vessels (over 40m) that would need them.

Restrictions imposed by the PLA will prevent bigger boats sailing beyond Tower Bridge, and only 12 under-15m boats will be allowed to sail as far as the House of Commons. The date will coincide with the last

Prime Minister's Question Time before the referendum vote.

UKIP leader Nigel Farage was due to join the Thames flotilla to help

guarantee major national media coverage.

It was also likely that a number of boats from the South West that could not make the long and expensive trip to



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tide and should arrive at Westminster about 1pm. He said the Port of London Authority (PLA) had been very helpful and had offered to supply pilots and moorings at cost to big Scottish

the Thames would mount a demonstration at Plymouth. South West PO chief Jim Portus said that while the trip to the Thames was too far and time-consuming for most boats ‘they want to demonstrate their support for the Vote Leave campaign and show solidarity with the Thames boats’. A fund had been set up to help any boats willing to join the Thames flotilla.

He said there had been

flotillas up the Thames before, ‘but none since 1975 has had the possibility of influencing the outcome of a referendum’. Ports represented in 1975, such as Fleetwood, Milford Haven, Lowestoft and Grimsby, now have no home fleets and are ‘shadows of once-great fishing activity and trade’. The flag today was being flown by Peterhead, Lerwick, Plymouth and ports in SE England (see page 7).

Leave campaign steps up

The Fishing for Leave (FFL) campaign has moved into top gear, and the debate over the imminent referendum intensified, with the crucial vote now only a week away.

Prime Minister David Cameron and Leave leader Boris Johnson clashed when fisheries in the context of the referendum was discussed on the BBC TV *Countryfile* programme last weekend. (See page 23).

The PM claimed the CFP had turned around in the past five years, and the value of landings and stocks were up. But Boris Johnson said the CFP had brought ‘poverty’ to many fishing communities and that bringing back fishing could be ‘fantastic’ for these ports.

FFL blasted DEFRA’s statement in its latest *Fishing Focus* publication claiming that ‘Being Part of the EU is better for Fish and Seafood’ (*Fishing News*, 2 June).

FFL leaders Aaron Brown and John Ashworth said DEFRA’s advice was ‘to continue to hand British affairs to unelected EU bureaucrats who have no obligation/responsibility to the British

electorate or Britain’s interests’ (see page 7).

“One is compelled to ask whether, if a government department feels it needs to subcontract the administration of our country to the EU, then is it admitting that it is not fit for office or government?” they ask.

They also reject DEFRA’s claim that we must remain in the EU and single market because it is ‘the biggest export market for fish and seafood’. FFL argues that the high level of exports shows there is a strong demand for UK seafood and that retaking control of our own waters would enable the UK to better meet that demand.

“There is no question that trade would continue, as Britain and Norway would control a vast proportion of the EU’s seafood supply,” says FFL.

“Leaving the EU would give us a chance to manage our fisheries for our interest and to rejuvenate our coastal communities. It is time for the people to take back control of what is rightfully theirs and operate British resources free from the EU politics of integration.”

At a packed meeting in Looe, hosted

by East Cornwall local MP Sheryl Murray, former Conservative shadow fisheries minister Owen Paterson made a powerful case for the ‘Leave’ vote (see page 7).

As shadow fisheries minister, Owen Paterson carried out a study of fisheries management in Norway, Iceland and Faroe and produced a major report on how UK fisheries could be managed under national control of UK waters.

He told the fully supportive Looe meeting that the ‘awful damage’ the CFP had done and was doing to British fishermen was ‘frightening’, while Sheryl Murray said the CFP was ‘widely hated by everyone who understands the issues’.

Owen Paterson said the CFP was ‘a top-down approach to solving complex, local problems’, that produced ‘a grotesque policy’ that created discards of healthy marketable fish. Meanwhile, independent countries like Norway, Iceland and Faroe had maintained catches while preserving healthy stocks by using up-to-date local knowledge and an ability to respond rapidly to natural changes.

“Effective policy can only be developed with the full co-operation and assent of fishermen, guided by good science, and up-to-date local knowledge and flexibility,” he told the Looe meeting.

But he said bureaucratic control by Brussels must not be replaced by bureaucratic control in London and there must be local control as well.

“After we vote to take back control, local people can work with politicians and experts in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Westminster to set the framework. The real power will lie with you, the local fishing communities.”

Scottish MEP Ian Duncan, who is a member of the EU Parliament’s fisheries committee, said while the CFP had been ‘a disaster’ for the Scottish industry the single market had been ‘a welcome asset’ (see page 5).

He said the chance to leave the EU/CFP had to be weighed against the potential loss of access to the continental market. And while the alternative to leaving the EU was fundamental reform of the CFP, prospects for this seemed ‘timid at best’.

Sir Ben Ainslie supporting project to restore Solent native oyster

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Charles Clover, Chairman of BLUE, said: "We are leading a coalition to restore the native oyster to the Solent by protecting resident oysters and substantially boosting the number of oysters in the ecosystem by 2020.

"Our plan is to bring 10 million saved wild brood oysters and re-seed juvenile native oysters in the Solent's harbours, estuaries and main channel."

BLUE has spent the past year working with Land Rover BAR and together have developed and tested an oyster broodstock protection programme in conjunction with MDL Marinas, The Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Portsmouth and Southern IFCA.

Robert Clark, Chief Fisheries Office of Southern IFCA said: "I am really excited about this project and the fact that Ben has got involved. To have these oysters in purpose-built floating

cages under the pontoons at his new premises at Portsmouth will contribute to cleaner and clearer water for the enjoyment of those using the Solent for recreational activities, due to a single oyster's ability to filter up to 200 litres of water a day."

Currently talks are in progress with a number of local and national corporations who are keen to play a part in helping the Solent back to its former glory, to raise a contribution of £250,000. The fishery dates back to Roman times and was the largest fishery in Europe for the native oyster, *Ostrea edulis*. Until 1978 up to 450 boats were catching oysters in the Solent between Weymouth and Chichester, landing up to 15 million oysters a year. The fishery was closed in 2013 due to the effects of invasive species and disease.

In conclusion, Dr Susie Tomson, Sustainability Manager, Land Rover BAR said: "We are very excited that the results

of our pilot project at our Portsmouth base will contribute to BLUE's 10 Million oyster initiative. Through taking part in the recent Americas Cup World Series, we have created links with the Billion Oyster Project in New York Harbour. As an Ocean Racing Team, with our Exclusive Sustainability Partner, 11th Hour Racing, we are committed to protecting and raising awareness of our oceans and their ecosystems."

This was endorsed by Dr Joanne Preston of the Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Portsmouth. "Our pilot study has been highly successful. The real test will be how they grow during the summer months, and most importantly if they successfully reproduce. We then hope to scale this across the Solent, providing a significant protected broodstock of oysters that can generate spat to re-populate the wild seabed population year after year."



Dr Susie Tomson (Sustainability Director Land Rover BAR), Sir Ben Ainslie, Tim Glover (UK Projects Director Blue Marine Foundation) and Dr Joanne Preston (Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Portsmouth). (Photograph courtesy of Alex Palmer).

Newhaven stalwart dies

A well-known Scottish former fisherman and Newhaven fish market superintendent has died.

James David Todd died in Edinburgh on 17 May aged 84 after a short illness. He was market superintendent at Newhaven on the Firth of Forth until his illness. He was a fisherman for 40 years following his National Service with the King's Own Scottish Borderers in Korea, where he was badly wounded and was airlifted from the battlefield by helicopter to the nearby mobile army surgical hospital (MASH).

In later life, he became a member of the British Korean Veterans Association and was closely involved in the establishment of the Scottish Korean War Memorial, a lasting tribute to all British servicemen killed in the conflict.

Jim's fishing career began catching lobsters in the Firth of Forth and west coast grounds from Oban to Machrihanish, and ring-netting for herring. While working at the herring following the traditional North Sea fishery down the east coast of Scotland and England he met his wife, Ruth Winspear, a Whitby lass.

To boost income between the seasonal fisheries, Jim sailed on the Granton trawlers. Urged to sit his tickets by William Liston he declined and opted to fish inshore. He participated for several years in the early days of the scallop fishery on the Scottish west



Jim Todd inside Newhaven fish market, where he was superintendent until his death aged 84.

coast and the Nephrops fishery. He fished for Nephrops out of Oban during the summer and off the English north-east coast during the winter, becoming a regular visitor to Amble. He skipper-owned in partnership several vessels, the last being Dunedin LH 122.

Jim was actively involved with the setting up and opening of the Newhaven Heritage Museum, which is currently looking for a new home.

Being born within the boundaries of Newhaven village, Jim was a 'Bow-Tow'—a name which derives from the original buoys (bows) which were made from animal bladders.

Sussex fisherman lost overboard in the English Channel

A largescale air and sea search was carried out last Thursday afternoon after a fisherman was reported missing from the Shoreham-based under-10m static gear vessel Our Sarah Jane NN 710.

UK and French Coastguards received a Mayday call shortly after midday, reporting the incident some 30 miles south of Newhaven. The UK Coastguard search and rescue helicopter based at Lydd, and the Eastbourne, Newhaven and Shoreham RNLi all-weather lifeboats were sent to the location,

along with other vessels in the vicinity.

As the search continued into the evening more local fishing vessels joined in, together with the Coastguard Helicopter from Lee-on-Solent, which replaced the one from Lydd. At 21.00 hours the lifeboats were recalled to their relevant stations.

Matt West, Duty Controller for The UK Coastguard said: "Following a comprehensive search in the area with nothing found, a decision has been made to suspend the search pending any further information."

IFCA fishery officers rescued by RNLi hovercraft

The Southend-on-Sea RNLi Hovercraft 004 was tasked earlier this month to assist in the rescue of two Kent and Essex IFCA Fishery Officers who got stuck on their quad bikes in the mud on Maplin Sands at low tide, reports **John Periam**.

John Foster, the Lifeboat Operations Manager for Southend Lifeboat, said: "It was one of those situations where the two experienced male and female fishery officers who were mapping out the area ready for the cockle season, wandered into soft mud a fair distance out on the sands. Before they knew it, they had got stuck and started to sink into the mud with both quad bikes unable to move, while sinking deeper all the time.

"Radio communication plays such an important role, and they were both familiar with all the relevant rescue procedures which made life a lot easier for us all. It was not long before Hovercraft 004 reached them and had

them all on board and back to the firmer sands of Maplin."

Last year Hovercraft 004 had 143 shouts and rescued nine people from the Maplin and Swale estuary areas of the Thames. The problem with the sands is that people don't realise how quickly the tide comes in and how soft the mud can be in places.

John Foster added, "The situation could have been very different had it been winter, and the sea frets that are common to this part of the coast had shrouded the area.

"Hovercraft 004 is designed specifically for this purpose, and its high speed across such areas made for a fast recovery.

"It was one of those situations where it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and we were glad that the outcome of the rescue resulted in all involved being able to return to their normal duties."

RNLi Hovercraft 004 alongside the ILB at Southend-on-Sea Lifeboat Station. (Photograph courtesy of RNLi/Nicholas Leach).

