

Smallholder Sid....

By Richard Barr

BEFORE

Smallholder Sid was impatient. He had been waiting in the snug of the Cowpat and Fly Public House for half an hour and neither of his regular drinking comrades had turned up.

There was a gale blowing outside, rattling the flimsy. As he sipped his Old Fart he became even more red faced than usual and besides, he was most anxious to share with the others his latest scheme – and of course to continue the debate that had occupied them all for many weeks: to Brexit or not to Brexit.

Eventually Farmer Fred put in an appearance. He arrived, soaking wet with his thick bottle-glass spectacles steamed up.

He shook himself vigorously, spraying Smallholder Sid with half a pint of water which, Sid noted from the drops that landed on his lips, had a similar taste and texture to Old Fart. A few minutes later Allotment holder Alice staggered into the snug looking as though she had been dragged through a hedge backwards (an impression emphasised by the fact that she had mud on her shoes and bindweed wrapped round one of her legs).

She shook her umbrella (and gave Smallholder Sid his second shower that evening. In truth it was his second shower that month but let us not go there) before settling down to sip her pint of Old Fart.

“Now then” said Sid as though calling the meeting to order. “Before I tell you my latest idea I want to know if either of you have wind.”

“How dare you!” protested Alice. In her outrage she tipped her glass over Sid’s lap. “I may have a little manure on my shoes but I took my wind-eez this morning and I know it wasn’t me.”

“Nor me” growled Fred. “I went before I came. That was why I was late”.

Sid looked entirely non-plussed. He explained that he was not talking about bodily functions but about the kind of wind that was threatening to take off the roof of the Cowpat and Fly.

“Ah” mumbled Alice and Fred together into their glasses.

Sid continued: “You can make good money by tapping into wind power & I am going to put up a pole mounted turbine on the corner of my land. I have had the survey and they say it will generate enough electricity to power my central heating, my workshop, my cooker and my wife’s hair dryer.”

“On a still day will it do those things?” asked Alice.

“No of course not but we will still be connected to the grid. And on nights like tonight we will be able to pump the power back and make enough to

.... And The Case of Wind

cover the still days”

“And how much will it cost?” asked Alice

“A fair bit, but over its life we will get the money back several times over.”

Fred and Alice frowned into their glasses, shaking their heads slowly. They had seen Sid’s previous schemes going very badly wrong. They were far from confident that this would not go the same way, so they brought the subject back to what was going to happen on the following Thursday.

Alice found no difficulty in getting Sid to change the subject.

“I’m going to vote Remain” she said casually. “It’s not done me any harm and I don’t trust that man Boris wotshisname. I don’t like his hair do. Besides he sounds too posh.”

That was enough to blow turbines out of Sid’s brain.

“What,” he exploded, “and let all those immigrants walk all over us. I hear that a dozen of them landed in Sea Palling only the other day all dressed in rubbery black and several more were seen swimming around at Happisburgh.”

“You will believe anything Sid.” Retorted Alice “They weren’t immigrants. That was the surfers enjoying the big waves. And the only things swimming around at Happisburgh were seals.”

“And you think that voting Brexit will stop people landing on our shores?” she continued “Do you know how many patrol boats we have? No course you don’t. We have three for the whole of the British Isles. And we have more than 7000 miles of coastline. They’re not going to stop them.”

“But them bananas” persisted Sid “we are fed up with being told to straighten them - and them unelected bureaucrats in Brussels how dare they tell us what to do? I want to be able to fly the flag and be proud to be British.”

Alice again: “But you can do that anyway. Nobody’s stopping you. I bet you are one of those people driving around with the flag of St George sticking out of your window”

“What if I am?” retorted Sid

“Well that’s silly too because we are the United Kingdom, not just little England. Anyway, I want us to stay. It’s got lot’s wrong with it, but I think we should be in there pushing for reform, not out of it. What do you think Fred?”

But there was no answer from Fred. His head lolled back & he was snoring. As he breathed in he said “E” and when he breathed out it was “U”.



Smallholder Sid.... continued

AFTER

Alternative 1 Brexit

A few days after the referendum they were back again in the snug. Smallholder Sid was smiling all over his face. He had found a huge union jack and had wrapped it round himself. He then did the most astonishing thing, never before seen in the history of their drinking sessions. He bought a round of drinks. Alice was wearing black.

“It’s a black and bleak day for our country” she moaned.

“What do you say Fred?” But Fred had gone to sleep early. Did the sound of his snoring seem to whisper *Brex It Brex It Brex It Brex It?*

Alternative 2 Remain

A few days after the referendum they were back again in the snug.

Alice was wearing a flowery dress and her grey hair was neatly combed (for a change). She had skipped into the snug – or at least she had attempted to, but her foot caught onto the leg of a chair causing her to trip and fall into the arms of Farmer Fred.

Instead of protesting he gave her a hug and told her that she looked almost pretty.

“To what do I owe this pleasure?” he asked.

“Well,” she giggled, “we did it. We’re in. Isn’t life wonderful?”

Fred nodded his head, but it was not clear whether it was because of the outcome of the referendum or because Alice was in his arms.

“It certainly is not” growled Sid. “Worst news we could possibly have. I’m thinking of moving to Latvia”

Serious legal note.

They completely forgot about Sid’s idea for a wind generator, but the reality is that it is too easy to overestimate the returns from a wind generator. Do your homework. You will almost certainly need planning permission. The Consumers Association has a useful website: <http://www.which.co.uk/energy/creating-an-energy-saving-home/guides/installing-a-wind-turbine/home-wind-turbines/>

By Richard Barr

For more of what he writes log onto www.richardbarr.org

Watch out for “*Smallholder Sid and the Case of.....*” in the next September October 2016 edition of The Harrowing Times!