



MAKING A MEAL OF IT: We are now entering the great Sausage War with the EU

Another pointless diversion by a useless government

WE SHALL fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender... our sausages.

A proposed ban on exporting sausages and processed meats from Britain to Northern Ireland, if the UK and EU cannot agree new regulatory standards before July 1, has caused some Brexiters to scabble for their best war metaphors.

As opponents of the Northern Ireland Protocol would have it, we're now entering potentially our greatest conflict – the great Sausage War.

Not since the *Blackadder* version of Dr Johnson realised he had forgotten to include 'sausage' in his *Dictionary of the English Language* has a few pounds of beef and pork caused such anguish.

The DUP's Sammy Wilson was so enraged he posted a photo of himself holding a unappetising bag of raw sausages beside an old 'Ulster is British' poster.

"Chilled British sausages are a threat to the peace process according to the EU, Alliance, Sinn Féin and the president of the United States," he blustered.

Sammy's just trolling us all now, isn't he? Of course for some, the right to chomp on processed meat cuts right to the heart of British sovereignty. One English pig farmer told *Channel 4 News* that Britain should "flood Northern Ireland with sausages" – a sausage flood being one of the lesser-known Plagues of Egypt.

Tabloid debates decrying 'barmy EU' rules have been going on for decades.

During the UK's membership of the bloc, the EU was blamed for everything from banning bendy bananas, forcing female bar staff not to show too much cleavage, or insisting that Bombay Mix be renamed as Mumbai Mix.

Claire
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Food safety or health guidelines were often mischievously interpreted as attempts to interfere with everything from morning fry-ups to the ringing of church bells. The fact that we're still having these debates shows how pathetic British political discourse has become. Reducing a complex agreement to rows about access to sausages may play well with voters used to being told that the EU is essentially a bureaucratic version of Beelzebub, but it won't help farmers, supermarkets and consumers stuck in the middle.

I suppose if you're Boris Johnson, used to weaseling out of everything from your marriage vows to Cobra meetings during a pandemic, then you'd be surprised that another party wants to stick to an agreement you made. The protocol, a government spokesman claimed last week, was only meant to be loosely interpreted.

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"We didn't expect the EU to take a purist approach when implementing it," he said. "We are working very hard to try to resolve these issues consensually."

A purist approach? Perhaps he meant sticking to the law, something Boris Johnson's administration finds it tricky to do.

The High Court ruled last week that Michael Gove's Cabinet Office acted unlawfully in handing out a \$560,000 public contract to a consultancy firm run by ex-colleagues of his and the Prime Minister's former adviser Dominic Cummings.

The firm, Public First, looked into public understanding of coronavirus. The court found a failure to consider any other agency "would lead a fair-minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility, or a real danger, that the decision-maker was biased". There seems to be a lack of fair-minded and informed observers in government because Mr Gove has shown no indication so far that he will resign.

But why should he, when health secretary Matt Hancock was also found to have acted unlawfully and still remains in post?

A court ruled in February that Mr Hancock "breached his legal obligation" when his department did not reveal details of contracts it had signed during the pandemic.

The government said it fully recognised the "importance of transparency", after it was found not to have been forthcoming.

Saying one thing and doing the exact opposite is the main feature of this government.

In 2019 Mr Johnson told Northern Ireland businesses to put any customs declaration forms "in the bin" because there will be "no barriers of any kind" to trade crossing the Irish Sea.

Voters should have binned him instead. With charlatans in charge, a mature solution to a complex trade dispute looks unlikely.

ON THIS DAY

JUNE 14 1971

Orangemen Repulsed

ORANGEMEN battled with riot troops and police, several soldiers were injured, rubber bullets and gas canisters were fired by the Army into the crowd and four arrests were made in Dungiven yesterday when an attempt was made to force a parade through the town in defiance of a Stormont ban.

One of those arrested was the Rev William McCrea, minister in Magherafelt Free Presbyterian Church. At one time Mr McCrea was crouched on the pavement, menaced by the uplifted baton of a Scottish soldier. Barbed wire barricades were ripped away by enraged Orangemen when they tackled troops of the Royal Scots Regiment. There were as many soldiers and police in the town as there were Orangemen. In defiance of the Government ban, a thousand Orangemen gathered, determined to break through the ranks of the Army and police – but they did not succeed.

The leaders of the Orangemen approached the Army and sought to be allowed through but the request was turned down. Some of the Orangemen then charged the first line of police and burst through.

They then ripped away barbed wire barricades to get at the Royal Scots. The confrontation, which lasted for some time, took on a more serious aspect when some of the crowd ran down to the banks of the River Roe and hurled rocks at the troops. Three soldiers were injured and the troops retaliated by firing four CS gas canisters. Rubber bullets were fired into the crowd to disperse it. It was then that Rev McCrea was arrested.

Ballymurphy's Problems Analysed

A MORE hopeful prospect for the future of the people of Ballymurphy 'who are more sinned against than sinning' was drawn by Dr Patrick Conway, PP when he spoke at the official opening of the magnificent church of Corpus Christi in the estate.

Dr Conway said there were three main sources of the troubles. The estate was built in a hurry with a lack of planning. There was widespread unemployment. The new residents suffered from the social problems that are common to new estates. 'There was an absence of community spirit,' he said.

'There was a difficulty in securing acceptance and integration into the existing community of west Belfast.'

Orangemen found it ironic that a senior member and the leader of their 1950s march down the nationalist Longstone Road in south Down had suppressed the attempt to trail the coat in Dungiven. Faulkner was already planning to balance his decision – by introducing Internment without trial. 'Ballymurphy' had become a by-word for nightly clashes between Catholic youths and British troops.

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