

# The ugly duckling

The tiny duckling was born in to a London farm community of ducks and farm animals in 2016. Known as Leave, he did not seem to be like the other baby ducklings. They were all proudly Remain ducklings, as they delighted in telling him. They told him to be like them he had to change his name and agree with everything they said. He was too proud to do that, and did not see what all the fuss was about. His parents had told him his name was special and had been endorsed by millions of people.

The other ducklings snorted and looked down their bills at him. They told him he could never survive on his own. They made him feel very uncomfortable trying to live alongside them. They told him they were superior, could swim faster and fly further. They doubted his ability to find enough food, and took delight in hiding the food from him or eating it before he could get it. They explained that unless he became a proper Remain duck there was no chance of him having a happy life, and perhaps no chance of his surviving.

When he pushed back and told them being called Leave was just fine, and there was food he could find, and he could be happy on his own they all ganged up on him and tried to starve him out. The ducklings got support from their parents, who used their superior weight and muscle to beat Leave to the food, or to keep him out of the best parts of the pond. The European geese were particular keen to make his life difficult.

Things got so bad for Leave that he decided to live up to his name and simply leave the farmyard and its pond and all those disagreeable ducklings behind him. After wandering a long way he stumbled in to a new home called Parliament, where some people, a cat and a hen held court. They put up with him but when they found out he was called Leave they turned on him just like the ducks had done.

They told him Leave was bad. They told him it would mean he could not get access to enough food., They told him if he ever needed medicines the people helping him would not be able to afford them. They shoved him around, and worked out ways to make his life more miserable. Just like the ducks they said he had to change his name to Remain if he wanted peace and quiet. The cat who curled up in a big chair at one end of the Parliament room played with him mercilessly, shouting at him and telling him all the things he could not do. The hen said she was the opposition and planned to see him off.

Lonely and downhearted, Leave picked up his dignity and moved on. He found a big empty lake and lived a lonely life there, until one day a large number of fine swans arrived. He was afraid they would set on him, so he kept in the reeds on the edge and hoped they would not see.

The swans came straight over to him and told him not to be afraid. He apologised for being an ugly Leave duckling as an act of self preservation. They told him to look at the mirror of the water, for he would then see he was no ugly duckling but a magnificent swan. They told him they were all

Leave swans. Leave meant being free. It meant the right to go anywhere you wished. It gave you access to all the best food . As swans are so much more powerful than Remain ducklings, there was no need to be afraid ever again.

So the ugly duckling looked at himself in the mirror, and looked again. Finally he pronounced "I am a swan. "

He soon discovered how much better it was being a swan than a duck. He was respected and admired wherever he went. He was free to go as he chose, and accepted rules which only he could make. Gone was all the hassle of the farmyard and the intrusion of all that squawking of all those unhappy ducklings in Parliament.