

**PE1541/I**

David Whyte Letter of 17 February 2015

Re: Petition to have 'Flower of Scotland' recognised as the official anthem of Scotland

I am writing to challenge the current petition to have 'Flower of Scotland' recognised as Scotland's official national anthem. The song was never written to be used as an official anthem. It is backward looking. It dwells on a mythical golden age in the past. It promotes a clichéd stereotypical image of Scotland with its 'wee bit hill and glen'. It is militaristic and celebrates war. It is obsessed with Scotland's historical enmity with one other country, our neighbour, England. The song may be popular with Scottish football fans and express populist sentiments, but these have no place in the official anthem of a modern day Scotland. Musically, the tune cannot even be played properly on the pipes as it contains a note which is out with the piping scales.

Hamish Henderson's 'Freedom Come All Ye' is the precise opposite. It is set to an existing pipe tune. The lyrics are forward looking, outward looking, inclusive and positive in their promotion of peace and justice for all peoples. It is written in Scots. Some see this as an issue, but surely it is a further benefit. Adopting it as the official anthem of Scotland would promote the Scots language and encourage more Scottish people to learn something in their own language and appreciate how rich and expressive that language can be. 'Freedom Come All Ye' would be a much more appropriate choice as Scotland's national anthem.

David Whyte