

They've dragged the carcass out again, being short on news today: no earthquakes, terrorist attacks and no love-nest exposé.

In solemn tones the nation's told of 'a push to change the flag'. As evidence, the announcer whips a has-been from his bag of past-date *pollies*, trained galahs and old rabid Anglophobes – those pseudo-Aussie patriots in their green and golden robes.

'Why flog a dead horse, Mate?', I call at the spruiker on my screen, 'We've heard your arguments before and have found them false and lean'. He rabbits on, now links his plea with the need to ditch the Crown – a pea-and-thimble strategy that would take few Aussies down. Like many others, I desire a republic in good time and regard the House of Windsor as redundant, past its prime.

But the Union Jack that's cornered at the top-left of our flag doesn't mean we're still dependent or retain our convicts' tag. It stands for institutions which we now treasure as our own, that were gained from Mother England as her seeds were widely sown: religious toleration, plus education freely due, the rule of law shared equally and all race attacks taboo.

Our migrants from a background where no such guarantees exist might share my disenchantment were that small British flag dismissed, removed from measured prominence where it's been since nineteen-one. Since then our flag's remained intact, but for star-point changes done. A nation's ensign shouldn't be at the mercy of some fad, but built on heritage and pride, it's defences ironclad.

The fabric of our flag is weft with our childhood memories. We've watched it lowered Anzac Days and at school-yards in the breeze. Its aura whispers sacrifice: at Kokoda, Burma rail, Korea, Long Tan, Poziers and Sandakan's tragic trail. All those who still appreciate what was Britain's *finest hour*<sup>1</sup>, recall the RAAF in comradeship when *so few*<sup>2</sup> faced Hitler's power.

Our flag's respected, mostly loved, both in cities and the bush,  
its future guaranteed despite your assertions of a *push*.  
It stands for courage, fortitude in the stress of peace and war.  
It binds our past and future, flies as a mateship metaphor.  
So here's my friendly warning for you absurd iconoclasts:  
Remove your fancy colours, nailed to prententious flimsy masts.

(ends)

Notes: from Winston Churchill's House of Commons speeches.

1. 18 June 1940. 'If the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will say "This was their finest hour".'
2. 20 Aug 1940 ( on RAF in Battle of Britain) ' Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'.