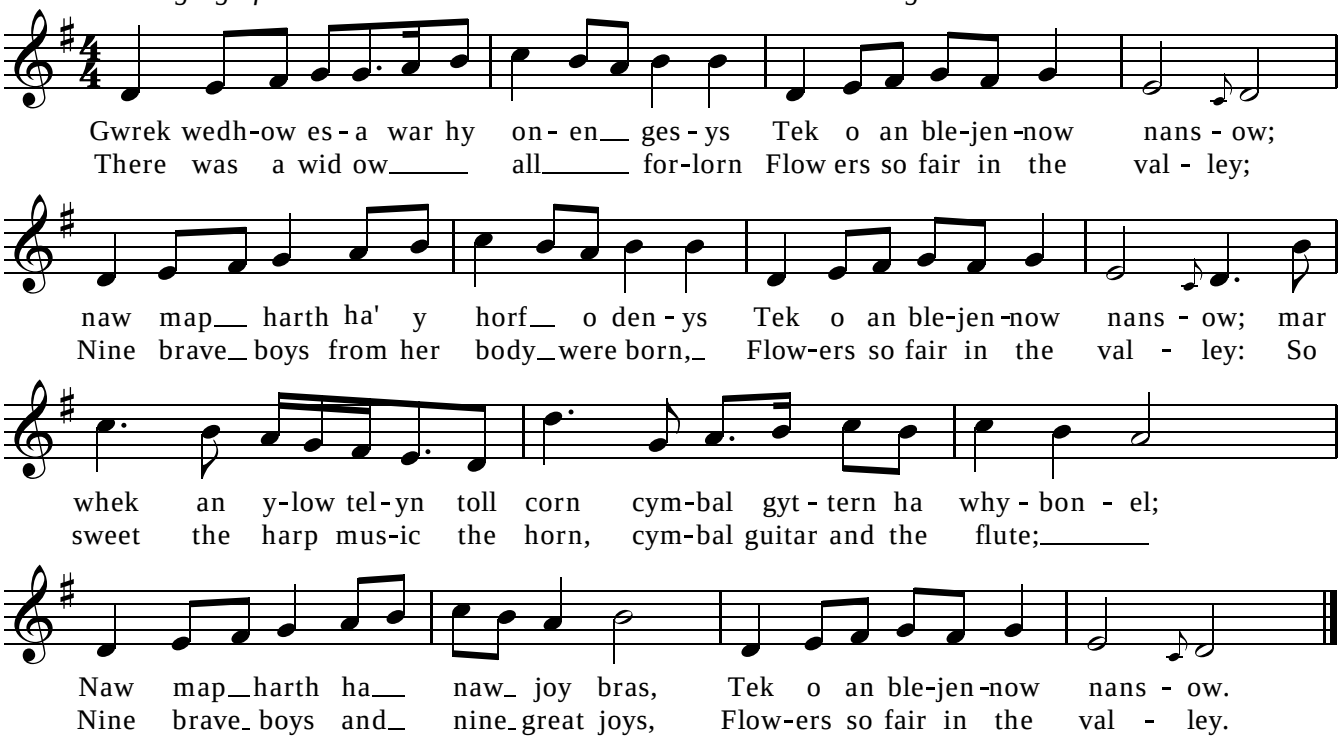
Naw Map Harth (Nine Brave Boys), or Flowers in the Valley

From the singing of John Bolitho at St Clements Church Withiel 8th August 2005



Three of them were soldiers bold,
Flowers....
For the sergeants shilling their lives they sold.
Flowers....

Three of them were tinners fine,
Flowers....
Taken with consumption and dead before their time.
Flowers....

[Three of them were seamen so brave,
Flowers....
Lost in battle, given a watery grave.
Flowers....] *

And that was the end of the nine brave boys,
Flowers....
Leaving the widow all forlorn.
Flowers....

Try anedha o casoryon len;
Tek ....
Rak sols serjont ledhys yn tyr estren.
Tek ....

Try anedha o stennoryon yn whel;
Tek ....
Y kemeryns cleves skevens hag y whrussons y merwel.
Tek ....

[Try anedha o morwesyon harth;
Tek ....
Kellys yn casvor, encledhys yn mordarth.
Tek ....] *

An naw map harth yndella o merwys;
Tek ....
Ha'n wrek wedhow esa war y onen gesys.,
Tek ....

** Verse 4 not sung by John Bolitho at Withiel Church but added here to make sense of the story of 9 brave boys.*

Notes

This song was originally noted by the Gilbert family of the Falcon Inn at St Mawgan from a singer called Thomas Williams who died in 1881. The Gilberts sent it to both Rev Sabine Baring Gould and Cecil Sharp for their collections. The song was adapted with Cornish words by Merv Davey in Hengan (Redruth, Dyllansow Truran 1983). Version given above is from the singing of John Bolitho in 2005. It was included in the Racca Cornish session tune project 1995 -97 and played as a march with an even number of bars rather than a lament is also a popular session and dance tune at the time of writing. Cornish and English versions are not literal translations of each other.

Merv Davey 2011