



## Teachers' Guide Trelawny Shout

# Trelawny Shout Guide for Teachers

## Trelawny (The Song of The Western Men) by RS Hawker (1824)

Hawker was a vicar in Morwenstow in the 1800s and became a renowned poet. His lyrics Trelawny were set to an old folk tune and the song has now become Cornwall's unofficial National Anthem. It is sung patriotically at sporting events, on St Piran's Day and in gatherings of the Cornish throughout the world.

It is believed that The Song of The Western Men refers to Jonathan Trelawny (1650 - 1721) who was one of seven bishops imprisoned in the Tower of London by James II in 1688. Trelawny was born in Pelynt near Looe and became a priest in 1676. In 1685 he became Bishop of Bristol.

At the time, Europe was mainly Catholic and King James II became concerned that Britain was under threat as a Protestant country. Consequently, he appointed a number of Catholics to prominent positions and later challenged the Church of England by publishing a 'Declaration of Indulgence towards Catholics' insisting that this was read in every church. Seven bishops, including Trelawny, travelled to London and presented the king with a petition against the reading. James took no notice and imprisoned the seven bishops in the Tower of London.

James had the bishops transported by river to Traitors' Gate in the royal barge because he was concerned that the people would attempt to free them from the tower. On the way, crowds waded into the river to receive the bishops' blessing, and the Tower Warders knelt inside the gate as they landed. The guards that night drank a toast to their health. It was obvious that they and their cause were popular.

In Cornwall, the news of the arrest of their Bishop was greeted with anger and dismay. "And shall Trelawny die?" asked the Cornish. However, there certainly weren't 20,000 Cornish Men available to storm the Tower of London. These men had supported the king in the civil war and many had died or were exhausted. The Cornish Army, however, had been loyal to its Cornish leaders and not to English commanders who had attempted to take their charge. Despite taking most of the South West the men were defeated and returned to Cornwall incapable of mustering a battalion to free Bishop Trelawny.

On 30th June, 1688, the seven bishops were acquitted, probably because of public pressure. When the news reached Cornwall, the church bells of Pelynt Church rang and the mayor fired the two town cannons. It was not long before James II fled England and William of Orange took the throne, supporting the Church of England. Trelawny later became Bishop of Exeter and Winchester.

*By the way, there is a some evidence that the song may be about the Cornish Royalist Leader Sir John Trelawny... but that's another story!*

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### A Cornish Shout

In the tradition of Cornish singing over centuries the 'shout' is an informal and inclusive celebration, often held in pubs, with harmonising voices of all ages. The first 'pitch'n up' inevitably leads to further hours of singing traditional Cornish songs.

In common with other Celtic nations, the Cornish have a long-standing tradition of communal singing. Shanties are known to have been sung as long as 500 years ago to help sailors synchronise their work and became popular in pubs and amongst groups ashore. With miners and farmers developing their own songs to manage their toil, group singing had become a staple of Cornish community life by the industrial revolution. Many of these songs still exist in the repertoire of community choirs, shanty groups and male voice choirs in Cornwall, with the recent fame of The Fisherman's Friends highlighting their popularity.

In a shout, there are no performances or audiences and leadership is very understated. Everyone participates, and songs become familiar, passed between communities and generations. As the Cornish have now been recognised as a national minority this is one aspect of our culture that is being preserved and Having launched The Trelawny Shout in 2015, approximately 11,000 people joined in on St Piran's Day 2019.

### **Fundamentals of a Shout**

1. Sung in a circle
2. No obvious leader, although a pitch pipe may be used to start a song
3. Anyone can start a new song
4. Anyone can join in
5. Usually in a pub, but can happen anywhere

Shout Kernow by Hilary Coleman and Sally Burley has 31 traditional songs and a CD as well as information about the history of a Cornish Shout.

<https://francisboutle.co.uk/products/shout-kernow/>