

# Grand Union Folk Club



## *A Collection of Christmas Carols & Seasonal Songs*

For information about the club visit <http://www.guf.org.uk>

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## A Merry Christmas

1. We singers make bold, as in days of old,  
To celebrate Christmas and bring you good cheer,  
Glad tidings we bring of Messiah, our King:

*Chorus:*

*So we wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
We wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a happy New Year*

2. The Shepherds amazed as upwards they gazed,  
Behold holy angels to them drawing near,  
Singing “good will to men” as onwards they came:
3. Yes join heart and hand and keep God’s command,  
By living to serve Him throughout the New Year,  
In an innocent way be merry today:

The origins of this song are unknown. This version comes from *Jack Goodison’s Collection of Sheffield carols* but variations can be found throughout the UK. Ian Russell (2008) associates the song in the Sheffield area with the manuscripts of the Mount Family of Worrall.

## A Song for the Time

*Chorus:*

*There's a song for the time when the sweet bells chime,  
Calling rich and poor to pray,  
On this glad morn, when Christ was born,  
On that holy Christmas Day.*

1. The squire came forth from his rich old hall,  
And the peasants by two and by three,  
The woodman let his hatchet fall,  
And the shepherd left his tree.
2. Through the churchyard snow, in a goodly row,  
They came forth old and young,  
And with one consent in prayer they bent,  
And with one consent they sang.
3. We'll cherish it now in the time of strife,  
As a holy and peaceful thing,  
For it tells of His love, coming down from above,  
And the peace he deigns to bring.
4. In those good old days of prayer and praise,  
Twas a season of right goodwill,  
For they kept His birthday holy then,  
And we'll keep it holy still.

One of the Yorkshire carols. Worrall Male Voice Choir's "The Joy of Christmas" (2002) attributes the song to Ecclesfield vicar Dr Alfred Gatty (1813 – 1903), or more likely his son Alfred Scott Gatty (1847 – 1918) who was a prolific writer of songs.

## Angels From the Realms of Glory

1. Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth,  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

*Chorus:*

*Come and worship, Christ, the new-born King,  
Come and worship, Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

2. Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with man is now residing;  
Yonder shines the infant Light.
3. Sages, leave your contemplations,  
Brighter visions beam afar,  
Seek the great Desire of Nations,  
Ye have seen his natal star.
4. Saints before the altar bending,  
Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
In his temple shall appear.

Written by Scottish poet James Montgomery it was first published in his newspaper the *Sheffield Iris* on December 24<sup>th</sup> 1816.

## **Awake and Join the Cheerful Choir**

1. Awake and join the cheerful choir upon this joyful morn,  
Upon this Joyful morn,  
And glad Hosannas loudly sing for joy a Saviour's born,  
And glad Hosannas loudly sing for joy a Saviour's born,  
For joy a Saviour's born,  
And glad Hosannas loudly sing for joy a Saviour's born,  
And glad Hosannas loudly sing for joy a Saviour's born,  
For joy a Saviour's born.
  
2. Let all the choirs on earth below their voices loudly raise,  
Their voices loudly raise,  
And sweetly join the cheerful band of angels in the skies,  
And sweetly join the cheerful band of angels in the skies,  
Of angels in the skies,  
And sweetly join the cheerful band of angels in the skies,  
And sweetly join the cheerful band of angels in the skies,  
Of angels in the skies.
  
3. The shining host in bright array descend from Heaven to Earth,  
Descend from Heaven to Earth,  
And joyful news to us they brought of our dear Saviours birth,  
And joyful news to us they brought of our dear Saviours birth,  
Of our dear Saviours birth,  
And joyful news to us they brought of our dear Saviours birth,  
And joyful news to us they brought of our dear Saviours birth,  
Of our dear Saviours birth.
  
4. But let us join the cheerful song with joy and pious mirth,  
With joy and pious mirth,  
And all with grateful heart and voice proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
And all with grateful heart and voice proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
Proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
And all with grateful heart and voice proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
And all with grateful heart and voice proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
Proclaim the Saviour's birth.

A carol from Dorset that can be found in the George Hanford Book (1830), part of the Dorset County Museum's collection. It is also mentioned in the Puddletown manuscripts and appears in song books in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection. It is likely that Hardy, an accomplished singer and musician, would have been very familiar with this carol. A variation of the song entitled the "Britford Second Carol" was published in 1904 in Rev. Geoffry Hill's "Wiltshire Folk Songs and Carols".

## Awake, Arise Good Christians

1. Awake, arise good Christians,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour,  
Was born upon this day,  
The self same moon was shining,  
That now is in the sky,  
When a holy band of angels,  
Came down from God on high.

*Chorus:*

*Hosannah, Hosannah,  
To Jesus we'll sing,  
Hosannah, Hosannah,  
Our Saviour and King.*

2. "Fear not we bring good tidings,  
For on this happy morn,  
The promised one, our Saviour,  
In Bethlehem town was born",  
Up rose the simple shepherds,  
All with a joyful mind,  
"And let us go in haste" they say,  
"This Holy Child to find".

3. And like unto the shepherds,  
We wander far and near,  
And bid you wake good Christians,  
The joyful news to hear,  
Awake arise good Christians,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour,  
Was born upon this day,

*Repeat chorus.*

From the tradition of Yorkshire village carols; they are still sung annually in the pubs around Dungworth, Ecclesfield, Worrall, Oughtibridge, etc. The source of the words is unknown, the tune is attributed to William Mount of Worrall (Ian Russell (2008), "The Sheffield Book of Village Carols")

## Babes in the Wood

1. O, don't you remember, a long time ago,  
Those two little babies their names I don't know,  
They strayed far away, one bright summer's day,  
Those two little babies got lost on their way.

*Chorus:*

*Pretty babes in the wood, pretty babes in the wood,  
O, don't you remember those babes in the wood.*

2. Now the day being long and the night coming on,  
Those two little babies sat under a stone,  
They sobbed and they sighed, they sat there and cried,  
Those two little babies they lay down and died.
3. Now the robins so red, how swiftly they sped,  
They put out their wide wings and over them spread,  
And all the day long in the branches they throng,  
They sweetly did whistle and this was their song.

The above version appears in Bob Copper's "A Song For Every Season" (1971).

English folklore links the tale of the "babes in the wood" to Griston Hall in Norfolk and the alleged murder by Robert de Grey of his brother's children *circa* 1562. The village signs in both Griston and nearby Whatton depict the story. However, there appears to be no official documentary evidence relating either to the untimely demise of the children or the role of the uncle in their death. Robert de Grey was a staunch catholic at a time when there was much tension in England between catholics and protestants so it is possible that the tale was malicious. Either way Thomas Millington of Norfolk published a ballad entitled "The Children in the Wood" in 1595, several years after the alleged events took place. Millington's epic has 40 verses – none of which bears any resemblance to the Coppers' version.

The Brothers Grimm collected similar tales in both France and Germany (the basis of Hansel & Gretel) and other variations are found right across Europe.

Bob Copper associated his family's version of "Babes in the Wood" with the seasonal tradition of pantomime and said it was always sung during supper on Christmas night.

## Boar's Head Carol

1. The Boar's Head in hand bear I,  
Bedecked with bay and rosemary,  
I bid you my masters be merry,  
Quot estis in convivio.

*Chorus (sung twice between each verse):*

*Caput apri defero,  
Reddens laudes Domino.*

2. The Boar's Head as I understand,  
Is the rarest dish in all the land,  
Which thus bedecked with a gay garland,  
Let us servire cantico.
3. Our steward hath provided this,  
In honour of the King of bliss,  
Which on this day to be served is,  
In Reginensis Atrio.

*Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino.* – I bring the Boar's head, sing thanks to the Lord  
*Quot estis in convivio* – all who are feasting together.  
*servire cantico* – serve whilst singing.  
*Reginensis Atrio* – within the Queen's Hall

A traditional 16th century carol that can be traced back to *Christmasse Carolles*, published by Jan van Wynkyn in 1521. Wynkyn, also known as Wynkyn de Worde, was Caxton's apprentice from the formation of his printing business in 1476 until his death in 1491. Wynkyn inherited the business and moved it to Fleet Street in 1501. A similar text can be found in Richard Hill's "*Commonplace Book*", circa 1500 (MS 354, Balliol College archives). Over the years there have been numerous variations of the Boars Head Carol including a 1607 version that was sung in St John's College, Cambridge. Our version, which is specific to Queens College, Oxford, appears in A.H. Bullen's "*A Christmas Garland*" (1885). It is quite similar to one given in Joseph Ritson's "*Ancient Songs and Ballads*" (1790) but which does not include the reference to Queens College.

## The Carnal and the Crane

1. As I passed by a river side,  
And there as I did reign,  
In argument I chanced to hear,  
A carnal and a crane.
2. The carnal said unto the crane,  
“If all the world should turn,  
Before we had the Father,  
But now we have the Son!”
3. “From whence does the Son come,  
From where and from what place?”  
He said, “In a manger,  
Between an ox and ass.”
4. “I pray thee,” said the carnal,  
“Tell me before thou go,  
Was not the mother of Jesus Christ,  
Conceived by the Holy Ghost?”
5. She was the purest virgin,  
And the cleanest from all sin;  
She was the handmaid of our Lord,  
And the mother of our King.”
6. “Where is the golden cradle,  
That Christ was rocked in?  
And where are the silken sheets,  
That Jesus was wrapped in?”
7. “A manger was the cradle,  
That Christ was rocked in,  
The provender the asses left,  
So sweetly he slept on.”

The Carnal (Crow) and the Crane is a conversation between two birds related to the legend that when the Magi visited King Herod and told him of their quest to honour the birth of the Messiah, Herod responded that if what they had told him was true the roasted cock on his table would rise up and crow. The cock duly obliged. William Sandys published 30 verses of the song in “Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern” (1833). Numerous other people including Cecil Sharp, Lucy Broadwood and Ralph Vaughan Williams collected fragments of the song from across the UK. This abridged version comes from the singing of Peter Bellamy and uses a tune collected by Vaughan Williams in Hereford in 1904

## The Christmas Goose

1. Twas at an inn in Manchester, 'The Cornstalks' was the sign,  
A famous public where commercials used to sleep and dine,  
A traveller one Christmas eve, so long had been his use,  
Called in to spend his holiday and choose his Christmas goose.

*Chorus:*

*All around the greenwood so early in the morn  
The merry, merry huntsman blows his silver bugle horn.*

2. Well, he sipped his glass of sherry wine, he smoked his mild cigar,  
And chatted with the landlord and customers at the bar,  
And not a thought of wickedness did enter in his head,  
Until the chambermaid appeared to light him up to bed.
3. As he followed he grew so amorous he kissed her on the stairs,  
He squeezed her by the chamber door before he said his prayers,  
He gave to her a guinea to prevent her feeling vexed,  
And then he blew the candle out, and you can guess the next.
4. Next morn this gay Lothario discharged his little bill,  
He tipped the boots and tossed the landlord for a parting gill,  
And where he went to afterwards I really couldn't say,  
Suffice he came to choose his goose the very next Christmas day.
5. He strolled into the coffee room, as jaunty as could be,  
Where many a rooster like himself was waiting for his tea,  
He ordered up the very best the landlord could produce,  
And as the waiter turned he said "Now don't forget me goose!"
6. Right speedily a tray was brought with eatables galore,  
And by the selfsame chambermaid he'd kissed twelve months before,  
But when he looked beneath the cloth, whereon the goods were piled,  
Instead of eatables he found a big fat bumping child.
7. Enraged at hearing others laugh, "Now what's this here?" says he,  
"Come sit you down beside me and I'll tell you sir," says she,  
"Last Christmas you so generous was, nay do not think it strange,  
You gave to me a guinea sir and now I've brought your change."

*Repeat chorus*

This song is included because it's seasonal and it's a great tale. The story is widespread. This version comes from Yorkshire but a non-seasonal version with a local connection was published on a 19<sup>th</sup> century broadsheet under the name of the "*Leicester Chamber Maid*". Another non-seasonal variant, also set in Leicestershire, goes under the name of "*The Brisk Young Butcher*". A version of *The Brisk Young Butcher* was collected in 1906 in Mere Workhouse, Dorset from Alfred Scannell and was published in Frank Purslow's *Marrow Bones* (1965).

## **Christmas is Now Drawing Near at Hand**

1. Christmas is now drawing near at hand,  
Come praise the Lord and be at His command,  
And God a portion for you will provide,  
And give a blessing to your soul besides.
2. Down in the garden where flowers growing ranks,  
Down on your bended knee and give the Lord thanks,  
Down on your knees and pray both night and day,  
Leave off your sins and live upright I pray.
3. So proud and lofty is some sort of sin,  
Which many take delight and pleasure in,  
Whose conversation God doth much dislike,  
And yet He shakes His sword before He strikes.
4. So proud and lofty do some people go,  
And dress themselves like players in a show,  
They patch and paint and dress with idle stuff,  
As if God had not made them fine enough.
5. Even little children learn to curse and swear,  
And can't rehearse one word of Godly prayer,  
Oh teach them better, oh teach them to rely,  
On Christ the sinner's friend who reigns on high.

*Repeat first verse*

This carol was often sung by beggars during the approach to Christmas. It was also reported as being common among gypsies who travelled through the West Midlands and indeed some of the collected versions go under the title of "*The Gypsy's Carol*". The tune is traceable back to the sixteenth century. Numerous versions of this song, collected by both Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp, were published in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* in 1914.

## Christmas Song

1. The trees are all bare not a leaf to be seen,  
And the meadows their beauty have lost,  
Now winter is come and tis cold for man and beast,  
And the streams they are all, the streams they are all,  
Fast bound down with frost.
2. And down in the farmyard where the oxen feed on hay,  
They send forth their breath like the steam,  
Sweet Betsy the milkmaid now quickly she must go,  
For flakes of ice she finds, for flakes of ice she finds,  
A-floating on her cream.
3. Tis now all the small birds to the barn door fly for food,  
How gently they rest on each spray,  
While down the plantation the hares do search for food,  
And lift their footsteps sure, lift their footsteps sure,  
For fear they do betray.
4. Now Christmas is come and our song is almost done,  
For soon we have the turning of the year,  
So fill up your glasses and let your health go round,  
For we wish you all, for we wish you all,  
A joyful New Year,  
For we wish you all, for we wish you all,  
A joyful New Year.

A delightful song from Bob Copper's "*A Song for Every Season*" (1971). The words of the first two verses are adapted from the poem "*Winter*" written by Thomas Brerewood (d 1748) of Horton, Bucks and published in G Pearch's, "*A Collection of Poems in Four Volumes by Several Hands. Vol. II*" (1770). A slightly different version of "*Winter*" appears in G. A. Stevens' collection of songs "*The Choice Spirit's Chaplet*" (1771). Stevens' version includes the essence of the Copper Family's third verse (attributed to Brerewood), but no tune. Joseph Ritson's "*A Select Collection of English Songs*" (1783) has Pearch's 1770 words (not a hint of the third verse) and a tune; however it is different to the one sung by the Coppers. The fourth verse appears to be a more recent addition but it provides a fitting climax to the song.

## The Christmas Tree

1. Who comes this way so blithe and gay,  
Upon this Merry Christmas Day,  
So merrily, so cheerily,  
With his peak'd hat and reindeer sleigh,  
With lots toys for girls and boys,  
As pretty as you e'er did see,  
Oh welcome Santa Claus's man,  
Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.

*Chorus:*

*Oh Ho Ho, Ho!*  
*Jingle, jingle, jinga, jinga, jing,*  
*Right merry shall we be.*  
*Jingle, jingle, he comes this way,*  
*Comes with a Christmas tree.*  
*And welcome, welcome, welcome Kris,*  
*Right welcome shall you be.*  
*Oh here he is yes, yes he is,*  
*'Tis Kris with the Christmas tree,*  
*The Christmas tree, the Christmas tree,*  
*The Christmas tree, the Christmas tree.*

2. Hear sleigh bell ring with a merry ching,  
As o'er the roofs the reindeers spring,  
Gee up, Gee ho, how swift they go,  
Over the ice and the drifts of snow,  
For he must call on one and all,  
His master's pretty pets you see,  
For he is Santa Claus's man,  
Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.
3. With cakes and plums, trumpets and drums,  
And lots of pretty things he comes,  
So now be quick your places take,  
And all a merry circle make,  
For now he's near he'll soon appear,  
And his jolly face we'll see,  
Oh welcome Santa Claus's man,  
Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.

A song associated in the UK with the carolling tradition of the villages around Sheffield. Its origins however lie in the USA. It was composed by William Bradbury of Maine and was first published in New York in "*Bradbury's Fresh Laurels for the Sabbath School*", 1867.

## The Coventry Carol

*Chorus:*

*Lul-ly, lul-la, thou little tiny child,  
Bye, bye lul-ly, lul-lay,  
Thou little tiny child,  
Bye, bye lul-ly, lul-lay.*

1. O sisters too, how may we do,  
For to preserve this day,  
This poor youngling for whom we sing,  
Bye, bye lul-ly, lul-lay.
2. Herod the king in his raging,  
Charged he hath this day,  
His men of might in his own sight,  
All young children to slay.
3. That woe is me, poor child for thee,  
And ever morn and day,  
For thy parting neither say nor sing,  
Bye, bye lul-ly, lul-lay.

A 16th century carol that originally formed part of a nativity pageant of “*The Shearman and Tailors Company*” of Coventry (Thomas Sharp (1825) *Dissertation on the Pageants of Coventry*). The text shown here is attributed to Robert Croo (1534). It tells of the anguish of the women of Bethlehem just before the slaughter of the innocents.

The history of the Coventry pageants date back at least to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. According to *The Oxford Book of Carols* Margaret, Queen of Henry VI (in 1456), Richard III (in 1484) and Henry VII in (1492) all witnessed versions of the plays.

## Cranbrook

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.
2. "Fear not" said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind,  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.
3. "To you in David's town this day,  
Is born of David's line,  
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,  
And this shall be the sign.
4. "The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid."
5. Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith,  
Appeared a shining throng,  
Of angels praising God, who thus,  
Addressed their joyful song.
6. "All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace,  
Good will henceforth from heaven to men,  
Begin and never cease."

The lyrics were written by Nahum Tate circa 1700. Tate's words are so malleable they have been the inspiration for a huge number of variations. The tune *Cranbrook*, written by Canterbury shoemaker Thomas Clark, was published in 1805 in his book *A Sett of Psalm and Hymn Tunes*. Almost immediately Clark's tune was married to "While Shepherds" and for many years it was the most commonly heard version of the carol. Today however the tune *Cranbrook* is almost universally associated with the popular music hall number "On Ilkley Moor Bah Tat".

## Diadem

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name  
Let angels prostrate fall, let angels prostrate fall,  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,  
And crown Him Lord of all.
2. Ye Saints redeemed of Adam's race,  
Ye ransomed from the fall, Ye ransomed from the fall,  
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,  
And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,  
And crown Him Lord of all.
3. Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget,  
The wormwood and the gall, the wormwood and the gall,  
Go spread your trophies at His feet,  
And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,  
And crown Him Lord of all.
4. Let every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball, on this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,  
And crown Him Lord of all.
5. Oh that with yonder sacred throng,  
We at His feet may fall, we at His feet may fall,  
Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

And crown Him Lord of all,  
And crown Him Lord of all,  
And crown Him Lord of all,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

Words by Rev. Edward Perronet (circa 1779); tune by James Ellor of Droylsden, Lancashire (circa 1838).

## Ding Dong! Merrily on High

1. Ding dong! merrily on high,  
In heav'n the bells are ringing,  
Ding dong! verily the sky,  
Is riv'n with angels singing.

*Chorus:*

*Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!*

2. E'en so here below, below,  
Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And "Io, io, io!"  
By priest and people sungen.
3. Pray you, dutifully prime,  
Your Matin chime, ye ringers,  
May you beautifully rime,  
Your Evetime song, ye singers.

A relatively modern English carol with a tune that dates back to sixteenth century France. It must rank as one of the most popular carols ever written.

The tune first appeared as a piece of secular dance music known as "*Branle de l'Official*". It formed part of a collection of dance tunes entitled "*Orchésographie*", compiled by Thoinot Arbeau and published in 1588. "Thoinot Arbeau" was the semi-anagrammatic pen-name of French cleric Jehan Tabourot (1519–1593).

The lyrics are from English composer George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934). The carol was first published in 1924 in Woodward's "*The Cambridge Carol-Book: Being Fifty-two Songs for Christmas, Easter, And Other Seasons*". This was just 18 years before Irving Berlin wrote "*White Christmas*".

## Down in Yon Forest

1. Down in yon forest there is a hall,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
Covered all over in purple pall,  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*
2. And in that hall there is a bed,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
Covered over with a cover so red,  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*
3. And at the bed-side there is a stone,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon,  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*
4. At the bed foot there grows a thorn,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
Which never bore flower since it was born,  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*
5. And under that bed there is a flood,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
One half runs water the other runs blood,  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*
6. And over that hall the moon shines so bright,  
*The bells of paradise I heard them ring,*  
Denoting our saviour was born this night.  
*I love my Lord Jesus above anything.*

A carol from Derbyshire collected by Vaughan Williams from James Hall of Castleton in 1906. A similar song "All Bells In Paradise" was published in a Staffordshire broadsheet in 1862, but without a tune. The earliest recorded mention of the text appears in Richard Hill's Commonplace Book (a scrapbook of sorts), circa 1500 (MS 354, Balliol College archives). However, the song is likely to have been in circulation before then.

## The First Nowell

1. The first Nowell the angel did say,  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Chorus:*

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

2. They looked up and saw a star,  
Shining in the east beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night.
3. And by the light of that same star,  
Three wise men came from country far,  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.
4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
And there it did both stop and stay,  
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
5. Then entered in those wise men three,  
Fell reverently upon their knee,  
And offered there in his presence,  
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
6. Then let us all with one accord,  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
And with his blood mankind hath bought.

A Traditional English carol that the Oxford Book of Carols speculates dates back to the seventeenth century. However its first appearance in print seems to be in Davies Gilbert's "Ancient Christmas Carols" published in 1823.

## The Gloucestershire Wassail

1. Wassail! wassail! all over the town,  
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown,  
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree,  
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.
2. Here's to our Cherry\*, and to his right cheek,  
Pray God send our master a good piece of beef,  
And a good piece of beef as e'er he did see,  
With my wassailing bowl I drink to thee.
3. Here's to our dobbin\* and to his right eye,  
God send our mistress a good Christmas pie.  
A good Christmas pie as e'er she did see,  
With my wassailing bowl I drink to thee.
4. So here's to Broad Mary and to her broad horn,  
May God send our master a good crop of corn,  
And a good crop of corn that may we all see,  
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.
5. And here is to Fillpail\* and to her left ear,  
Pray God send our master a happy New Year,  
And a happy New Year as e'er he did see,  
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.
6. Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best,  
Then we hope that your soul in heaven may rest,  
But if you do draw us a bowl of the small,  
Then down shall go butler, bowl and all.
7. Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,  
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock,  
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin,  
For to let these jolly wassailers in.

\* *Cherry* and *Dobbin* were horses, *Fillpail* was a cow.

Variations of this carol were found all over Gloucestershire by numerous collectors including Vaughan Williams and Sharp. It was published in Bell's "*Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs of England*" (1857). Husk in "*Songs of the Nativity*" (1868) reports a reference to it being sung in the 1790s in Gloucestershire by wassailers carrying a great bowl dressed up with garlands and ribbons.

## God Bless The Master

1. God bless the master of this house,  
And send him long to reign,  
Wherever he walks, wherever he rides,  
Lord Jesus be his guide, Lord Jesus be his guide.
2. God bless the mistress of this house,  
With a gold chain round her breast,  
Amongst her friends and kindred,  
God send their souls to rest, God send their souls to rest.
3. From morn to morn remember thou,  
When first our Christ was born,  
He was crucified between two thieves,  
And crowned with a thorn, And crowned with a thorn.
4. From morn to morn remember thou,  
When Christ lay on the rood,  
Twas for our sins and wickedness,  
Christ shed his precious blood, Christ shed his precious blood.
5. From morn to morn remember thou,  
When Christ was wrapped in clay,  
He was put into some sepulchre,  
Where never no man lay, Where never no man lay.
6. God bless the ruler of this house,  
And send him long to reign,  
And many a merry Christmas,  
We may live to see again, We may live to see again.
7. Now I have said my carol,  
Which I intend to do,  
God bless us all, both great and small,  
And send us a happy New Year, And send us a happy New Year.

A wassailing hymn that appears in numerous broadsides dating from around the 1850s, much used in Mummers plays. This version was collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1909 from Mr Daniel Wigg of Preston Candover, nr Alresford, Hampshire.

## God Rest You Merry Gentlemen

1. God rest you merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour was born upon this day,  
To save poor souls from Satan's power when we are gone astray.

*Chorus:*

*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

2. From God that is our Father, the blessed angels came,  
Unto some certain shepherds with tidings of the same,  
That there was born in Bethlehem, the Son of God by name.
3. The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,  
And left their flocks a feeding in tempest storms of wind,  
And straight they came to Bethlehem, the Son of God to find.
4. Now when they came to Bethlehem where our sweet Saviour lay,  
They found Him in a manger, where oxen fed on hay,  
The Blessed Mary kneeling down, unto the Lord did pray.
5. Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place,  
Like we true loving brethren, each other to embrace,  
The merry time of Christmas is drawing on a-pace.
6. God bless the ruler of this house and send him long to reign,  
And many a merry Christmas, may live to see again,  
Among your friends and kindred that live both far and near.

A version of this carol can be found in the *Roxborough Ballads*, vol 3, circa 1770. It is thought to have originated in Cornwall but this abridged version, which comes from London, appeared in William Sandys' *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*, 1833.

## Good Christian Men, Rejoice

1. Good Christian men, rejoice,  
With heart and soul and voice,  
Give ye heed to what we say,  
Jesus Christ is born today,  
Ox and ass before him bow,  
And he is in the manger now,  
Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!
2. Good Christian men, rejoice,  
With heart and soul and voice,  
Now ye hear of endless bliss,  
Jesus Christ is born for this!  
He hath opened heaven's door,  
And man is blessèd evermore,  
Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born for this!
3. Good Christian men, rejoice,  
with heart and soul and voice,  
Now ye need not fear the grave,  
Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all,  
To gain his everlasting hall,  
Christ was born to save!  
Christ was born to save!

The original words for this carol are attributed to German composer Heinrich Suso (1295 – 1366) and the tune is the 14<sup>th</sup> century German melody “*In Dulce Jubilo*”. The words as they appear here are a very free translation from Latin into English by John Mason Neale. They appeared in his book “*Carols for Christmas-Tide*”, published in 1853.

## Good King Wenceslas

1. Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen,  
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even,  
Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel,  
When a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.
2. "Hither, page, and stand by me, if you know it, telling,  
Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?"  
"Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain,  
Right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes' fountain."
3. "Bring me food and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither,  
Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither."  
Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together,  
Through the cold wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.
4. "Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger,  
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no longer."  
"Mark my footsteps good my page, tread thou in them boldly,  
Thou shall find the winter's rage freeze your blood less coldly."
5. In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted,  
Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed,  
Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing,  
Ye who now will bless the poor shall yourselves find blessing.

The words were written by John Mason Neale and published in his "*Carols for Christmas-Tide*", 1853. Neale set the words to a Finnish tune "*Tempus Adest Floridum*" that appeared in "*Piae Cantiones*" a collection of Scandinavian tunes compiled by Jacobus Finno and published in 1582.

## The Good Old Way

1. Lift up your heart Emmanuel's friend,  
And taste the pleasure Jesus sends,  
Let nothing cause you to delay,  
But hasten in the good old way.

### *Chorus*

*For I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul  
I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul  
And I know I have and I feel I have,  
A sweet hope of glory in my soul.*

2. Our conflicts here though great they be,  
Shall not prevent our victory,  
If we but strive and watch and pray,  
Like soldiers in the good old way.
3. Though Satan may his powers employ,  
Our happiness for to destroy,  
Yet never fear we'll gain the day,  
By marching in the good old way.
4. Ye valiant souls for heaven contend,  
Remember glory is at the end,  
Our God will wipe our tears away,  
When we have run the good old way.
5. And far beyond this mortal shore,  
We'll meet with those who have gone before,  
And shout to think we have gained the day.  
By marching in the good old way.
6. Lift up your heart Emmanuel's friend,  
And taste the pleasure Jesus sends,  
Let nothing cause you to delay,  
But hasten in the good old way.

This is not a carol but its anthemic nature makes it great to sing and it sits well in this collection. It was written by John Cennick (1718-1775) of Berkshire but it had to go to America to acquire a chorus. It returned to England and was published in several works including the Ranters' "*Hymns and Spiritual Songs*" (c1820) and W.H. Gill's "*Manx National Songs*" (1896). This version has been adapted from The Watersons' "*Penny for Spice and Ale*" album.

## Gower Wassail

1. A-wassail, a-wassail throughout of this town  
Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown  
Our wassail is made of good ale and cake  
Of nutmeg and ginger, the best we can bake

*Chorus:*

*Fol-dol-dee-dol-dee-dol,  
Fol-dee-dol-dee-dol, Fol-dee-dol-dee-dee,  
Fol de de ro, Fol de da ri,  
Sing to-ra-li-oh.*

2. Our wassail is made of the elderberry bough,  
Although my good neighbours I'll drink unto thou,  
Besides all on earth, we have apples to store,  
Pray let us come in for it's cold by the door.
3. We know by the moon that we are not too soon,  
And we know by the sky that we are not too high,  
We know by the star that we are not too far,  
And we know by the ground that we are within sound.
4. Now master and mistress let your company forbear,  
To fill up our wassail with your cider and beer,  
We want none of your pale beer, nor none of your small,  
But a drop from your kilderkin, that's next to the wall.
5. Now Master and Mistress I know you will give,  
Unto our jolly wassail as long as you live,  
And if we do live till another new year,  
We'll call in again just to see who lives here.

A wassailing song from the Gower peninsula. The Rev J D Davies, rector of Llanmadoc between 1860 and 1911, noted a number of slightly different versions. Maud Karpeles collected a version from Mr Edwin Ace, of Llangennith, Gower, on April 18th, 1928 and it was subsequently published in the *Folk Song Journal*. Our version comes from the singing of Charley Bate of Padstow.

# The Green Man

Words & Music: Steve Thomason

*Chorus:*

*Til the Green Man walks again  
Til the Green man walks again  
Bird and beast will sing no more  
Til the Green Man walks again*

1. Once the earth was fair and fine once the earth was whole  
Soft rain fell and rivers ran, a web of life unfolds  
Where now are the rivers, where the teeming seas?  
Where now is the web of life, torn by mankind's greed?
2. Seasons came and seasons went, cycles of the earth  
Autumn brought the harvest, springtime brought rebirth  
Mankind honoured nature, old gods turned the wheel  
Time enough for friendship, time enough to heal
3. Yes once man walked with nature part of nature's plan  
'Til he stole the reins of power; at the centre, man  
Mankind now the conqueror covets all he can touch  
Touches all of nature turning her to dust
4. But deep beneath the surface seasons they still pass  
Patience waits forever, tyrants fall at last  
Earth herself far older, wisdom like the sea,  
Time will wash away the wounds setting nature free
5. When the Green Man walks again  
When the Green man walks again  
Bird and beast will sing once more  
When the Green Man walks again

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## Hail Chime On

1. While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The Angel of the Lord came down,  
And Glory shone around.

*Chorus:*

*Hail Chime on, chime on,  
Merry, merry Christmas bells chime on,  
Hail Chime on, chime on,  
Merry, merry Christmas bells chime on,*

2. “Fear not” said he, for mighty dread,  
Had seized their troubled minds,  
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
To you and all mankind”.
3. “To you in David’s town this day,  
Is born of David’s line”,  
“A Saviour who is Christ the Lord,  
And this shall be a sign”.
4. All glory be to God on high,  
And on the earth be peace,  
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men,  
Begin and never cease.

One of the many variations of Nahum Tate’s (1652 – 1715) carol that can be heard today in the villages to the west of Sheffield. Its origins are unknown.

## Hail smiling morn

1. Hail! smiling morn, smiling morn,  
That tips the hills with gold, that tips the hills with gold,  
At whose rosy fingers open wide the gates of heaven,  
The gates of heaven,  
At whose rosy fingers open wide the gates of heaven.
2. Hail! smiling morn, smiling morn,  
That tips the hills with gold, that tips the hills with gold,  
At whose rosy fingers open wide the gates of heaven,  
The gates of heaven,  
At whose rosy fingers open wide the gates of heaven.
3. All the green fields that nature doth enfold,  
All the green fields that nature doth enfold,  
At whose bright presence darkness flies away,  
(Flies away), (*flies away*), (Flies away), (*flies away*),  
Darkness flies away, darkness flies away;  
At whose bright presence darkness flies,  
Darkness flies away,  
(Flies away), (*Darkness flies away*),  
(Flies away), (*Darkness flies away*),  
Hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail!
4. All the green fields that nature doth enfold,  
All the green fields that nature doth enfold,  
At whose bright presence darkness flies away,  
(Flies away), (*flies away*), (Flies away), (*flies away*),  
Darkness flies away, darkness flies away;  
At whose bright presence darkness flies,  
Darkness flies away,  
(Flies away), (*Darkness flies away*),  
(Flies away), (*Darkness flies away*),  
Hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail, hail!

Composed by Reginald Spofforth (1770-1827) of Southwell, near Nottingham and first published in 1810 as the last in *A Set of Six Glees*. It is one of the favorite carols in the village pubs west of Sheffield, but variations are found all over England.

## Hark, Hark, What News

1. Hark! Hark! What news those angels bring?  
Glad tidings of a new born King,  
Glad tidings of a new born King,  
Born of a maid, a virgin pure,  
Born without sin, from guilt secure,  
Born without sin, from guilt secure.
2. Hail mighty Prince, eternal King,  
Let Heaven and earth rejoice and sing,  
Let Heaven and earth rejoice and sing,  
Angels and men, with one accord  
Break forth in song to praise the Lord,  
Break forth in song to praise the Lord.
3. Behold, He comes and leaves the skies,  
Awake ye slumbering mortals rise,  
Awake ye slumbering mortals rise,  
Awake to joy and hail the morn,  
A Saviour of this world was born,  
A Saviour of this world was born.

A Saviour of this world was born,  
A Saviour of this world was born,  
A Saviour of this world was born.

A Saviour of this world was born,  
A Saviour of this world was born,  
A Saviour of this world was born.

A Yorkshire village carol written by John Hall of Sheffield who unfortunately died in the poor house. The carol is still sung annually in the pubs around Yorkshire and at one time was traditionally used to start the carol singing in the Royal Hotel, Dungworth.

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies,  
With the angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

*Chorus:*

*Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King!*

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of a Virgin's womb,  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
3. Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Risen with healing in his wings,  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give us second birth.

Written by Charles Wesley and published in *"Hymns and Sacred Poems"* (1739). The tune usually associated with the carol today is a W.H. Cummins adaptation of a piece of secular music composed by Felix Mendelssohn.

## The Holly And The Ivy

1. The holly and the ivy,  
When they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
The holly bears the crown.

*Chorus:*

*The rising of the sun,  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing all in the choir.*

2. The holly bears a blossom,  
As white as the lily flower,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet Saviour.
3. The holly bears a berry,  
As red as any blood,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To do poor sinners good.
4. The holly bears a prickle,  
As sharp as any thorn,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
On Christmas Day in the morn.
5. The holly bears a bark,  
As bitter as any gall,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
For to redeem us all.

Versions of this carol have appeared in broadsides dating back as far as the early 1700s and there is a note of a similar song in Richard Hill's Commonplace Book, circa 1500s (MS 354, Balliol College archives). Cecil Sharp collected the tune most commonly associated with the carol from a Mrs Clayton of Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire in 1909. Then in 1911 he collected a different version (popularised by John Kirkpatrick) from a Mrs Kilford of Lilleshall, Shropshire. In 1912 Vaughan Williams collected yet another, more rhythmic tune that is popular with folkies and morris dancers from "a waggoner" he met up with in 1912 at Poole-End near Hereford.

## The Huron Carol.

1. 'Twas in the moon of winter-time,  
When all the birds had fled,  
That mighty Gitchi Manitou,  
Sent angel choirs instead,  
Before their light the stars grew dim,  
And wandering hunter heard the hymn.

*Chorus:*

*"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,  
In excelsis gloria."*

2. Within a lodge of broken bark,  
The tender Babe was found,  
A ragged robe of rabbit skin,  
Enwrapp'd His beauty round,  
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,  
The angel song rang loud and high.
3. O children of the forest free,  
O sons of Manitou,  
The Holy Child of earth and heaven,  
Is born today for you,  
Come kneel before the radiant Boy,  
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.

Contributed by Julie Palmer. "The Huron Carol", also known as "Twas in the Moon of Wintertime" is Canada's oldest Christmas song. It was originally written in the Huron language, probably in 1642 by a Jesuit missionary named Jean de Brebeuf, and set to a traditional French tune "Une Jeune Pucelle". The carol was translated into English by Jesse Edgar Middleton.

## **Hush My Babe (The Dunstan Lullaby)**

1. Hush my babe lie still in slumber,  
Holy angels guard thy bed,  
Sweetest blessings without number,  
Gently fall around thy head.
2. Sleep my babe, thy food and raiment,  
House and home thy friends provide,  
All without thy care or payment,  
All thy wants are well supplied.
3. Soft and easy is thy cradle,  
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,  
When His birthplace was a stable,  
And His softest bed was hay.
4. Lovely babe see Him addressing,  
Holy Infant how we smiled,  
When He wept His Mother's blessing,  
Soothed and hushed the Holy Child.
5. Hush my babe lie still in slumber,  
Holy angels guard thy bed,  
Sweetest blessings without number,  
Gently fall around thy head.

Contributed by Graham Schofield. The words are by Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748). R. Vaughan Williams collected this version set to a traditional carol tune from Mrs Thompson of Dunstan, Northumberland.

## In Bethlehem City

1. In Bethlehem City in Judea it was,  
That Joseph and Mary together did pass,  
All for to be taxed when thither they came,  
For Ceasar Augustus commanded the same.

*Chorus:*

*Then let us be merry, cast sorrow away,  
Our Saviour Christ Jesus was born on this day.*

2. But Mary's full time being come as we find,  
She brought forth her first born to save all mankind,  
The inn being full of the heavenly guests,  
No place could she find there to lay Him to rest.
3. Bless Mary, bless Mary so meek and so mild,  
All wrapped up in swathing this heavenly child,  
Contented she laid where the oxen did feed,  
The great God of nature approved of the deed.
4. Then presently after the shepherds did spy,  
Vast numbers of angels did stand in the sky,  
So merry we're talking so sweetly did sing,  
All glory and praise to the heavenly King.

This is a variation of the traditional carol "A Virgin Unspotted" or "A Virgin Most Pure" that possibly dates back to the 1600s. This version appears in Lucy E. Broadwood and J. A. Fuller Maitland's "English Country Songs" published in 1893 along with a note linking it to the tune of "Admiral Benbow". There is a version in Cecil Sharp's "English Folk Carols" (1911), reports of it being printed on a broadside in Birmingham circa 1861 and records of it being collected in locations all over the UK including Northamptonshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

## **In the Deep Mid Winter**

1. In the deep mid-winter, frosty winds did moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone,  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the deep mid-winter, so long ago.
  
2. Our God, heaven can't hold Him, nor Earth sustain,  
Heaven and Earth shall flee away, when He comes to reign.  
In the deep mid-winter a stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.
  
3. Angels and Archangels may have gathered there,  
All the hosts of Heaven thronged the midnight air,  
But a lowly mother in her gentle bliss,  
Comforted the Beloved with a soft caress.
  
4. What can I give Him poor as I am,  
If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb,  
If I were a wise man, I would play my part,  
What can I give Him? Give to Him my heart.

Contributed by Graham Schofield with verse 2 added by Lyn Cooper. A variation of *Mid-Winter* by Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) set to a tune by Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934).

## **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold,  
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's gracious King",  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world,  
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
And ever o'er its Babel-sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long,  
Beneath the angels strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong,  
And man at war with man hears not the tidings which they bring,  
O hush the noise you men of strife and hear the angels sing!
4. For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,  
When the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their King,  
And all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.

The words of this carol started life as a poem written by Edward Hamilton Sears of Massachusetts in 1849. In the UK it is usually set to a traditional tune known as "Noel" (a variation on the folk song *Devizes and Lasaurus*) that was adapted and augmented by Arthur Sullivan and published in 1874 in his work "Church Hymns with Tunes". In the US a tune composed by Richard Storrs Willis in 1851 is most commonly used.

## Jacob's Well

1. At Jacob's well, a stranger sought,  
His drooping frame to cheer,  
His drooping frame to cheer,  
Samaria's daughter little thought,  
That Jacob's God was near,  
Samaria's daughter little thought,  
That Jacob's God was near.
2. This had she known, her fainting mind,  
For richer draughts had sighed,  
For richer draughts had sighed,  
Nor had Messiah, ever kind,  
Those richer draughts denied,  
Nor had Messiah, ever kind,  
Those richer draughts denied.
3. This ancient well, no glass so true,  
Britannia's image shows,  
Britannia's image shows;  
Now Jesus travels Britain through,  
But who the stranger knows?  
Now Jesus travels Britain through,  
But who the stranger knows?
4. Yet Britain must the stranger know,  
Or soon her loss deplore,  
Or soon her loss deplore;  
Behold, the living waters flow,  
Come drink and thirst no more!  
Behold, the living waters flow,  
Come drink and thirst no more!  
Behold, the living waters flow,  
Come drink and thirst no more!

One of the Yorkshire carols sung in the village pubs in the hills to the west of Sheffield. The words are attributed to Hugh Bourne (1772 – 1852) and the tune was penned by James Leach (1762 – 1798)

## Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come,  
Let earth receive her King,  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the world! the Saviour reigns,  
Let us our songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove,  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, and wonders of His love.

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719. The tune (*Antioch*) is generally attributed to an 1836 arrangement by Lowell Mason of an earlier tune which most probably had its origins in passages from “Lift up Your Heads” and “Comfort Ye”, both from Handel’s *Messiah*.

## The King

1. Joy, health, love and peace,  
Be all here in this place,  
By your leave we will sing,  
Concerning our King.
2. Our King is well dressed,  
In the silks of the best,  
In ribbons so rare,  
No king can compare.
3. We have travelled many miles,  
Over hedges and stiles,  
In search of our King,  
Unto to you we bring.
4. We have powder and shot,  
To conquer the lot,  
We have cannon and ball,  
To conquer them all.
5. O Christmas is past,  
Twelfth Night is the last,  
And we bid you adieu,  
Great joy to the New.

Trad – Sung on St Stephens day (26th Dec. – also known as Wrens Day in Ireland) when groups of ‘wrenboys’ travelled from door to door carrying a holly bush, decked with ribbons and streamers and on which was a dead wren – the ‘king of birds’. Alms were collected and feathers from the bird, which were believed to carry good luck, were sold. The origins of the custom are unknown but there are many theories. One legend has it that when St Stephen, the first of the Christian martyrs, was fleeing his enemies, his hiding place in a bush was betrayed by the chattering of a wren. Now largely symbolic (which is good news for the birds) the tradition of the wrenboys is still widely practised on the west coast of Ireland in places like Carrigaline, Co Cork which hosts an annual Wren Boys Carnival.

## Malpas Wassail

1. Now the harvest being over and Christmas drawing in,  
Please open your door and let us come in.

*Chorus:*

*With our wassail, wassail, wassail,  
And joy come to our jolly wassail.*

2. Here's the master and mistress sitting down by the fire,  
While we poor wassail boys do trudge through the mire.
3. Here's the master and mistress sitting down at their ease,  
Put your hands in your pockets and give what you please.
4. This ancient awd house we will kindly salute,  
It is the old custom you need not dispute.
5. Here's an 'ealth to the master and a long time to live.  
Since you've been so kind and so willing to give.
6. Here's the saddle and the bridle they're hung upon the shelf,  
If you want any more you can sing it yourself.

A song from Truro in Cornwall, performed by the poor of the parish in the run-up to Christmas when the hardships of winter started to bite. They would go from house to house wishing the occupants good luck and seeking doles in return. The word "wassail" is derived from the Anglo Saxon *Wes Hael* meaning to be healthy. This version has been adapted from The Watersons' "*Penny For Spice and Ale*" album.

## Midwinter Song

Words & Music: Steve Thomason

*Chorus:*

*Burn the fires at midwinter,  
Dance the seasons round,  
Cold winds blow and the sun hangs low,  
'Til we dance him from the ground.*

1. Frost lies on the hedgerows bare,  
Mists roll o'er the hills,  
Winter ghosts of fox and hare,  
Dance o'er frozen rills.
2. Autumn's gifts long past and gone,  
Lean times lie ahead,  
Look unto the fading sun,  
The old year is dead.
3. Sun stands still in winter skies,  
Has these seven days,  
Aging year now fades and dies,  
In the sun's last rays.
4. But beneath the frozen ground,  
Green shoots pierce the earth,  
As we dance the season round,  
And the New Year's birth.

A song of hardship and hope. Copyright Steve Thomason (2007) - reproduced with the kind permission of the author.

## The Mistletoe Bough

1. The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,  
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall,  
And the Baron's retainers were blithe and gay,  
And keeping their Christmas holiday,  
The Baron beheld with a father's pride,  
His beautiful child, young Lovell's bride,  
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be,  
The star of the goodly company.

*Chorus:*

*Oh! the mistletoe bough!, Oh! the mistletoe bough!*

2. "I'm weary of dancing now" she cried,  
"Here tarry a moment, I'll hide, I'll hide,  
And Lovell be sure thou'rt the first to trace,  
The clue to my secret hiding place",  
Away she ran and her friends began,  
Each tower to search and each nook to scan,  
And young Lovell he cried, "where dost thou hide?  
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride".
3. They sought her that night and they sought her next day,  
And they sought her in vain till a week passed away,  
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,  
Young Lovell sought wildly but found her not,  
And years flew by and their grief at last,  
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past,  
And when Lovell appeared the children cried,  
"See! the old man weeps for his fairy bride".
4. At length, an oak chest that had long lain hid,  
Was found in the castle, they raised the lid,  
And a skeleton form lay mouldering there,  
In the bridal wreath of the lady fair,  
Oh! sad was her fate, in sportive jest,  
She hid from her Lord, in the old oak chest,  
It closed with a spring, and her bridal bloom  
Lay withering there, in a living tomb.

Words: Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), Tune: Sir Henry Bishop.(circa 1840). Legend has it that Constance Seymour of Marden Castle, Northumberland wore her bridal gown before the ceremony of her marriage to Henry Lovell, thus evoking bad luck and the events told in the song.

## Mount Moriah

1. “Glory to God”, the angels sing,  
Glad tidings, lo, I bring,  
Glad tidings, lo, I bring,  
In David’s city lies a babe,  
And Jesus is the child,  
And Jesus is the child,  
And Jesus is the child.
  
2. “Glory to God”, let man reply,  
For Christ, the Lord, is come,  
For Christ, the Lord, is come,  
Behold him in a manger lie,  
A stable is His room,  
A stable is His room,  
A stable is His room.
  
3. “Glory to God”, let all the earth,  
Join in the heavenly song,  
Join in the heavenly song,  
And praise Him for our Saviour’s birth,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue,  
And praise Him for our Saviour’s birth,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue.  
*(And praise Him for our Saviour’s birth,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue,  
In every land and tongue.)*  
  
*(3<sup>rd</sup> repeat of the final refrain is optional)*

One of the Sheffield village carols. Its origins are unknown although Russell (2008) in “The Sheffield Book of Village Carols” suggests a possible listing in Julian’s Dictionary of Hymnology with a publication date of 1821 and words attributed to Miss D.A. Thrupp. It was included in the Grand Union Book at the request of Dave Walters.

## My Dancing Day

1. Tomorrow shall be my dancing day,  
I would my true love did so chance,  
To see the legend of my play,  
And call my true love to my dance.

*Chorus:*

*Sing O my love, O my love, my love, my love  
This have I done for my true love.*

2. Then was I born of virgin pure,  
Of her I took fleshly substance,  
Thus was I knit to man's nature,  
To call my true love to my dance.
3. In Manger laid and wrapped I was,  
So very poor this was my chance,  
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,  
To call my true love to my dance.

A traditional carol that can be found in a number of broadsides published in the earlier 1800s. However the text is thought to date from before the seventeenth century.

## Nowell and Nowell

1. Nowell and Nowell, the angels did say,  
While shepherds there in the fields did lay,  
Laying in one night and folding their sheep,  
On a winters night both cold and bleak.

*Chorus:*

*Nowell and Nowell, Nowell and Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel,  
Nowell and Nowell, Nowell and Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

2. And then there did appear a star,  
To wise men three in country far,  
And to the earth it gave a great light,  
And there it continued a day and a night.
3. The star it shone all in the north west,  
O'er Bethlehem City it took its rest,  
And there it did both stand and stay,  
Right over the house where our Lord lay.
4. There entered in those wise men three,  
With reverence upon their knee,  
And offered up in rich portent,  
Both gold and Myrrh and Frankincense.
5. Betwixt an ox manger and an ass,  
There our blessed Messiah was,  
To save our souls from sin and thrall,  
He is the Redeemer of us all.

A Cornish carol collected in 1913 by Cecil Sharp and Bartle Symons from Mr James Thomas of Cambourne. It was published in the Journal of the Folk Song Society in 1914.

## O Come, All Ye Faithful

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem,  
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels.

*Chorus:*

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,  
Glory to God, in the highest.
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be glory given,  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

This carol, which first appeared in print as the Latin hymn “Adeste Fideles”, is widely attributed to Francis Wade (1711 – 1786). Wade fled England after the 1745 Jacobite rebellion and became a music teacher at the school for British Roman Catholic exiles in Douai in France. It is thought he wrote the song at or slightly before the time of his exile and it first appeared in print in England 1751 as part of Wade’s hymn collection “Cantus Diversi”. Given Wade’s political and religious leanings, the date of publication, the form of words used and the anthemic nature of the tune there are those who believe the song was actually intended to be a coded call to arms to those who supported the Jacobite cause.

The first widely acknowledged translation of “Adeste Fideles” into English was by Frederick Oakeley in 1841.

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
Who mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God does appear.

*Chorus:*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee,  
O Israel.*

2. O come, thou son of David, come,  
And lead us to our heavenly home,  
Make safe the path that leads on high,  
And bar the way to misery.
3. O come, O come, you God of might,  
Who to your tribes on ancient Sinai's height,  
In ancient times did give the law,  
In cloud and majesty and awe.

*Repeat Chorus*

A thirteenth century hymn, translated here from the Latin by J.M.Neale (1818-1866). The tune was first printed in 1856 and is thought to be an adaption by T. Helmore from a French missal. (Most modern hymnbooks prefer a later translation by T.A.Lacey (1851 – 1931).)

## The Old Hark (Barwell)

1. Hark! Hark! Hark, hark what news the Angels bring,  
Glad tidings, glad tidings, glad tidings of a new-born King,  
Who is the Saviour of mankind, (of mankind,) who is the Saviour of  
mankind,  
In whom we may salvation find.
2. This! This! This, this is the day, the happy morn,  
The Saviour, the Saviour, the Saviour of mankind was born,  
Born of a maid, a virgin pure, (virgin pure,) born of a maid a virgin pure,  
Born without sin, from guilt secure.
3. If! If! If Angels sang at Jesus' birth,  
Sure we have, sure we have, sure we have, cause for greater mirth,  
For why it was then for our sake, (for our sake,) for why it was then for our  
sake,  
Christ did our human nature take.
4. Sweet! Sweet! Sweet Christ, thou didst thyself debase,  
Thus to, thus to, thus to, descend to human race,  
And leave thy Father's throne above, (throne above,) and leave thy Father's  
throne above,  
Lord, what could move thee to this love?
5. May! May! May, may we contemplate and admire,  
And join with, and join with, and join with, the celestial choir,  
Extend your voice above the sky, (above the sky,) extend your voice above  
the sky,  
All Glory be to God on high.

A carol that within living memory was sung annually in Barwell, Leicestershire. The words were published in William Sandy's "*Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*" (1883). They are a variation on a version published 60 years earlier in Davies Gilbert's "*Some Ancient Christmas Carols*" (1823). The words are thought to date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The tune was written by William Knapp (1698 – 1768) of Dorset and were possibly married to the words by William East of Waltham

## Pentonville

1. While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
All seated on the ground,  
The Angel of the Lord came down,  
And Glory shone around,  
And Glory shone around,  
And Glory shone around,  
And Glory shone around.
2. “Fear not” said he, for mighty dread,  
Had seized their troubled mind,  
Had seized their troubled mind,  
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
To you and all mankind”,  
To you and all mankind,  
To you and all mankind,  
To you and all mankind.
3. “To you in David’s town this day,  
Is born of David’s line”,  
Is born of David’s line,  
“A Saviour who is Christ the Lord,  
And this shall be a sign”,  
And this shall be a sign,  
And this shall be a sign,  
And this shall be a sign.
4. All glory be to God on high,  
And on the earth be peace,  
And on the earth be peace,  
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men,  
Begin and never cease,  
Begin and never cease,  
Begin and never cease,  
Begin and never cease.

Written by Nahum Tate sometime before 1696. There are many variations of this carol often with tunes that have local names such as Spout Cottage, Malin Bridge or Lyngham. Others lost their original local names and were re-designated Liverpool, Pentonville etc.

## Sans Day Carol

1. Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,  
And Mary she bore Jesus who was wrapped up in silk.

*Chorus:*

*And Mary she bore Jesus our Saviour for to be,  
And the First tree in the greenwood, it was the holly, holly, holly,  
And the First tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.*

2. Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,  
And Mary she bore Jesus who died on the cross.
3. Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,  
And Mary she bore Jesus who died for us all.
4. Now the holly bears a berry as blood it is red,  
And Mary she bore Jesus who rose from the dead.

The Sans Day or St Day Carol got its name because the melody and first three verses were taken down by Rev. G.H. Doble from the singing of Mr W.D. Watson who in turn got it from Thomas Beard, in the village of St Day in Cornwall. (It is believed the village was named after St Dei, a Breton saint with Cornish connections.) Doble added the fourth verse. The song was published in 1929 in “The Cornish Song Book, Part 2: Carols” edited by Ralph Dunstan.

## The Season of Holly and Ivy.

*Chorus:*

*The season of holly and ivy is here,  
The season of mirth and of glee,  
The year has come round to the time,  
When all men of goodwill can agree,  
Hail to the time when all men can agree.*

1. O trim up the tree with fair silver and gold,  
String garlands of berries around,  
And with blithesome carols fill house,  
And fill hall with their clamorous sound,  
Hail to the carols gay clamorous sound.
2. The board now is laden with roast beef and goose,  
With mince pie, plumb pudding and ale,  
The yule log is roaring his welcome to guests,  
From both valley and dale,  
Hail to all guests from both valley and dale.
3. We'll spend the long night in merry delight,  
A drinking good wine and strong beer,  
To drive the cold winter away with carousing,  
Much mirth and good cheer,  
Hail to carousing, much mirth and good cheer.

Contributed by John Stephenson following a request at one of the club's singarounds. John got the song from an Artisan CD that takes its title from the song. The chorus and first two verses are traditional and are thought to date from 15<sup>th</sup> century England. The last verse was added by John. The tune is also used for the ballad "Henry Martin".

## See Amid The Winter's Snow

1. See amid the winter's snow,  
Born for us on earth below,  
See the gentle Lamb appears,  
Promised from eternal years.

*Chorus:*

*Hail thou ever blessed morn!  
Hail redemption's happy dawn!  
Sing through all Jerusalem,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

2. Lo, within a manger lies,  
He who built the starry skies,  
He who throned in height sublime,  
Sits amid the cherubim.
3. Say, ye holy shepherds, say,  
What your joyful news today,  
Wherefore have ye left your sheep,  
On the lonely mountain steep?
4. “As we watched at dead of night,  
Lo, we saw a wondrous light,  
Angels singing ‘Peace on earth’  
Told us of the Saviour's birth.”
5. Sacred Infant, all divine,  
What a tender love was thine,  
Thus to come from highest bliss,  
Down to such a world as this.

Word by Edward Caswall in 1851, the tune by John Goss appeared in Bramley and Stainer's  
“*Christmas Carols New and Old – Second Series*” (1871).

## Shepherds Arise

1. Shepherds arise, be not afraid,  
With hasty steps repair,  
To David's City, sin on earth,  
With our blessed infant there,  
With our blessed infant there,  
With our blessed infant there.

*Chorus:*

*Sing sing all earth,  
Sing, sing all earth,  
Eternal praises sing,  
To our redeemer,  
To our redeemer,  
And our Heavenly King.*

2. Laid in a manger, view the child,  
Humility, divine,  
Sweet innocence, sounds meek and mild,  
Grace in his features shine,  
Grace in his features shine,  
Grace in his features shine.
3. For us a Saviour came on earth,  
For us His life He gave,  
To save us from eternal death,  
And to raise us from the grave,  
To raise us from the grave,  
To raise us from the grave.

A 16th Century carol from the south of England, principally Dorset and Sussex. This version comes from the Copper Family of Rottingdean. A variant with a slightly different tune can be found in "A Collection of Dorset Carols" compiled by William Adair Pickard-Cambridge and published in 1926.

## **Silent Night**

(Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht)

1. Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin, mother and child,  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.
  
2. Silent night, holy night,  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing alleluia,  
Christ, the Saviour, is born!  
Christ, the Saviour, is born!
  
3. Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light,  
Radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

The words of this universally known carol were written as a poem in 1816 by Joseph Mohr, a young priest, in the town of Mariapfarr near Salzburg. In 1817 he moved to the parish church of St Nicholas, located on the banks of the River Salzach in Oberndorf, present day Austria. Shortly before Christmas 1818 the river burst its banks and the church organ was damaged by floodwater. This reportedly prompted Josef to take his lyrics to Franz Xaver Gruber, a schoolmaster and organist in nearby village of Arnsdorf, whom he asked to write a melody and guitar accompaniment for the song. It was performed for the very first time in St Nicholas's Church, Oberndorf on Christmas Eve, 1818.

The carol was published in 1833 by A.R. Friese in "*Four Genuine Tyrolean Songs*" but for many years there was a great deal of uncertainty about its origins. Then a handwritten manuscript was found, signed by Mohr, which included notes relating to the story behind the song. The manuscript was authenticated and published by the Salzburg Museum in 1995.

St Nicholas's church eventually succumbed to the damage caused by repeated flooding and in 1906 was relocated to a less vulnerable site in the town's centre. In 1937 a "Silent Night Chapel" was opened close to the site of the old church.

## Somerset Wassail

1. Wassail, wassail all over the town,  
The cup it is white and the ale it is brown,  
The cup it is made of the good ashen tree,  
And so is the ale of the best barley.

*Chorus:*

*For it's your wassail and it's our wassail,  
Ay it's joy come to you and a jolly wassail.*

2. O master and missus are you all within,  
Pray open the door and let us all come in,  
O master and missus, a sitting by the fire,  
Pray think upon poor travellers a travelling in the mire.
3. O where is the maid with the silver headed pin,  
To open the door and let us all come in,  
O master and missus, it is our desire,  
To have a loaf and cheese and a toast by the fire.
4. There was an old man and he had an old cow,  
And how for to keep her warm he didn't know how,  
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm,  
And a drop or two of cider will do us no harm.

*Alternative chorus:*

*No harm boys harm, no harm boys harm,  
And a drop or two of cider will do us no harm.*

5. The girt dog of Langport he burnt his long tail,  
And this is the night we go singing wassail,  
O master and missus, now we must be gone,  
God bless all in this house till we do come again.

Trad: The ceremony of wassailing apple trees that is associated with this carol was usually performed on 5th January which is the Eve of Epiphany or Old Christmas Day. Sharp thought that the "girt dog of Langport" referred to the Danes. In 878 just outside Langport, King Alfred fortified the island of Athelney in the Somerset Levels and made it the base from which he gathered an army to defeat Guthrum and his invading Danes.

## Sound Your Instruments of Joy

1. Sound, sound your instruments of joy,  
Sound your instruments of joy,  
Sound, sound your instruments of joy,  
To triumph shake each string,  
To triumph shake each string,  
Let shouts of universal joy,  
Welcome, welcome, welcome the new born King.
2. See, see the gladdening dawn appears,  
See the gladdening dawn appears,  
See, see the gladdening dawn appears,  
Bright angels deck the morn,  
Bright angels deck the morn,  
Behold the great I Am is here,  
The King, the King, the King of glory's born.
3. Surprising scenes, stupendous love,  
Surprising scenes, stupendous love,  
Surprising scenes, stupendous love,  
The Lord of Light descends,  
The Lord of Light descends,  
He left his glorious realms on high,  
To be, to be, to be the sinners friend.
4. Let Heaven and earth and sea proclaim,  
Let Heaven and earth and sea proclaim,  
Let Heaven and earth and sea proclaim,  
The wondrous love of God,  
The wondrous love of God,  
And all the universal plain,  
Sing praise, sing praise, sing praises to our God.

Repeat 1st verse.

This carol is a real anthem, thought to be from the West Country around the eighteenth century. The Watersons learnt this version from an old BBC recording of the Mabe Male Voice Choir in Cornwall. The Vicar of Mabe reported that the choir sang as their ancestors did, they stood round in a circle, the leader gave out the first line and off they went at full tilt, more or less making up their own harmonies as they went along.

## Sussex Carol

1. On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the Angels bring,  
On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the Angels bring,  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.
2. Then why should men on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad,  
Then why should men on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad,  
When from our sin he set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty.
3. When sin departs before his grace,  
Then health and life come in its place,  
When sin departs before his grace,  
Then health and life come in its place,  
Angels and men with joy may sing,  
All for to see the new born King.
4. All out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night,  
All out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night,  
Glory to God and peace to men,  
Now and forever more. Amen.

This song was noted down by Cecil Sharp from Mrs Verrall of Monks Gate, Sussex. Vaughan Williams included the arrangement commonly sung today in "Eight Traditional English Carols", published in 1919. A variation on the carol was collected by Dr Culwick in 1904 from his mother who had heard it sung many years previously in the streets of Dublin.

## Sweet Chiming Bells

1. While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The Angel of the Lord came down,  
And Glory shone around.

*Chorus:*

*Sweet bells, sweet chiming Christmas bells,  
Sweet bells, sweet chiming Christmas bells,  
They cheer us on our Heav'nly way,  
Sweet chiming bells.*

2. "Fear not" said he, for mighty dread,  
Had seized their troubled minds,  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
To you and all mankind".
3. "To you in David's town this day,  
Is born of David's line",  
"A Saviour who is Christ the Lord,  
And this shall be a sign".
4. All glory be to God on high,  
And on the earth be peace,  
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men,  
Begin and never cease.

Words: Nahum Tate (1700), composer of the tune unknown. The carol is widespread in England and Wales. Ernie Scriven in *A Short History of Sketty Methodism, 1832-1976* reminisced about a cold Christmas morning in 1921 or 22. At the time, this carol was a well established favourite in his local South Wales community. He particularly remembers the double forte rendering of the chorus and goes on to recall how much fun it was to sing. Who could disagree?

## Tar Barrel in Dale

George Unthank

*Chorus:*

*Tar barrel in dale,  
Fire in snow,  
Toast the New Year,  
Bid farewell to the old.*

1. The old year out, the New Year in,  
Please wont you let the lucky bird in,  
With bottle in hand and a piece of black coal,  
A stranger's a friend when first-footing you go.
2. At midnight's approach the band you can hear,  
The fiery procession of guisers draws near,  
With friends and good company, with voices so clear,  
Singing in harmony, bringing in the New Year.
3. Off the heads of the guisers the blazing barrels are hurled,  
On to the bonfire, smoke, sparks and flames swell,  
Amidst cheers and rejoicing, the rites of Old Father Time  
We'll link hands together, sing "Aulde Lang Syne".
4. Throughout the year when we sing this song,  
With old friends and new friends sing along,  
May good fortune be with you, from all sorrows refrain,  
Till that happy time when we all meet again.

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The Tar Barrel (or Tar Bar'l) Festival takes place in Allendale Town, Northumberland every New Years Eve. Forty-five men known as "guisers" with blacked up faces and brightly coloured costumes parade through the town with blazing barrels of tar on their heads. By tradition the guisers must be born in the Allen Valleys (East and West Allen Rivers) and often the role is handed down from father to son. The procession is timed to arrive at a bonfire in the centre of the town by midnight and the fire is then ignited using the burning barrels. The Allendale Festival has been celebrated for at least 160 years and some people think it may date back to the Middle Ages.

Similar fire festivals take place at a few places around the UK, most notably "Up Helly Aa" in Lerwick. However, it is interesting to note that the recorded history of Allendale's Tar Bar'l pre dates the Shetland event by at least 20 years.

## **There Was a Star (King Herod and the Cock)**

1. There was a star in David's land,  
In David's land appeared,  
And in King Herod's bedroom,  
So brightly did shine there.
2. The wise men they soon spied it,  
And told the King on high,  
That a princely babe was born that night,  
No man could ever destroy.
3. Well if this be true King Herod said,  
That you been telling me,  
This roasted fowl that's in the dish,  
Shall crow full fences three.
4. This fowl soon thrustened and feathered well,  
By the work of God's own hand,  
Three times that roasted cock did crow,  
In the dish where he did stand.

Contributed by Graham Schofield. Collected by Cecil Sharp from Mrs Plumb of Armscote, Worcestershire. Fences = times; thrustened = thrust out. The story about the cock has been traced back as far as Prior's *Ancient Danish Ballads*, c1200.

## **They That Wait upon the Lord (Ho Reaper)**

1. Ho reapers in the whitened harvest,  
Oft feeble, faint and few,  
Come wait upon the blessed Master,  
Our strength he will renew.

*Chorus:*

*For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,  
They shall mount up with wings,  
They shall mount up with wings as eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint,  
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint,  
They shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint.*

2. Too oft a-weary and discouraged,  
We pour a sad complaint,  
Believing in a living Saviour,  
Why should we ever faint?
3. Rejoice for He is with us always,  
Lo even to the end,  
Look up, take courage and go forward,  
All needed grace He'll send.

Included at the request of John and Sheila Bentham. The song appears in Ira D. Sankey's "Sacred Music and Solos" (c1880). Sankey credits the tune to James McGranahan (1840 – 1907) and the words simply to GMJ. However McGranahan was known as both a composer and a lyricist and it is thought that GMJ was a pseudonym he sometimes used.

## The Three Harks

1. Hark! Hark! Hark!  
Hark the herald angels sing,  
Glory! Glory! Glory to the new born King,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled,  
God and sinners reconciled.
2. Joy! Joy! Joy!  
Joyful all ye nations rise,  
Join! Join! Join the triumph of the skies,  
With the angelic host proclaim,  
With the angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
3. Veil, veil, veil,  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail! Hail! Hail the incarnate deity,  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.
4. Mild, mild, mild,  
Mild He lays his glory by,  
Born! Born! Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth,  
Born to give them second birth.
5. Hail! Hail! Hail!  
Hail the Heaven born Prince of Peace,  
Hail! Hail! Hail the Son of Righteousness,  
Light and Life to all He brings,  
Light and Life to all He brings,  
Risen with healing in his wings,  
Risen with healing in his wings.

An eighteenth century variation on Charles Wesley's carol, Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Popular in the villages around the South Pennines, versions of the Three Harks are reported as far south as Beeston and Gotham in Nottinghamshire and Hungarton in Leicestershire.

## Wassail Song (George Dunn's)

1. Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering so fair to be seen.

*Chorus:*

*Love and joy come to you, to your wassailing to you,  
Praise God and send you a happy New Year,  
A happy New Year, a happy New Year,  
Praise God and send you a happy New Year.*

2. We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door,  
But we're your neighbour's children whom you have seen before.
3. We have got little purses of stretching leather skin,  
We want some of your money to line them well within.
4. God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress, too,  
And all the little children that round the table go.
5. And all your kin and kinsfolk that live both far and near,  
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

A traditional song that *The Oxford Book of Carols* suggests originated in the north of England. However Steve Roud in *The Roud Folk Song Index* cites more than 120 instances of the song from all over England. This version comes from the singing of George Dunn (1887–1975), a chainmaker from Quarry Bank in the Black Country. It was published in various forms in the 1800s including Ritson's "*Ancient Songs and Ballads*" (1829) but it is thought that Ritson copied it from an earlier source written during the early 1600s, or possibly earlier. *The Oxford Book of Carols* speculates that Shakespeare may well have heard a version sung outside his house on Christmas night!

## Wassail Song (Steve Thomason's)

Words & Music: Steve Thomason

*Chorus:*

*Sing Wassail, Sing Wassail,  
The boughs they do lie bare,  
Until we sing Wassail.*

1. Come all you lords and ladies fair,  
Sat by your fireside bright,  
Come out into the woods this e'en,  
By pale Diana's light and....
2. Now elder is a witch's tree,  
You cut her if your dare,  
For to cut without her leave you see,  
Brings bad luck all the year so ....
3. And rowan is a northern tree,  
Of magic and of charm,  
For May-plucked sprigs hung by the door,  
Will keep you safe from harm.
4. And hawthorn is a fairy tree,  
Though touched by Joseph's hand,  
He watches safe o'er you and me,  
And we watch o'er this land so ....
5. The oak he is the king of trees,  
In winter golden boughed,  
He stands outside the orchard wall,  
A sentry tall and proud so ....
6. But apple she's the fairest tree,  
Her blossom pure as snow,  
Come wassail to the apple tree,  
And watch the cider flow and ....
7. So all you lords and ladies fair,  
You're sitting at your ease,  
Come give us hungry wassailers,  
Some cider and some cheese and ....
8. And now we've sung our wassail here,  
The boughs they may grow green,  
Here's health unto our woodland lord,  
His lady fair and queen so ....

## We Three Kings of Orient Are

1. We three kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain,  
Moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

*Chorus:*

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!*

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
Gold I bring to crown him again,  
King for ever,  
Ceasing never,  
Over us all to reign.
3. Frankincense to offer have I,  
Incense owns a Deity nigh,  
Prayer and praising,  
All men raising,  
Worship him, God Most High.
4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume,  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom,  
Sorrowing, sighing,  
Bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.
5. Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and Sacrifice,  
Heaven sings,  
Alleluia,  
Alleluia the earth replies.

The words & music were written by Dr John Henry Hopkins, Jr. of Pennsylvania as part of a Christmas pageant for his nieces and nephews. It is thought he penned the carol in about 1857 but it did not appear in print until 1863 when he published it in his "Carols, Hymns, and Songs".

## The Wexford Carol

1. Good people all this Christmas time,  
Consider well and bear in mind,  
What our good God for us has done,  
In sending His beloved Son,  
With Mary Holy we should pray,  
To God with love this Christmas day,  
In Bethlehem upon that morn,  
There was a blessed Messiah born.
2. Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep,  
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep,  
To whom God's angels did appear,  
Which put the shepherd in great fear,  
Arise and go the angels said,  
To Bethlehem, be not afraid,  
For there you'll find, this happy morn,  
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born.
3. There were three wise men from afar,  
Directed by a glorious star,  
And on they wandered night and day,  
Until they came to where Jesus lay,  
And when they came unto the stall,  
Where our beloved Messiah was,  
They humbly laid at his feet,  
Their gifts of gold and incense sweet.
4. Good people all this Christmas time,  
Consider well and bear in mind,  
What our good God for us has done,  
In sending His beloved Son,

This carol was collected in County Wexford Ireland in 1912, but the words may be English as they can be found in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Roxborough broadside collection. The words have also been collected in Castleton in Derbyshire.

## While Shepherds Were Watching

1. While shepherds were watching their flocks by the night  
There came a great noise, which gave them a fright.  
Cheer up faithful shepherds and be not afraid  
Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up faithful shepherds  
And be not afraid.

*Chorus:*

*Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up faithful shepherds  
And be not afraid.*

2. Twas angels a-shouting on that glorious morn  
A-shouting good tidings, the Saviour is born.  
Is born of a virgin so meek and so mild.  
Our Lord, our Lord, our Lord and Redeemer  
Is now born a child.

*Chorus:*

*Our Lord, our Lord, our Lord and Redeemer  
Is now born a child.*

3. I went to behold him and asked them his name.  
His name it was Jesus, from Bethlehem came.  
Let every believer his mercy implore.  
And praise, and praise and praise him forever  
Till time be no more.

*Chorus:*

*And praise, and praise and praise him forever  
Till time be no more.*

A variation on Nahum Tate's song collected in 1971 by Roy Palmer from the singing of George Dunn (1887 – 1975). George, a chainmaker from Quarry Bank in the Black Country, learned the song from his father who in turn probably got it from his father. The refrain was added by Lyn Cooper.

## The World Turned Upside Down

1. Listen to me and you shall hear, news hath not been this thousand year,  
Since Herod, Caesar and many more, you never heard the like before,  
Holy-days are despised, new fashions are devised,  
Old Christmas is kicked out of Town.

*Chorus:*

*Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turned upside down.*

2. The wise men did rejoice to see our Saviour Christ's nativity,  
The Angels did good tidings bring, the Shepherds did rejoice and sing,  
Let all honest men, take example by them,  
Why should we from good Laws be bound?
3. Command is given, we must obey and quite forget old Christmas day,  
Kill a thousand men, or a Town regain, we will give thanks and praise amain\*,  
The wine pot shall clink, we will feast and drink,  
And then strange motions will abound.
4. Our lords and knights, and gentry too, do mean old fashions to forgo,  
They set a porter at the gate, that none must enter in thereat,  
They count it a sin, when poor people come in,  
Hospitality itself is drowned.
5. The serving men do sit and whine, and think it long ere dinner time,  
The butler's still out of the way, or else my lady keeps the key,  
The poor old cook, in the larder doth look,  
Where is no goodness to be found.
6. To conclude, I'll tell you news that's right, Christmas was killed at *Naseby* fight,  
Charity was slain at that same time, Jack Tell troth too, a friend of mine,  
Likewise then did die, roast beef and shred pie,  
Pig, Goose and Capon no quarter found.

\* Amain = exceedingly

Not strictly a carol but an interesting comment on how the 'common man' viewed the 'Puritan' approach to Christmas during the latter stages of the English Civil War (when Cromwell had the upper hand). The text of this ballad is drawn from the Thomason Tracts (669. f. 10 (47)), where it is dated 8 April 1646. In it, the author decries the passing of all the English Christmas traditions that he feels were killed at the Battle of Naseby (1645). Ironically the tune is "When the King Enjoys His Own Again", a popular 'royalist' song during the period of civil unrest. "The Thomason Tracts" comprise a collection of over 22,000 pamphlets, manuscripts, broadsides and news-sheets printed in the 1640s and 1650s and accrued by George Thomason, a London bookseller. The Tracts now reside in the British Library.

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