

Old Kent Carollers songsheet 2018

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
Ch. O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.
2. From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
3. The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
This blessed Babe to find:
4. But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this Infant lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:
5. Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,

And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth deface:
[First printed in a broadside c. 1760.]

Christians Awake!

1. Christians awake, arise rejoice and sing,
Behold glad tidings of great joy I bring,
A child is born, his wonders will increase,
The everlasting Father, the Prince of
Peace.
Refrain: A child is born, his wonders will
increase,
The everlasting Father, the Prince of
Peace.
- 2 This Prince's child is born of David's line
His name is wonderful, his grace Divine.
Arise, rejoice, sing hymns of joy and mirth
And worship him all nations upon the
earth.
- 3 Sweet Jesus Christ our Saviour here we
find
From sin he hath redeemed all mankind
And now he reigns above the starry skies
Where Saints and Angels sing continually.
- 4 Let every soul in joyful accents sing
Loud praises to our great Almighty King,
Let us with them unite to swell the sound,
Goodwill to men and peace on earth are
found.
[Sung at Aldington and Otham]

While Shepherds Watched (Lyngham)

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 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
The 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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.
*[Sung at Aldington, Bethersden and
Swarden]*

The Ditchling Carol

(Chorus) Be merry all, be merry all, with holly deck the festive hall, Prepare the song, the feast, the hall, to welcome merry Christmas.

1. But oh remember gentles gay,
For you who bask in fortune's ray
The year is all a holiday,
The poor have only Christmas
2. When you with velvets mantled o'er
Defy December's tempest roar
O spare one garment from your store
To clothe the poor at Christmas
3. From blazing loads of fuel awhile
Your homes are within summer smile
Oh spare one faggot from your pile
To warm the poor at Christmas
4. When you the costly banquet deal
To guests who never famine feel
O spare one morsel from your meal
To feed the poor at Christmas
5. When gen'rous wine your care controls
And gives new joy to happier souls
O spare one goblet from your bowls
To cheer the poor at Christmas
6. So shall each note of mirth appear
More sweet to heaven than praise or prayer
And angels in their carols there
Shall bless the poor at Christmas

[Lyrics by William Robert Spencer and published it in 1811. Reputed to have been composed by shoemaker and church

musician Peter Parsons of Ditchling, d. 1901]

Hark! What Sounds

1. Hark! What sounds salutes our ears
Christ, the Lord at length appears
Un-to us a child is born
Zion is no more forlorn.
 2. Come, ye saints, arise and sing
Glory be to God our King
Unto us a son is given
Angels bring the news from heaven
 3. Who are these that come from afar
Led by Jacob's rising star
Lo, they gather like a cloud
Or as doves their window crowd
 4. Strangers they to Zion come
There to seek a peaceful home
Zion wonders at the sight
Zion feels a strange delight
 5. Son of Zion sing aloud
See her sky without a cloud
God shall make her joys complete
Zion's sun shall never set
- [From the music books of Robert Thomas Bottle (1761-1849) of Harrietsham]*

While Shepherds Watched (Eythorn)

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 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
The 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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.
- [Composed by Thomas Clarke of Canterbury, 1775 - 1859.]*

The Moon Shines Bright

1. The moon shines bright, the stars give light
A little before it was day,
The Lord, our God, he calls on us,
And bids us to wake and pray.
2. Awake, awake! Good people all,
Awake and you shall hear,
How our Lord our God died on the cross,
For us he loved so dear.
3. In yonder garden green doth grow,
As green as any leek,
Our Lord our God he waters us,
With his heavenly dew so sweet.
4. So teach your children well, dear man,
It's whilst that you are here,
It will be better for your soul, dear man,
When you are gone from here.
5. Today you might be alive, dear man,
And worth ten thousand pound,
Tomorrow might be dead, dear man,
and your corpse lie under ground.
6. The turf all at your head, dear man,
And another at your feet,
When your good deeds and your bad
deeds,
Before the Lord will meet.

*[Collected from James Beale of
Warehorne by Cecil Sharp in 1908 and
from Mrs Alice Harden, Hamstreet, 1911]*

Oxford Christmas Version

1. Hark the glad sound! The saviour comes,
The saviour promised long;
(section 2x)(quiet)Let every heart prepare
a throne
(louder)Let every heart prepare a throne
(loud)And every voice a song.
2. He comes the prisoners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.
3. He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.
4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

*[Hark the Glad Sound! Text by Philip
Doddridge, 1702-1751, composer
unknown]*

The Boar's Head Carol

- Ch. Caput apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
Caput apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
1. The boar's head in hand bring I,
Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary.
I pray you, my masters, be merry
Quot estis in convivio.
 2. The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all this land,
Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.
 3. Our steward hath provided this
In honor of the King of Bliss;
Which, on this day to be served is
In Reginensi atrio.

*[Traditionally sung at Queen's College,
Oxford. First published by Wynkyn de
Worde in London, 1521.]*

Lazerus

1. Come all you worthy Christian men
That are so very poor
Remember how poor Lazerus
Lay at the rich man's door
A-begging for those crumbs of bread
That from his table fell
The scripture doth inform us all
That he now in heaven doth dwell.

2. Now, Job he was a patient man
The richest in the East;
How he was brought to poverty
His troubles soon increased.
He bore them all most patiently
From sin he did refrain
He always trusted in the Lord
He soon got rich again.

3. The ti-me it will soon come
That parted we must be,
The only thing that doth remain
Is to joy our misery;
For soon we must account give
Both great as well as small,
Remember all good Christian friends
One God will judge us all.

4. Though poor I am contented
No riches do I crave
For they are all but vanity
On this side of the grave;
Where some they roll in riches,
Their glass will soon run out,
No riches we brought in this world,
And none shall we take out.

5. Come all you worthy Christians
That dwell within this land
Don't spend your time in rioting
Remember you're but man;
Be watchful for your latter end,
Be ready when you're called,
There's many changes in this world
Some rises and some falls.
*[Collected from Mrs Lurcock of Bredgar,
Kent and noted down by Miss Alice
Travers of Bredgar]*

While Shepherds Watched (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 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
The 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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.
*[Composed by Thomas Clarke of
Canterbury, 1775 - 1859.]*

The Seven Joys of Mary

1. The first good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of one
To see her own son Jesus
To ride above the sun
(Ref.) (quiet) To ride above the sun good
man,
(Ch) And blessed may he be
(louder) Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost
(loud) To all eternity.
2. The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of two,
To see her own son Jesus,
To make the lame to go.
To make the lame to go, good man
3. The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of three.
When that her own son Jesus
Did make the blind to see.
4. The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of four,
To see her own son Jesus,
To read the Scriptures o'er.
5. The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of five,
To see her own son Jesus,
To raise the dead to life.
6. The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of six,
To see her own son Jesus,
To wear the Crucifix.

7. The next good joy that Mary had
It was the joy of seven,
To see her own son Jesus,
To wear the crown of heaven.
To wear the crown of heaven, good man.
*[Collected at Gravesend in the 1880s.
Found in A Kent Christmas by G&F Doel,
to which it was contributed by Simon
Evans.]*

While Shepherds Watched (Pentonville)

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 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
The 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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.
*[Composed by William Marsh of
Canterbury, c. 1780-1815+]*

Behold the Grace Appears

1. Thy promise is fulfilled, (2x)
Mary the wondrous virgin, bears,
(quiet)And Jesus is the child.
(progressively louder)And Jesus is the
child.
And Jesus is the child.
(loud)And Jesus is the child.
2. The Lord, the Lord, the highest God,
Calls Him His only Son, (2x)
He bids Him rule the lands abroad,
And gives him David's throne. (4x)
3. O'er Jacob, Jacob, shall He reign,
With a peculiar sway, (2x)
The nations shall His grace obtain,
His kingdom ne'er decay. (4x)
4. To bring, to bring the glorious news,
A heavenly form appears, (2x)
He tells the shepherds of the news,
And banishes their fears. (4x)
5. (quiet) 'Go, humble, humble swains,' did
say,
'To David's city fly, (2x)
The promised Infant born today,
Doth in a manger lie.' (4x)
6. (quiet) 'With looks, with looks, and
hearts serene,
'Go visit Christ your King,' (2x)
And straight a flaming troop was seen,
The shepherds heard them sing. (4x)
7. In worship, worship, so divine,
Let saints employ their tongues, (2x)
With the celestial hosts we join,

And loud repeat their songs. (4x)
8. All glory, glory to God on high!
And heav'nly peace on Earth, (2x)
Goodwill to men, to angels joy,
At our Redeemer's birth. (4x)
[Sung at Bethersden]

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
Ch. (2x) Sweet bells, sweet chiming
Christmas bells
They lead us on our heavenly 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
The 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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease
*[Widely popular in the 19th Century,
including in Kent]*

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, tho'
the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, gath'ring
winter fuel.

2. [men]"Hither, page, and stand by me, if
thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
[women]"Sire, he lives a good league
hence, underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence, by Saint
Agnes' fountain."

3. [men] "Bring me flesh, and bring me
wine, bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I shall see him dine, when we
bear them thither. "
[all]Page and monarch, forth they went,
forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament and
the bitter weather.

4. [women]"Sire, the night is darker now,
and the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go
no longer."
[men]"Mark my footsteps, good my page.
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy
blood less coldly."

5. [all]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.
*[This was a popular carol that was sung
everywhere and widely sold in the streets
in the early 19thC.]*