

# Kennet Karols – their origins

(and some little known facts)



Pub Carolling is a tradition that has existed in many different forms in thousands of places up and down in the country. Of course, most of those villages don't sing now but there are areas where these carols are still hugely important, especially in the Pennines of England.

We've been bringing them to pubs in Berkshire for a long, long time and Jem at the Bell and Bottle has been making us very welcome for the last few years. It's always been a highlight of our morris calendar.

These old carols used to be performed in the west galleries of village churches by local musicians. As the Victorians tidied up church worship, however, the folksy hymns, some with questionable doctrine or disconcertingly exuberant choruses, were pushed out into the pubs and homes of the local people who still loved to sing them.

We have a collection of 50 traditional carols, most of them recognisable. I've attempted to describe the origins of each (in alphabetical order), some recent compositions and many dating back to the middle ages and medieval times. Some of the old tunes we use may surprise the "congregation" and they are usually sung with the traditional exuberance, accompanied by the team's fine musicians.

<b>Karol No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>KarolsPage</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>A CHILD THIS DAY IS BORN</b>	<b>2</b>
	A Child Is Born was an adaptation of Stephen Vincent Benet's blank-verse play by American film composer Bernard Herrmann for a CBS Christmas Special in 1955 which was hosted future President-to-be, Ronald Reagan.	
<b>51.</b>	<b>ADESTE FIDELES (Oh Come All Ye Faithful - Latin)</b>	<b>20</b>
	It has been attributed to various authors, including John Francis Wade (1711–1786), John Reading (1645–1692), King John IV of Portugal (1604–1656), and anonymous Cistercian monks. The earliest printed version is in a book published by Wade. A manuscript by Wade, dating to 1751, is held by Stonyhurst College in Lancashire.	
	The original four verses of the hymn were extended to a total of eight, and these have been translated into many languages. The English translation of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" by the English Catholic priest Frederick Oakeley, written in 1841, is widespread in most English-speaking countries.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY</b>	<b>2</b>
	Written by Scottish poet James Montgomery and first printed on Christmas Eve 1816, though it only began to be sung in churches after a 1825 reprint. It's been sung to many tunes but here it's most often sung to the French carol tune "Iris".	
<b>10.</b>	<b>AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD</b>	<b>5</b>
	An Epiphany hymn, written by William Chatterton Dix on 6 January 1859 (Epiphany) while he was ill in bed. Though considered by many as a Christmas carol, including us, it is found in the Epiphany section of many hymnals and still used by many churches. The music was adapted by William Henry Monk in 1861 from a tune written by the German Conrad Kocher in 1838.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>AWAY IN A MANGER</b>	<b>4</b>
	Not every well-known carol has English roots. In particular, 'Away in a Manger' first appeared in a number of American magazines in the 1880s. Intriguingly, the anonymous donor who sent it to them claimed it was a 16th-century German lullaby. The anonymous donor credited it to Martin Luther (pictured), the great German reformer. Experts in Luther are convinced this cannot be possible.	

So it's almost certainly a fake in that sense, written by clearly quite a brilliant American in the late 19th century who chose to conceal her or his identity. It is the tenderest of all our carols. And it was called "Luther's Cradle Song" for decades, when people were still believing in the original story.

**6. CHILD IN THE MANGER**

**4**

Originally in Gaelic (*Leanabh an àigh*), it was written by Mary Macdonald (d. c1890), a Baptist, who lived near Bunessan in the south of Mull, where there is a memorial to her. She came from a family of Gaelic poets and wrote many poems and songs. She married a crofter and is remembered as singing while she spun. AS it's a bit twee, we sing it to the tune of Morning Has Broken!

**19. CHRISTIANS AWAKE**

**9**

Actually a poem by John Byrom. The original manuscript, in Chetham's Library, Manchester, bears the title "Christmas Day. For Dolly", referring to the author's daughter, although there is no evidence to support the oft repeated story that it was written for her specifically.

**15. DECK THE HALLS**

**7**

This jaunty tune dates back to 16th century Wales, where its melody and much of the lyrics were pinched from the New Year's Eve song "Nos Galan." Lines like "Oh! how soft my fair one's bosom/ Fa la la la la la la la," were transformed into Yuletide wishes like "Deck the halls with boughs of holly/ Fa la la la la la la la." This musical makeover was published in 1862, done by Scottish folk music scribe Thomas Oliphant, who built his reputation on old melodies with new lyrics.

But Oliphant's version is not the one most commonly sung today. Now called "Deck the Halls," lines like "Fill the meadcup, drain the barrel," have been swapped for "Don we now our gay apparel." This variant became popular from revised music sheet printings made in 1877 and 1881.

**8. DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH**

**4**

The tune first appeared as a secular dance tune, in a book on dance written by Jehan Tabourot (1519–1593). The words are by the English composer George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934), and the carol was first published in 1924 in his *The Cambridge Carol-Book*. Woodward took an interest in church bell ringing, which no doubt aided him in writing it.

**5. GOD REST YOU MERRY GENTLEMEN**

**3**

This dates back to at least the 16th century, possibly earlier. Although most people assume the first line is suggesting merry gentlemen should rest, in early English it actually means something closer to 'remain bountiful, gentlemen'.

**24. GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN**

**10**

English lyrics written in 1953 by J M Neale fitted to the Latin hymn-tune "In dulci jubilo", (Latin for "In sweet rejoicing") a traditional Christmas carol dating from the middle ages, possibly written by the German mystic Heinrich Seuse circa 1328. According to folklore, Seuse heard angels sing these words and joined them in a dance of worship.

**4. GOOD KING WENCESLAS**

**3**

Written in 1853 by John Mason Neale but the melody is much older – it's a 13th-century tune called 'Tempus adest flordum' in praise of the spring.

The carol was written for the Feast of St Stephen, better known as Boxing Day. And it celebrates the long tradition of charitable giving on the Second Day of Christmas.

The man we know as 'Good King Wenceslas' was actually Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia. He was also known as Vaclac the Good, or Svatý Václav in Czech and lived from c.907 to 28 September 935.

And the reason we have his exact date of death is that he was assassinated – on the orders of his brother, appropriately named Boleslaus the Cruel.

**42. GREENSLEEVES****16**

There is a persistent belief that Greensleeves was composed by Henry VIII for his lover and future queen consort Anne Boleyn. Boleyn allegedly rejected King Henry's attempts to seduce her and this rejection may be referred to in the song when the writer's love "cast me off discourteously". However, the piece is based on an Italian style of composition that did not reach England until after Henry's death, making it more likely to be Elizabethan in origin! broadside ballad by this name was registered at the London Stationer's Company in September 1580 by Richard Jones, as "A Newe Northern Dittye of ye Ladye Greene Sleves".

A possible interpretation of the lyrics is that Lady Green Sleeves was a promiscuous young woman, perhaps even a prostitute. At the time, the word "green" had sexual connotations, most notably in the phrase "a green gown", a reference to the grass stains on a woman's dress from engaging in sexual intercourse outdoors!

Christmas and New Year texts were associated with the tune from as early as 1686, and by the 19th century almost every printed collection of Christmas carols included some version

**7. HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING****4**

The lyric was originally written by Charles Wesley (1707–88) who, with his brother John, founded the Christian denomination of Methodism. 'The original first two lines are, "Hark how all the welkin rings, Glorious the king of kings." And quite obviously, this is pretty obscure,' says Hutton. 'Even in the early 18th century, "welkin" was a rather old-fashioned way of saying heaven or sky. And so quietly and tactfully, the Methodist preacher George Whitefield tidied the thing up and, in 1754, to begin with the couplet we know today – and again in 1782, giving us the complete text we sing now But Charles Wesley's words were sung to a somewhat gloomy melody. The carol didn't get the tune we know today until the composer Felix Mendelssohn (pictured) wrote it in 1840. More recently, a descant (an independent treble melody sung above the main tune) was added in the 1960s.

**47. HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS****18**

Penned by Hugh Martin for a scene in the 1944 movie musical Meet Me In St. Louis. Judy Garland sings the bittersweet song to her little sister, trying to cheer her up as both lament their family's move away from their hometown. But Garland and director Vincente Minnelli weren't happy with Martin's early, much more maudlin drafts. These included lines like: "Have yourself a merry little Christmas/It may be your last.... Faithful friends who were dear to us/Will be near to us no more."

**49. HUNTING THE WREN****19**

John Kirkpatrick thinks it has echoes of some sort of sacrificial offering. On the day after Christmas it was the practice to parade around with a recently killed wren ceremonially displayed, with this as the accompanying song. In return for a contribution you were given a feather from the wren for good luck. When all the feathers were gone, you would have a feast, and then bury its bones, gaining strength from the King of the Birds. Although In Ireland the St Stephen's Day 'Wran' ritual was widely followed, it doesn't seem to have been so popular in England other than in Berkshire, the Cotswolds and Yorkshire.

**56. I SAW MOMMY KISSING SANTA CLAUS****21**

Music and lyrics by British songwriter Tommie Connor it was first recorded by American singer Jimmy Boyd in 1952 aged 13. The song has since been covered by many artists, with the Ronettes's 1963 and the Jackson 5's 1970 versions being the most famous.

**11. I SAW THREE SHIPS****5**

The earliest printed version of "I Saw Three Ships" is from the 17th century, possibly Derbyshire, and was also published by William Sandys in 1833. The song was probably traditionally known as "As I Sat On a Sunny Bank" and was particularly popular in Cornwall. Go and Enlist seems an appropriate tune for the naval theme.

**16. IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER 7**  
Based on a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, this carol was written sometime before 1872 in response to a magazine request for a Christmas poem. It became recognised as a carol after it appeared in The English Hymnal in 1906, with music by Gustav Holst.

**1. IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR 2**  
The lyrics for this carol were written by Massachusetts pastor Edmund Sears and refer to ideas of war and peace. The most common musical setting was adapted from an English melody in 1874 by Arthur Sullivan.

**17. JINGLE BELLS 8**  
It was not originally conceived for Christmas time at all. Penned by James Lord Pierpont in 1850s Savannah, Georgia, the song originally titled "The One Horse Open Sleigh" was intended to celebrate US Thanksgiving. The local Unitarian church where he'd later play the song on the organ boasts historical markers declaring it the birthplace of "Jingle Bells." However, some insist Pierpont was belting the melody as early as 1850, when he still lived in Medford, Massachusetts. Debate still rages about the true birthplace of the song.

"Jingle Bells" was renamed in 1857 when its lyrics and notes were first published. Decades passed before it rose to prominence. Yet it made history on December 16, 1965, becoming the first song broadcast in space. The crew of Gemini 6 followed reports of seeing Santa Claus with an improvised version of "Jingle Bells," which included bells and a harmonica that they had snuck onboard.

**38. JOY TO THE WORLD 15**  
The words, dreamed up by English writer Isaac Watts, are based on the second half of Psalm 98 in the Bible. Our tune is by Lowell Mason from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**53. LITTLE DONKEY 20**  
Written by British songwriter Eric Boswell in 1959, which describes the journey by Mary the mother of Jesus to Bethlehem on the donkey of the title. The first version to chart was by Gracie Fields, followed a fortnight later by The Beverley Sisters, who overtook her in the charts by Christmas. The song became No. 1 in the UK Sheet Music Chart from mid November 1959 until the end of the year, and a recording by Nina & Frederik reached No. 3 the following Christmas.

**55. LITTLE DRUMMER BOY 21**  
(Originally known as "Carol of the Drum") A popular Christmas song written by American composer Katherine Kennicott Davis in 1941.

**57. MARY'S BOYCHILD 21**  
The song had its genesis when Jester (a fine name!) Hairston was sharing a room with a friend. The friend asked him to write a song for a birthday party. Hairston wrote the song with a calypso rhythm because the people at the party would be mainly West Indians. The song's original title was "He Pone and Chocolate Tea", pone being a type of corn bread. It was never recorded in this form. Sometime later Walter Schumann, at the time conducting Schumann's Hollywood Choir, asked Hairston to write a new Christmas song for his choir. Hairston remembered the calypso rhythm from his old song and wrote new lyrics for it.

Harry Belafonte heard the song being performed by the choir and sought permission to record it. It was recorded in 1956 and released as a single that year. It reached No. 1 on the UK Singles Chart in November 1957 and has since sold over 1.19 million copies here.

- 36. MY DANCING DAY 14**  
 "Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing-day" is an English carol usually attributed as "traditional"; its first written appearance is in William B. Sandys' Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern of 1833. However, it is almost certainly of a much earlier date probably 16th century. Based on the phrase "to see the legend of my play" it is speculated that the text may be based on an earlier version associated with a mystery play of the late medieval period.
- 12. O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL 6**  
 The standard version we now use was put together by John Francis Wade (1711–86), a Jacobite. He was a supporter of the exiled Stuart royal family, and a lot of people have thought there's a subversive, hidden message in the lyrics, rallying support from "the faithful" for Bonnie Prince Charlie and his family. There's no absolute proof. It's there if you want to see it. It's a conspiracy theory – and sometimes those are correct.
- 14. O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM 7**  
 Following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Rector Phillips Brooks wrote the text to this hymn. Brooks rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, where he participated in the Church of the Nativity's five-hour long Christmas Eve celebration, complete with hymns. After, he was inspired by the view of Bethlehem from the hills of Palestine. Three years later in 1871, his church organist Lewis Redner wrote the melody for the local Sunday school children's choir. We thought British Grenadiers fits better and is a tad more exuberant.
- 18. ONCE IN ROYAL DAVIDS CITY 8**  
 First published in the early nineteenth century, this carol paints a vivid picture of the nativity. The words were first written by children's poet Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander to explain to children the virgin birth. She is best remembered for her hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'. The carol was set to music a year later by organist H.J Gauntlett, though we have on occasion, when the musicians can remember it, sung it to the tune of Clementine, with a bit of tweaking.
- 48. QUEM PASTORES 18**  
 "Quempas" is the shortened title of "Quem pastores laudavere" ("He whom the shepherds praised"), popular in Germany in the sixteenth century, and used as a generic term for Christmas songs in a German caroling tradition. The earliest sources of the carol are from the fifteenth century, including the Hohenfurth Monastery Ms. 28 (1410).
- 25. ROCKING CAROL 11**  
 The carol was first published in an anthology in 1920 in Czechoslovakia, where it was described as a traditional Czech carol. It was loosely translated into English by Percy Dearmer. The carol is sung in the form of a lullaby to Jesus while rocking the manger as if it were a more modern cradle – difficult!
- 32. RUDOLF THE RED - NOSED REINDEER 13**  
 Written by Johnny Marks in 1949. Ten years earlier, Marks' brother-in-law, Robert L. May, created the character Rudolph as an assignment for a big American mail order company, and Marks decided to adapt the story of Rudolph into a song.
- 22. SEE AMID THE WINTER SNOW 10**  
 Also known as 'Hymn for Christmas Day', this 19th-century English carol was written by Edward Caswall with music by Sir John Goss, an organist at St Paul's Cathedral and a professor at the Royal Academy of Music. As our musicians are not quite of that standard, we often sing it to the tune "Playing on my Old Banjo".

**34. SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN** **14**  
Penned by James "Haven" Gillespie, this jolly tune was first performed on American singer Eddie Cantor's radio show in 1934. But for all its mirth, its inspiration came from a place of grief. In his book *Stories Behind the Greatest Hits of Christmas*, Ace Collins explains how Gillespie was a vaudevillian-turned-songwriter who'd fallen on hard times, both financially and personally. Gillespie got the call to pen a Christmas tune for Cantor just after learning his brother had died.

Initially, he rejected the job, feeling too overcome with grief to consider penning a playful holiday ditty. But a subway ride recollecting his childhood with his brother and his mother's warnings that Santa was watching changed his mind. He had the lyrics in 15 minutes, then called in composer John Coots to make up the music that would become a big hit within 24 hours of its debut.

**45. SHEPHERDS ARISE** **17**  
The carol was first published in a 1926 book, *A Collection of Dorset Carols* by William Adair Pickard-Cambridge, a classics scholar and talented organist, had obtained several old manuscripts of early 19th century "West gallery music" from his father Octavius Pickard-Cambridge, who had been Rector in a Dorset parish. The carol gained a wider recognition in our folk world through being recorded by Bob and Ron Copper in 1951 for the BBC and on the Copper family's LP *A Song for Every Season*.

**20. SILENT NIGHT** **9**  
Joseph Mohr, a young Catholic priest at St Nicholas Church, Oberndorf near Salzburg in Austria, was in despair: the organ at his church had been incapacitated by mice, and the chances of fixing the instrument before the evening service were looking slim.

But young Joseph had an idea. A few years before, he had written a rather beautiful poem called 'Silent Night' (originally written in German, 'Stille Nacht'). So, he asked Franz Xavez Gruber, a schoolmaster and organist in a nearby town, to set his six-stanza poem to music. That night, the two men sang 'Silent Night' for the first time at the church's Christmas Mass, while Mohr played guitar and the choir repeated the last two lines of each verse.

**54. SLEIGH RIDE** **20**  
"Sleigh Ride" is a light orchestra standard composed by Leroy Anderson. He formed the original idea for the piece during a heat wave in July 1946, and finished the work in February 1948. The original recordings were instrumental versions. The lyrics were written by Mitchell Parish in 1950.

**21. SUSSEX CAROL** **9**  
Often known by its first line "On Christmas night all Christians sing" its words were first published by Luke Wadding, a 17th-century Irish bishop, in a work called *Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs* (1684). It is unclear whether Wadding wrote the song or was recording an earlier composition.

Both the text and the tune to which it is now sung were discovered and written down by Cecil Sharp in Buckland, Gloucestershire, and Ralph Vaughan Williams, who heard it being sung by a Harriet Verrall of Monk's Gate, near Horsham, Sussex (hence "Sussex Carol"). The tune generally sung today is the one Vaughan Williams took down from Mrs. Verrall and published in 1919.

**46. THE BOAR'S HEAD CAROL** **18**  
Performed while the head of a boar was presented on a platter during the Yuletide feast, the one most usually performed today is based on a version published in 1521. Initiated in all probability in Britain by the Anglo-Saxons, our knowledge of it comes substantially from medieval times. In ancient Norse tradition the sacrifice carried the intent of imploring Freyr to show favour to the new year. The boar's head with apple in mouth was carried into the banquet hall on a gold or silver dish to the sounds of trumpets and the songs of minstrels.

**26. THE FIRST NOEL****11**

There's a misconception that 'The First Noel' is French, because of the spelling of 'Noël' meaning "the Christmas season". But it is actually of Cornish origin, with most hymn sheets opting for the old English Anglo-Saxon spelling, Nowell. We've printed off too many Karols books to change it now! Its current form was first published in 1823, the song, not our Karols book.

**28. THE HOLLY AND THE IVY****12**

So try as Christian carol writers might to impose their own symbols on the plants – the red holly berry as Jesus's blood, the white holly flower his shroud – they have to work hard to displace earlier layers of meaning. Some think there's a further secret layer to the carol. Is the holly, with its phallic prickles, a symbol of the masculine, and the clinging ivy of the feminine? English courtiers were fond of such hidden language and holly-and-ivy carols could have formed the basis of courting games.

**44. THE KING (THE WREN)****17**

"The king was the wren. The wren was the king of the birds. In ancient religions the king was sacrificed every seven years for the fertility and good of the tribe. In some places (Ireland) the queen was royal and married new consorts to be sacrificed. The consort was treated well for seven years (or one year) and then sacrificed by the new consort. A wren was killed and dressed up in ribbons, etc. and carried around the village. This is from Pembrokeshire in South Wales, commemorating the wren-killing on St Stephen's Day, 26 December. "Old Christmas", still celebrated rather than 25 December is Twelfth Night."

**40. THE ROBIN****15**

Another Hunting The Wren version – "wran" possibly being misheard as Robin by some English, not used to Irish accents!

**39. THE TREES ARE ALL BARE****15**

A song unknown outside Sussex, it would seem—Roud knows of only two singers apart from George Townshend of Lewes who knew it. One was the Downs shepherd, Michael Blann from Upper Beeding, whose MS songbook is in the Sussex Library, and whose story is told in the Andrews book Shepherd of the Downs. The other singer(s) being various specified and unspecified members of the Copper family.

**29. THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS****12**

This period has been recognised as a festive and sacred season since before the middle ages, with the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany having first been proclaimed as such all the way back in 567AD. The first appearance of this seasonal song was actually, not as a song at all, but as a rhyme. These types of songs were common in 1800s English playgrounds, and would normally involve children taking turns to sing all of the previously sung lyrics, before adding the next line. If someone got the lyrics wrong, there would usually be a forfeit.

These lyrics were published in England in 1780 without music, and many composers would go on to write tunes for the words over the next 100 or so years. However, the melody we most associate with this song is derived from a 1909 arrangement of a traditional folk melody by English composer, Frederic Austin.

**23. UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN****10**

"Puer nobis nascitur", usually translated as "Unto Us Is Born a Son", is a medieval Christmas carol found in a number of manuscript sources—the 14th-century German Moosburg Gradual and a 15th-century Trier manuscript. The Moosburg Gradual itself contained a number of melodies derived from the 12th- and 13th-century organum repertoires of Notre Dame de Paris and the Abbey of Saint Martial, Limoges, suggesting that its antiquity may be much greater. It's still described as "English Traditional" popular as a processional hymn following a translation by George Ratcliffe Woodward first published in 1902. Percy Dearmer also translated the hymn for inclusion in The Oxford Book of Carols (1928) as "Unto Us a Boy Is Born", this version.

**33. WALKING IN THE AIR 13**  
A song written by Howard Blake for the 1982 animated film *The Snowman* based on Raymond Briggs's 1978 children's book of the same name. In the film, the song was performed by St Paul's Cathedral choirboy Peter Auty. In 1985, an altered version was recorded for use in a TV advertising campaign for Toys "R" Us. While it was believed that Auty's voice had then broken, he claimed in an interview with BBC Breakfast News in 2022 that his voice had not broken and he was never contacted for the recording. Blake recommended the then-14-year-old Welsh chorister Aled Jones, who's never looked back

**35. WASSAIL (Adderbury) 14**  
Wassail (most likely from Old Norse "ves heill") is a beverage made from hot mulled cider, ale, or wine and spices, drunk traditionally as an integral part of wassailing, an ancient English Yuletide drinking ritual and salutation either involved in door-to-door charity-giving or used to ensure a good harvest the following year. Songs followed similar formats – this is a short one – obviously eager to get away to the next “donor”.

**41. WASSAIL (Gloucestershire) 16**  
Also known as "Wassail! Wassail! All Over the Town", "The Wassailing Bowl" and "Wassail Song" is an English Christmas carol from the county of Gloucestershire in England, dating back to at least the 18th century, but may be older.

**43. WASSAIL (Yorkshire) 17**  
A popular Wassail carol within the folk fraternity, recorded by many artists including the Watsons and Eliza Carthy. Fairly long for its genre – probably because Yorkshire gentry wanted their money's worth before parting with a coin or two.

**37. WASSAIL! 14**  
In the cider-producing counties in the South West of England (primarily Cornwall,[16] Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Herefordshire) or South East England (Kent, Sussex, Essex, and Suffolk), as well as Jersey, wassailing refers to a traditional ceremony that involves singing and drinking to the health of trees on Twelfth Night in the hopes that they might better thrive. The purpose of wassailing is to awaken the cider apple trees and to scare away evil spirits to ensure a good harvest of fruit.

The ceremonies of each wassail vary from village to village but they generally all have the same core elements. A wassail King and Queen lead the song or a processional tune to be played/sung from one orchard to the next; the wassail Queen is then lifted into the boughs of the tree where she places toast soaked in wassail from the clayen cup as a gift to the tree spirits (and to show the fruits created the previous year). In some counties, the youngest boy or "Tom Tit" will stand in for the Queen and hang the cider-soaked toast in the tree. Then an incantation is usually recited.

To see it live, join us at Tutts Clump cider farm on the afternoon of the first Saturday after 12<sup>th</sup> night. Bring noise makers!

**13. WHAT CHILD IS THIS 6**  
A Christmas carol written by Bristol born William Chatterton Dix as a poem, "The Manger Throne" in 1865. It was set to the tune of "Greensleeves", the traditional English folk song, in 1871, possibly by Sir John Stainer, organist at St Paul's Cathedral and later Professor of Music at Oxford.

**27. WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE 11**  
Written in 1857 by Peter Cornelius, this carol is designed so three male voices can sing a verse each to correspond with the three kings. As the Kings took a long time to arrive, and we have more than three male voices, we prefer the tune to Monk's March. We have been known to follow it with the Morris Dance.

**30. WE WISH YOU A MERRYCHRISTMAS 12**  
Both wassailing and mumming were still going strong under the Tudor monarchs, with carollers and players going from door to door performing. It was terribly bad luck not to reward their efforts with food and drink, including the 'figgy pudding' – an early version of what we now know as Christmas pudding.

**31. WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED 13**  
The exact date of Poet Laureate Nahum Tate's composition is not known, but the words appeared in Tate and Nicholas Brady's 1700 supplement to their New Version of the Psalms of David of 1696. The only Christmas hymn to be approved by the Church of England in the 18th century and this allowed it to be disseminated across the country with the Book of Common Prayer. This was because most carols, which had roots in folk music, were considered too secular and thus not used in church services until the end of the 18th century. As a result of its approved status, many tunes have been associated with this carol. As Yorkshire bleats a lot about being God's Own Country, we sing it to the tune of Ilkey Moor; you'd be surprised – our musicians often are!

**52. WHITE CHRISTMAS 20**  
An Irving Berlin song written for the 1942 musical film Holiday Inn. The composition won an Academy Award for Best Original Song. The story goes one day he told his secretary, "I want you to take down a song I wrote over the weekend. Not only is it the best song I ever wrote, it's the best song anybody ever wrote." Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" single has been credited with selling 50 million copies, the most by any release and therefore it is the biggest-selling single worldwide of all time, so he may have been right.

**50. WINTER WONDERLAND 19**  
Written in 1934 by Americans Felix Bernard and lyricist Richard Bernhard Smith, Smith wrote the lyrics while being treated for tuberculosis.

Created by Peter de Courcy, which much help from Wikipedia. Any mistakes are probably mine.  
19 December 2022