



Cornish Carols

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CORNISH CAROLS.

COLLECTED BY J. E. THOMAS AND T. MINERS.

I.—CHERRY, HOLLY AND IVY.

[THE CHERRY TREE CAROL.]

Noted by T. MINERS and J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. S. LANDRY,
June 11th, 1924.



Jo - seph and Ma - ry In the gar - den did walk, Where were
cher - ries and ber - ries And all kinds of fruit, Then
up be - spoke Ma - ry So meek and so mild, Pluck
me some cher - ries, Jo - seph, For I am with child. Then sing
O, the hol - ly, hol - ly O, And sing O, the hol - ly, But of
all the trees that's in the wood, It is the hol - ly.

A full version of the words is given in *Journal*, Vol. v, No. 20, p. 321.

The tune resembles "Sweet Europe," *Folk Songs from Somerset*, No. 46.—J. E. T.

Cf. the Irish tune, "The Old Head of Denis," used by T. Moore for his lyric, "There is not in the wide world." For notes on the air see *The Minstrelsy of Ireland* edited, with notes, by A. Moffat. A simple Highland form of the "Farewell to Lochaber" tune is allied.—L. E. B.

This "Old Head of Denis" tune, apparently Irish in origin, seems to have become well known amongst English folk-singers. Besides the "Sweet Europe" or "Poor Stranger" song, there are other variants, of which two, which I noted in Sussex, may be compared with the Cornish carol, showing how the tune has been adapted to different metres. The first was sung to "Pretty Susan, the Pride of Kildare" (see *Journal*, Vol. vi, p. 12). The other, a "Green Bushes" tune, is here printed.

GREEN BUSHES.

FIRST VERSION.

Noted by A. G. GILCHRIST.

SUNG BY MR. COOMBER,
BLACKHAM, May, 1907.

But when he came there the mai - den was gone, etc.

The "Green Bushes" version was no doubt popularised in England through snatches of the ballad being sung to this tune by Mrs. Fitzwilliam in Buckstone's play "The Green Bushes" (1845), the ballad and tune afterwards being published by Davidson. A Gloucestershire "Holly and Ivy" tune, No. 7 of Mr. Sharp's *English Folk-Carols*, shows some likeness to the Cornish tune, and shares with it a Scotch or Irish flavour. Mrs. Fitzwilliam's tune is given below.—A. G. G.

SECOND VERSION.

From SAM COWELL'S 120 COMIC SONGS, c. 1850.

"AN OLD IRISH MELODY AS SUNG BY
MRS. FITZWILLIAM IN THE POPULAR DRAMA."

Musical notation for the second version of 'Holly and Ivy'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the accompaniment is written on a bass clef staff. The piece ends with a double bar line.

2.—HOLLY AND IVY.

FIRST VERSION.

Noted by T. MINERS and J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. JAMES THOMAS (Aged 77),
UNION STREET, CAMBORNE, August 12th, 1924.

Musical notation for the first version of 'Holly and Ivy' with lyrics. It consists of three staves of music in F major (one flat) and 6/8 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the accompaniment is written on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the melody. There are three instances of the letter '(a)' above the notes, indicating where the tune was repeated for the refrain. The piece ends with a double bar line.

The Hol - ly and the I - vy are trees that's ve - ry well known, Of
all the trees that grow in - to wood the Hol - ly bears the crown.
mer - ry mer - ry harp, Sweet

Ref: The rising of the sun, the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry, merry harp, sweet singing in the choir.

The tune was repeated for the refrain with the exception noted at (a).

- 2 The holly bears a blossom
As white as any flower,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To be our sweet Saviour.
- 3 The holly bears a colour
As green as any tree,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To set poor sinners free.

- 4 The holly bears a berry
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.
- 5 The holly bears a prickle
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas day in the morn.

Mr. Thomas also sings the following Easter version :

- 1 The holly and the ivy
Are plants that are well known,
Of all the trees that grow in woods
The holly bears the crown.
- 2 Its head it points to Heaven
To show its berries red,
In token of the drops of blood
Which on Calvary were shed.
- 3 And in the holly prickle
You can plainly see
The crown of thorns our Saviour wore
When going up Calvary.
- 4 And, although up in Heaven,
His love can still be seen
In the ivy colour—
The everlasting green.

These words are not nearly so old as the usual version, and appear to be late eighteenth century.—J. E. T.

SECOND VERSION.

Noted by J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MRS. ALICE RUNDLE (Aged 76).
DOLCOATH ROAD, CAMBORNE, November 29th, 1926.

The Hol - ly and the I - vy are trees that's both well
grown,.... Of all the trees that's in the wood the Hol - ly bears the
crown. The ris - ing of the sun, And the run - ning of the

deer,..... The play - ing of the mer - ry, mer - ry or - gan, Sweet
sing - ing in the choir, The play - ing of the mer - ry
or - gan, Sweet sing - ing in the choir.

The remainder of the words were very close to most printed versions.—J. E. T.

These two “Holly and Ivy” tunes are modifications of the old “Chevy Chase” air, of which Mrs. Alice Rundle’s version is the most interesting development. This ubiquitous old tune may be traced in many forms and settings—from “Three Children sliding on the Ice” (“Now ponder well, ye parents dear” in the *Beggar’s Opera*) to “The first that does come in” of the Sword-dancers.—A. G. G.

3.—EIGHT JOYS.

[THE JOYS OF MARY.]

Noted by J. E. THOMAS and T. MINERS.

SUNG BY MRS. JOSEPH TIPPET,
PENPONDS, CORNWALL.

The first good joy that Ma - ry had, It was the joy of
one, To see her own Son Je - sus Christ, When He was first her
son, When He was first her son, good man. Sing Fa - ther, Son and
Ho - ly Ghost, It's ti - dings of com - fort and joy.

- 2 The next good joy that Mary had
 It was the joy of two,
 To see her own son Jesus Christ
 To read the Bible through ;
 To read the Bible through, good man,
 Sing Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
 It's tidings of comfort and joy.
- 3 . . . To make the blind to see, etc.
- 4 . . . To walk the billows o'er, etc.
- 5 . . . To make the dead alive, etc.
- 6 . . . To wear the crucifix, etc.
- 7 . . . To wear the crown of heaven, etc.
- 8 . . . To make the crooked straight, etc.

Mrs. Boundey of Penponds sings for the third joy "Upon the accurséd tree," and for the seventh "To take us all to Heaven."—J. E. T.

The tune is unusual in being a *major* adaptation of "God rest you merry."

Another version, "The Seven Joys of Mary," from the same district but to a different tune, will be found in *Journal* No. 18 (Vol. v, p. 18), where variants and notes are given.—F. H.

See also Vol. viii, p. 86, where the origin of Bramley and Stainer's familiar tune to this carol is discussed, and Dr. Ralph Dunstan's *Second Book of Christmas Carols*, 1925, for an Irish tune.

The line "When He was first her Son" is a modern substitution for the uncouth "To suck at her breast-bone" of traditional copies. But the suggestion may here be thrown out that what was originally intended was "boon," in the sense of good, gracious, or bounteous. "Bon" and "bone" are the Anglo-Norman forms, "boon," and also "bone," mediæval. "Bone" survives in "Marylebone" to the present day, and Strutt has "Marybone Gardens." The N. E. D. quotes from early fourteenth-century sources "They come to cyte boon" and, concurrently, "bone chere." To the seventeenth-century, "boon" is retained in such phrases as "our boon God" and Milton's "Nature boon." Corresponding with these forms are (1) "oon" [*i.e.* "one"] found from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, as in Wyclif, and examples *temp.* Henry VIII, and (2) the old pronunciation of "one" with a long "o" (to rhyme with "alone"), given, says the N. E. D., by the earlier grammarians down to Cooper, 1685. So that the pair of rhymes in the carol may, according to this theory, have originally been either "oon" and "boon," or "ōne" and "bone"—but in both cases meaning the same thing. Such a reading would restore both rhyme and reason to a doubtful and perhaps corrupted line.—A. G. G.

4.—IN THOSE TWELVE DAYS.

Noted by JAMES THOMAS and
J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. THOMAS HOCKING (Aged 74),
UNION STREET, CAMBORNE, January 24th, 1927.

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are: 'There is but one God all a-lone, In Heav'n a-bove He sits on His throne. In those twelve days, Let us be glad, Since God the Fa-ther hath all things made.....' The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

- 2 There are two testaments, so we are told,
The one is new, the other is old.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 3 Three persons in the Trinity,
The Father, the Son and the Ghost Holy.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 4 Four Gospels are there right and true,
Saint John, Luke, Mark and Saint Matthew.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 5 Five senses we have from God in all,
Who gave his only Son to use them well.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 6 —
- 7 Seven days in the week have we,
Six to labour, the seventh holy.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 8 —
- 9 —
- 10 Ten commandments by Moses given :
Use them well and go to heaven.
In those twelve days, etc.
- 11 —
- 12 Twelve apostles Christ did choose
To preach the gospel to the Jews.
In those twelve days, etc.

The words are more interesting than the tune. The carol is given to a different air in Sandys. Mr. Hacking seems to have forgotten the rest of the verses. A very full set of words is in a manuscript book inscribed "Margery Hocking, her book of Carols," 1797.—J. E. T.

Cf. the tune "Jolly Old Hawk" (*Journal*, Vol. v, p. 282).—L. E. B.

5.—NOWELL AND NOWELL.

Noted by J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MRS. FRANK MITCHELL,
SOUTH TERRACE, CAMBORNE, December 14th, 1924.

No - well and No-well the an - gels did say, To shep - herds there in the
fields that lay, Late in the night en - fold - ing their sheep, One
win - ter's night so cold and deep. No - well and No - well, No -
well and No - well, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.....

The remainder of the words are very much like those already printed in *Journal*, Vol. v, p. 26 (No. 18). We send the tune because it is rather stronger than that which has appeared, and is the best in every way of a large number that have been noted in the district.

Mr. Miners wishes to draw attention to the supposed German origin of this tune (*see notes in Journal* No. 18). If the tune is really German, may it not have been brought by German "tinnners" who came to Cornwall in Queen Elizabeth's reign? That the carol was known in Cornwall earlier than the Howitts (1842) seems probable from the fact that it has been obtained from singers who learned it in the most remote parts of Cornwall where the influence of the Howitts could scarcely have penetrated. Mr. Miners has heard it sung by upwards of thirty residents of Camborne, natives of every part of the county of Cornwall.—J. E. T.

This "Nowell and Nowell" tune, which differs little—though it is a rather better version—from Mr. Sharp's in *Journal*, Vol. v, p. 26, is a form, like his, of the Wassail Song which immediately follows it (Vol. v, p. 28). Cf. also the Wassail Song from West Cornwall in Dr. Dunstan's (*First*) *Book of Christmas Carols*, 1923. See reference (Vol. v, p. 27) to the carol-tune "To-morrow shall be my dancing day" in Sandys' collection, also my note on Sandys' "First Nowell" tune (Vol. v, pp. 240-242).

—A. G. G.

6.—GOD BLESS YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN.

Noted by J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MRS. RICKA, TRESWITHIAN,
CORNWALL, December 22nd, 1925.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The melody is simple and folk-like, with a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

God bless you, mer - ry gen - tle - men, Let no - thing you dis -
 may, Re - mem - ber Christ your Sa - viour, Was born on Christ - mas
 day, To save poor souls from Sa - tan's pow'r, That long had gone a -
 - stray, For it's ti - dings of com - fort and joy, Com - fort and
 joy, For it's ti - dings of com - fort and joy.

- 2 From God that is our Father those blessed angels came
 Unto some sartin shepherds with tidings of the same,
 How that in Bethlehem was born the son of God by name,
 For it's tidings, etc.
- 3 The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
 And left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind,
 And straightway went to Bethlehem the Son of God to find,
 And it's tidings, etc.
- 4 Now when they came to Bethlehem where our dear Saviour lay,
 They found him in a manger where oxen feed on hay
 His mother Mary kneeling unto the Lord did pray,
 And it's tidings, etc.

- 5 God bless the rulers of this house with great prosperity,
 And many a merry Christmas may they live again to see
 Amongst their friends and kindred who live both far and near,
 And God send you a happy New Year.

Owing to the corruption of "rest" into "bless" in the title, "merry" is debased from a predicate into a mere epithet. The sentiments in v. 5 appropriate to a Wassail Song appear to have become entangled with the carol proper of vv. 1-4.

—F. H.

7.—HERE COME WE A-WASSAILING.

Noted by J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. W. J. BENNETTS (Aged 72),
 TOLCARNE STREET, CAMBORNE, June 23rd, 1926.



Here come we a - was - sail - ing, 'Long with our Lu - cy
 Green, And here we come a - wan - d'ring, As fair as to be seen.
 Love and joy come to you and to your was - sail too, And God
 send you a hap - - py New Year,... a New Year, And God
 send you a hap - py New Year.

- 2 Good Mistress and Master, as you sit by the fire
 Pray think of wassail-boys, a travelling in the mire.
- 3 God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress too,
 And give us each a piece of cake, as other people do.
- 4 God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress too,
 And all the little children that round the table go.

The tune is a variant of that given in Bramley and Stainer. The corruption in the first verse has given rise to an interesting custom. The Camborne Carol Party, of which Mr. Bennetts was a member, used to carry with them a small child dressed in

evergreens, their "Lucy Green." This is evidently a substitute for the older wassail bowl. Another carol choir in this district was known as the "Turkey Claw Choir," the collector carrying a turkey's claw in virtue of his office. Mr. Miners thinks this might be a relic of the insignia of the old "privileged choirs."—J. E. T.

Cf. English County Songs, p. 14.—L. E. B.

For Lancashire and Yorkshire versions of this "leaves so green" wassail song see *Journal*, Vol. v, pp. 210-11.

The small child dressed in evergreens carried round by the Camborne Carol Party seems to be a confused relic of the custom of bearing the "vessel-cup" at Christmas, the "vessel" (a corruption of wassail) being a box containing two dolls dressed to represent the Virgin and Child. In Yorkshire, formerly, says Thistleton Dyer, (*British Popular Customs*, p. 464) only one image was carried—that of the Saviour, which was placed in a box surrounded by evergreens and seasonable flowers. The household visited by the party were allowed to take from these decorations a leaf or flower, which was carefully preserved as a sovereign remedy for toothache. Dr. Dunstan prints one of these "Advent Images" carols (see his *Second Book of Christmas Carols*, 1925). It is the "Seven Joys of Mary," but sung to the "God rest you merry" tune. He states that it was deemed most unlucky to refuse a contribution, and also an omen of ill if a household was not visited by the Advent Images before Christmas Eve at the latest. Dr. Dunstan also prints a West Riding "Vessel-Cup" or Wassail Song, with an interesting chorus beginning "Pier! Tier! Wessel! And a jolly wessel," as now generally sung by children, decked with and carrying evergreens, and sometimes having blackened faces.—A. G. G.

8.—WASSAIL SONG.

FIRST VERSION.

Noted by J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. BENJAMIN LITTLE (Aged 79),
TRURO, October 20th, 1925.

Now Christ - mas is o - ver, and New Year be - gin, Pray
o - pen your doors and let us come in, With our was - sail, Was -
sail, Was - sail, And joy... come to..... our jol - ly Was - sail.

- 2 We're at this door and we already stand,
The jolly warzail boys, with the bowl in our hand.
With our warzail, etc.
- 3 Good mistress and master sitting down by the fire
While we poor warzail boys are travelling in the mire.
With our warzail, etc.
- 4 Good mistress and master, will you kindly forbear,
Come fill up our bowl with cyder or beer.
With our warzail, etc.
- 5 We poor warzail boys growing weary and old,
Drop a small piece of silver into our bowl.
With our warzail, etc.
- 6 Good mistress and master, sitting down at your ease,
Put your hand in your pocket and give what you please.
With our warzail, etc.
- 7 This ancient old house we will kindly salute,
It is an old custom you need not dispute.
With our warzail, etc.
- 8 I wish you a blessing and a long time to live
Since you've been so free and so willing to give.
With our warzail, etc.
- 9 The saddle and bridle are up on the shelf,
If you want any more you may sing it yourself.
With our warzail, etc.

SECOND VERSION.

Noted by T. MINERS and J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MR. WILLIAM PAPPIN,
CAMBORNE. November 15th, 1924.

The mis-tress and mas-ter our was-sail be-gin, Pray o-pen your door and
let us come in, For sing-ing was-sail, was-sail, was-sail, was-sail,
And joy..... come to..... our jol-ly was-sail.....

- 2 If the mistress is upstairs I hope she'll look down
And see we warzailers encircled around.
For singing, etc.
- 3 If the mistress is upstairs I hope she'll come down,
Put her hand in her pocket and give us a crown.
For singing, etc.

The reference in v. 2 to the mistress looking down from upstairs seems to refer more definitely than most Wassail songs, to singing *outside* the house. This would make it more ancient than the other versions, since wassailing outside is the older custom.

—T. M.

Baring-Gould in his *Garland of Country Songs* prints a variant of this tune and song noted at Grampond from an old man, Michael Nancarow, by Mr. J. J. Mountford, and also a common-time tune and words from Langport, Somerset. This has seven verses, several being quite different from those here given.—A. G. G.

THIRD VERSION.

Noted by T. MINERS.

SUNG BY MRS. CARLYON, 1914.

The mis - tress and mas - ter sit - ting down by the fire, While
we poor was - sail boys are trav - 'ling in the mire, To
our..... was - sail, was - sail, was - sail,..... was - sail, While
we poor was - sail boys are trav' - ling in the mire.

FOURTH VERSION.

Noted by J. MINERS and
J. E. THOMAS.

SUNG BY MRS. WOOLCOCK,
PARK ROAD, CAMBORNE. June 30th, 1926.

I..... wish you a merr - ry Christ - mas, And a Hap - py New
Year, With a poc - ket full of ap - ples, And a bel - ly full of

beer. Moor - zeal, Moor - zeal, Moor - zeal,..... Moor - zeal, Put your
hand..... in your poc - ket and give what you please.

- 2 The mistress and master sitting down by the fire,
While we poor jolly sailor-boys are walking in the mire.

The words are fragmentary and corrupt. The first verse is given in *Folk Songs from Somerset*, Fourth Series, as the opening of the New Year carol to which it more properly belongs.

Another "Moorzeal" version given by a Penponds singer was snatches of the St. George play :

In comes I, little man Jack,
With my wife upon my back.
Moorzeal, etc.

In comes I old Beelzebub,
On my shoulder I carry a club.
Moorzeal, etc.

The Cornish St. George plays, of which several versions have been taken down in West Cornwall, usually end with some verses of the Wassail Song, which accounts for the above version, although the words are difficult to fit to the tune.

If householders were unwilling to give to the "Wassail Boys" the blessings would be turned to curses and insults, as in the verse :

The mistress and master, they won't give a fig,
But set down by the fire and grunt like a pig.
A-wersey, A-wersey,
Joy come home with Johnny Wersey.

This corruption, like that in "Here come we a-wassailing," has given rise to a personification.

All the above words have been noted by Mr. Miners.—J. E. T.