Paul Hardy’s Xmas Tunebook 2019

Introduction

This tunebook contains Christmas tunes and carols that I play on my English concertina. They should also be playable on fiddle, whistle, flute, dulcimer, etc. The predominant keys used are G, D and C (and Em, Bm, and Am) to suit folk instruments and ease learning.

Most are traditional tunes, mainly from the British Isles, but others are imports from various sources. All tunes are believed free of current copyright (unless noted explicitly), or else appear to have been placed in the public domain as part of the ongoing live folk music tradition. Please let me know if you are the owner of any that are under access restrictions and I’ll remove them.

I have tried to choose the simple versions of most tunes, without much decoration and interpretation, so add your own triplets, grace notes and variations. From this 2019 edition, the guitar chords have had a major overhaul and simplification from the earlier editions (thanks to the Brind family). I’ve also included a small subset of words - just enough to go with the notes written, usually one verse plus a chorus if any. This tunebook is for instrumentalists, not singers!

This tunebook has been prepared using the abcm2ps software, with help from abcmus, EasyABC, and ABCexplorer. A big thank you goes to those creative and dedicated people who give their time to create and maintain low-cost or free and open source software for abc music editing and output.

The current version of this tunebook, in ABC and in PDF forms, is downloadable from Paul’s web site at http://www.pghardy.net/, along with Paul Hardy’s Session Tunebook.

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Original version of 16 December 2009, this version of 13 November 2019, with minor edits to 18 November 2022.
A Child this Day is Born
Trad. Sandys 1833

**March**

\[ J = 140 \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A Child this day is born,} \\
\text{Noëls, noëls, noëls,} \\
\text{Most worthy of a scepter,} \\
\text{A scepter and a crown.}
\end{align*}
\]

**Mazurka**

\[ J = 120 \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A virgin most pure,} \\
\text{as the prophets do tell,} \\
\text{Hath brought forth a Baby, as it hath befell,} \\
\text{To be our Redeemer from death, hell and sin,} \\
\text{Which Adam’s transgression has wrappèd us in.}
\end{align*}
\]

**Air**

\[ J = 110 \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Adam lay ybounden,} \\
\text{bounden in a bond;} \\
\text{Ne had the apple taken been,} \\
\text{And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,} \\
\text{Ne had never Our Lady a been heavenly queen.}
\end{align*}
\]
March

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Trad.
France

G D G D G G Em Am D7 G C D G D G C G D

As With Gladness, Men of Old

William Chatterton Dix, 1859
England

G C G Em D

Away in a Manger

William J Kirkpatrick, 1895
England

G D7 G Em Am D G A7 D7

March

J = 140

March

J = 140

As With Gladness, Men of Old

William Chatterton Dix, 1859
England

G C G Em D

Away in a Manger

William J Kirkpatrick, 1895
England

G D7 G Em Am D G A7 D7

Away in a manger, No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus, Laid down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky, Looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on the hay
Boar’s Head Carol

Trad. 1521
England

Air

J = 140

The boar’s head in hand bear I
Bedecked with bays and rosemary;
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estis in convivio:

Brightest and Best

J P Harding 1892
England

March

J = 140

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
(Bishop Reginald Heber 1783-1826)

The Cherry Tree Carol

Trad.
England

March

J = 140

Joseph was an old man, and an old man was he,
when he wedded Mary in the land of Galilee.
Christians, Awake, Salute the Happy Morn

John Wainwright, 1757

England

C Am Em F C Am F G C
C Am F G Em Am E Am E7 Am
F C F G A m E A m F G C

Christians, awake, salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born
Rise to adore the mystery of love
Which hosts of angels chanted from above
With them the joyful tidings first begun
Of God incarnate and the Virgin's Son

Christmas is Coming

Trad.

England

D G A D G A7 D
D G A D A7 D

Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat
Please put a penny in the old man's hat
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you!

Coventry Carol

Trad. 16th C.

England, Coventry

Em B Em B Em B Em B Em D B Em B
D Em B Em B Em B Em B

Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.
Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day
This poor Youngling for Whom we sing
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.

(16C Pageant of the Shearmen & Tailors)
Reel

J = 120

Cranbrook
While Shepherds Watched

| England |

While shepherds watched their flocks by night, All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down, The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around, And glory shone around, And glory shone around.

March

J = 160

Deck the Halls

| Wales |

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la, la la la la,
'Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la, la la la la,
Don we now our gay apparel, Fa la la la la, la la la la,
Troll the ancient Yule-tide carol, Fa la la la la, la la la la,

March

J = 100

Ding Dong Merrily on High

| France |

Ding dong! merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with Angel singing.
Gloria; Hosanna in excelsis!

(George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1924)
Waltz  
J = 120

The First Nowell  
First Noel  
Trad. Ancient in 1833  
England

A7 D A G D G A7 D A7 D

The first nowell the angels 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;

Irregular  
J = 80

Gabriel’s Message  
The Angel Gabriel from Heaven came  
Trad.  
Basque

Em D Em C D B7

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
All hail, said he, thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favour’d lady, Gloria!

Air  
J = 110

Gaudete  
Trad. - Piae Cantiones, 1582  
Sweden

Am G Am G Am G

Gaudete! Gaudete! Tempus adest gratiae, hoc quod optabamus;
Christus est natus ex Maria virgine. Gaudete!
Tempus adest gratiae, hoc quod optabamus;
Carmina laetitiae devote reddamus.
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Trad.  England

March  J= 150

\[ \text{Em} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{B7} \]

\[ \text{Em} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{B} \]

\[ \text{Am} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{D} \]

\[ \text{G} \quad \text{B7} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{B} \quad \text{Em} \]

God rest you merry, gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ, our Savior, Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan’s power When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

Good King Wenceslas

Trad. - Piae Cantiones, 1582  Sweden

March  J= 180

\[ \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \]

\[ \text{G} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \]

\[ \text{D} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{G} \]

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
Gath’ring winter fuel

Go, tell it on the mountain

Trad. Negro Spiritual  USA

March  J= 160

\[ \text{G} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \]

\[ \text{G} \quad \text{D7} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{D7} \]

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.
March

J = 130

Hark The Herald Angels Sing

Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

Germany

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

Irregular

J = 110

Here We Come A-Wassailing

Trad.

England

Here we come a-wassailing; Among the leaves so green;
Here we come a-wand’ring; So fair to be seen.
Love and joy come to you, And to you your wassail too; And God bless you and send you
A Happy New Year, And God send you a Happy New Year.
**The Holly and the Ivy**

*Trad.*

*England*

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

---

**Huron Carol**

*Trad.*

*Canada 1643, after France*

'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled
That mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim and wondering hunters heard the hymn,
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

(Translation by Jesse Middleton, of Jesous Ahatonia by Saint Jean de Brebeuf, 1643)

---

**Il Est Né le Divin Enfant**

*Trad.*

*France*

Il est né le divin enfant,
Jouez hautbois, résonnez musette.
Il est né le divin enfant,
Chantons tous son avènement.

He is born, the holy Child,
Play the oboe and bagpipes merrily!
He is born, the holy Child,
Sing we all of the Savior mild.
In Dulci Jubilo

Good Christian Men Rejoice

Heinrich Seuse circa 1328
Germany

In dulci jubilo; Now sing we all with hearts aglow!
Our delight and pleasure; Lies in praesepio,
Like sunshine is our treasure; Matris in gremio.
Alpha es et O! Alpha es et O!

Good Christian men rejoice; With heart and soul and voice!
Give ye heed to what we say; News! News! 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!

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst 1906
Germany

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, (Christina Rossetti, 1872)
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long a go.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Trad.
Poland

Infant holy, Infant lowly, For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, Little knowing, Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging, Angels singing, Nowells ringing, Tidings bringing,
Christ the Babe is Lord of all; Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In

Trad.
England

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day in the morning.
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

A Sullivan after Trad.
England

It came upon the midnight clear,
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
That glorious song of old,
From heaven’s all-gracious King.

From angels bending near the earth,
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To touch their harps of gold:
To hear the angels sing.

(Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849)

I Wonder as I Wander

Trad.
USA

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
For poor ordinary people like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Trad.
USA after England

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.
Jingle Bells
James Lord Pierpont, 1857
USA

Dashing through the snow
In a one-horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way;
Bells on bobtail ring
Making spirits bright
Oh, what fun it is to sing
A sleighing song tonight.

Joy to the World
Lowell Mason 1839 after Handel
USA after Germany

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 heaven, and nature sing.

Love Came Down at Christmas
Trad.
Ireland

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.
Mary Had a Baby

Reel

J = 130

Trad. - Negro Spiritual

G D7 G D7 G D7 C D

G D7 C G D G D7 G

Mary had a baby (Aye Lord)
Mary had a baby (Oh My Lord)
Mary had a baby (Aye Lord)
The people keep a-comin’ and the train done gone.

My Dancing Day

Waltz

J = 180

Trad.

G D G D Em D G D

G C A7 D Em G D7 G

Am D7 G D A7 D Em G D7 G

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day: I would my true love did so chance;
To see the legend of my play, To call my true love to my dance
Sing O my love, O my love, my love, my love; This have I done for my true love.

O Come, All ye Faithful

March

J = 130

John Wade, 1743.

G D G C G D Em A D A7 D

G C G D A7 D G D G D G

D G D7 G D G D7 A7 D G C G D G

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;
Oh come let us adore Him; Oh come let us adore Him
Oh come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.
O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Veni Emmanuel

Trad. 15C
France

Em Am D G Em D Em

Am C D Em Am D G

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

O Holy Night

Cantique de Noël

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)
France

D G D A D

D G F C Fm

A D A D

Bm Fm Em Bm

D A D G D A D A D

A D A D

O Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear savior’s birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining,”Til he appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees. Oh, hear the angels voices. Oh, night divine. Oh, night when Christ was born. Oh, night. Oh, holy night. Oh, night divine.

(Translation by by John Dwight, of Minuit Chrétien by Placide Cappeau, 1847)
O Little Town of Bethlehem

**Trad. = Forest Green**

**England**

**March**

\( J = 120 \)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{D} & \text{G} & \text{Em} & \text{Am} & \text{G} & \text{C} & \text{D} & \text{G} \\
& G & Em & A7 & D & G & Em & A7 & D \\
& D & G & Em & Am & G & C & D & G \\
\end{align*}
\]

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

(Phillips Brooks, 1903)

---

Once In Royal David’s City

**Henry John Gauntlett, 1849**

**England**

**March**

\( J = 120 \)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{D7} & \text{G} & \text{D7} & \text{G} & \text{Em} & \text{G} & \text{Am} & \text{D7} & \text{G} \\
& C & G & Am & D7 & G & C & G & Am & D7 & G \\
\end{align*}
\]

Once in royal Davids city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby,
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

(Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, 1848)

---

O Tannenbaum

**Trad.**

**Germany**

**Waltz**

\( J = 110 \)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{D} & \text{A7} & \text{D} & \text{Em} & \text{A7} & \text{D} \\
& D & A & D & A & A & D \\
& A7 & D & A7 & D & Em & A7 & D \\
\end{align*}
\]

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us. (x2)
They’re green when summer days are bright;
They’re green when winter snow is white.
O, Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein, auch im Winter, wenn es schneit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Past Three O’Clock
London Waits

Trad.
England

Em Am D G Em Am D Em

Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!

Born is a Baby, Gentle as may be,
Son of the eternal, Father supernal.

Patapan
Bernard de La Monnoye 1720
France

Em D Em B7 B7 Em

Willie, bring your little drum;
Robin, bring your flute and come;
Tu-re-lu-re-lu, Pat-a-pat-a-pan,
Come be merry while you play,
On this joyous Holiday!

Rocking Carol
Little Jesus, Sweetly Sleep
Trad.
Czech

G C Am D G C Am D Am D

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;
We will lend a coat of fur.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you;
See the fur to keep you warm; Snugly round your tiny form
Sans Day Carol

The Holly Bears a Berry

Trad.

England, Cornwall

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly! And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

See, Amid the Winter’s Snow

John Goss, 1871

See amid the winter snow,
Born for us on earth below;
Hail, thou ever blessed morn;
See the tender lamb appears,
Promis’d from eternal years.

Seven Joys of Mary

The First Good Joy that Mary Had

Trad.

England

The first good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of one,
To see her ownsome Jesus Christ when he was first her son,
When he was first her son, good man, and blessed may he be.
O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through all eternity.
Silent Night
Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818
Austria

Air
J = 60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
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<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round von Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Sussex Carol
On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing
Trad.
England, Sussex

Jig
J = 80

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
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<th>G</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 Redeemer's birth

Sweet Chiming Bells
While Shepherds Watched
Trad.
England, Sheffield

March
J = 160

<table>
<thead>
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<th>G</th>
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</table>

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around,

Sweet bells, sweet chiming Christmas bells,
Sweet bells, sweet chiming Christmas bells,
They lead us on our heav'nly way, sweet chiming bells,
They lead us on our heav'nly way, sweet chiming bells.
The Twelve Days of Christmas

Trad. England

March
J = 120

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
seven swans a’ swimming
six geese a’ laying
five gold rings
four colly-birds
three French hens
two turtle doves
and a partridge in a pear tree

We Wish You A Merry Christmas

Trad. England, Sussex

Waltz
J = 180

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

We Three Kings Of Orient Are
Rev John Henry Hopkins, 1863

Jig
J = 90

We wish you a merry Christmas, we wish you a merry Christmas,
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!
Glad tidings we bring, to you and your kin,
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

We three kings of Orient are
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.
What Child Is This?

Trad. (Greensleeves, 16C)  
England

Air

J = 130

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Em</th>
<th>D</th>
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What child is this, who, laid to rest; On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet; While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king; Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud; The babe, the son of Mary!

(William Chatterton Dix, 1865)

March

J = 120

<table>
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While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.

(Nahum Tate, 1700)
Sleigh bells ring, are you listening,  
In the meadow we can build a snowman,  
In the lane, snow is glistening  
Then pretend that he is Parson Brown  
A beautiful sight, We're happy tonight.  
He'll say: Are you married? We'll say: No man,  
Walking in a winter wonderland.  
But you can do the job when you're in town.  

(George F. Schott 1934).

Girls and boys, leave your toys. Make no noise,  
Kneel at His crib and worship Him.  
At Thy shrine, Child divine, we are Thine,  
Our Saviour's here.
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