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 9 December 2021.
A Child this Day is Born

Traditional 1833

England

March

J = 140

A Child this day is born,
A Child of high renown.
Most worthy of a scepter,
A scepter and a crown.

Noëls, noëls, noëls,
Noëls sing all we may,
Because the King of all kings
Was born this blessed day.
A virgin most pure, as the prophets do tell, Hath brought forth a Baby, as it hath befell,  
To be our Redeemer from death, hell and sin, Which Adam’s transgression has wrappèd us in.  
And therefore be merry, set sorrow aside; Christ Jesus our Savior was born on this tide.
Adam Lay Ybounden

Trad, 15th Century

England

Air

J = 110

Am Em Am Em Am F G D Em

Am Em Am Em C F C F E

Am G C F D7 G Em C G

C G Am G Am G Am Em Am

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter, thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
As clerkès finden written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
Ne had never Our Lady a been heavenly queen.
Blessed be the time that apple taken was.
Therefore we moun singen Deo gratias!
March
J = 140

Angels from the Realms of Glory
Trad.
France

Angels from the realms of glory
Come and worship, Come and worship;
Ye who sang creation's story;
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Worship Christ, the newborn King!
As with gladness, men of old; Did the guiding star behold
As with joy they hailed its light; Leading onward, beaming bright
So, most glorious Lord, may we; Evermore be led to Thee
Away in a Manger

William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895

England

Waltz
J = 110

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
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:

Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino.
Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino.
Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

(Bishop Reginald Heber 1783-1826)
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
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

(John Byron 1745)
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!
Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child, O sisters too, how may we do,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay. For to preserve this day
Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child, This poor Youngling for Whom we sing
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.

(16C Pageant of the Shearmen & Tailors)
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.
Deck the Halls

March
J = 160

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,
Ding Dong Merrily on High

(George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1924)

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!
The First Nowell

First Noel

Trad. Ancient in 1833

England

A7 D A G D G A7 D A7 D

A7 D F G D G A7 D 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;

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.
Gabriel’s Message
The Angel Gabriel from Heaven came

Em D Em C D B7
Em D Em C D Em
G Em D G D
Am B7 Em C Am D Em

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame; To me be as it pleaseth God, she said,
All hail, said he, thou lowly maiden Mary, Most highly favour’d lady, Gloria!
Most highly favour’d lady, Gloria!
Gaudete

Trad. - Piae Cantiones, 1582

Sweden

Am G Am G Am G Am

Gaudete! Gaudete!
Christus est natus ex Maria virgine. Gaudete!

Am Dm Am G Am

Tempus adest gratiae, hoc quod optabamus;
Carmina laetitiae devote reddamus.
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

G C D7 G

March
J = 180

Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even

G Em C D7 G

Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel
When a poor man came in sight
Gath’ring winter fuel

(D John Mason Neale, 1853, after Czech poem)
Go, tell it on the mountain, While shepherds kept their watching
Over the hills and everywhere Over silent flocks by night
That Jesus Christ is born. Behold throughout the heavens
Go, tell it on the mountain, 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; (Charles Wesley 1839)
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!
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

Waltz

J = 140

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.
Une Jeune Pucelle
Canada 1643, after France

Air
J = 130

Am Em Am Em Am Am Am
Em G Am Em Am Em Am Em Am Am

’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
He is born, the holy Child

G C D G
1 D A F D 2 D C

Il est né le divin enfant,
He is born, the holy Child,
Jouez hautbois, résonnez musette.
Play the oboe and bagpipes merrily!
Il est né le divin enfant,
He is born, the holy Child,
Chantons tous son avènement.
Sing we all of the Savior mild.
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

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, (Christina Rosetti, 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, 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
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

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:

(Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849)
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

March

J = 130

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

March

J = 200

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

Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way;
Oh! what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh.

Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way;
Oh! what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh.
Joy to the world! the Lord is come; (Isaac Watts 1719)
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.
Love came down at Christmas, (Christina Rossetti 1885)
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.
Mary Had a Baby

Trad. - Negro Spiritual
USA

Reel
J = 130

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

Trad.

England, Cornwall

Waltz

J = 180

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

(Trans. John Neale of 12C Veni, veni, Emmanuel)
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

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

(Phillips Brooks, 1903)
Once in royal David's 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.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Your branches green delight us. (x2) Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
They're green when summer days are bright; Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
They're green when winter snow is white. Nein, auch im Winter, wenn es schneit.
O, Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Your branches green delight us! Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Past Three O’Clock

Trad.
England

J = 130

Past three a clock, Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning, And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock; Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all! Good morrow, masters all!
Born is a Baby, Gentle as may be, Son of the eternal, Father supernal.

(George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1924)
March

Patapan

Bernard de La Monnoye 1720
France

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

Guillaume, prends ton tambourin,
Toi, prends ta flûte, Robin;
Au son de ces instruments,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de ces instruments,
Je dirai Noël gaiement.
March

\[
J = 120
\]

**Rocking Carol**

**Little Jesus, Sweetly Sleep**

Trad.

Czech

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir; We will lend a coat of fur.

We will rock you, rock you, rock you; 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

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 snow, Hail, thou ever blessed morn;  
Born for us on earth below; Hail, redemption’s happy dawn;  
See the tender lamb appears, Sing through all Jerusalem,  
Promis’d from eternal years. Christ is born in Bethlehem.

(Edward Caswall, 1871)
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

\[ J = 60 \]

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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

(Josef Mohr, 1818, Trans by John Young, 1819)
**Sussex Carol**

*On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing*

**Trad.**

*England, Sussex*

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

The Twelve Days of Christmas

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my true love sent to me
seven swans a’ swimming

Twelve drummers drumming
six geese a’ laying

eleven pipers piping
five gold rings

four colly-birds

nine ladies dancing
two turtle doves

eight maids a’ milking

and a partridge in a pear tree

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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
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

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, 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)
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,
A beautiful sight, We're happy tonight.
Walking in a winter wonderland.

Gone away is the bluebird,
Here to stay is a new bird
He sings a love song, As we go along,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

In the meadow we can build a snowman,
Then pretend that he is Parson Brown
He'll say: Are you married? We'll say: No man,
But you can do the job when you're in town.

(Richard B. Smith 1934).
Irregular
J = 60

Zither Carol

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.

"Hallelujah!" the church bells ring,
"Hallelujah!" the angels sing,
"Hallelujah!" from everything.
All must draw near.