

Folk Arts Center of New England
10 Franklin Street, Stoneham, MA 02180-1862
Telephone: 781-438-4387 <<>> email: fac@facone.org
website: <http://www.facone.org/>

The "Some Other Folk Arts" (SOFA) Series
From the Solstice to Twelfth Night with John Roberts
Saturday, January 6, 2022

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SONG LYRICS

Santa's Alphabet (Nigel Schofield)

CHORUS:

Merrily, merrily, we ding-dong on high
26 letters as Christmas draws nigh:
Merrily, Merrily Christmas to you
And we shall not end till our A to Z's through.

The Halsway Carol (Nigel Eaton/Ian Frisk)

Lo for the tiding of the Long Night Moon
Let the sunrise call about the morning soon
Short is the biding of the fading light
Sing for the coming of the longest night
North wind tell us what we need to know
When the stars are shining on the midnight snow
All of the branches will be turned to white
Sing for the coming of the longest night

CHORUS:

A winter day, the summer grass turned hay
Frost in the field 'til the dawn of May
A summer's light never shone as great or as bright
So dance in the shadows of a winter's night

Lo for the tiding of the Long Night Moon
May the harvest last until the springtime bloom
Home is our comfort at the winter's height
Sing for the coming of the longest night
All of the colours of the sunrise sky
Shine a light upon us, as the day goes by
Sunsetting shadows fading out of sight
Sing for the coming of the longest night

CHORUS: A winter day

Kris Kringle (Sheffield tradition)

Who comes this way so blithe and gay, upon a merry Christmas Day?
So merrily, so cheerily, with his peaked hat and his reindeer sleigh,
With pretty toys for girls and boys, as pretty as you e'er did see?
O, this is Santa Claus's man, Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.

CHORUS:

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho,
Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho,
And jingle, jingle, jing-a-jing-a-jing,
Right merry shall you be,
And jingle, jingle, he comes this way,
He comes with a Christmas tree,
And welcome, welcome, welcome Kris,
Right welcome shall you be,
Oh here he is, yes, yes, he is,
'Tis Kris with a Christmas tree,
The Christmas tree, the Christmas tree,
The Christmas tree, the Christmas tree.

The sleigh bells ring with a merry ching, as o'er the roofs the reindeer swing,
Gee up! Gee ho! How swift they go, over the ice and the drifts of snow.
For he must call on one and all, his master's pretty pets you see,
O, this is Santa Claus's man, Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.

CHORUS

With cakes and plums, trumpets and drums, and lots of pretty things he comes,
So now be quick, your places take, and all a merry circle make,
For now he's here he'll soon appear, and his jolly face you'll see,
O, welcome Santa Claus's man, Kris Kringle with his Christmas tree.

CHORUS

I Am Christmas (John Conolly/Bill Meek)

I will sew a braid of gold on grey December's ragged sleeve,
Teach the crabbed and jaded soul how to give, how to receive,
For rooms are thick with magic now, the tree its soft light throwing
The mistletoe, the holly bough, my age-old spell bestowing.

CHORUS:

I am warmth and I am light, I am kith and kin,
A candle in your darkest night, I am Christmas, let me in,
I am Christmas, Let me in.

For I bring stories by the hearth, delight in half-forgotten names,
Apple logs on fragrant fires with flick'ring faces in the flames.
As the year draws in its days and tired leaves are falling,
I can brighten darkened ways where dusk is early calling.

CHORUS

I can take the weary miles and weave a carpet to your door,
Guide the dusty wand'rer home safely to your side once more,
I can cheer the bitter days with tunes to set you singing,
My standard in your heart I'll raise, joy and comfort bringing.

CHORUS

I bring churches all aglow and carols on the midnight air,
Coloured windows streaked with snow that gild the congregation there;
For young and old shall join and sing to mark the long year's turning,
From one glad candle that I bring, ten thousand more are burning.

CHORUS

The Cutty Wren

THE PATTERN:

(QUESTION) said Milder to Malder

O, we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose,

(ANSWER) said John the Red Nose & *REPEAT THAT LINE*

(DENIAL) said Milder to Malder

O, what will do then? said Festel to Fose,

(ANSWER) said John the Red Nose & *REPEAT THAT LINE*

"O, where are you going?" said Milder to Molder,

"O, we may not tell you," said Festel to Fose,

"We're off to the woods," said John the Red Nose,

"We're off to the woods," said John the Red Nose.

And what will you do there?

O, we may not tell you.

We'll hunt the Cutty Wren.

And how will you shoot her?

O, we may not tell you.

With bows and with arrows.

But that will not do.

O, what will do then?

Big guns and big cannons.

And how will you carry her?

O, we may not tell you.

On four strong men's shoulders.

But that will not do.

O, what will do then?

In a big horse and wagon.

And how will you cut her up?

O, we may not tell you.

With knives and with forks.

But that will not do.

O, what will do then?

Big hatchets and cleavers.

And how will you cook her?

O, we may not tell you.

In pots and in pans.

But that will not do.

O, what will do then?

In a bloody great brass cauldron.

And who'll get the spare ribs?

O, we may not tell you.

We'll give 'em all to the poor.

King's Song

Make us room for we are a-coming
All for to let you understand
What and of late we have been a-doing
Since we left your foreign land

The first to come in it is Lord Nelson
He is the hero of this isle
He that has won the garland of victory
At the battle of the Nile

The next to come in is the Duke of Wellington
He that has fought his passage through
He that has won the garland of victory
On the plains of Waterloo

The next to come in is Tom the tinker
All you kettles he will mend
So if you dare to let him venture
Tom will treat you as a friend

The next to come in is the highlander laddie
He's got ships all on the main
Merchandise of every description
Since he's returning home again

The last to come in is Dick the cobbler
He's got little for to lose
But for a poor and ragged waistcoat
And a pair of clouted shoes

Rise Up Jock (Bob Pegg)

As I went out one morning, for to take the pleasant air,
The birds were singing in the trees, and the weather, it was fair
I sat for a while to rest myself, at the foot of a shady oak,
When by there came a band of men with their faces black with smoke, (So it's):

CHORUS:

Rise up Jock and sing your song,
For the summer is short and the winter long,
Let's all join hands and form a chain
'Til the leaves of springtime bloom again.

Now, the first to come in was a soldier, with his rifle in his hand,
He's just returned from fighting wars, in many's the distant land,
He's left his regiment sleeping, at the foot of a foreign hill,
And he's returned to England, for to kill or to be killed:

CHORUS

And the next to come in was a sailor, he's just returned from sea,
He's sailed away for seven long years, till at last he was set free,
That evening as the sun went down, he anchored by the shore,
And he's returned to England, for to fight one battle more:

CHORUS

In the middle of the forest, where the blackbird sweet did sing,
The soldier and the sailor took their place inside a ring,
And when the battle started they went at it blow by blow,
And when the battle ended, down their backs the blood did flow:

CHORUS

Now a chimney-sweep and a doctor come a-walking arm in arm,
And when they saw the bodies there, they showed no alarm,
For the doctor had been traveling, through Italy, Spittaly, France and Spain,
And he had in his bag a tiny flask, for to ease the aching pain:

CHORUS

He gave a drink to the soldier, who rose up from the ground,
And he began for to sing his song as he passed the bottle round,
And the sailor, the same, up from the ground, as sure as he was born
And the soldier, the sailor, the doctor and the sweep, they danced until the dawn:

CHORUS

Stevens Family Waysail (coll. Gwilym Davies)

Waysail, waysail all over the town
Our bread it is white and our ale it is brown
Our bowl it is made of some fine apple tree
With a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee.
 Drink unto thee, drink unto thee
 With a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to our master and to his right arm
May God send our master a good crop of corn
A good crop of corn that we may all see
With a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee, etc.

Here's a health to our master and to his right leg
May God send our master a jolly fat pig
And a jolly fat pig that we may all see
With a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee, etc.

Here's a health to our master and to his right eye
May God send our master a good Christmas pie
And a good Christmas pie that we may all see
Oh, a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee, etc,

Here's a health to our master and to his right ear
May God send our master a happy new year
And a happy new year that we may all see
With a waysailing bowl, we'll drink unto thee, etc.

Come butler, come butler, bring us a bowl of the best
And we hope that in Heaven your soul it may rest
But if you should bring us a bowl of your small
Then down will go butler, bowl and all
 Bowl and all, etc.

There was an old woman, she had but one cow
And how to maintain it she did not know how
She built up a fire to keep her cow warm
And a little of your cider would do us no harm
 Do us no harm, etc.

Gower Wassail (from Phil Tanner)

A wassail, a wassail, throughout all this town,
Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown,
Our wassail is made of the good ale and cake,
Some nutmeg and ginger, the best we can make,

CHORUS:

Fol-the-dol, lol-the-dol-the-dol,
Fol-the-dol-the-dol, lol-the-dol-the-dee,
Fol-the-der-rol, fol-the-dad-dy,
Sing too-ra-li-do.

Our wassail is made of an elderberry bough,
And so my good neighbors we'll drink unto thou.
Besides all on earth we have apples in store,
Pray let us come in for it's cold by the door.

CHORUS

We know by the moon that we are not too soon,
And we know by the sky that we are not too high,
We know by the stars that we are not too far,
And we know by the ground that we are within sound.

CHORUS

Good master and mistress, we do hope that you'll give
Unto our jolly wassail as long as you live;
And if we do live till another New Year,
Then perhaps we may call and see who do live here.

CHORUS

Derwent Wassail (Keith Kendrick)

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green
And here we come a-wandering, so fair to be seen:

CHORUS:

Love and joy come to you, and your wassail too
God bless you all and send you all a Happy New Year
Happy New Year, Happy New Year
God bless you all and send you all a Happy New Year.

Our wassail bowl is made of the rosemary tree
And so is your beer of the best barley:

CHORUS

Call up the butler of this house, put on his golden ring
And bring us out a drop of good beer, the better we shall sing:

CHORUS

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door
But we're your neighbor's children that you have seen before:

CHORUS

God bless the master of this house, the mistress also
And all the little children that round your table go:

CHORUS

We've got a little purse and it's made of leather skin
So give us a handful of your cash to line it well within:

CHORUS

Good master and good mistress, while you're sitting by your fire
Pray think of us poor children out a-wandering in the mire:

CHORUS

To Drive the Cold Winter Away

All hail to the days that merit more praise
Than all the rest of the year,
And welcome the nights that double delights,
As well for the poor as the peer!
Good fortune attend each merry man's friend,
That doth but the best that he may;
Forgetting old wrongs, with carols and songs,
To drive the cold winter away.

This time of the year is spent in good cheer,
And neighbors together do meet,
To sit by the fire, with friendly desire,
Each other in love do greet;
Old grudges forgot, are put in the pot,
All sorrows aside they lay,
The old and the young doth carol his song,
To drive the cold winter away.

To mask and to mum kind neighbors will come
With wassails of nut-brown ale,
To drink and carouse to all in the house,
As merry as bucks in the dale;
Where cake, bread and cheese is brought for your fees,
To make you the longer stay;
At the fire to warm will do you no harm,
To drive the cold winter away.

When Christmas's tide comes in like a bride,
With holly and ivy clad,
Twelve days in the year, much mirth and good cheer,
In every household is had;
The country guise is then to devise
Some gambols of Christmas play,
Whereat the young men do best that they can,
To drive the cold winter away.

When white-bearded frost hath threatened his worst,
And fallen from branch and brier,
Then time away calls, from husbandry halls
And from the good countryman's fire,
Together to go to plough and to sow,
To get us both food and array;
And thus with content the time we have spent
To drive the cold winter away.

Orkney New Year's Carol (coll. Pat Shaw)

THE PATTERN:

(LINE OF VERSE)

We are all Queen Mary's Men

(LINE OF VERSE)

And that's before Our Lady

This is New Year's Even Night,
We are all Queen Mary's Men,
And we've come here to claim our right:
And that's before our lady.

The morning, it is New Year's Day,
And we've come here to sport and play:

And if you don't open up your door,
We'll lay it flat upon the floor:

Master, get your ale vat,
And give us a couple of pints of that:

Mistress, get your pork ham,
And cut it large, and cut it round,
Be sure you don't cut off your thumb:

We wish your cattle all may thrive,
To every one, a goodly calf:

We wish your mares, well fare they all,
To every one, a stag foal:

We wish your hens all well may thrive,
And every one lay three times five:

We wish your geese may all do well,
And every one, twelve at her heel:

God bless the mistress and her man,
Dish and table, pot and pan:

Here's to the one with yellow hair,
She's hiding underneath the stair:

Be you maids or be you none,
Although our time may not be long,
You'll all be kissed ere we go home:

Carol for New Year's Day

1. The old year now away is fled
The new year now is entered;
Then let us now our sins down tread
And joyfully all appear.
Let's merry be this holiday
And let us run with sport and play
Hang sorrow, let's cast care away
God send you a happy new year.

2. And now, with new years gifts, each friend
Unto each other they do send;
God grant we may our lives amend
And that the truth may appear.
Now like the snake cast off your skin
Of evil thoughts and wicked sin,
And to amend this new year begin
God send us a merry new year.

3. And now let all the company
In friendly manner all agree,
For we are here welcome all may see
Unto this jolly good cheer.
I think my master and my dame
The which are founders of the same,
To eat, to drink now is no shame --
God send us a merry new year.

4. Come lads and lasses, every one,
Jack, Tom, Dick, Bess, Mary and Joan,
Let's cut the meat unto the bone
For welcome you need not fear.
And here for good liquor we shall not lack
It will whet my brains and strengthen my back,
This jolly good cheer it must go to wrack
God send us a merry new year.

5. Come, give us more liquor when I do call,
I'll drink to each one in this hall,
I hope so loud I must not bawl,
But unto me lend an ear.
Good fortune to my master send
And to my dame which is our friend
God bless us all, and so I end---
And God send us a happy new year.

A Bright New Year – Alec Thompson

Now all around is cold and chill,
But take good heart, fear no ill,
For through the frost of winter
Comes a bright new year.

CHORUS:

A bright new year,
A bright new year
For through the frost of winter
Comes a bright new year.

Food and drink to make us grow,
Swell the seed that we would sow,
So comes the rain in springtime
And a bright new year.

CHORUS

Warmth and light to make us strong,
Bring the ripest fruit along
So comes the sun in summer
And a bright new year.

CHORUS

When harvest time has gone around
Blow out the chaff, clear the ground,
So comes the wind in autumn
And a bright new year.

CHORUS

So when all around is cold and chill,
Take good heart, fear no ill,
For through the frost of winter
Comes a bright new year.

CHORUS

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR JOHN ROBERTS:

Website: <https://johnrobertsmusic.com/>

Nowell Sing We Clear - <https://nowellsingweclear.com/>

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A recording of tonight's presentation will be available through the Folk Arts Center's "Little Shop of Horas" at <https://facone.org/store/product-category/workshops-and-presentations/online-archives/sofa-presentations/>