

Newport S E Wales U3A



***A Christmas Hamper
containing our 2020 Carol Service
and other musical goodies***



To say that 2020 has been a year like no other doesn't even begin to embrace the changes that we have all had to make to our everyday lives. The total absence of holidays and the inability to meet together weekly in our U3A groups, has been a major disruption to our routines, though I am sure that we all appreciate the need for these restrictions on our everyday lives.

For me, Christmas is my busiest season of the year normally and my calendar for the period starting at the end of November and running through until Christmas morning is usually full of choir concerts and church carol and other services. This is the first year in the last 65 years that I have had to delete every annual event from my calendar! Our U3A Carol Service is a major event in that calendar and it is a wonderful way of finishing off the calendar year as far as our organisation is concerned.

I know that many members come to Shaftesbury Street on the last Friday of the term and that they too will miss this event this year.

I cannot make up for that loss, although this Christmas Hamper of Musical Goodies does, I hope, go some way towards doing so. I have included an expanded form of our traditional Carol Service and plenty of suggestions (with Youtube links) for congregational hymns; a selection of carols in the languages for which we have U3A groups; a number of Choir items; traditional Carol Service bible readings; and some pieces of Creative Writing. Additionally, Rev. Gordon Gresswell has provided a welcome message, Christmas message and conclusion, for which I am particularly grateful. Music lists and links are on pages 10 and 11.

I should warn you that some of the Youtube performances are preceded by a short advertisement. There is nothing I can do to avoid these, I'm afraid, but the inconvenience is usually only around 5 seconds – far shorter than it takes for us to set up our groups at the traditional carol service!

It is entirely up to you how much or how little you use of the form of service – indeed, all musical items except for the first, are contained in the lists which follow the form of service. This offers maximum flexibility as you can have a number of musically different carol services or simply immerse yourself in the music lists and play every item as a concert if you so wish. However you choose to use the items, do enjoy yourself and add a more personal dimension to your Christmas listening this year!

The extra “goodies” will, I hope, introduce you to some different Christmas music, but you will also find a number of “old favourites” amongst those listed. There is sufficient material for you to celebrate throughout the Christmas season!

As you will be aware, we traditionally take a retiring collection at the Carol Service which is passed on to a local charity. We had decided to support the **Serennau Children's Centre** at High Cross but it will not be possible to take our normal “bucket” collection, of course. As an alternative, we are asking members who would like to make a donation – no matter how small – to do so by cheque, made payable to **J KERR** and sent to Newport SE Wales U3A, c/o 242 Caerleon Road, Newport NP19 7GR. Please support this excellent local charity if you are able.

I offer a massive “thank you” to all of those members who have contributed in any way to keeping our U3A alive and active since mid-March, including contributors to this Hamper and DIT, Convenors, Committee members – and anybody who has had an input. It must not be forgotten, though, that without our loyal membership, it would not be possible to achieve anything.

A very blessed Christmas to you all – enjoy the festival as best you can and, above all, stay safe and look forward to the time when we can reassemble again as the fine organisation that we are!

Stephen Berry

NEWPORT SE WALES U3A – CAROL SERVICE 2020

As has become traditional, we start our Carol Service with a performance of one of the best-loved Christmas pieces, Adolphe Adam's "O Holy Night".

O Holy Night https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTFG_nvreol

Introduction – Rev. Gordon Gresswell, Minister of Shaftesbury Street Methodist Church.

A warm welcome to A Christmas Hamper. What a wonderful idea!

One of the highlights of the year is the Carol Service that the U3A put together. I love the singing in different languages; I love the pieces from the Creative Writers. I love to see so many people with that real sense of joy and anticipation and waiting for Christmas, though this is a year like no other, where we can't even imagine gathering together at the moment. This then is an opportunity for us to gather in an alternative way with this Christmas Hamper.

So, welcome! Welcome from my study and not from Shaftesbury Street Methodist Church. I would like to start with this prayer:

It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold.
Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's all gracious King;
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

As you go through this Hamper may we rejoice that the Prince of Peace is with us, and may the blessings of the season carry us through this journey.

Congregational carol 1 – choose from list A (suggested – Once in Royal David's City)

Language group carol 1 – choose from list B

1st Lesson: The Annunciation (Luke 1: 26–35; 38)

God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!" Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God". "I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Choral item 1 – choose from list C

Congregational carol 2 – choose from list A

Creative Writing – CHRISTMAS by Pam Cocchiara

It's Christmas now, this festive time of year
That we've anticipated all year long,
To celebrate with friends and all good cheer.

At primary school nativities we hear
The sound of youthful voices raised in song,
At Christmas time, the children's time of year.

The family members that to us are dear,
Especially those we've not seen for so long,
Will join together, meeting with good cheer.

The stars we see in our celestial sphere
Recall the star o'er Bethlehem that shone
At Christmas time, this joyous time of year.

The Christmas bells ring out, resounding clear
With news of Jesus' birth conveyed in song,
A call to celebrate with all good cheer.

We understand the message that we hear
A message that remains forever strong,
On Christmas Day, this holy time of year,
So celebrate with joy and all good cheer.

Language group carol 2 – choose from list B

2nd Lesson: The Journey to Bethlehem and the Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1; 3–7)

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger - there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

Choral item 2 – choose from list C

Congregational carol 3 – choose from list A

Creative Writing – a piece by Ian Lumley

At this time of the year, thoughts are turning to everything sparkly and nice about Christmas - even in the face of our current difficulties. This is the story about a little boy.

Six years ago – almost to the very day – my wife and I were sitting in an audience of old age pensioners. You know the kind I mean, a bunch of old fogeys. The difference on that occasion was that we were sitting in a school hall, eagerly awaiting our oldest grandson's first Christmas concert. Before the concert started, the Headmistress came out onto the small stage to tell us all the 'domestics'. She pointed out where the emergency exits were – but as we had all just arrived, no-one was thinking of leaving! She also showed us where the toilets were, and, given the age of the audience, that was of considerable interest to most of us! She turned to leave the stage, then paused and came back, and said 'I know that you will all be anxious to get pictures of your own little gem, but can I ask you NOT to post any you take onto social media or the like. There are children on stage today whose identities need to be protected'. Those words, said so matter-of-factly, hit me hard then, and still do so today.

I think the concert was a great success, but I have to say think, because for most of the time, my mind was elsewhere.

When I returned home later, I went straight into the study and wrote the poem below. It only took me a short time – my wife said, when I had finished, that it took thirty minutes – and two handkerchiefs! Of course, I then needed to find a suitable title for the poem and, for me, there was only one title which fitted the bill. It's the title of a song that my Dad used to sing to me all those years ago when I was only five years old. The song and now the Poem are entitled "The Little Boy That Santa Claus Forgot"

He was only a very little boy
But old enough to know
When his Dad had walked out, with no backward look
And his Mum had lost her glow.

He knew that Christmas was coming
He'd seen a few before
They'd never been very happy times
When his Mum and Dad just swore.

But somehow he knew this was different
This time it was truly a change.
His Mum was now left on her own
It was going to be quite strange.

She was upset when buying him presents
She was upset when buying him food.
She was trying to do her best for him
She was hoping he understood.

He didn't know how to explain to her
When she tucked him up in bed.
That he didn't mind all the other things
He just wanted rid of the dread.

He didn't know how she would manage to cope
If she'd be there when he'd grown.
He needed to be sure that she'd still be with him
He didn't want to be left all alone.

He was only a very little boy
But old enough to know
That the love he'd felt until then in his life
Was no more, as tears started to flow.

In the middle of our own difficulties, we need to remember that there are others who have more problems.

Language group carol 3 – choose from list B

3rd Lesson: The Angels Announce the Birth to the Shepherds (Luke 2: 8–16)

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Choral item 3 – choose from list C

Congregational carol 4 – choose from list A

Language group carol 4 – choose from list B

4th Lesson: The Wise Men from the East Visit Jesus (Matthew 2: 1–12)

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?" "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they answered. "For this is what the prophet wrote: "Bethlehem in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Judah; for from you will come a leader who will guide my people Israel.'" So Herod called the visitors from the East to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: "Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him." And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him. Then they returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

Choral item 4 – choose from list C

Creative Writing – THE NIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS by Ian Lumley

*The tree is ready to go to the 'tip'
The lights are all put away.
I feel just a little bit older somehow
And ever so slightly more grey.*

*New toys that are cherished are back in their boxes
But carefully still placed in sight.
Older ones all have their special place too,
Tho' the colours are not quite so bright.*

*The kids are all tucked up safely in bed
My wife pours a glass of Chablis
We look at each other with that knowing smile,
As she slides across onto my knee.*

*Another Christmas has gone, another year closes in,
And still I have that desire
To hold her, and tell her I love her.
She still lights deep in me a fire.*

*As our years have gone by, in the blink of an eye
The passion has slowly abated.
But it's been replaced now, by a much stronger tie,
Shared experiences that we've created.*

*The ups and downs of married life
Bring with them a mellowing feeling.
Emotions too many and varied to count
Leave hearts that together are sealing.*

*And as we succumb to the firelight's warmth
And I trace the lines in her face
I know that I've found heaven
When I enter her warm embrace.*

*And if I should be granted a few more years
I'll use them to give her my love
Because I know just how amazing it is
To find someone who fits like a glove.*

Congregational carol 5 – choose from list A

Language group carol 5 – choose from list B

5th Lesson: The Christmas Gospel (John 1: 1–14)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Choral item 5 – choose from list C

A Christmas Message from Rev. Gordon Gresswell



Over this past year we've come across wise men – the SAGE group (they do seem to be all men, don't they? We'd like to see more women there, but the story is one of wise men!). We've seen shepherds – the Government who are supposed to care for us. There's a journey – well, we've all been there, haven't we, on this journey; a journey that's been very still most of the time but a journey through a whole range of emotions. A stable – let us thank God that we have had houses to live in during lockdown. For many people that stable, in a flat with small children, for example, must have felt very cramped and difficult. A star – a sign of hope in the sky – maybe the vaccine is that star that leads us into a place of hope for this is Christmas, the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the one who brings hope every day to every man and woman. The hope is that God is with us, shining a light in the darkness.

Choral item 6 – choose from list C

Conclusion - Rev. Gordon Gresswell

Let us draw to a close with this prayer:

Hark! The herald angels sing! May they break through a silent night in that little town of Bethlehem in that bleak midwinter. We know that love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, all divine. So, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord. May you have a blessed, lovely, peaceful and, above all, a safe Christmas and may the peace of the Lord be with you this Christmastime. Amen.

Congregational carol 6 – choose from list A (suggested – O Come, all ye Faithful)

Outgoing organ voluntary: Toccata from the 5th Organ Symphony (Widor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKejfYzB3ak>

Some notes on the music

Generally speaking, the Congregational items are sung to tunes you will know. I have, however, included two versions of “In the bleak midwinter” – the Holst version, which is generally sung by congregations; and the Darke version, which is generally sung by choirs. “O little town of Bethlehem” has three choices – the Vaughan Williams, the most generally used in the UK; the Redner, which is hugely popular in the USA; and the Walford Davies (in my opinion the best!) which is English but far less frequently heard. Do try the alternatives – you may be pleasantly surprised if you have not heard them before. “While shepherds watched their flocks by night” will disappoint anybody who loves the traditional tune – and this version will come as a surprise! There is a short rehearsal sequence at the start of the recording, but this doesn’t take long and everyone soon gets into a very rousing rendition of this carol.

The Language carols were all new to me. Many thanks to Chris John, one of our French Convenors, for the first item. Although new, I can honestly say I enjoyed all of these – and they are all very different from each other.

The choral items need no introduction from me, particularly the Rutter items – they are all delightful.

The additional music contains relatively well-known and relatively unknown. The “Nutcracker” recording is of the full ballet score and not just the few numbers that appear in the more commonly heard Suite. There is much fine music that is rarely heard. Although the Christmas music in “The Messiah” is only section 1, I have included the full work as the performance and recording is excellent. I would thoroughly recommend the Rheinberger “Star of Bethlehem”, a Christmas Cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra, lasting around 48 minutes. It is a beautiful work that has seldom been recorded and is rarely performed in this country.

After the best known of the modern Christmas songs we have two items by Eric Coates which should conjure up fond memories of that annual treat – a visit to the pantomime!

List A – Congregational Carols

Christians, awake! Salute the happy morn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJWrbsF6inE>

Ding, dong, merrily on high https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J_2tKCwu7Q

God rest ye merry, gentlemen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDcSyaW-tTI>

Good King Wenceslas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQVUMG6LZGM>

Hark! The herald angels sing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_iLXNSIaYc

In the bleak midwinter (Darke) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gppy3XSk6c0>

In the bleak midwinter (Holst) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0aL9rKJPr4>

It came upon the midnight clear <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtV477Cqni0>

O come all ye faithful <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5rMQ6P12WY>

O little town of Bethlehem (Walford Davies) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzWX3YTs9v8>

O little town of Bethlehem (Vaughan Williams) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XV_tufatTBQ

O little town of Bethlehem (Redner) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uLELfqlntI>

On Christmas night all Christians sing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-TZ76wONPs>

Once in Royal David's City <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l87hqhxKfbg>

See, amid the winter's snow <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0akXeYaHAc4>

Stille Nacht (Silent Night) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nK8GyD5Ma2M>

The first nowell <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4yL-aEIEcM>

We three kings of orient are <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANXV46f3jo0>

While shepherds watched <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf90SQPBgGA>

List B - Language Groups – items in the languages studied

French - Symphonie confinée - La tendresse <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEjvRktXeis>

Welsh - Pwy sy'n dwad dros y bryn? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfuoArvUzyM>

Spanish - Riu Riu Chiu la guarda ribera <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJl6nSVVrlg>

Italian - Tu scendi dalle stelle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THoF5snnSvE>

German - Kling, Glöckchen, klingelingeling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_0dQ0jToSQ

List C - Choral items:

Angel's Carol (John Rutter) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYYT52Kluzs>

Candlelight carol (JR) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbudPRPrFWI>

Christmas Lullaby (JR). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdWOF7u624U>

Jesus Child (JR) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx3APMO6hB8>

Nativity Carol (JR) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G4KYduL6e0>

Shepherd's pipe carol (JR) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ousLBf0q1y8>

Christmas Blessing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz8TGKZHEWQ>

Here on a Silent Night <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t09AMclxWYI>

Rejoice and be Merry <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3aZWPw5wh0>

Shepherds' Farewell (Berlioz) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGBTnlbRbeM>

Calypso Carol <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1UI5Ko34XQ>

Cowboy Carol https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=145TOliMr_8

It was on a Starry Night https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBDt_31sHz0

A selection of Music for your Christmas entertainment

Nutcracker Ballet (Tchaikovsky) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N21Wn9v31c0>

Christmas Eve Suite (Rimsky-Korsakov) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bz6J2HozccU>

Carol Symphony (Hely-Hutchinson) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHu12WzFzjo>

Sleigh Ride (Anderson) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDRFmn_KqfA

Dream of Christmas (Ketèlbey) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOL45yy5XMU>

A Song was heard at Christmas (Stephen Berry – synthesised) <https://youtu.be/zrf3fW15Tt8>

The Messiah (Handel) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N21Wn9v31c0>

Christmas Oratorio (Bach) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXNX6Ulzvn0>

The Star of Bethlehem (Rheinberger) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3DjOgi9ePA>

Fantasia on Christmas Carols (Vaughan Williams) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3aZWPw5wh0>

Nazareth (Gounod) (sung by Webster Booth) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYAv2UkUSzY>

Star of Bethlehem (Adams) (sung by Stuart Burrows) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq5Vg4bwrGM>

Star of Bethlehem (Adams) (sung by Webster Booth) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8XoD4EPI9M>

Come and hear the joyful singing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyBkgtvJ5rc>

I saw a star up high above the heavens <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvrqD5OA5Wg>

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZO5r_5GmtQ

Jingle bells <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhv9s7SMnal>

Little donkey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v6X4QxVDIA>

Mary's boy child <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8N8aNhbnP-Y>

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjQqOzkchjg>

Sleigh bells ring (winter wonderland) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZF8lkQ8e-Ag>

When a child is born

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilz8XLKyrVc&list=PL5INBSQoIhJyo_CC4obXjLY6t1CvXF5vy

Let's go to the Pantomime! - Two pieces by Eric Coates:

Cinderella <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzIqFKketwc>

The Three Bears <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdwDR62BC7g>