

The Sussex Carol



1. 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 merciful King's birth.
2. Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?
3. When sin departs before his grace
Then life and health come in its place
When sin departs before his grace
Then life and health come in its place
Angels and men with joy may sing
All for to see the new born King
4. All out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night
All out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night
Glory to God and peace to men
Now and forever more, Amen.

Both the text and the tune to which "The Sussex Carol" is now sung were discovered and written down by Cecil Sharp in Buckland, Gloucestershire and Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mrs. Verrall on May 24, 1904 in Horsham, Sussex. The words were first published by Luke Wadding, a 17th-century Irish bishop, in a work called **Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs** (1684). It is unclear whether Wadding wrote the song or was recording an earlier composition. An earlier version using a different tune and a variation on the first line, "On Christmas night true Christians sing", was published as early as 1878 in Henry Ramsden Bramley and John Stainer's **Christmas Carols New and Old**. It is included in **The New Oxford Book of Carols** (#139).