

## On Christmas Night

by Cat McGill

On Christmas night the joy bells ring  
To tell what news the angels bring  
News of gladness, news of mirth  
News of our blessed Saviour's birth  
*The choirs sing, the trumpet sounds*  
*And we share the joy of this Christmas night in our town*

And in this town of silken mills  
Of cobbled streets and rolling hills  
We gather here by candlelight  
Old friends and new sharing in this night  
*The choirs sing, the trumpets sound*  
*And we share the joy of this Christmas night in our town*

Dark are the Roaches standing proud  
Soft is the sunset o'er the cloud  
And as the winter shadows fall  
The winking man watches over all  
*The choirs sing, the trumpets sound*  
*And we share the joy of this Christmas night in our town*

Across the Moorlands silence creeps  
As under silver snow it sleeps  
So gather round both far and near  
And raise your voices in Christmas cheer  
*The choirs sing, the trumpets sound*  
*And we share the joy of this Christmas night in our town*  
*The choirs sing, the trumpets sound*  
*And we share the joy of this Christmas night in our town*

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The main melody of the verse (up to 'The choirs sing...') and the lyrics of the first verse have been adapted from a 'Christmas Song of the South Staffordshire Colliers' which was recorded in the Lucy Broadwood Manuscript Collection in 1904. The tune and lyrics would have been sung around South Staffordshire in the 1800s, and were sent to Lucy Broadwood by Dr James Culwick, who wrote:

*"I have certainly not heard this for the past forty years. I have written it from memory of my mother's singing. She said when she learned it the recital lasted nearly an hour. There were about ninety verses sung slowly by a man with a strong, rough and deep bass voice."*

You can view the original manuscript in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House in London, on online:

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/5/127>

The refrain, harmonies, and additional verses have been added by Cat McGill to celebrate Christmas in Leek 2023, as part of OUTSIDE Arts' Advent Doors project. This carol will be performed for the first time on Christmas Eve, nearly 120 years after it was first written down, by community choirs and singers from the local area.