



CAROLS AROUND THE WORLD

St Andrew's Church
Surbiton
Programme £1

Saturday 14 December 2002
7.30pm



With very best wishes.

Bentalls

Merry Christmas! Afrikaans Gesëende Kersfees Afrikander Een Plesierige Kerfees African/Eritrean/Tigrinja



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President	Honourary Alderman W James Daly KCHS FICE
Musical director	Robin Page MS Hons (Cantab) LRAM
Rehearsal pianist	Mark Knoop
Chair	Marigold Haworth
Choir secretary	Tricia Nicholls
Treasurer	Halcyon Leonard
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Kingston Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the continuing financial assistance of the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

Kingston Choral Society is a registered Charity number 261522

Coming 2003 concerts

Saturday 5 April 2003

Kingston Parish Church, Kingston

Haydn — *Paukenmesse*

Faure — *Requiem*

Saturday 28 June 2003

Kingston Parish Church, Kingston

Sibelius — *In Memoriam* (Orchestra)

Sibelius — *Coronation Cantata* (first UK performance)

Puccini — *Messa di Gloria*

This concert is partly funded by the UK Sibelius Society

Rehus-Beal-Ledeats Albanian Gezur Krislinjden Arabic Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah Argentine Feliz



Kingston Choral Society

Since its formation in 1948, Kingston Choral Society has earned a reputation for concerts of a high standard and for performing a wide range of music. Under the guidance of Robin Page, Kingston Choral Society is not afraid of taking on ambitious projects and has, for example, performed Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky in Russian. However, the choir also enjoys singing the more familiar favourites of the choral repertoire as demonstrated by the programme for the current season. Kingston Choral Society has around 100 members drawn from a wide area of southwest London and north Surrey. New members are always welcome. The choir performs four concerts a year, usually in Kingston Parish Church. Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings (8pm-10pm) at Hollyfield School, Surbiton, in term time. Kingston Choral Society also holds regular social and fund-raising events and occasional musical workshops.

If you are interested in joining, we look forward to hearing from you. Please talk to any member of the choir during the interval or at the end of the concert about joining. You can also contact the membership secretary, Elizabeth Siberry (020 8399 2982) for more information and arrange to come to a rehearsal.

This year and next

This season Kingston Choral Society performed an exciting and varied programme of music, including the world premier of *Matilda* by Antony Le Fleming, and in October Bach's *Magnificat* and Purcell's *Hail! Bright Cecilia*.

Next year, two concerts are already planned. The first, 5 April 2003, will be a performance of Haydn's *Paukenmesse* and Faure's *Requiem*. On 28 June 2003 Kingston Choral Society will perform for the first time in the UK the *Coronation Cantata* by Sibelius as well as Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. Details of future concerts can be obtained from the box office (020 8977 8665). As a Friend of Kingston Choral Society you will receive advance notice of all our concerts.



Robin Page — Musical Director



Robin is based in London where he is the principal conductor and musical director of Thames Sinfonia, the Purcell Orchestra, Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra and Kingston Choral Society. He has conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra Chorus and has made many appearances at the Royal Academy of Music and the London College of Music as a conductor and lecturer specialising in contemporary repertoire and Scandinavian music. Robin has given acclaimed performances of Sibelius and Nielsen symphonies and conducted the inaugural concert of the UK Sibelius Society in London. He has also given the first performance of many Swedish works,

including such composers as Stenhammer, Rosenberg, Lidholm and Börtz. He is guest conductor to Sundsvalls Kammarorkester in Sweden and has broadcast on Swedish National Radio.

Robin also has close links with the Baltic states. As guest conductor to the Estonian State Symphony Orchestra, he gave the first broadcast performance and broadcast in Estonian of Elgar's Enigma Variations. Elsewhere in Europe he recently recorded film scores with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra and the Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra. He has given concert broadcast performances with Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra and the Silesian State Philharmonic Orchestra (Poland). In Britain, Robin travels widely. For many years he was the principal conductor of the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and also conducted the Hallé Choir, Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Worthing Symphony Orchestra and the West Sussex Philharmonic Choir where he was their musical director for many years. He has given broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 with the BBC Ulster Orchestra.

As well as conducting, Robin is in great demand as an adjudicator, notably with regular appearances at the National Festival of Music for Youth at the Royal Festival Hall. For many years he was a visiting lecturer at Kingston University and has given classes for the Bandmaster Course at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall.

Robin studied at Magdalen College School, Oxford, as a choral scholar, Gonville and Caius Colleges, Cambridge, as a choral exhibitor and as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music, London.



Mark Knoop — Rehearsal Pianist



Mark Knoop has performed in Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada and throughout the UK. He has also played at festivals including the Melbourne and Adelaide Festivals, the Sydney Spring Festival and the 1997 ISCM World Music Days.

He is co-artistic director of the contemporary music group Libra Ensemble and has appeared with such groups as ELISION Ensemble (Australia), Melbourne Symphony, Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt) and the Kingston Chamber Orchestra. He has conducted Ensemble Offspring (Sydney) and ensembles of The Australian National Academy of Music.

With Libra, Mark has conducted premieres of works by Jason Eckardt (*Tongues*) and Benjamin Marks (...à l'abîme béant) and the Australian premieres of Elliott Carter's *Clarinet Concerto* (with Carl Rosman, clarinet), Hans Werner Henze's *Kammermusik* 1958 and Michael Finnissy's *Various Nations*. He also performed the Australian premieres of Finnissy's mammoth piano cycle *The History of Photography in Sound* and Richard Barrett's *Tract*.

Mark has worked with many respected composers including Michael Finnissy, Chris

Dench, James Dillon, Liza Lim, Adam Yee, Benjamin Marks, Richard Barrett, David Young, Matthew Shlomowitz, Thomas Meadowcroft and many others. Solo works composed for him include Chris Dench's *into the wormworks* and *the heart's algorithms*, both members of the *Phase Portraits* cycle, Benjamin Marks's *La Chûte* and Matthew Shlomowitz's *Thinking Remembering*. Current commissions include a work for piano and ensemble by Dominik Karski, to be premiered in 2003 with the Libra Ensemble alongside Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques*.

Now based in London, Mark performs regularly in a duo with cellist Christina Waldoock as well as in other chamber music and as a soloist. He is currently undertaking a recording for the METIER label of Chris Dench's 30-year *Phase Portraits* cycle.



Mark Uglow — Organist



Mark was an organ scholar at Cranleigh School and Exeter College, Oxford. He was a pupil of the late Nicholas Danby and James Dalton and has won prizes for gaining the top aggregate marks for his year at the examinations for both Associateship and Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists. Mark has been assistant organist at some of London's most notable churches including St Clement Danes' as well as Hampstead and Marylebone parish churches. He was also one of the assistants at St Paul's cathedral.



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Since 1986 he has been director of music at the parish church of Kensington, St Mary Abbots and since 1994 the professor of harmony and composition at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall.

Mark is director of The Abbots Choir, a semi-professional chamber choir that has performed at many venues throughout the country. For many of its concerts he edits his own performing editions, specialising particularly in music of the English Renaissance.

As an organist and accompanist, he has broadcast on both the BBC and ORTF and made the first commercial recording of the organ sonatas of CPE Bach. Mark also works with local Kingston groups, including the Ashford and Staines Choral Society and the Epsom Chamber Choir.



Programme



Santa Lucia

Swedish traditional carol

Zither Carol

Czech folk tune arranged by Malcolm Sargent

O Little One Sweet

Old German tune by JS Bach



Hark ! The Herald Angels Sing

the audience is invited to sing along

Mendelssohn; descant and organ part by David Willcocks

The Angels and the Shepherds

Bohemian traditional carol arranged by CH Trevor

Child in the Manager

Gaelic traditional carol

Hurry to the Stable

Spanish traditional carol



The Holly and the Ivy

the audience is invited to sing along

English traditional carol arranged by Reginald Jacques

Lulaj (Lullaby)

Polish traditional carol arranged by N Harris

Jingle, Bells

J Pierpoint, arranged by N Harris

Deck the Hall

Welsh traditional carol arranged by David Willcocks



O Come, All Ye Faithful

the audience is invited to sing along

Composer unknown (probably 18th C); arranged by David Willcocks



Interval



Angels, from the Realms of Glory *audience is invited to sing along*
Old French tune arranged by Reginal Jacques

Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head

Appalachian (US) traditional carol

Shiao Bao Bao (Cradle Song)

Chinese traditional carol



Good King Wenceslas *the audience is invited to sing along*
Tune from *Piae Cantiones* arranged by Reginal Jacques

Kyrie Eleison, Jesus Is Born

Croatian traditional carol

Singing to Bethlehem

Puerto Rican traditional carol



Ding Dong! Merrily on High *the audience is invited to sing along*
16th C French tune harmonised by Charles Wood

The Infant King

Basque Noël arranged by David Willcocks

Noël Nouvelet (Nowell, sing nowell)

French traditional carol arranged by John Rutter

De Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

West Indian traditional carol

Sleep, My Darling

Italian traditional carol



The First Nowell *the audience is invited to sing along*
English traditional carol arranged by David Willcocks



Christmas Pudding

Stirred by Jonathan Willcocks (with apologies to almost everyone)



Hark! the Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:

Veiled in flesh the God-head see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.



The Holly and the Ivy



1 The holly and ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown
Refrain
The rising of the sun,
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

2 The holly bears a blossom,
As white as the lily flower;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus
Christ,
To be our sweet Saviour
Refrain

3 The holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
For to do us sinners good.
Refrain

4 The holly bears a prickly,
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
on Christmas day in the morn.

Refrain

5 The holly bears a bark,
As bitter as any gall;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus
Christ,
For to redeem us all
Refrain





O Come, All Ye Faithful



1 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;

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2 God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, Begotten, not created:

Refrain

3 See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks,

draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:
Refrain

4 Lo! star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations:
Refrain

5 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
Refrain



Angels from the Realms of Glory



1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light:

Refrain

3 Sages, leave your contemplations;
Brighter visions beam afar;

Seek the great desire of nations;
Ye have seen his natal star:
Refrain

4 Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:
Refrain

5 Though an infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to him;
Every knee shall then bow down:
Refrain



Good King Wenceslas



1 Good King Wenceslas look'd out
On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep, and crisp, and even:
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

Men only

2 "Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"

Women only

"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

Men only

3 "Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."

All

Page and monarch, forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather

Women only

4 "Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer."

Men only

"Mark my footsteps, good my page;
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

All

5 In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christina men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.





Ding Dong! Merrily on High



1 Ding-dong! merrily on high
in heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding-dong! verily the sky
is riv'n with angel singing.

Refrain

Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

2 E'en so here below, below,
let steeple bells be swungen,

And i-o, i-o, i-o,
by priest and people sungen.
Refrain

3 Pray you, dutifully prime
your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
your evetime song, ye singers.
Refrain



The First Nowell



1 The first Nowell the angel 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:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!

2 They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!

3 And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!

4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!

5 Then enter'd in those wise men three,
Full rev'rently upon their knee,
And offer'd there in his presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!

6 Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hat made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind
hath bought:
Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Nowell,
Born is the king of Israel!



The first Christmas celebrations

Christmas, which takes its name from Christ's Mass, was first celebrated on various dates from about 200 AD. Christmas was finally fixed on 25 December by Bishop Liberius of Rome. In 354 AD he chose the date to replace a Roman pagan festival of sun-god worship with Christ's Mass, a Christian event.

The December date, which almost coincides with the winter solstice, became a popular festival of West Europe during the Middle Ages. But as late as the 19th century, Christmas celebration was suppressed in Scotland and New England because of some religious differences.

All Christian nations have traditions which have become a part of the Christmas season. For example, England has contributed the decorations of holly and mistletoe, carolling and gift giving. The Christmas tree is a medieval German tradition and the immortal carol *Silent Night* also comes from Germany. The US first made Santa Claus popular in New York, popularised the Christmas card about 1846 and made the major contribution of commercialising Christmas.

Christmas tree legends

Many legends exist about the origin of the Christmas tree. One is the story of Saint Boniface, an English monk, who organised the Christian church in France and Germany. One day as he travelled about, he came upon a group of pagans gathered around a great oak tree about to sacrifice a child to the god Thor. To stop the sacrifice and save the child's life Boniface felled the tree with one mighty blow of his fist. In its place grew a small fir tree. The saint told

the pagan worshippers that the tiny fir was the Tree of Life and stood for the eternal life of Christ. Another legend tells of a poor woodsman who long ago met a lost and hungry child on Christmas Eve. Though very poor himself, the woodsman gave the child food and shelter for the night. The woodsman woke the next morning to find a beautiful glittering tree outside his door. The hungry child was really the Christ Child in disguise. He created the tree to reward the good man for his charity. The origin of the Christmas tree may be the "Paradise Play." In medieval times most people could not read and plays were used to teach the lessons of the Bible all over Europe. The Paradise Play, which showed the creation of man and the fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, was performed every year on 24 December. As apple trees do not bare fruit in winter, evergreens were hung with apples instead.

The old man with the sack

Father Christmas (or Santa Claus) has become the human face of Christmas. Pictures are seen everywhere of the old man with long white beard, red coat and bag of toys. Children are taught that he brings them presents the night before Christmas (or in some countries on 6 December, St Nicholas' Day). In most countries it is said that he lives near the North Pole and arrives through the sky on a sledge (snow-cart) pulled by reindeer. He comes into houses down the chimney at midnight and places presents for the children in socks or bags by their beds or in front of the family Christmas tree. There is a legend that



with the tradition of giving presents secretly. There was a nobleman in Patana with three daughters, but he was too poor to provide them with a dowry for marriage. He was almost on the point of abandoning them to a sinful life when Nicholas heard of his problem. That night he took a purse of gold and threw it in an open window. The nobleman used it for a dowry the next day

as he did a second purse he found the next night. Curious about his benefactor, the third night he watched and caught Nicholas in the act but he was told not to reveal the saint's identity or generosity. Ever since, St. Nicholas has been identified with the tradition of gift giving. His three purses of gold eventually became the three golden balls, symbol of pawnbrokers.



Christmas traditions round the world



Basque

For the Spanish Basque people —the region between the Pyrenees mountains and the Bay of Biscay — Christmas is heralded by the Olentzero, the Basque Father Christmas, is a mythical winter figure. He is a messenger, a shepherd who cries out that it is Christmas time. In some parts of Euskadi he is a farm worker and in other parts he is the coal man, but all of them have in common the fact that they bring good news. The Olentzero has a big head, a large belly and according to local traditions is capable of drinking 10 "arrobas" (one arroba is about 25 pounds in weight) of wine. In Hondarribia apart from carrying a pipe, a capon, some eggs and a bottle of wine, he usually has a tail made of cod, and if a permanent Olentzero is erected in a village, a barbecue is usually set up next to him where sardines are handed out.

On Christmas Eve the figure sitting in a basket is lifted onto the shoulders of people who take it from house to house throughout the town or village. At every house that it passes, the young people that accompany the Olentzero stop to sing a Christmas carol. The idea is that the carols represent a cheerful greeting which is taken from house

to house where a verse is dedicated either to the whole family or to one special member.

China

The Christians in China light their homes with paper lanterns and the children decorate trees with colourful ornaments made from paper in the shapes of flowers, chains and lanterns. They also hang muslin stockings hoping that Christmas Old Man (Dun Che Lao Ren) will fill them with gifts and treats. The non-Christian Chinese call this season the Spring Festival and celebrate with many festivities that include delicious meals and pay respects to their ancestors. The children are the main focus of these celebrations and receive new clothes and toys and watch firecracker displays.

Croatia

Many Croatian Christmas customs are the same or similar to others in central Europe: for instance, decorating the tree on Christmas eve and giving presents after midnight mass as well as the bringing in of a Yule log. However, there are a couple customs unique to Croatia. On 4 December, St Barbara's day, each family sows wheat

in a little bowl. This is placed in the dark to sprout and then brought into the light — from darkness into light, reflecting the birth of Christ — on Christmas day and placed on the table with a ribbon in Croatian national colours (red and white) tied around the green wheat, symbolising new life (the baby Jesus). Under the tablecloth for the Christmas meal, families place straw to remind them of the poverty and lowliness of the stable, the birthplace of Jesus.

Czech Republic

In the midst of the normal holiday preparations, the parents of small children have the holiday of Mikulas (St Nicholas Day) on 5 December and is the only one of the old Czech advent holidays to still be celebrated. On this night, the streets are filled with devils rattling chains, St Nicholases with white cotton beards, long white robes and bishop's staves, and angels with paper wings, coming to see small children to give them a scare before giving them sweets, and then drinking a toast with their parents.

England

Christmas is Britain's most popular holiday and is characterised by traditions which date back hundreds of years. Christmas decorations have early origins. Holly, ivy and mistletoe are associated with rituals going back beyond the Dark Ages. The custom of kissing beneath a sprig of mistletoe is derived from an ancient pagan tradition. Mistletoe, considered sacred by the British Druids, was believed to have many miraculous powers. Among the Romans, it was symbol of peace, and, it was said that when enemies met under it, they discarded their arms



and declared a truce. From this comes our custom of kissing under the mistletoe. England was the first country to use it during the Christmas season. The day after Christmas is called Boxing Day because boys used to go round collecting money in clay boxes. When the boxes were full, they broke them open.



France

Christmas customs originating in the Middle East were introduced to France by the Romans. Reims was the site of the first French Christmas celebration when, in 496, Clovis and his 3,000 warriors were baptised. Christmas gradually became both a religious and secular celebration which, in fact, until the end of the Middle Ages, was confused with the celebration of the new year. Tiny clay figures, dressed in what is popular in provincial clothing that year, are used in the Christmas crèches. In Provence the children bring rocks, branches and moss to make a setting for the manger. Little terra-cotta figures, known as "santons" or little saints are grouped around the manger to represent the Holy Family, the other characters of the story of the Nativity, and the people of the village: the mayor, the priest, the policeman, the butcher, the baker, the miller, the farmer.

Germany

Christmas preparations often begin on the eve of 6 December. People set aside special evenings for baking spiced cakes and cookies, and making gifts and decorations. Little dolls of fruit are traditional Christmas toys. Children leave letters, sometimes decorated with glue and sprinkled with sugar to make

them sparkle, on their windowsills for Christkind, a winged figure dressed in white robes and a golden crown who distributes gifts. She is portrayed as a beautiful fair-haired girl with a shining crown of candles who visits each house with a basket of presents.

There is also a Christmas Eve figure called Weihnachtsmann or Christmas Man. He looks like Father Christmas and also brings gifts.

Ireland

Christmas in Ireland lasts from Christmas Eve to the feast of the Epiphany on 6 January 6 which is referred to Little Christmas. Lighted candles are placed in windows on Christmas Eve, as a guide as Joseph and Mary might be looking for shelter. The candles are usually red and decorated with sprigs of holly. Irish women bake a seed cake for each person in the house. On St Stephen's Day, the day after Christmas, the Wren Boys Procession is the big event. Boys go from door to door with a fake wren on a stick, singing, with violins, accordions, harmonicas and horns to accompany them. The reason for the ceremony is to ask for money "for the starving wren", that is, for their own pockets.

Italy

Christmas in Italy has two origins: Christian and the pagan traditions of the ancient Roman empire. The great feast of that era was "Saturnalia" (a winter solstice celebration). Now, it coincides with



the pre-Christmas celebrations of Advent. Christmas markets, merry-making and torch processions honour not only the birth of Christ, but also the birth of the "unconquered sun". Natale, the Italian word for Christmas, is the translation for "birthday." A tradition, now finding renewal in Italy, is the ushering in of the December festivities by the *zampognari* or bagpipers. They descend from the mountains in the regions of Abruzzo and Calabria playing adaptations of old hill tunes such as *Cantata dei Pastori*.

Poland

Christmas Eve is a time of family gathering and reconciliation. It is also a night of magic "Maidens" interested in their marital future and older people try to predict next year's weather based on the sky's aura between Christmas Eve and Twelfth Night (6 January). In eastern Poland it is believed that girls who grind poppy seed on Christmas Eve can hope for a quick marriage. After dinner they leave the house and the direction of the first dog bark points to where their future husband will come from. Another fortune-telling trick is eavesdropping on the neighbours. If in a casual conversation, the girl hears the word "go" it means she will get married in the coming year. A loud "sit" announces long-lasting maidenhood.

When going to Christmas eve midnight mass, girls would blindfold each other and touch fence pickets. A straight and smooth picket would portend a resourceful husband, while a crooked and rough one was an indication of a clumsy and awkward spouse.

Puerto Rica

For several days before Christmas, Catholic churches throughout the island celebrate a special mass before sunrise known as Misa de Aguinaldo (the aguinaldo being a type of Puerto Rican Christmas carol). These liturgical services reach their climax on Nochebuena (literally, "Good Night" or Christmas eve) with the celebration of midnight mass, commonly known as Misa de Gallo (Rooster Mass) after the ancient tradition of celebrating the mass of the nativity at the time the rooster crows. Crowds of children go to see the church of San Jose at La Navidad to see the animated Nacimiento — birth of Christ. During the feast of Epiphany, children place water and maybe some grass under their beds for the wise men's camels, and in return, presents are left.

Spain

On Christmas eve, as the stars come out, tiny oil lamps are lit in every house and after midnight mass and Christmas dinner, streets fill with dancers and onlookers. There is a special Christmas dance called the Jota and the words and music have been handed down for hundreds of years. They dance to the sound of guitars and castanets. One Spanish tradition not at all common elsewhere, is "Hogueras" (bonfires). This tradition originated long before Christmas itself. It is the observance of the winter solstice and is characterised by people jumping over fires as a symbolic protection against illness.

United States

Christmas celebrations vary greatly between regions of the US because of the

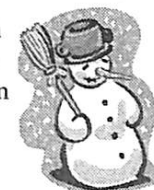
variety of nationalities which have settled there. In Pennsylvania the Moravians build a landscape called a putz under the Christmas tree. Germans are given gifts by Belsnickle, who taps them with his switch if they have misbehaved. In Alaska a star on a pole is taken from door to door, followed by Herod's men, who try to capture the star. In New Orleans a huge ox is paraded around the streets decorated with holly and with ribbons tied to its horns. In Hawaii, Christmas starts with the coming of the Christmas Tree Ship. Santa Claus also arrives by boat. In California Santa Claus sweeps in on a surf board.

Wales

Taffy making is one of the most important of the Welsh Christmas traditions. This involves the making of a special kind of chewy toffee from brown sugar and butter. It is boiled and then pulled so that it becomes lovely and glossy.

West Indies

In Trinidad and Tobago groups go around serenading with guitars, steel drums, tambourines and any other kind of instrument that can be easily moved from house to house. The group keeps on singing until the household invites them in for refreshments. Christmas activities in rural areas of Jamaica include a Jonkanoo, a form of parade and festivities brought from Africa by the people who were taken to Jamaica as slaves. Christmas in the French Islands borrows from the Creole and French traditions, with the trunks of palm trees festooned with little white lights.





Kingston Choral Society needs your support

It takes a lot of resources — talent, volunteers and financial support — to allow Kingston Choral Society to continue to perform and maintain high quality performances. Contributions are used to purchase and rent music, to rent performance facilities and to pay the day-to-day operational expenses of the organisation. Your gift entitles you to membership of the Friends of Kingston Choral Society. By becoming a Friend of Kingston Choral Society, you will receive in return for your yearly subscription of £15:

- ☐ Priority booking facilities
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Kingston Choral Society greatly appreciates your support.

Friends' Scheme

If you would like to become a Friend of Kingston Choral Society, please complete the form below and pass it to any member of the choir or contact the Friends' Secretary on 020 8399 2982. The form can also be posted to: the Friends' Secretary, Kingston Choral Society, 36 Norbiton Avenue, Kingston, Surrey KT1 3QR. I would like to become of Friend of Kingston Choral Society and enclose cash/cheque payable to Kingston Choral Society for £15.00.
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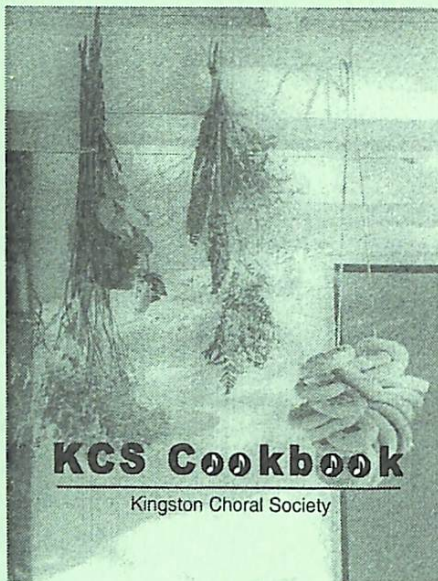
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