

Sussex Carol

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The **"Sussex Carol"** is a [Christmas carol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_carol) popular in [Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), sometimes referred to by its first line **"On Christmas night all Christians sing"**. Its words were first published by [Luke Wadding](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Luke_Wadding_(bishop_of_Ferns)&action=edit&redlink=1), 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.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-hcc-2)

Both the text and the tune to which it is now sung were discovered and written down by [Cecil Sharp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_Sharp) in [Buckland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckland,_Gloucestershire), [Gloucestershire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloucestershire), and [Ralph Vaughan Williams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Vaughan_Williams), who heard it being sung by a Harriet Verrall of [Monk's Gate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monk%27s_Gate), near [Horsham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horsham), [Sussex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex) (hence "Sussex Carol").[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-sharp-3) The tune to which it is generally sung today is the one Vaughan Williams took down from Mrs. Verrall and published in 1919.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-hcc-2)

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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Ramsden_Bramley) and [John Stainer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stainer)'s *Christmas Carols New and Old*.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-4) The carol has been arranged by a number of composers. Vaughan Williams' setting is found in his *Eight Traditional English Carols*.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sussex_Carol#cite_note-5)





