Happy Christmas Welcome to Dave and Anwyl's Christmas Bumper Box of Goodies

Here are some Christmas carols and songs from the Isle of Wight. Also some holiday reading!

Holly Red and Mistletoe (A Christmas Carol from the Isle of Wight)

https://youtu.be/SdIglt6jdUc

Bring the yule log garlanded,
Evergreen with berry,
Draw it homeward, music led,
Men and maidens merry.
Refrain:
Foot it gaily through the snow
Hobbinol and Dolly.
Holly red and mistletoe
Mistletoe and holly. (x2)

Balance it across the dogs,
Draw the settler nigher,
Kindle faggots, pile the logs,
Gather round the fire;
Refrain:
Snug within its welcome glow
Let's be warm and jolly,
Holly red and mistletoe
Mistletoe and holly. (x2)

Pass the bumper round and round
Crown the board with holly,
Hautbois, serpent fill the sound
Alama, Jem and Molly
Refrain:
Let the joyful music flow,
Flouting melancholy,
Holly red and mistletoe,
Mistletoe and holly. (x2)

Trumpeting out the wondrous call
Island voices singing,
"Goodwill and peace to one and all"
Christmas bells are ringing.
Refrain:
Forward pipe and tabor go
Voicing harmless folly
Holly red and mistletoe
Mistletoe and holly. (x2)

(Adapted from Percy Stone in Poets of the Wight by Charles Arnell. Shanklin / Arreton area)

……..

Cristmus Bwoys Carol or Mummers' Christmas Carol - Isle of Wight

https://youtu.be/Gdx_tMgp_KA

Let's bless the master of this house
With happiness beside
Where e'er his body rides or walks
Everyone shall be his guide
Everyone shall be his guide.

Let's bless the mistress of this house
With gold chain round her breast
Where e'er her body sleeps or wakes
We'll send her soul to rest
We'll send her soul to rest.

Let's bless your house, your children too
Your cattle and your store
We will increase you day by day
And send you more and more
And send you more and more.

There are six good days all in the week
All for the labouring man
The seventh we shall take our rest
And at Christmas do the same
And at Christmas do the same.

In hell it is dark, in hell it is dim,
In hell it is full of lies;
And that's the place where wicked men go
Unless you eat mince pies
Unless you eat mince pies.

Then bring us some of your Christmas ale
Likewise your Christmas beer
For when another Christmas comes
We hope we'll all be here.
We hope we'll all be here.

We may not all be here.
We may not all be here.

(Adapted from Sussex and Hampshire Mummers Carol. East Wight mummers play)

••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

Christmas Party

https://youtu.be/4kX3hNzbYRY

‘Morning, you! ‘Tis fine today’
Sure wind has blown the rain away.
Oi we’ve done well this lambing time,
And hay be up and roots be prime.
I’ve come to ask all of ye
To take your vittles along with we.
There’s rabbit pie and roasted teal,
And figgy pudding thick with peel,
And just about a breast of veal
In oven now a baking!
And missus’ made a topping brew
Sure I’ve a tub of whiskey too
Will last us most the winter through
To cheer our merry making.’

We settled down old George said grace,
And then we did pitch in a pace.
I reckon we made proper play
With all the spread that Christmas Day.
Soon ‘Missus’ farmer Chick did cry
‘Here’s the bottom of your rabbit pie.’
Then followed on the breast of veal,
The ribs of beef, the roasted teal,
The figgy pudding, thick with peel,
All fairly round divided.
We finished off with cheese and bread,
White celery and beetroot red.
Begob! It was a topping spread
That Farmer Chick provided.

All done, we pushed the chairs away
And started in for fun and play.
Then Missus brought her famous brew
As Farmer said she was allowed to do,
And tongues got loose and eyes got bright,
As ought to be on Christmas night.
Granfer caught old Missus Loe
And kissed her under mistletoe,
He did and wouldn’t let her go
Lord! Didn’t it surprise her.
Then kiss within the ring began,
The boys did catch, the girls did run -
The smartest couple at the fun
Were Sam and Serle’s Eliza.

Then the Christmas boys came tumbling in
With dance and talk and merry din.
‘Girt Head and Blunder,’ starts the show
And after him ‘King George’ you know;
Next ‘Father Christmas’ and his wife,
With broom and cudgel fair at strife.
Then ‘Noble Captain,’ ‘Turkish Knight’

That most do give the maids a fright
When he with brave ‘King George’ does fight -
Each after the other coming’.
Next ‘Valiant Soldier,’ ‘Poor and Mean,’
Then ‘Doctor’ with his physics seen,
Lastly ‘Johnny Jack’ so starved and lean
‘Twas proper Christmas mumming.

Then the farmer from his whiskey keg
Gave all of them a middling peg;
‘Twill keep the dust down,’ so he said,
And never hurts your legs nor head.
‘Twas then the song and tale went round,
The best of both, you may be bound.
Last, Farmer set a dancing bout
‘Twixt Nat and Jan, the dancers stout;
I reckon neither would give out,
But keep their legs a shaking.
Have done! We cried, the match be drawn,
Else you might dance away till dawn.
Begob! I’ll mind so long as I’m born
Chick’s Christmas merry making.

(Adapted from Percy Stone - Legends and Lays of the Isle of Wight. Chick of Whitewell)

••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

Winter

https://youtu.be/zQXl5cGDBaw

The sluggard wakes with many a yawn,
Frost stars the window pane a.
Sure gettin’ up in winter dawn
Is a sleepy sluggards bane a.
While Kezzie ‘way to cowhouse trips,
With ankles trim and neat a,
So tight jack Frost her fingers grips
She scarce can draw the teat a. (2)

The wagon horses seep along
The roads all white with rime a,
While Jem the carter cracks his thong
And hames bells ring a chime a.
Will Shepherd whistles up his dogs
And seeks the lambing ewes a;
His master way to market jogs
To learn the latest news a. (x2)

When daylight sinks along the West
‘Tis time no more to roam a.
Give over, we have done our best -
So, hey, my boys, for home a.

Ay, there it is, at end of lane,
The home we dearly love a.
See, fire-light bivers thro' the pane
And chimney smokes above a. (x2)

Fling on a log.   Draw to a cheer.
Come, let's be snug and warm a.
Fill up the glass, away with care,
Shut out the cold and storm a.
So let our voices merry sound
With song and tale and jest a.
Then, filling up a final round,
Toss off - and so to rest a. (x2)

(Adapted from Percy Stone - Legends and Lays of the Isle of Wight)

••

Isle of Wight Wassail   - for Christmas and the New Year

https://youtu.be/UPNS-xroNK8

Wassail, wassail in our town
The cup is white and the ale is brown;
The cup is made from the good old ashen tree
And the ale is brewed from the best barley.
Chorus:
Wassail and wassail
A piece of cake and a cup of ale
We'll sing merrily one and all
For a piece of cake and a jolly wassail.

God bless the master of this house the mistress also,
And all the little children that round the table go.
And all your kin and kinsmen that dwell both far and near
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Ch.

Little maid, little maid, troll the pin,
Open the door and well all fall in;
Give us some cake and ale that's brown
And we don't give a fig for the wassail in the town. Ch.

Then John he arose and to the door goes
And he tirled and he tirled at the pin;
The lass she took the hint and to the door went
And she let, oh she let her true love in. Ch.

A pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year;
A pantry full of good roast-beef and barrels full of beer.
We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Ch.

The great dog of Newport that burnt his long tail,

And this is the night we go singing wassail
O Master and Missus, now we must be gone
Let us bless all in this house till we do come again. Ch.

Traditional Isle of Wight. Collected by H Smith 1830s. Adapted.

……

Folk song, story and legend from Shanklin to Arreton. One of the folk hot spots on the island.

The Shanklin to Arreton area is an enclosed low lying area that includes villages such as Apse Heath, Branstone, Newchurch, Blackwater and Merstone. This lower valley area stretches out as far as Godshill, Rookley, Whitwell, Wroxall. One of the key areas for folk related material was Languard Manor/ Farm which is on the edge of Shanklin. The Smith family lived here and documented the dialect, stories and songs of the area for well over a hundred years. They had relations at Arreton Manor Farm and visited many of the farms for various parties and festivals.

Speed the Plough

We will first look at a play that was inspired by the Languard farm, it is a comedy called "Speed the Plough". It was written by Thomas Morton who frequently visited Shanklin / Languard and was a friend of John Smith. It features rural life, a provincial accent and a ploughing match. It is about a dilemma whether to marry for money or for love! Enough said it would make a great play to revive for our times and of course a chance to include plenty of folk songs and tunes. Speed the Plough is a great tune.

The Three Little Pigs

The Three Little Pigs is amongst many stories and tales that were collected by Henry Smith. It is thought that his aunt Amelia from Arreton, who used to entertain people with stories, may have told this one. It refers to the Shanklin Fair which would have probably have been the Hiring / Mop Fair just after Michaelmas. The fair would have been at the beginning of October which also relates to there being apples on the ground. It also talks of the Mr Smith's Home Field and Merry Garden at Languard.

James Orchard Halliwell included it in his "Nursery Rhymes and Nursery Tales of England" of 1853. It probable was sent by Henry Smith much earlier but was not included until that date. Here is the original story.

The Three Little Pigs
Once upon a time there was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him, "Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house;" which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it. Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said, - "Little pig, little pig, let me come in." To which the pig answered, - "No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin." The wolf then answered to that, - "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze, and said, "Please, man, give me that furze to build a house;" which the man did, and the pig built his house. Them along came the wolf, and said, - "Little pig, little pig, let me come in." To which the pig answered, - "No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin." The wolf then answered to that, - "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said, “Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with;” so the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them. So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said, - “Then I'll huff, and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in.” So he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed; but he could not get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said, “Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips.” ”Where?” said the little pig. “Oh, in Mr. Smith's Home-field, and if you will be ready to-morrow morning I will call for you and we will go together and get some for dinner.” “Very well,” said the little pig, “I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?” “Oh, at six o'clock.” Well the little pig got up at five and got the turnips before the wolf came – (which he did about six) – and who said, “Little pig are you ready?” The little pig said “Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner.”

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought he would be *up to* the little pig somehow or other, so he said, “Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple-tree.” “Where?” said the pig. “Down at Merry-garden,” replied the wolf, “and if you will not deceive me I will come for you, at five o'clock to-morrow, and we will go together and get some apples.” Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had further to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much. When the wolf came up he said “Little pig, what! Are you here before me? Are they nice apples?” “Yes very,” said the little pig. “I will throw you one down;” and he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home.

The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig, “Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon, will you go?” “Oh yes,” said the pig, “I will go; what time shall you be ready?” “At three,” said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got inside the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair.

He went to the little pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him. Then the little pig said “Hah, I frightened you then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill.” Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he *would* eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happy ever afterwards.

Entertainment

Amelia Smith who ran the farm from 1849-1853 was a great entertainer. An evening with her would include stories, songs and parlour games that had forfeits. A forfeit could include “To kiss a gentleman in a rabbit position”! They played 9 pin skittles at Languard.

Fairholt who visited Languard in 1849 and loved the place recorded some of the stories from the area. One was about Old Simon Peach. It tells about about someone saying there is money buried in his house. He gets his wife to almost rip the house apart but does not find it at first. Here is the story.

“Old Simon Peach, who lived near Shanklin, had come into his brother's house by heirship; but feeling sure that his brother must have been comparatively rich, and as no money was found, consulted 'a cunning man', who told him that the money was buried in the house, and that a woman would find it. He went home and worried his wife until she had nearly pulled the house to pieces, with no success. Still he

continually annoyed her, so that she could think of little else; when, about eighteen months afterwards, being in the washhouse, and treading upon a stone in the floor, it sank a little. She lifted it up, finding beneath it more that 500 guineas. With this a farm was bought; and they began to invite folks like other farmers, who at this time kept much company. At the first dinner they gave, Simon, taking a fowl, began carving, at the same time exclaiming, 'I likes the liver, and my wife the gizzard wing'; and so, cutting both off, pushed the dish away, adding, 'and now, ladies and gentlemen, help yourselves!'" Fairholt 1849 Languard, Shanklin.

Can you work out the moral to this story?

The Glossary of Isle of Wight words

Henry Smith compiled a Glossary of Isle of Wight dialect as a manuscript in the 1840s along with a collection of stories and island traditions. This was made available to Halliwell before 1847 for his book "Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial words" and his Nursery Rhyme books.

The Dictionary was later published with alterations by his brother Charles in 1881 through the Dialect Society. Included with the dictionary were references to Home Harvest evenings and and various superstitions around Languard. He also refers to other material such as the East Wight mummers play that he did not include. It had many different characters such as Beelzebub and this could be the version found in Halliwell 1847. The papers surrounding all this work, as yet, have not been found.

Here are some Island Stories and songs collected by Henry Smith that are in Halliwell

The Wood Pigeon

An Isle of Wight legend respecting this bird tells us that, soon after the creation of the world, all the birds were assembled for the purpose of learning to build their nests, and the magpie, being very sagacious and cunning, was chosen to teach them. Those birds that were most industrious, such as the wren and the long-tailed-capon, or pie-finch, he instructed to make whole nests in the shape of a cocoa-nut, with a small hole on one side; others, not so diligent, he taught to make half-nests, shaped something like a teacup.

Having thus instructed a great variety of birds according to their capacity, it came to the turn of the wood-pigeon, who, being a careless and lazy bird, was very indifferent about the matter, and while the magpie was directing him how to place the little twigs, &c., he kept exclaiming, "What, athurt and across! what zoo! what zoo!—athurt and across! what zoo! what zoo!" At length the magpie was so irritated with his stupidity and indolence, that he flew away, and the wood-pigeon, having had no more instruction, to this day builds the worst nest of any of the feathered tribe, consisting merely of layers of cross-twigs.

Dragon Flies

In some parts of the Isle of Wight, these insects are found of a peculiarly large size, and their colours are extremely beautiful. There is an old legend respecting them which is still current. It is supposed by the country people that their sting or bite is venomous, as bad as that of a snake or adder, and perhaps from this belief their provincial name of snake-stanger or snake-stang is derived. It is said that these insects can distinguish the good children from the bad when they go fishing: if the latter go too near the water, they are almost sure to be bitten; but when the good boys go, the dragon-flies point out the places where the fish are, by settling on the banks, or flags, in the proper direction. This curious myth is commemorated by the following song:
Snakestanger! snakestanger! vlee aal about the brooks;

Sting aal the bad bwoys that vor the vish looks,
But lat the good bwoys ketch aal the vish they can,
And car'm awaay whooa to vry'em in a pan;
Bred and butter they shall yeat at zupper wi' their vish,
While aal the littul bad bwoys shall only lick the dish.

Dragon fly! dragon fly! fly about the brook;
Sting all the bad boys who for the fish look;
But let the good boys catch all that they can,
And then take them home to be fried in a pan;
With nice bread and butter they shall sup upon their fish,
While all the little naughty boys shall only lick the dish.

Isle of Wight Shrovers

Until within about the last thirty years, it had been the custom in the Isle of Wight from time immemorial at all the farms and some other charitable houses to distribute cakes on Shrove-Tuesday, called Shrove-cakes, to the poor children of the parish or neighbourhood, who assembled early in the morning at the different villages, hamlets, and cottages, in parties of from two to thirty or more, for the purpose of what was denominated "Going Shroving," and the children bore the name of *Shrovers*. At every house they visited they had a nice Shrove-cake each given them. In those days the winters were much more inclement and of longer duration than at the present time, and it often happened that, in addition to a severe frost, the ground was covered several inches high with snow, yet however cold or intense the weather, it did not prevent these little ones from what they called in the provincial dialect *Gwine a Shrovun*, and they jogged merrily along hand in hand from one house to another to obtain their cakes; but, before receiving them, it was expected and deemed necessary that they should all sing together a song suitable to the occasion; those who *sang the loudest* were considered the *best Shrovers*, and sometimes had an extra cake bestowed on them; consequently, there was no want of noise (whatever there might have been of harmony) to endeavour to get another Shroving gift. There were many different versions of the song according to the parishes they lived in. The one generally sang by the children of the East Medina was as follows:
A Shrovun, a Shrovun,
I be cum a Shrovun,
A piece a bread, a piece a cheese,
A bit a your fat beyacun,
Or a dish of doughnuts,
Aal of your own meyacun!

A Shrovun, a Shrovun,
I be cum a Shrovun,
Nice meeat in a pie,
My mouth is verrey dry!
I wish a wuz zoo well a-wet,
I'd zing the louder for a nut! *1

Chorus. A Shrovun, a Shrovun,
We be cum a Shrovun!

**1 Composed of flour and lard, with plums in the middle, and made into round substances about the size of a cricket-ball. They were called nuts or dough-nuts, and quite peculiar to the Isle of Wight.*

The song of the children of the West Medina was different:

A Shrovun, a Shrovun,
I be cum a Shrovun,
Linen stuff es good enuff,
Vor we that cums a Shrovun.

Vine veathers in a pie,
My mouth is verrey dry.
I wish a wuz zoo well a-wet,
Then I'd zing louder vor a nut!

Dame, dame,*2 a igg, a igg,*3
Or a piece a beyacun.
Dro awaay*4 the porridge pot,
Or crock to bwile the peeazun.
Vine veathers in a pie,
My mouth is verrey dry.
I wish a wuz zoo well a-wet,
Then I'd zing louder vor a nut!

Chorus. A Shrovun, a Shrovun,
We be cum a Shrovun!

**2 Dame. The mistress of the house, if past the middle age, was called Dame, i.e. Madame.*

**3 An egg, an egg.*

**4 Throw away.*

If the song was not given sufficiently loud, they were desired to sing it again. In that case it very rarely required a second repetition. When the Shrovers were more numerous than was anticipated, it not unfrequently happened that, before the time of the arrival of the latter parties, the Shrove-cakes had been expended; then dough-nuts, pancakes, bread and cheese, or bread and bacon, were given, or halfpence were substituted; but in *no instance* whatever were they sent from the door empty-handed. It is much to be regretted that this charitable custom should have become almost extinct; there being very few houses at the present time where they distribute Shrove-cakes.

"There was another very ancient custom somewhat similar to the Shroving, which has also nearly, if not quite, disappeared; probably it began to decay within the last half-century: this was a gift of cakes and ale to children on *New Year's Day*, who, like the Shrovers, went from house to house singing for them; but, if we may judge from the song, those children were for the most part from the towns and larger villages, as the song begins, "*A sale, a sale in our town*;" there is no doubt but it was written for the occasion some centuries since, when "a sale" was not a thing of such a common occurrence as now, and when there was one, it was often held in an open field in or near the town." So writes my kind and valued correspondent, Captain Henry Smith, but *town* is, I think, merely a provincialism for *village*. It is so, at least, in the North of England. As for the phrase *a seyal*, it seems to be a corruption of *wassail*, the original sense having been lost. The following was the song:

A seyal, a seyal in our town,
The cup es white and the eal es brown;
The cup es meyad from the ashen tree,
And the eal es brew'd vrom the good barlie.

Chorus. Cake and eal, cake and eal,
A piece of cake and a cup of eal;
We zing merrily one and aal
For a piece of cake and a cup of eal.

Little maid, little maid, troll the pin,*5
Lift up the latch and we'll aal vall in;*6
Ghee us a cake and zum eal that es brown,
And we dont keer a vig vor the seyal in the town.

Chorus. W'ill zing merrily one and aal
Vor a cake and a cup of eal;
God be there and God be here,
We wish you aal a happy New Year.

**5 That is, turn the pin inside the door in order to raise the latch. In the old method of latching doors, there was a pin inside which was turned round to raise the latch.* An old Isle of Wight song says,—

Then John he arose,
And to the door goes,
And he trolled, and he trolled at the pin.
The lass she took the hint,
And to the door she went,
And she let her true love in.

**6 "Aal vall in," stand in rank to receive in turn the cake and ale.*

New Year's Day

God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children
That round the table go;
And all your kin and kinsmen,
That dwell both far and near;
I wish you a merry Christmas,
And a happy new year.

Wassel or Wassal.—A remnant of this part of our Saxon manners still exists at Yarmouth (1840s), and strange to say, in no other part of the Isle of Wight. On the first day of the new year the children collect together and sing wassel or wassal through the streets; the following is their song:

Wassal, wassal, to our town!
The cup is white and the ale is brown;
The cup is made of the ashen tree,
And so is the ale of the good barley;
Little maid, little maid, turn the pin,

Open the door and let us come in;
God be here, God be there.
I wish you all a happy new year!

We presume at one time it was sung through out the island.

Newchurch

There is "Wold Hark" the Isle of Wight carol (a variant of the carol Hark) that is sung at the All Saints Church every Christmas. Newchurch seems to hold a special place in this area. It is referred to in some of the songs such as Shroving. The children used to do many of the customs until fairly recently.

Hark, hark what news the angels bring (Newchurch Carol)

Hark, hark what news the angels bring
Glad tidings of the new-born King
Born of a maid, a virgin pure
Born without sin from guilt secure

Hail mighty Prince, eternal King
Let heaven and earth rejoice and sing
Angels and men with one accord
Break forth in song, O praise the Lord

Behold he comes and leaves the skies
Awake, ye slumbering mortals rise
Awake to joy and hail the morn
The saviour of this world is born

Echo shall waft the strains around
'Til listening angels hear the sound
And all the heavenly host above
Shall join to sing redeeming love.

The Final Curtain? No a new Dawn!

Percy Goodard Stone had published his Antiquities of the Isle of Wight in 1891. He visited most of the villages on the island and met many working people who still spoke some of the Isle of Wight dialect. He married Amelia Smith who almost certainly introduced him to the work of her uncles Henry and Charles Smith. From this he wrote his collection of legends and songs which are a wonderful resource. The island is a continuing resource for new writers.

Thanks to James Orchard Halliwell, Henry and Charles Smith, Amelia Smith, Percy Goddard Stone, Brian Reeves, Helen Thomas Secretary Shanklin & District History Society, F. W. Fairholt, Karen Butcher and everybody who keeps on giving us encouragement.

(As more information is obtained this will be updated)