

Minehead Choral Society
Christmas Concert 2025

Concert: Saturday, 29th November 2025 7.30pm Avenue Methodist, Minehead
Programme:

- First Half**
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| Bob Chilcott “On Christmas Night” | |
| 1. This is the truth (I) | Trad. English |
| <i>Reading 1: Genesis 3:8-15</i> | |
| 2. Adam lay ybounden | 15 th cent. |
| <i>Reading 2: Isaiah 9: 2,6-7</i> | |
| 3. A Spotless Rose | 14th cent. German |
| <i>Reading 3: Luke 1 : 26-35, 38</i> | |
| 4. The Cherry Tree Carol | Trad. English |
| <i>Reading 4: Luke 2 : 1, 3-7</i> | |
| 5. O Little Town | Phillips Brooks (1835-93) |
| <i>Reading 5: Luke 2 : 8-16</i> | |
| 6. Sweet was the Song | William Ballet’s Lute Book (16th Cent.) |
| <i>Reading 6: Matthew 2 : 1-11</i> | |
| 7. Rejoice and be Merry | Trad. English |
| 8. This is the Truth (II) | Trad. English |

Second Half

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| 1. Once in Royal David’s City | | |
| 2. Huron Carol | Sarah Quartel | Trad. Canadian |
| 3. Angels’ Carol | John Rutter | |
| 4. Hark the Herald Angels Sing | | |
| 5. Nativity Carol | John Rutter | |
| 6. Candlelight Carol | John Rutter | |
| 7. O Little Town of Bethlehem | | |
| Jerry Rubino (A Merry Little Christmas): | | |
| 8. It’s the most wonderful time of the year! | George Wyle and Eddie Pola arr. Bob Krogstad | |
| 9. Feliz Navidad | Jose Feliciano arr. Paul Langford | |
| 10. Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas | Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin arr. Paul Johnson | |
| 11. O Come All Ye Faithful | | |
| 12. We Wish you a Merry Christmas | Trad. West Country arr. A. Warrell | |

Bob Chilcott (1955) “On Christmas Night”

Bob Chilcott was born in Plymouth, after the family re-located to Watford he sang in the local church choir and then at Kings College, Cambridge. On Christmas night is made up of eight carol settings that follow the sequence of the Christmas story – from the fall of Adam, through the promise of a child’s coming and the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, to the birth of the baby Jesus. The eight carols are interspersed with readings. The work was premiered in Austin, Texas in 2010 with a UK premiere at Rugby School in 2011

INTERVAL

On the eve of Advent, our second half follows the pattern of a traditional Christmas concert opening with the well-loved “**Once in Royal David’s City**”, words by C.F. Alexander, tune by H.J. Gauntlett and arranged by David Willcocks. Please join in after the solo first verse!

*1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.*

**2. He came down to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**

**3. And, through all his wondrous childhood,
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as he.**

**4. For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew.
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.**

**5. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that Child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.**

**6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing round,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned,
all in white shall wait around.**

The Huron Carol is generally considered the first Canadian Christmas carol. It was originally written in the Huron Indian language in 1641 and set to an old French tune by a Jesuit priest, Jean de Brebeuf. In retelling the story of the nativity, Father Brebeuf used symbols and figures that could be understood by the Hurons, and the hymn entered the tribe's oral tradition. This SATB arrangement is by Sarah Quartel.

The Huron Carol

Angels' Carol was written and composed by John Rutter in the 1980s. It is a joyful celebration of the Angels messages. We follow this with the rousing "**Hark the Herald Angels Sing**", music by Mendelssohn, arranged by David Willcocks.

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 the 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 Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

3. **Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n 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!"**

We now have two further carols by John Rutter: **Nativity Carol**, written in 1963 was one of John Rutter's earliest pieces. It quietly and reflectively tells the story of Jesus's birth. The **Candlelight Carol** was written in 1984 and also focuses on the nativity of Jesus, particularly the love of Mary for her son, Jesus.

Our third participation carol is the traditional English tune, arranged by Vaughan Williams "**O Little Town of Bethlehem**"

1. **O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight**

**2. O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth
For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love**

**3. How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

The last group of carols is from Jerry Rubino's A Merry Little Christmas, artistically challenging as well as popular and entertaining. Lots of fun for the choir to sing and a great addition to the eclectic repertoire of the society! It's the most wonderful time of the year, Feliz Navidad and Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

Our last participation carol is the great "O Come all Ye Faithful" arranged by David Willcocks. Tonight, as is traditional, we will save the last verse for Christmas Day!

**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;**

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**God of God, Light of Light,
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;**

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;**

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Our concert concludes with a fun and rousing “**We Wish you a Merry Christmas**” a West Country favourite, arranged by Arthur Warrell.

We hope you enjoy the concert, have a very Happy Christmas!

Marcus Capel
November 2025