

WASSAIL SONG (VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CAROLING)

The earliest version of caroling dates back to the 13th Century when people went house to house giving out well wishes during the colder months. Earlier Christmas caroling was known as wassailing and referred to the hot, thick, spiced beverage, similar to modern day eggnog, given to travelers during the winter to help keep them warm. As wassailing evolved, with children often going door-to-door it became more associated with Christmas and New Years.

By the 19th century, caroling received a surge in popularity. In Victorian England, groups of singers would visit houses singing carols or songs. In return, they were often rewarded with money that was collected and given to charity, mince pies, or a glass warm milk.

The Wassail Song (also known as *Here We Come A-wassailing* or *Here We Come A-caroling*) dates back to mid-19th Century England and highlight the Victorian tradition of caroling.

WASSAIL SONG

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green;
Here we come a-wand'ring
So fair to be seen.

REFRAIN:

Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too;
And God bless you and send you a Happy New
Year
And God send you a Happy New Year.

Our wassail cup is made
Of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
Of the best barley.

REFRAIN

We are not daily beggars
That beg from door to door;
But we are neighbours' children,
Whom you have seen before.

REFRAIN

Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring.
Let him bring us up a glass of beer,
And better we shall sing.

REFRAIN

We have got a little purse
Of stretching leather skin;
We want a little of your money
To line it well within.

REFRAIN

Bring us out a table
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mouldy cheese,
And some of your Christmas loaf.

REFRAIN

God bless the master of this house
Likewise the mistress too,
And all the little children
That round the table go.

REFRAIN

Good master and good mistress,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire.



Image credit: <https://londonbygaslight.wordpress.com/2011/10/06/in-the-bleak-mid-winter/>