Christmas Tunes

Collected and Written by John Walsh

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Here are a few tunes for the season, gleaned from some dusty books and an even dustier memory.

Jigs:

Christmas Day in the Morning: I first learned this jig from Paddy Haverty, of Killimor, Co. Galway, who called it The Munster Buttermilk. Since I already played another jig of the name, I just called it "Paddy Haverty's". But some sleuthing in Breathnach's Ceol Rince na hEireann uncovered the fact that someone else called it Siamsa Mhuilte Farannain–and also–which is the reason for including it here–Christmas Day in the Morning. It has a lot of lift–great tune for dancing. It also sounds good when transposed down to D.

Oiche Nollag: a single jig version of the reel Boys of Ballinahinch/Strawberry Blossom. It is in vol. 1 of Ceol Rince na hEireann.

A Merry Christmas: I haven't seen this except in O'Neill's. It's a nice open jig.

Reels:

Christmas Eve: This fine reel is often called Tommy Coen's, because (why else?) it was written by Tommy Coen of Co. Galway. It has been recorded several times–e.g. Chieftains 10, Delores Keane and John Falkner–and is often heard in sessions–a tune for all seasons, not just Christmas.

How We Spent the Christmas: this reel is in O'Neill's collection "Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melodies".

New Year's Night: This reel is also in Waifs and Strays. O'Neill got it from the piper Barney Delaney, and apologized for not having included it in his earlier collections. It's worth checking out–it is the kind of simple-but-interesting tune which goes so well on whistle, flute or pipes.

Hornpipe:

The Christmas Hornpipe: This is in Coles 1000 Fiddle Tunes. More of an English than Irish tune, by the sound of it.

Airs:

A New Years' Song, Christmas Eve, both from O'Neill's 1850. Dom Oiche Ud I mBeithil: a Christmas Carol, from the Chieftains.

John Walsh

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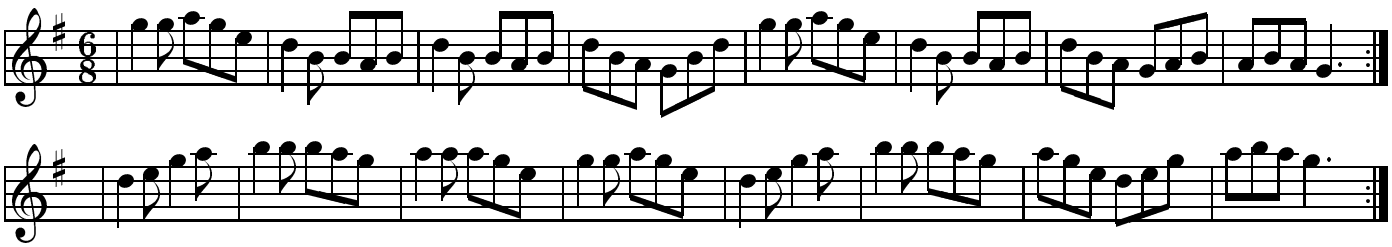
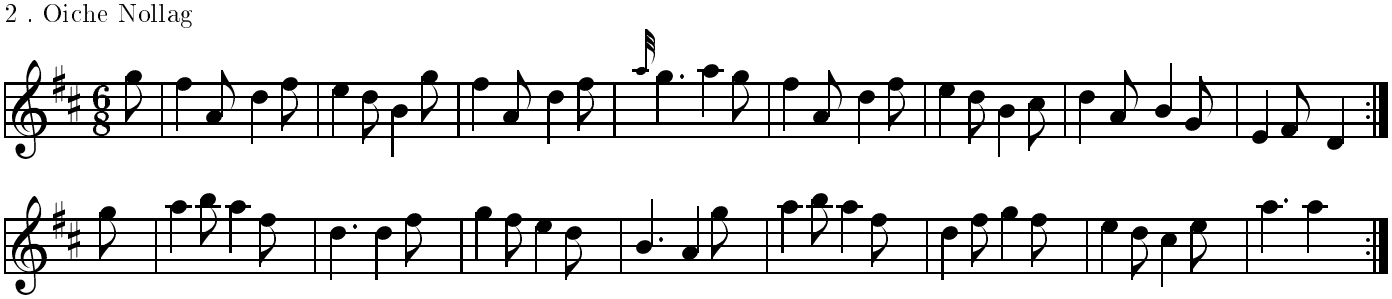
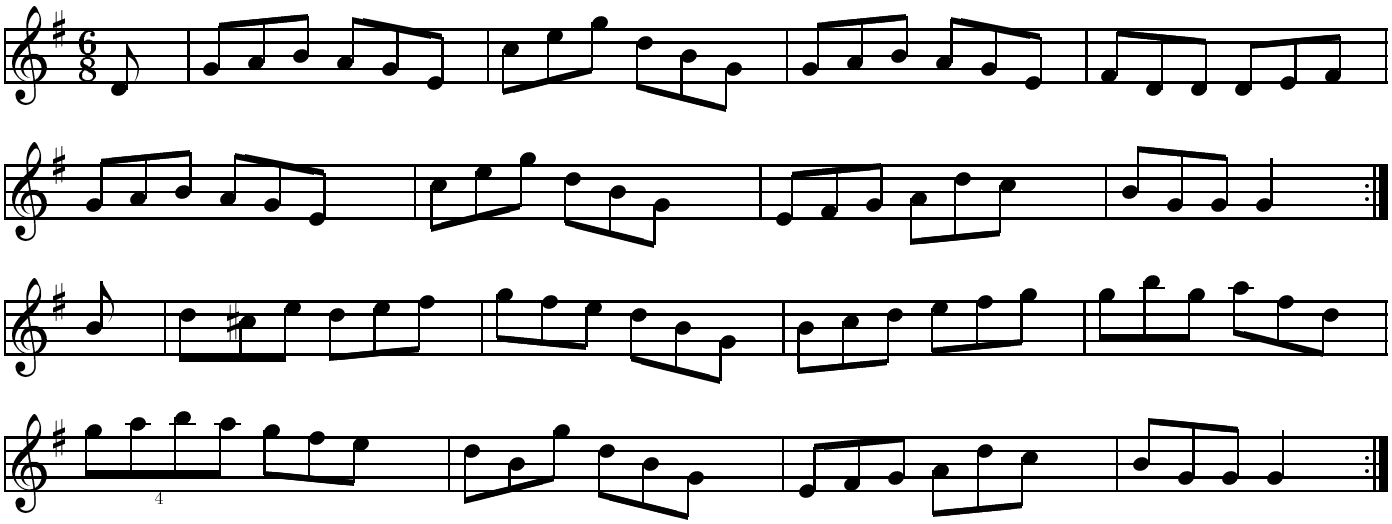
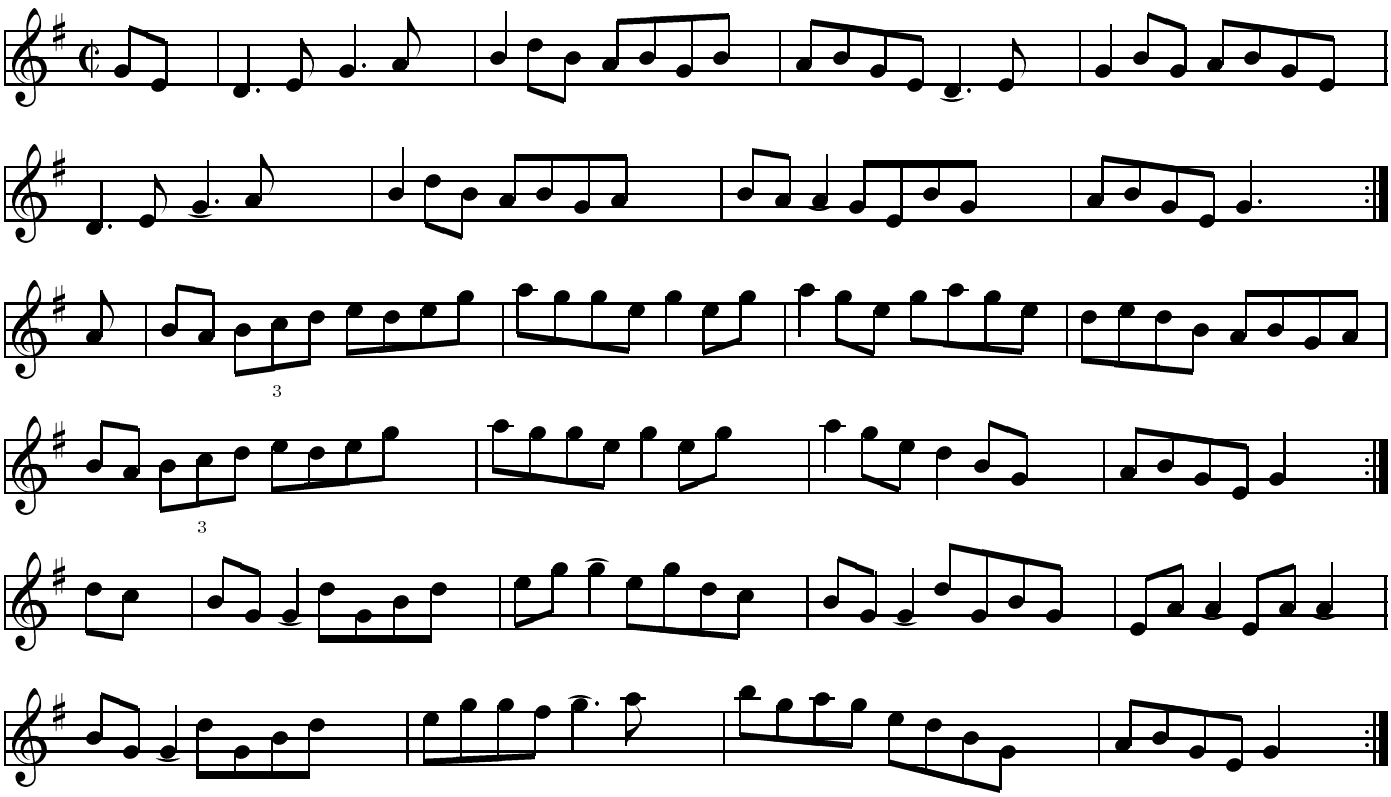
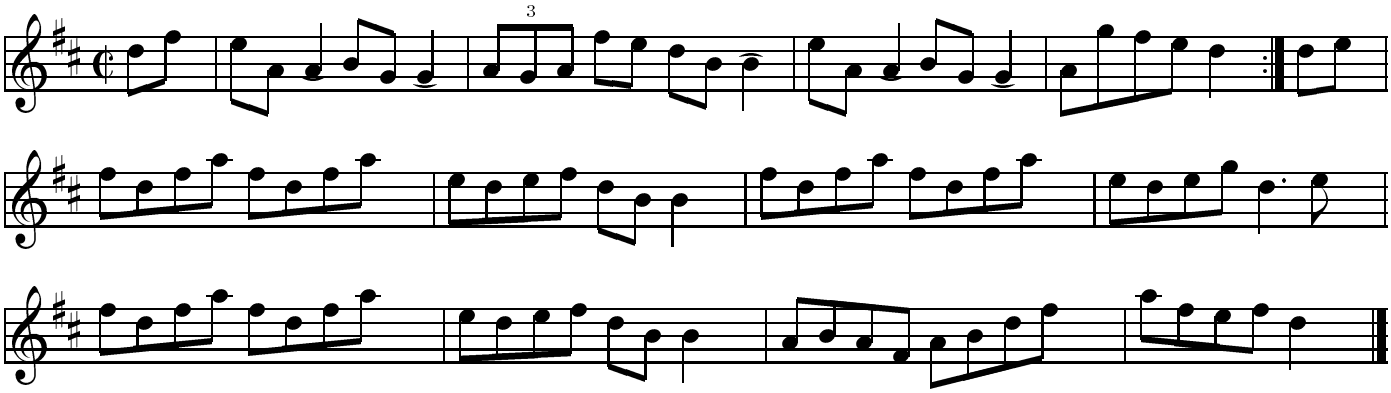
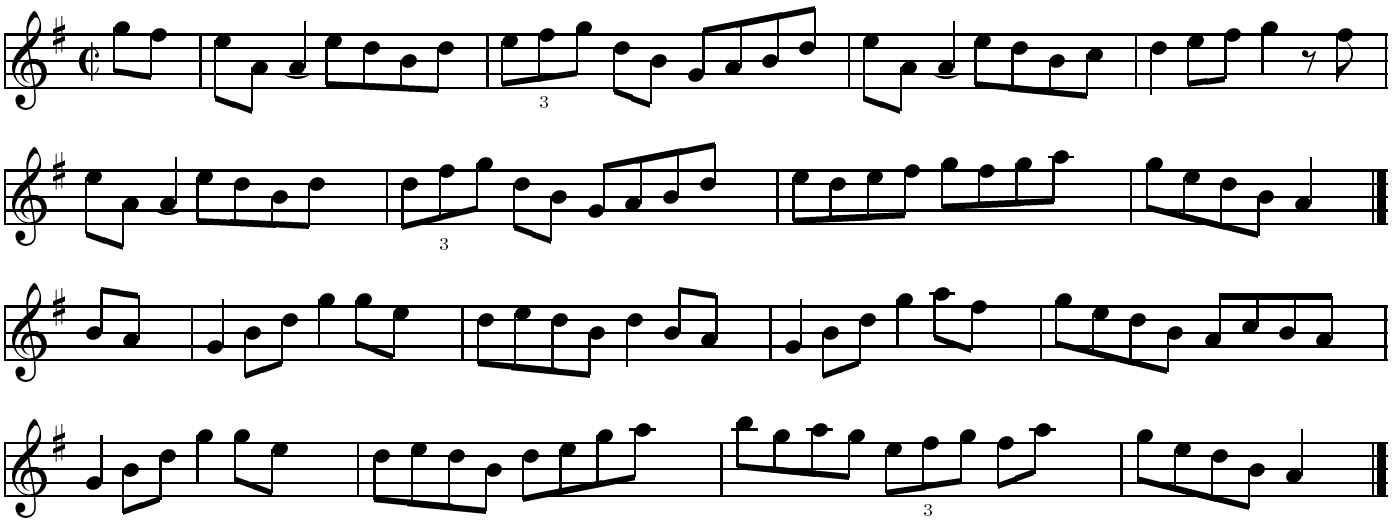
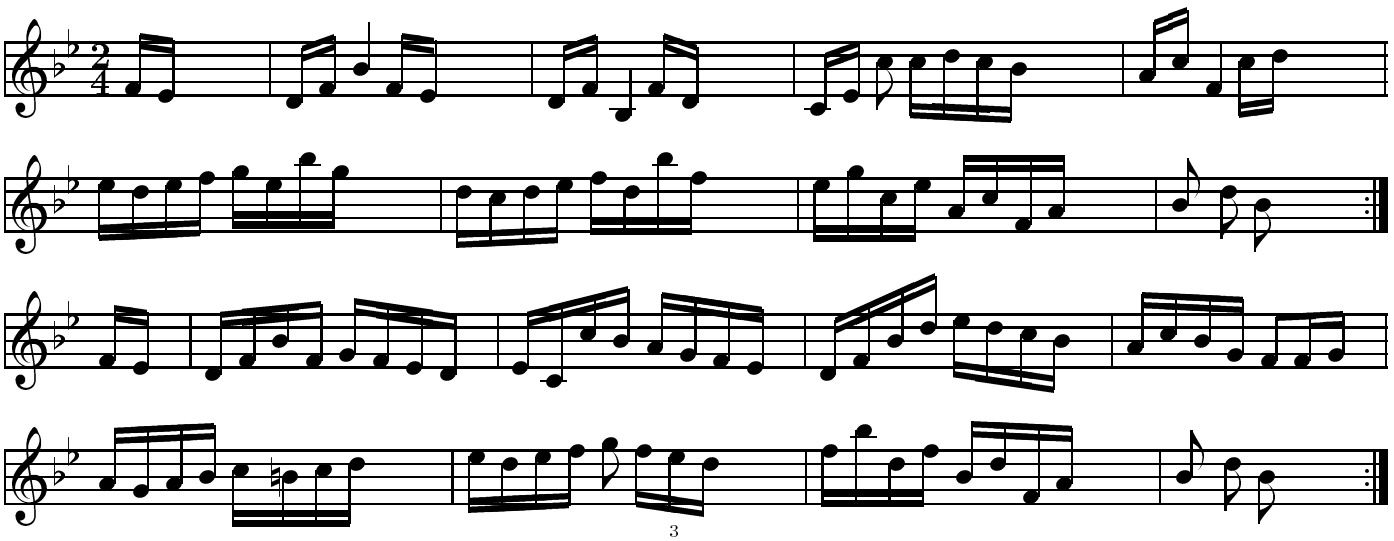
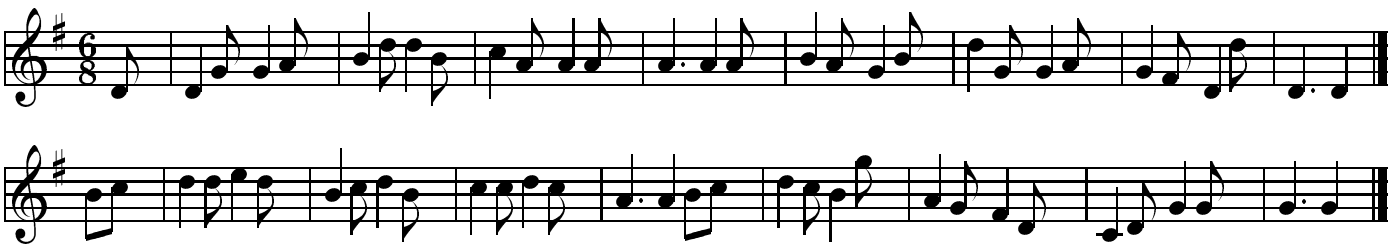
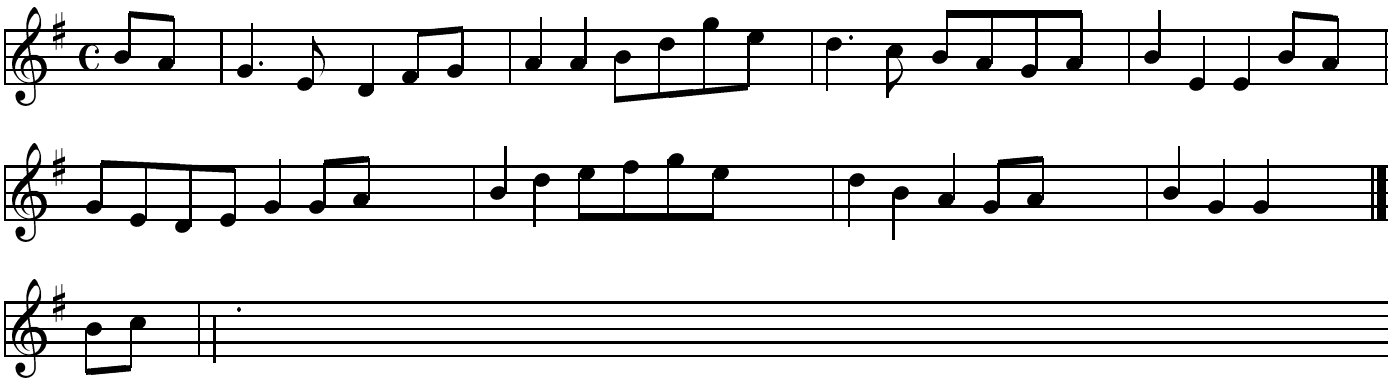
1. Christmas Day in the Morning *(Paddy Haverty)*

(Paddy Haverty's)



2 . Oiche Nollag

3. A Merry Christmas *(O'Neill's)*

4. Christmas Eve *Tommy Coen*

(Tommy Coen's)

5. How We Spent the Christmas *(O'Neill's Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody; from Francis O'Neill.)*

6. New Year's Night *(O'Neill's Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody. From piping of Barney Delaney.)*

7. The Christmas Hornpipe *(Coles 1000 Fiddle Tunes)*

8. New Year's Song *(O'Neill's)*

9. Christmas Eve *(O'Neill's)*