

# Hello Mouse!

The Tale  
of a  
Silent Night.



Many years ago a family of Austrian mice were so hungry that they nibbled through the bellows of the Church organ and nearly put a stop to Christmas in Oberndorf. Instead they inspired one of the greatest Christmas Carols ever written; Silent Night.

Friday December 23rd  
2016 6pm

St. Luke's Church, Hickling

~ featuring the Hickling Village Choir ~



Raising money for:

St. Luke's Church Clock Fund & Farms for City Children

Village Choir  
Singing for  
Enjoyment



Wednesdays, 7-8pm

Hickling Village Hall / St Lukes Church Hickling (see Facebook  
or email)  
contact [lynnhivng1@icloud.com](mailto:lynnhivng1@icloud.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/villagechoir/>

## Village Choir

We have sung for village events, key church services, weddings, care home, flash mob.  
We also plan to hold our own workshop or singalong event and enter Open Mic Night

All ages welcome  
No experience or talent required - singing is mostly a matter of confidence.  
Members usually donate £1 per week towards heating costs

### Typical Practice

- ♦ Warm up exercises such as stretches, breathing and lip trilling
- ♦ Simple round or part song - like Swing Low/I'm Gonna Sing/When the Saints
- ♦ Learn a short new song or part of a longer song like West Side Story, some Christmas carols, Linden Lea, Hey Jude
- ♦ Sing through and work on songs we know - songs such as Edelweiss, Barbara Ann
- ♦ Cheesy karaoke - last 10 minutes we often sing along to some fab songs e.g. Delilah

## Carol Singing

Christmas Eve  
from 6pm

Charles Acres

In Aid of Rainbows

Hospice



Everybody welcome – join us at any time and stay for as long as you like.  
If you're too modest to sing please take round the collecting tin.  
Those staying at home please give generously and pretend to enjoy.

We expect to finish in the pub about 8.30pm.

This year you can find out where we have got to by texting or calling Lynn 07557 902516 or Paul 07960 839969

### The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men ...

With any luck these will 'gang richtly' this evening and we will have a very enjoyable time!  
Almost exactly a year ago, a young gentleman of Hickling was feeling very disappointed at the lack of a village Christmas play; he had enjoyed the story of the WW1 Christmas truce that we had staged the year before and really missed being involved again. Promises were made and here we are, reassembled and having another go at telling the Christmas story for you.  
Thank you, Ben, for setting us off!

There are many versions of the Silent Night story (& indeed, many versions of the carol itself) and these stories all involve a snowbound Tyrolean Church and a hungry mouse; beyond that the versions are many and various – one example features a mouse called 'Nonny' who finds himself credited with writing the carol (using his inky paws), in this way the carol is by 'Anonymous' – A-Nonny-Mouse ...  
The only bits that we can genuinely claim to be true are that there was a priest called Joseph Mohr who wrote poetry and there was an organist and teacher called Franz Gruber and they lived in Oberndorf in Austria. They were great friends and when the mice nibbled through the organ bellows they did rescue Christmas Eve with their new carol, Silent Night - most versions replace the organ with a guitar but we rather liked the idea of just voices. Oh, and the description of Joseph Mohr that we use in the play does come, word-for-word, from the Diocesan records of the time!

It did take many years for Joseph and Franz to receive the recognition they deserved and it was many years before the real story emerged but the popularity of Silent Night spread quickly and with great affection from the very earliest performances; this word-of-mouth spread is largely responsible for the many different versions which existed in its earliest history. Although the original Church was moved in 1913, you can still visit the old site where a memorial Chapel now stands.  
Finally, a quick mention of the brilliantly funny Don Camillo books by Giovanni Guareschi; these were the inspiration for the Mary Statue figure. I cannot recommend them too strongly – funny, sad, thoughtful; strong, irreverent but fundamentally heart-felt, too.

Anyway, this is our version of the Silent Night story, which we hope you will like!  
JF.

**Narrator:** Two years ago we commemorated the beginning of the First World War with Michael Morpurgo's story of the Christmas truce and the moments when soldiers who were enemies came together to play football and to sing Christmas Carols – particularly we remembered the sound of voices emerging from darkness and silence; we remembered Silent Night.



Now it is December 2016 and we continue to commemorate tragic one hundred year anniversaries; memories that are painful to relive and lessons that we hoped had been learnt because we also find ourselves living in a world trying desperately to find and hold on to peace, calm, humility, understanding and tolerance.  
Tonight, we want to capture for ourselves the spirit of that first Silent Night ...

### Choir

The pieces sung by the choir frame our play:  
**Medley of Austrian Folk Songs:** Kein Schöner Land in Dieser Zeit, Muss I Denn, Es Klappert die Mühler  
**Spring:** Eidelweiss  
**Summer:** Sumer is icumen in (Cuckoo)  
**Autumn:** Linden Lea (Apple Tree)  
**Busy Sundays:** O' Little Town of Bethlehem  
**Winter:** In the Bleak Midwinter  
**Christmas Eve:** Silent Night/Stille Nacht

### Thank you

**Special thanks to Alex Thomas and John & Gill Bloor for all their support and many thanks to everyone who has supported us, tonight:** for helping with the refreshments, with your time and your contributions and, especially, for joining us this evening.

### Fundraising

Tonight we are fundraising for:  
**St. Luke's, Hickling: Church Clock Appeal**  
and

#### Farms For City Children

(a charity established by the children's author, Michael Morpurgo, which gives City Children a taste of the life we are lucky to enjoy here in Hickling.)  
**If you would like to add an extra donation; we would be very grateful! There will be a collection plate by the door.**



Farms for City Children:  
<http://farmsforcitychildren.org/>

## The first time that I heard the Silent Night story.

January 2016 was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Cranmer Group of Parishes; my father, Geoffrey Blackmore, was their first vicar and was responsible for establishing the Group in early 1966. This was a new experiment for the Diocese and a busy role; the vicar was at the centre of daily life, the phone or door-bell rang at all times of the day or night; routine was there but there always had to be room for the unforeseen, too - there must have been impressive intuition and organisation behind it all! It's 36 years since he died but still we're stopped by people wanting to be remembered to us because of the impact he had on their lives.

And so, our Christmas Day; flurries of busy, flurries of chaos, flurries of fun, lots and lots of people and moments of calm. Dad had 6 parishes and the Whatton Detention Centre to look after and every Church saw him over Christmas: Christmas Eve – Carols & Lessons alternated with the Nativity Pageant in Orston; Midnight Mass in Whatton; Communion at 8am and 9.30 on Christmas morning; ("You can open one present before Church – choose quickly!"); 10.30 Family Service in Aslockton (full to the brim & noisy!); quick coffee, all of us round the kitchen table, Dad allowed to drink from the saucer in the interests of speed (a guilty pleasure ...); 11.30 Detention Centre Service – he thrived on this helter skelter but phew ... The only service missing from his usual Sunday was Evensong (followed by 'catching up with the non-churchgoers' in the Cranmer Arms & pulling pints if needed whilst George Taylor changed a barrel!). But from lunchtime onwards on Christmas Day; that was family and friends time – warm, cosy & invariably full of people. Ramshackle Victorian vicarages were a nightmare to maintain but brilliant for kids and brilliant at Christmas.

Anyway, at some point, I have no idea how old I was or even which Church we were in; I have a vivid memory of hearing the story of the Mouse and Silent Night.

It was winter dark outside; the lights inside were very low. It wasn't cosy but certainly it was still and slightly mysterious. There is a strangeness for a small child in a congregation watching her father like this; remote (although he certainly wasn't in real life).

My father had a compelling presence and a voice that immersed you; particularly when he was telling you a story. He had an eye that seemed only to be seeing you and talking to you. So in a dark church that was full but silent this remote figure telling the simple story of the mouse, befriended by a priest and responsible for these words and this music is like a gentle echo that keeps tapping me on the shoulder ...

It's a lot of years ago and the world is ever-changing but I hope that the sound of Thomas's solo at the end of our play will create just such a memory for you.

(JF)



## Cast

### St. Nikolai's Church, Oberndorf:

**Narrator:** Kate Greenwood

**Joseph Mohr (Priest):** Peter Greenwood

**Franz (Frank) Gruber (Organist):** Tim McEwen

**Mouse:** Ben Samworth

**Mr Mouse:** Thomas Samworth

**Mrs Mouse:** Maddy Irving

**Mouse children:** William Overall, George Baker

**Mary Statue:** Emma Pressley

### Tableau:

**Mary:** Evie Parkes

**Joseph:** George Greasley

**Innkeeper:** Isla Greasley

**Angels:** Charlotte and Hollie Reek, Grace Easters, Verity Irving

**Shepherds:** George Baker, William Overall

**Kings:** James Cartmell, Thomas Winfield, William Hogg

### Choir:

**Director:** Lynn Irving

Michael Steven, Alan Smith, Richard Pulley Julia Brailsford, Sally Jenkins, Sue Pulley, Denise Amos, Karen Buckley, Barbara McEwen, Jane Harvey, Cathy Hetherington, Sue Willis, Margaret Woolley.

**Soloist:** Thomas Samworth

**Costumes:** Barbara McEwen

**Set & Props:** Barbara McEwen, Bob & Mary-Anne Naismith

**Sound & Effects:** Alan Thomas

**Mouse images:** Katie Fraser

**Written, produced, directed:** Jane Fraser

Please join us  
when we sing these two Carols!

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

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

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

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

**(FIRST VERSE: SOLO)**

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm all is bright  
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

**(CHOIR)**

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,  
Alles schläft; einsam wacht  
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.  
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

**(ALL)**

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm all is bright  
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;  
Christ the Saviour is born  
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth