The Joy of Christmas — Captured as Never Before!

The Twelve Days of Christmas

For the Rochester Philatelic Association’s
Zoom Meeting, December 10, 2020

by Tom Fortunato
I’m sure you’ve heard the tune, but you may have never seen the music before! It was first published in 1909 by Novello & Company, attributed to Frederic William Austin of England based on an old folk melody.
Here are the supposed meanings behind each verse:

- A Partridge in a Pear Tree - Jesus Christ
- Two Turtle Doves - The Old and New Testament
- Three French Hens - The virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity
- Four Calling Birds - The four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Five Golden Rings - The first five books of the Old Testament (The Tanach)
- Six Geese-a-Laying - The six days of creation before God’s rest on the seventh day
- Seven Swans-a-Swimming - The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord
- Eight Maids-a-Milking - The eight Beatitudes
- Nine Ladies Dancing - The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and temperance.
- Ten Lords-a-Leaping - The Ten Commandments
- Eleven Pipers Piping - The Eleven Faithful Disciples (minus Judas, who betrayed Jesus)
- Twelve Drummers Drumming - The Twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed
The first day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree.
The second day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Two turtle doves...
The third day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Three French hens...
The fourth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Four calling birds...
The fifth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Five golden rings ...
The sixth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Six geese a-laying...
The seventh day of Christmas,  
My true love sent to me  
Seven swans a-swimming . . .
The eighth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Eight maids a-milking . . .

The Twelve Days of Christmas
Eight Maids a-Milking
THE GAMBIA

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

BAILIWICK OF GUERNSEY
EIGHT MAIDS A - MILKING

CHRISTMAS ISLAND
2nd JAN.
1978

CHRISTMAS 1977
10c
The ninth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Nine ladies dancing...
The tenth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Ten lords a-leaping...
The eleventh day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Eleven pipers piping...
The twelfth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Twelve drummers drumming...
There are many countries that have issued stamps depicting “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

Here are some already seen as well as additional ones...
Happy Holidays
and
Happy New Year!