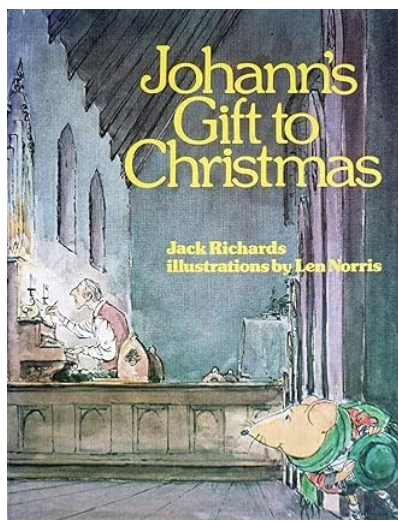


# Ripping Reads

## No 51 November 2024



Johann's Gift to Christmas: Jack Richards  
by Jilly Day



Readers of the Chalet School will be familiar with the origins of *Silent Night, Stille Nacht*. When, just before Christmas 1818, the church organ in the small Tyrolean village of Oberndorf was found to be damaged, organist and school teacher Franz Xavier Gruber, composed a simple tune for words written by the priest Joseph Mohr. But Johann, also had a role in the composition of *Silent Night*. So, who was Johann and why does his name remain unknown?

The Napoleonic wars had caused misery and poverty throughout Europe. However, in the Tyrolean village of Oberndorf a family of mice lived very comfortably in the spacious cellar of the Burgermeister's home. Food was plentiful, thus Johann and his numerous siblings, grew fat and strong. The young mice played together in the lush meadows of their mountainous land. However, tiny Johann was captivated by music. Whether it was the church bell, a jolly Tyrolean band, or simply hearing peasants yodelling in the still mountain air, the little mouse stopped his games and listened happily to the melodic sounds.

One momentous day, as Johann was enjoying the merry music of a Tyrolean band, he met a shabby elderly mouse named Viktor. Viktor had observed Johann's love of music and invited him along to the church, where Franz Xavier Gruber was playing the organ. Johann was in raptures

