Azed No. 2,428 ‘Christmas Playtent’ Competition Puzzle

In a Playfair word square the code word or phrase (in which no letter recur) is followed by the remaining letters of the alphabet. I doing double duty for I (see example left). To encode a word it must first be split into pairs of letters, eg CR IT E AL. Each pair is then to be seen as forming the diagonally opposite corners of a rectangle within the word square, the other two corners being the encoded form. Thus, in the example shown, CR gives SG (not GS, which RC would give). Where a pair of letters appears in the word square, the other two corners being opposite corners of a rectangle within the word square, the code phrase must then be deduced so that the diagram may be completed. It consists of three consecutive words from a familiar seasonal verse.

Competitors should submit with their entries a normalcryptic clue to the 9-letter word coming three words before the code phrase in this verse.

Across
1 Get moving, cart’s given a shake in it (9)
2 Work late shifts, extra hour put in? Not real (5)
3 Former afflictor of cows perhaps last award (6)
4 Pass self-rule to Irkham, with cost (8)
5 Group of soldiers I catch behind bed (10)
6 Flowering shrub’s name in label affix (6)
7 Bogged down, is trapped – failed in one’s aim (6)
8 Lacking Latin, A Latin class struggles making connections (13)
14 Fish gutted, scrambled hoeing NY desk (8)
20 Terrestrial bear (old) nursing terrible harm (8)
29 Harden at being confined, being bad-tempered (9, 2 words)
30 Company row brought to an end by Director (5)
31 What fossickers do, remain changing situation? (10)
34 Rear moving forward sat composed (6)
35 Sand trobled cattle regularly having fused digits (9)

Down
1 Duck in cereals consumed with capital adornment (8)
2 Husband admitted to Salome once close by (6)
3 Little bird is avoiding sun in US shrub (4)
5 A party with free eats? Put on new dress (5)
6 Made progressing face to face? Sounds like one of the ways (5)
7 Wax, epoqul food to burn around 027 (6, 2 words)
8 Vessels for liquids or oils (4)
9 Stick put through clave (6)
10 King boring in coach, symbol representing that fun (4)
11 Odd extracts from Zacharias dour imam scribbled in prayer-books (9)
12 Thickets in the Broads? Deer wandering in margins (9)
13 Wine cupboard: example of its contents including the Spanish (8)
15 Periodical supplying gossip (3)
21 Boatman performed charity maybe, crew’s heart lifting inside (6)
22 Like many roofs, items viewed from below I omitted (6)
23 Get engrossed in informal discussion about women (5)
24 Noblewoman of high rank embraced by husband at induction (5)
25 Had a nose of various colours, including a bit of red (5)
26 Fedd hauled up for walked town historically (4)
27 Furnished holiday? Hat lost, seek exotic plant (4)
30 Polo finishing early? Refuse (4)

Every word used in the puzzle is in the Chambers Dictionary (2010).

Azed No. 2,425 solution & notes

Send correct solution and clue as indicated (on separate sheet also bearing name and address, security pin Azed No. 2,406, 108-112, Old York St D6W 6QX. Closing date: Saturday 5 January 2013). Please add a little exploitation of your clue (one entry only), £2, £6, £14 prizes and Azed batonoids for the three clues judged best. Extra prizes for those judged very highly commented. The Azed Slip, containing details of successful competition winners and Azed’s comments, is available on subscription at £3.50 a year for 11 issues (£10 for overseas subscribers). Cheques, payable to The Azed Slip, should be sent to The Azed Slip, Corfe Farm, Ayldeford, Romsey SO51 6NH. To receive a sample slip, please send an sae to this address. For much more information on the Azed Slip, visit www.andlit.org.uk.