

The Ballad of Fyfield Church Clock – to celebrate its restoration

The Fyfield clock is what I sing,
Its weights and pendulum – and string –
Its cogs and logs, its gilded hands,
Chime and rocks and elastic bands.

Now once it helped a village priest
To have a B Tech Eng at least.
High Church or low or orthodox,
A parson had to know his clocks.

And so it was that our last Vicar,
Keith Triplow, saved our village ticker.
When he arrived the clock was dead –
'Hasn't worked for years' they said.

With patience, oil and native wit
Keith overhauled it bit by bit;
For thirty years he made it run
As sure and certain as the sun.

Year in year out he climbed the tower
To wind it up and set the hour.
But should a key component fail
A spare could not be found on sale.

Yet faults were quickly overcome:
A seized nut on the pendulum?
Keith fixed that with a set of shims
So that his flock weren't late for hymns.

An arm would not engage its cog –
The wily Vicar rigged a log
For weight. To synchronise the ring
He hung a boulder from a string.

The stop fan wouldn't work at all –
He diagnosed a broken pawle.
The bell lagged hours behind the hands;
Rev's remedy? Elastic bands!

And I've been told – Keith swears it's myth –
A spring that failed was mended with
A strip of metal fitted in –
Cut neatly from a baked bean tin.

Time ticked along – but then Keith left.
The poor old clock was quite bereft.
I kept it wound – but I'm an idiot
When dealing with a failing widget.

Weep for the clock, forlorn, uncherished!
Of course the rubber bands soon perished.
With me it never kept good time
And crime of crimes – I trashed the chime!

So thanks to all who've raised the ready
So Fyfield time runs true and steady.
Repaired, restored, the clock's long story
Winds up in electronic glory!

Mark Baker 20th May 2011