



THE BALLAD OF BOLDRE'S ST JOHN'S

By butter-cupped and daisied fields,
well away from town,
Boldre's ancient church, St John's,
snugly hunkers down.

More ancient than the age old trees
of nearby Royden Wood,
The veteran of a thousand storms
weathered and withstood.

Unpretentious, unassuming,
no hint of overreach,
As natural in its landscape
as oak and ash and beech.

On breezy days its churchyard shimmers
with life above the grave,
snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells
bow their heads and wave.

Weathered, lichened, rubbled walls
uphold a steep pitched roof
Of russet, terracotta tiles,
for centuries weatherproof.

This block of space so framed and shaped
by tile, beam and stone,
Suggests to all who enter in:
Alone, you're not alone.

We're blessed by those, nine centuries gone,
who faithfully conceived it,
Then planned and built and passed it down
just as we've received it.

It took them years and years and years
to bring to such perfection,
A church that still holds pride of place
in everyone's affection.

As then, so now, we bless all those
who keep St John's alive.
Who still today in cash and kind
enable it to thrive.

Two churchwardens, Graham and Sally,
never shirk a task,
Undertaking so much more than
anyone might ask.

A willing, expert fabric team
in constant to and fro,
Mending, fixing, painting, sorting,
always on the go.

The church and village fete committee
annually impress,
By motivating one and all
they guarantee success.

Timothy, the organist,
is best for miles around,
He lifts the roof and soothes the heart
with virtuosic sound.

A four part, keen, melodious choir,
plus chiming, joyful bells,
Gladdens hearts and minds, and dull
despondency dispels.

Dedicated lesson readers,
devoted chalice bearers,
Careful, thoughtful intercessors,
loving pastoral carers,

A team of smiling doorkeepers,
service-sheet preparers,
Dedicated floor-sweepers,
altar linen carers,

Monthly 'Bridge' distributors,
who're doughty door knockers,
Dusters, polishers, churchyard keepers,
daily church unlockers,

The stewardship group, the treasurer,
planned and unplanned givers,
The well supported Boldre Trust,
and help that it delivers,

Imaginative flower arrangers,
a mindful PCC,
Animals who come to church
for Francis of Assisi,

The master of our website, Don,
the waxers of our pews,,
The mission group and Sally's great
Rwanda work and news,

The prayer and bible-study groups,
are such a dividend,
As too are those who church and worship
regularly attend,

The Sunday children's club assistants,
summertime's church guides,
Ten thirty tea and coffee servers,
all those grooms and brides,

Providers of each fortnight's meal
for old folk in the hall,
The fabric team and car park minders
in sunshine, gale or squall.

Those who plan Remembrance Sunday's
moving celebration,
Likewise those who organise
the Hood commemoration,

And then to David Whately Smith
a grateful, heartfelt toast,
For he arranged Walhampton School,
to be our generous host.

A school these days of wide renown
and warm and friendly ties
To Boldre Church within whose bounds
so graciously it lies.

The food and wine tonight's donated
completely free of cost.
Our heartfelt thanks for this must not
be unremarked or lost.

Sincere thanks to one and all
who keep St John's alive,
By worship, effort and support
enabling it to thrive.

Every single one who helps
is held in high esteem,
And more especially those who join
our Parish Giving Scheme!

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As then, so now, all blessed be those
who keep St John's alive,
Who do and give so very much
enabling it to thrive.