

## CHANGING TIMES

In the hall of a National Trust house, after lights out, an Oyster Rolex watch, seeks comfort from an old friend.

“Grandfather, I can’t move my hands!” Young Rolly moans.

“Keep calm my young friend,” the Grandfather Clock says, “this is a temporary lapse by your owner. You will feel normal when you are worn again.”

“Maybe, but there’s definitely something funny going on. The cocktail watch hasn’t moved for a month, the kitchen clock is slow and the big alarm clock has disappeared. Is the house going digital?”

“May I suggest other reasons for your observations. The cocktail watch is not needed if there is no requirement to attract attention to its wearer, the kitchen clock has a slack spring after the cook filled the kitchen with steam and that alarm clock was too ostentatious.”

“All right then, but what about those boxes arriving *with batteries not supplied* written on the side. You aren’t clockwork if you need batteries. And what does *digital* really mean?”

“Rolly, calm yourself. You are more than a watch, you’re jewellery. Your kind is always celebrated on the Antiques Roadshow.”

“I may not be the most advanced watch in the world now but I was once. What if we are about to be replaced? I couldn’t bear being sold. I’d disengage my winding knob somehow.”

“Change is a constant. Since I first started ticking, 150 years ago, much has altered. But designs like you and me are timeless. We have unique qualities and can banish thoughts of replacement if we perform to specification.”

“I suppose you’re right. I guess we can’t be replaced by watches with no hands.”

“Have some compassion for those mass-produced digital products. They haven’t fine mechanisms put together by skilled craftsman. They aren’t regularly rewound and nurtured and many, I hear, only have the working life of one battery.”

At that moment, Rolly spots a watch left on the hall table. “Look there’s one here already,” he whispers.

A black plastic Casio interrupts, speaking in a staccato fashion. “:What is time...must show exact time.”

“It will be quarter to twelve next time I chime.” The Grandfather Clock says.

“Quarter? ...Have no number quarter.”

“Well, you can wait till I chime midnight then.”

“Midnight...?”

“Yes twelve o’clock.”

“O... clock?”

Rolly sniggers and congratulates his friend, “Well done old timer, we won’t make it easy for these newcomers. Long live the Analogs.”