

The Tangletree Village Bike Race.

A short Drama Production by Peter Fairhurst. m©mix. www.OldFred.com

Tangletree Major is a sleepy little village deep in the country. The main road runs through the middle and passes the village green and the Parish Church. At the side of the church, is the Village Hall.

The village green is very well looked after and, at one end, near the Church, there is a pond with fish and a family of ducks.

There is also a Post Office Stores and the 'Tangletree Arms', the local pub, where the villagers often meet for a drink in the evenings and before lunch on Sunday.

Opposite the green, on the other side of the road, there is a bakery, a newspaper shop and a garage and bike shop owned by Mr. Saddlepump. There are several houses in and around the village.

On one side of the green there is a lane that leads to a big old manor house, the home of Sir Henry Tangletree, an arrogant man – Tweeds, cap, plus fours, etc.

SCENE 1

The village hall, most of the characters are assembled for a meeting, to be chaired by Reverend Fontpew, typical 'fussy' vicar – bald but remaining hair grown long and wound round to cover baldness, cassock, 'dog collar', old fashioned wire rimmed glasses.

Rev. FP (*appearing a little nervous, taps the table to bring the meeting to order*)

Good evening, good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Quiet now, please, Thank you, thank you all for coming. Now then

Mr. Kegfroth (*Landlord of the Tangletree arms – stocky, impatient man*)

Get on with it, vicar, I've got customers waiting.

Mrs. Kegfroth (**crossly**) Behave yourself George, Lucinda will be managing very nicely.
Now, let the vicar speak.

Rev. FP Thank you Mrs. Kegfroth, ... Now then

Mr. K You've already said that ..

Mrs. K (**exasperated**) George!

Rev. FP (**nervously, fiddling with his glasses**) Thank you. Now then

Mrs. K glares at Mr. K, who looks at his watch.

I will be as brief as possible. We are gathered here today to sort out the final details of our annual Summer Fayre, to check that everything is in place, as it were. I am sure it will be as splendid as ever. Sir Henry has come up trumps, as always, he, naturally, will perform the opening ceremony....

Mr. K Will it be the same speech as always, Vicar?

Mrs. K glares at him again, the Vicar ignores the remark

Rev. FP Sir Henry has already agreed to pay for the posters and they are at the printers as we speak, thank you Miss Folio for the design, they are very good indeed, as always; we should be able to get them out by the weekend. Now then

Mr. K 'tuts' and looks at the ceiling.

Mrs. Fontpew, bless her, will have a splendid crop of vegetables and potted plants for the produce stall.

Lady 1 I should have some tomatoes in time, Vicar, the first ones are turning red very nicely.

Rev. FP Thank you, Mrs. Peel

Lady 1 I'm not sure how many there will be, perhaps just a few pounds.

Rev. FP (**humorously**) Kilos, dear Lady, in this day and age, it should be kilos, not pounds

Lady 1 (**confused**) But they're English tomatoes, Vicar.

Mr. K Get on ... ouch (**Mrs. K has 'elbowed' him in the chest**)

Gent 1 I should have some of my beautiful potatoes for you, Vicar; I don't understand kilos either, I'll just put them in a sack, you can sell them how you like.

Rev. FP Thank you, Mr. Hayhoe, very kind. Now, the bookstall, Miss Folio?

Miss Folio Thank you, Vicar (**standing**) Everything is under control ...we have a good selection of books, as always; the villagers are so generous,

Rev. FP Thank you, I'm sure they are. Now the cake stall, er, Miss Doughbun? (**looking around**)

Miss D (**waving her arm**) Here Vicar,

Rev. FP Ah yes, there you are.

Miss D All tickedy boo, Vicar. Same as always, plenty of good cakes and buns and things, and a lot of help as usual.

Rev. FP Splendid. And guess the weight of the cake?

Miss D Yes indeed Vicar, a nice rich fruitcake this year.

Mr. K. (**under his breath**) Will that be kilos, Vic ... ouch?

Rev. FP Splendid, splendid. (**he looks at his notes**)

Mr. K (**interrupting**) Vicar, this could go on all night, can I say my piece and get back to the pub?

Rev. FP (**flustered**) Oh, er,oh, very well, Mr. Kegfroth.

He stands and hitches up his trousers

Mr. K Right Vicar, I'll be running the beer tent as usual, you get ten percent of the take.

Rev. FP And your homemade beer?

Mr. K Oh yes, I have a couple of barrels of the old 'Tangletree Burper' ready.

Rev. FP (**hesitantly**) I thought ... did we not agree ...that you would change the ... name?

Mr. K Nonsense, Vicar, couldn't be a better name. Suits it down to the ground.

Rev. FP But ...

Mr. K (**ignoring him**) Right, that's settled then. Must go, see you on the day. (**he leaves**)

General hubbub, Quietens after Mr. K leaves

Rev. FP Well, erm, oh dear me, dear, dear, dear. Will you talk to him, Mrs. Kegfroth?

Mrs. K I will Vicar, but I doubt if it will do any good.

Rev. FP Oh dear. Such a vulgar name ...

Gent 1 Mighty fine beer, though, Vicar.

Rev. FP I don't doubt that, the name does, however, lower the tone somewhat. But never mind. Now then, ... Now, bric-a-brac and toys? **(he looks at the people, a couple wave)** Mr. and Mrs. Stamper, there you are; thank you. Tombola? Mrs. Raffles?

Mrs. R Here Vicar, all ship shape and bristle fashion.

Rev. FP **(humorously)** Should that not be BRISTOL fashion, my dear?

Mrs. R Perhaps I ought to BRUSH up on my English. **(subdued, good natured laughter)** Brush, bristles, oh, never mind.

Rev. FP Quite, quite. Now, **(looking at his notes again) Raffle?**

Mrs. R **(indignantly)** I beg your pardon Vicar, It's Mrs. Raffles, Vicar, Mrs. Rosalind Raffles, and you've just called me 'my dear'.

Rev. FP **(embarrassed)** No, no, sorry, not you, dear Mrs. Raffles, raffle TICKETS, ... Mrs. Bowler?

Mrs. B. Yes Vicar, Tom and I will be doing that as usual, we could do with a few more prizes, though. We've got the hamper, a bottle or two of spirits, quite a nice toaster

Rev. FP **(interrupting)** Excellent. I'm sure it will be splendid.

Katie K Vicar

Rev. FP Yes, my child.

Katie K To avoid confusion, might it not be better if Mrs. Raffles did the raffle and Mr. and Mrs. Bowler did the tombola.

Mrs. R **(crossly)** But I always do the tombola.

Rev. FP Of course you do, and you do it so well. No, I think we will leave things as they are. But thank you Katie, its good to see the youngsters showing an interest. Now then ... what else have we? **(he again shuffles his papers and looks at his notes)**

Mr. Saddlepump stands up. People turn to look at him

Mr. SP Jim Saddlepump, Vicar. As you know, I'm new in the village, not been here long, but I have a suggestion ..

Rev. FP **(cautiously)** Yes, Mr. Saddlepump.

Mr. SP Call me Jim, Vicar.

Rev. FP Oh, sorry, Mr. Vicar ... so who's Mr. Saddlepump?

Mr. SP Never mind Vicar, I think a bike race for the youngsters might be a good idea.

Rev. FP A bike race?

Mr. SP Yes, a bike race. The kids could start on the Green, go up Manor Lane, into the woods at Willows End, through the woods, on the path, of course, out onto Stream Lane, over the bridge and back to the Green. We could have two races, maybe two, or three laps for the younger ones and, say, five laps for the older children.

Rev. FP Sounds like fun, what a good idea.

Mrs. Banks (*sitting at the front table with Rev. FP*) The function of the Fayre is to raise money for the church, how could this possibly help?

Rev. FP Good point Mrs. Banks, very good point.

Miss DB (*haughtily*) I quite agree, and we don't want young hooligans rushing round on bicycles, quite dangerous; think of the damage they could do.

Lady 1 I agree Vicar, and I don't want my children racing through the woods, they're far too young.

Rev. FP Well Mr. Saddlepump, sorry, Mr. Vicar; perhaps it is not such a good idea after all?

Gent 1 Boys will be boys, Vicar, and girls for that matter. I think it's a great idea.

Lady 1 Not for MY children.

Gent 1 My lads would love it, Vicar, but we could just have a race for the older kids, five laps, I'm sure that it would be great, give the kids something to do, instead of wandering about and getting up to mischief.

Mrs. B (*sternly*) The Church fund, Vicar?

Mr. SP (*standing*) Vicar, I'm sorry I've caused this ..., er, .. outburst. If I hadn't been interrupted, I would have gone on to say that each competitor would pay a small entry fee, or, better still, be sponsored, so much a lap, you know. I would supply the prizes, one for the winner, one for the fastest girl.

Rev. FP Oh my word, how generous, what a splendid idea.

Mrs. B (*sulkily*) Seems like a lot of trouble for not much money.

Rev. FP But, surely, every little helps?

Miss D I cannot agree, that is nonsense, Vicar, and what about the children without suitable bikes?

Mr. SP The race could raise quite a few pounds, and don't you think its about time we did something for the youngsters, giving them a good race that will raise funds for the church MUST be a good idea. I could provide bikes for those without them, we could let them have them free, but making a small charge would bring in more money.

Miss D It wouldn't be a fair race, the best cyclist would win.

Mr. SP That's life, dear lady ...Michael Schumacher wouldn't have been World Champion if he wasn't the best driver

Miss D (*angrily*) Don't you 'dear lady' me. And who's Michael Schumacher?

Rev. FP Now, now....

Mr. SP Sorry, I'm so sorry. Perhaps we could devise a handicap system to make it a more even competition, but if you don't like my suggestion, I will withdraw my offer.

Mr. ** Don't do that Jim; and, ladies, Michael Schumacher is, or was the best racing driver in the world; World Champion for several years. Now, if you want cars, why don't you get Fred Lonsdale to give rides in his lovely old car; that would be something different and raise a few pounds.

General murmurs of support

Rev. FP (*banging the table*) Now, now, Ladies and gentlemen.I think that this is an absolutely splendid idea, and I would like to thank Mr. Saddlepump....

Mr. SP Jim

Rev. FP Sorry, Mr. Vicar, .. Jim of course, .. I think that we should have just one race, say five laps for the older ones and, perhaps four for the under tens. There is one problem, however, the general posters for the Fayre are already being printed; how will we let people know.

Mr. SP I could do a batch of extra posters on my computer, I've got an A3 printer. And I will do entry forms and sponsor sheets. Leave it to me.

Rev. FP Oh, how generous, how very kind, thank you very much indeed; what, pray tell is an A3 printer?

Mr. SP A printer that takes A3 paper.

Rev. FP (*bemused*)Really, imagine that, how very interesting.

The meeting finishes and the people leave. Miss Doughbun and Mrs. Banks leave together commenting

Mrs. B Who DOES he think he is?

Miss D I know, not been here five minutes .. and who IS Michael Schumacher?

Mrs. B I haven't a clue, and what will Sir Henry say, you know what he's like?

Miss D I know, well I don't know, but I can imagine....

Mrs. B Yes. Perhaps he knows Michael Schumacher?

SCENE 2

The road by the village Green, evening, a few days later. The light is fading, no one is about. The attention is focussed on a new poster for the bike race on the village notice board. An elderly Rolls Royce drives past, then screeches to a standstill, reverses back and stops. Sir Henry gets out, leaving his door open, reads the notice and then tears it down. He storms off across the Green to the vicarage, leaving the car door open and the engine running.

He knocks and bangs on the vicarage door, shouting

Sir H Fontpew, Fontpew, where are you, man?

After a while, the vicar opens the door, Sir H carries on shouting,

Fontpew, how dare you, what ARE you playing at.....

Rev. FP (***flustered***) I'm sorry, Sir Henry....

Sir H (***furiously***) Don't interrupt, man; what are you up to?

Rev. FP Well, er...umm...

Sir H I said don't interrupt while I am talking, who DO you think you are?

Rev. FP I'm sorry, Sir Henry; I am really sorry.

Sir H I should think so too, now I will leave it to you to sort it out, and see that you do; do I make myself clear? Good-night, Vicar, Good-night. *(he storms back to his car)*

SCENE 3

The vicarage kitchen, early next morning, the Vicar is making himself a pot of tea. As he is pouring his tea, he hears the milkman arriving, he goes to the door.

Rev. FP Good morning, Mr. Fullchurn.

Mr. F A bit early for you, isn't it, Vicar?

Rev. FP Yes, it is, I couldn't sleep. Would you like a cup of tea, I've just made a pot?

Mr. F *(looking at his watch)* Go on then, but just a quick one, thanks.

They go inside and sit down. Rev. FP gets a mug and pours the tea.

Mr. F Couldn't sleep. You say, Vicar, something on your mind?

Rev. FP Yes, as a matter of fact, there is. I don't know what to do. It was about half past nine last evening, perhaps a little later,... Sir Henry came banging on my door. He was awful, so angry, he told me, in no uncertain terms, to do something about it.

Mr. F About what?

Rev. FP I don't know, he didn't say, that's my problem, I really do not know; he just shouted at me to get it sorted out.

Mr. F But what, you must have some idea?

Rev. FP That's the trouble, I honestly don't know, I haven't got a clue, I laid awake, half the night trying to work it out,.....I have got no idea; honestly, not a clue. But he was certainly very angry.

Mr. F *(finishing his tea and standing up to leave)* I'll see what I can find out Vicar, I expect someone knows. I'll ask around.

Rev. FP Thank you very much indeed, Oh I do wish I knew what I have done wrong.

Mr. F I can't imagine you doing anything wrong, Vicar, *(as he leaves)* it's probably something and nothing, you know what Sir Henry's like.

SCENE 4

The village, the milkman goes about his round. He stops at the back door of the Tangletree Arms, Mrs. Kegfroth is in the kitchen, the door is open.

Mr. F *(cheerily)* Morning, Mrs. Kegfroth

Mrs. K Good morning Mick, another nice one.

Mr. F Yes, it looks like it, though poor old Fontpew may not think so.

Mrs. K Why, what's wrong with him?

Mr. F Poor old chap, seems to have upset Sir Henry.

Mrs. K Upset Sir Henry, how on earth did he manage to do that, he's such a meek little chap; what's he done?

Mr. F That's his problem, he really doesn't know. I don't suppose you know anything about it?

Mrs. K No. But you know Sir Henry, he can get very annoyed at the slightest little thing. But surely not the Vicar?

Mr. F Apparently so, I said I would ask around. I'm hoping that Molly Flanders might know, she's my next port of call.

Mrs. K Yes, if she doesn't know, nobody will.

Mr. F leaves the milk, says goodbye, returns to the milk float and drives away.

SCENE 5

The back door of the Manor House. Mr. F drives up, parks, collects a small crate of milk, walks over and knocks at the door. The cook/housekeeper opens it.

Mr. F Good morning Molly, *(she ushers him in and he puts the milk on the table)*

Molly Cup of tea, Mick?

Mr. F No thanks, not today love, I've just had one.

Molly *(questioning)* Oh?

Mr. F Yes, I got one at the Vicarage, old Fontpew was in a bit of a state.

Molly Not the Vicar, surely; though I suppose he is always in a bit of a state, always fussing about, always getting in the way when people are trying to work. So what's upset him, this time?

Mr. F D'know, and neither does he; something to do with Sir Henry, have you any ideas?

Molly No, not a clue, though, wait a minute, there might be something. When Sir Henry come back from London yesterday, it must have been getting near to ten o'clock, I was in my room watching the television, he didn't half make a lot of noise, banging doors and shouting, that sort of thing, I kept out of his way, you know what he's like.

Mr. F So what was he shouting about?

Molly I don't know, I didn't really take any notice, probably nothing in particular, you know what he's like. But ... there is something, *(she goes to the pedal bin and takes out a crumpled bit of paper)* When I came down this morning, I found this on the hall floor. *(she hands Mr. F the paper, he opens it up and they both look at it.)* What is it, it looks like some sort of notice?

Mr. F It is, it's a poster. A poster for a bike race at the village Fayre. I wonder what it's all about, a bike race seems like a good idea, *(pointing)* look, Jim Saddlepump has organised it, now what's wrong with that?

Molly Perhaps he didn't get Sir Henry's permission, and you know what he's like; pompous old pilloperson.

Mr. F But, surely he didn't need his permission, but, anyhow, what's this got to do with the Vicar?

Molly The Vicar organises the Fayre.

Mr. F Ah! Of course, I see; now that COULD explain it. This could be bad news for the Fayre. .. *(rubbing his chin)* I wonder, ...perhaps there may be a way to sort this out.

Molly How?

Mr. F *(tapping the side of his nose and winking)* Just wait and see.

He thanks Molly, leaves the room and continues on his round.

SCENE 6

The Vicarage, later that morning. The milkman drives to the door, Rev. FP greets him.

Rev. FP Hello, Mr. Fullchurn, any news?

Mr. F Maybe, I think I might know the answer.

Rev. FP Oh, wonderful, ... *(face dropping)* or is it?

Mr. F Well, yes and no. As far as I can make out, the trouble seems to be the bike race.

Rev. FP *(bemused)* The bike race? What do you mean?

Mr. F Did you get Sir Henry' permission for a bike race?

Rev. FP No.

Mr. F That could be the problem.

Rev. FP Why, I don't understand?

Mr. F Well, Vicar, as everyone round here likes to say, 'you know what Sir Henry's like'; the Summer Fayre is always the same, Sir Henry thinks it's HIS Summer Fayre, and if he didn't know about a new feature, like a bike race, he might think that someone was trying to usurp his position, and

Rev. FP and Mr. F *(in unison)* you know what Sir Henry's like.

Rev. FP Oh, my goodness; what AM I going to do?

Mr. F Do nothing, Vicar, not yet a while, I might be able to help.

Rev. FP But Sir Henry told me to sort it out, I must go to see Mr. Saddlepump immediately.

Mr. F Not yet Vicar, there'll be plenty of time for that later, and it may not be necessary, let me see if I can sort it out first. Don't do anything for the time

being. When I get back to base, I'll make a 'phone call, I'll let you know how I get on. *(looking at his watch)* About an hour.

Rev. FP Thank you, thank you so much

The milkman leaves the vicarage and drives off in his milk float.

SCENE 7:

Mr. Fullchurn's 'depot'. He drives in and parks the milkfloat in the corner by the big refrigerator, starts to unload the crates, looks at his watch again, stops what he is doing and goes over to a telephone, mounted on the wall. He dials a number.

Mr. F Hello Emma, it's Mick, is Dave there, thanks.Dave, how are you, you old reprobate.Yep, have we still got that Charity, Community thing running? Good, I think I've got an event for you.Yes, just right, I'd say; a village bike race, Yes, a Church Fete.

SCENE switches to Dave's office at the dairy. He is sitting at his desk, phone in one hand, talking to Mr. F

Dave Give me the details, Mick; I'll put you on hands free. *(he presses a button and puts the phone down)* Still there, Mick?

Mr. F Yep.

Dave Okay, what's the fete

Mr. F *It's the Tangletree Summer Fayre, organised by the Vicar, Reverend Fontpew.*

Dave That's a funny name

Mr. F *He's a funny vicar, always fussing about, getting in people's way, heart's in the right place, though. He's upset the Lord of the Manor, the pompous Sir Henry Tangletree, arrogant sod, thinks his family still owns the village and everything to do with it; mind you, he does own the Pub. The vicar has agreed to a bike race for the kids, organised by the new owner of the garage and bike shop, Jim Saddlepump.*

Dave Saddlepump, where did he get a name like that from?

Mr. F *There's a lot of funny names round here. Anyhow, we need to get Sir Henry to suggest a bike race; if the Dairy could sponsor it, he might.*

Dave So, don't tell me, you want me to phone him, tell him we're looking for promotional opportunities, that I heard about his fete and that we would like to sponsor it.

Mr. F *Yep, something like that, but whatever you do don't let him think you have been got at.*

Dave I hear what you're saying, leave it to me, I'll give him a ring, what's his number?

Mr. F *I'll have to look it up, hold on.*

Dave Don't worry, I'll do it. Sir Henry Tangletree, Tangletree Manor, Tangletree Major. Okay, see you.

Mr. F *Thanks mate, I owe you one.*

Puts phone down, flicks through the phone directory, finger on a number, dials and waits for a reply.

Dave (*very politely*) Good morning, is that Sir Henry Tangletree? Ah, excellent, good morning to you, Sir Henry, I'm David Silvertop from the Dairy.Yes, I suppose it is. Sir Henry, the Dairy have an events sponsorship scheme, it's a head office initiative, they want us, the regions that is, to make donations to suitable functions, events, Summer Fayres and the like. I'm not doing too well, getting a bit of pressure from on high,Yes, I saw one of your posters, phoned the vicar but he was out, I understand that you are the man to talk to,.....Oh no, it's a pretty good scheme, we like to sponsor something athletic, sporting, that sort of thing.The ideal might be a cycle race, for the youngsters, all we ask is that you let us supply the start and finish banner, and a couple of prizes. We would also want a small display about the goodness of milk, and, of course, there would be free milk for all the competitors.

The SCENE switches to the hall at the Manor House, Sir Henry is standing by a telephone table, phone in hand.

Sir H Yes, ... not a bad idea. Now you said 'sponsorship, a donation', how much did you have in mind?Really, that sounds quite acceptable. Now, the organisation?Yes, Fullchurn,okay, I'll get the Vicar to talk to him.We have a new chap in the village, runs the garage and cycle shop, I might get him to help, give him a chance to be accepted by the villagers.Fine,yes,Tangletree Church Fund, yes, sent it to me, here at the Manor. Thank you very much, perhaps we'll see you on the day?Excellent, thanks for calling.

He puts the phone down. Picks up his cap from the table, whistles and calls

Sir H Panzer, here boy. (*his German Shepherd dog bounds in*) Good boy, time for a walk, you old tank.

He pats the dog, picks up a lead and walks, with the dog, out of the house, putting on his cap.

SCENE 8

The village green, general activity. Sir Henry raises his cap as he says good morning to several people. He walks to the vicarage and knocks on the door. The housekeeper opens it. Sir Henry raises his cap

Sir H Fontpew; please, tell him it's Sir Henry Tangletree.

H/keeper Yes, Sir Henry. But I'm afraid he's not here at the moment.

Sir H Not here? Where is he?

H/keeper He went out, only a few minutes ago, I think he's gone to the garage to see Mr. Saddlepump.

Sir H Car trouble? But he doesn't drive, does he?

H/keeper No sir.

Sir H What's he doing at the garage? Never mind, I'll go and find him.

He raises his hat again, leaves and walks towards the garage,

SCENE 9

The garage/cycle workshop. Saddlepump is sitting on a 'rustic' three legged stool building a cycle wheel. Fontpew enters sheepishly. Saddlepump continues working but looks up

Mr. SP (*cheerily*) Morning Vicar, what can I do you for?

Rev. FP (*nervously*) I was just passing. (*noticing the rustic stool*) My word, that's an interesting little stool.

Mr. SP (*standing and picking up the stool*) Yes, ... it's an old milking stool, my dad bought it for me when I was a kid. Just right for this job. It's quite old, must have seen plenty of pretty young milkmaids in its time. Sorry, perhaps not.

Rev. FP (*uncomfortably*) That IS very interesting work, what are you doing?

Mr. SP What, this? I'm building a cycle wheel.

Rev. FP Most interesting, (*pointing*) So these are the spokes, and you tighten them, one at a time, most interesting.

Mr. SP (*quizzically*) Yes Vicar, one at a time, .. now are you sure there's nothing I can do for you. Is it about the bike race.

Rev. FP No, ...well Yes. We can't have it.

Mr. SP Can't have what? The bike race?

Rev. FP No, ..Yes, we can't have a bike race.

Sir Henry walks in

Sir H Nonsense, man. Why ever not?

Rev. FP (*almost whimpering*) But, Sir Henry ...you said ...

Sir H Your half baked plan was no good, but the idea is quite sound. I told you to sort it out, not cancel it. A cycle race, for the youth of this village is an excellent suggestion.

Rev. FP (*meekly*) Yes, Sir Henry.

Sir H I don't know, Fontpew, I'm surprised at you; I would have thought that you, of all people, would have been enthusiastic about it.

Rev. FP But, Sir Henry ..

Sir H Oh Vicar, really. Now, I've been in touch with the dairy, I have persuaded them to sponsor the event, I've even wangled a donation from them. (*he glares at Rev. FP, who says nothing*) Now, Saddlepump, I want you to organise my cycle race, I want you to work with Fullchurn, his manager would like him to be involved. And, as for you Vicar, ...well ... 'can't have a bike race', ... really.

Sir Henry calls his dog and leaves. Rev. FP is stunned.

Mr. SP Well, so that's Sir Henry, ...pompous old gi..., person isn't he, what was that all about?

Rev. FP Do forgive me. I must have misunderstood. Oh, how dreadful, I am so sorry.

The milkman walks in

Mr. F Hello Jim; oh,... vicar, what are you doing here?

Rev. FP (***shaking his head***) I wish I knew.

Mr. SP We were talking about the bike race, we've just had a visit from the lord and master.

Mr. F What did he want?

Mr. SP He wants me, and you, Mr. Fullchurn to organise a cycle race for the Summer Fayre.

Rev. FP sits down, his head in his hands.

Mr. F What's wrong, Vicar?

Rev. FP I should have listened to you. I was so worried about Sir Henry's outburst that I had to do something. And I got it wrong again.

Mr. F No, no, you didn't, don't worry about it.

Mr. SP I'm getting confused; Sir Henry seems to think that a cycle race was his idea and that he has persuaded your dairy to sponsor it. I thought we had already got a race, I've even had quite a few entries already. What's going on?

Mr. F Best left alone, you know what Sir Henry's like.

Mr. SP No, not really, but I'm beginning to find out. Who does he think he is?

Mr. F A lot of people ask that question; there's no doubt in his mind about the answer, he certainly knows who he is. HE is Sir Henry Tangletree and we should all be grateful. But enough of this. Now, the bike race?

Mr. SP All sorted, just need a few more competitors.

Mr. F What about the track, the circuit? The Dairy will lend us ropes and barriers and things, and the Start/Finish banner.

Mr. SP Excellent. We need to set it up the day before, have we got any helpers?

Mr. F Head office will send a van and a couple of blokes, If we do in on Friday afternoon, I can help as well.

Rev. FP (***standing***) If I can be of any help.....

Mr. F You'll be far too busy, Vicar, thanks, but I'm sure that we will manage.

Rev. FP Very well, I really am SO sorry, how could I have got it SO terribly wrong?

Mr. F Not your fault, Vicar, don't worry, it's all sorted now.

Rev. FP (*looking skywards*) Thank God.

The 'meeting' finishes, Mr. SP gets back to his work, the other two leave.

SCENE 10

The village green, Friday afternoon. There is a lot of activity, villagers erecting tents, setting up stalls, putting up bunting and banners. The van from the dairy arrives and two men get out; Mr. SP greets them.

Mr. SP Jim Saddlepump, (*he shakes hands with them*) Thanks for coming.

Man 1 Not at all, I'm Alf, this is Martin. Nice little spot, now where's the circuit?

Mr. SP Perhaps we should walk it first, decide what markers and barriers we need?

Rev. FP arrives, fussing about

Rev. FP Welcome gentlemen, thank you indeed for coming, I'm Reverend Fontpew, Vicar.

More shaking hands. Mr. F arrives.

Perhaps I should show you the course

Mr. F Thanks vicar, no need; you must be very busy, leave it to us, you've got far more important things to do.

Rev. FP Oh, very well, if you are sure?

Scene closes with the four men walking off up the Manor road and Rev. FP fussing about at each of the stalls, insisting on some being repositioned, some banners being moved, etc. From time to time, the wind unwinds his coiled hair, he carefully re-winds it, hoping that no one will notice

SCENE 11

The village green, all the stalls are ready, plenty of people milling about, the church clock is striking eleven o'clock. Sir Henry walks over to, and steps up onto a raised platform and stands in front of the microphone. Rev. FP, with a second microphone (switched off) begins to speak. No sound.

Mr. K (*shouting from the beer tent*) Microphone, Vicar, turn the microphone on.

Rev. FP (*flustered, fiddles with the switch*) Testing, testing, one, two, three.

Mr. K Get on with it, Vicar.

Rev. FP Can you all hear me? (*crowd respond*) Thank you for coming, I'd like to welcome our benefactor, Sir Henry Tangletree, who has graciously agreed, once again, to open the Tangletree Summer Fayre, and ask him to say a few words. (*He moves over to the microphone stand and switches the microphone, saying to Sir Henry*)
I'll just turn you on, Sir Henry.

Sir Henry begins to speak, but there is no sound, he glares at the vicar and switches the microphone back on.

Sir Henry (*pompously*) Good morning to you all, and welcome. Before I declare the Fete open, I feel it incumbent upon me to say a few words. (*he pauses*)

Gent 1 (*quietly to those around him*) 'Tangletree Major is mentioned in the Doomsday Book'

Sir Henry Tangletree Major is mentioned in the Doomsday Book

Gent 1 'and my family have been Lords of the Manor

Sir Henry And my family have been Lords of the Manor

Gent 1 'for over three hundred years ...

Sir Henry For nearly four hundred years ...

Gent 1 He's changed it, he added a century, the old bugger.

Others Sh!

The speech drones on as the camera focuses on the various stalls and then the children practicing on their bikes. A round of applause can be heard and the people

move away from the dais and mill about the stalls. The public address system churns out information. Sir Henry is accompanied around the Fayre and buys raffle tickets, etc. engaging in idle chitchat with the stallholders. He leaves and returns home.

SCENE 12

The village green, a little later. General activity. Rev. FP fussing around, getting in the way. P/A announcement calls for competitors in the cycle race to assemble on the green. Excited youngsters appear from all sides. Rev. FP also joins them

- Mr. SP Now then, kids, you know what it's all about, but let me just make sure you understand the rules, we don't want any accidents.
- Rev. FP Now then children, safety first, that should be our motto.
- Mr. SP Thank you vicar. Now, the rules ...
- Rev. FP You must all wear safety helmets and ...
- Mr. SP Thank you vicar.
- Rev. FP Sorry, but we must ...
- Mr. SP ... get on? Of course we must vicar. Now then, you all know the circuit, it's five laps, you each have to go round FIVE times, except Anna, Jeremy and Abigail, only four laps for you three.
- Boy 1, Colin That's not fair.
- Mr. SP Oh, Colin, I think it is, they are so much younger than the rest of you.
- Boy 1 But I'm younger than Anthony, I shouldn't have to do the same as him.
- Rev. FP And Katie is younger than you. No children, five laps for all except the three.
- Mr. SP Thank you vicar. Now remember, no short cuts, no nobbling your opponents, let's have a good clean race and may the best man win.
- Lady (*indignantly*) Best man, Sir?
- Mr. SP Yes, .. I'm, I'm sorry, of course, **MAY THE BEST PERSON WIN.** Now then, it's time to get into position, we've got a big wide start area, I want you all to line

up sensibly. When the vicar drops the flag, you're off, but BE CAREFUL, particularly on the first bend, as you go into Manor Lane, we don't want a big pile up. **(the cyclist jostle for position)**. Are you all ready? You ready vicar? **(Rev. FP raises the flag)** THREE, ... TWO, ... ONE

Rev. FP drops the flag and the cyclist rush off in a mad scramble to be first into Manor Lane. There is a certain amount of bumping and shouting. Further up the lane, marshals are waiting, at the entrance to the woods and all the cyclists pass safely

Back on the green, a crowd is waiting for the competitors, a few moments later they stream past, Colin first, Anthony second and Katie in third place, through the start/finish line and on.

General activity shots, cyclists falling off, overtaking, etc.

At the end of the second lap, the positions are still the same.

On the third lap, Anthony overtakes Colin as they cross the line. Colin is angry, gets off his bike and throws it into the hedge.

At the end of the fourth lap, Katie is close behind Anthony and both are tiring. Jeremy, one of the four lap younger racers, has already started his last lap.

On lap five, Anthony and Katie pass Jeremy as they leave the woods and Katie puts in a great effort; she passes Anthony a short distance from the finish line and wins, he is surprised and a bit frustrated; he stops pedaling for a moment. Jeremy is very close behind Katie and sneaks past to snatch second place.

The p/a system has been reporting on the race and, as it finishes, there is a large crowd cheering on the competitors. As the racers finish, they almost fall off their cycles and collapse on the grass.

Anna and Abigail saunter past to start their last lap, having a little chat and thoroughly enjoying a pleasant afternoon cycle ride.

Mr. F is providing milk for all the competitors from the coolbox of his milk float. Mrs. K was there to see her daughter win and, as the p/a system announces the results, Mr. K comes over to hug her.

Mr. K Well done lass. Bloody marvelous.

Mrs. K **(sternly)** George!

Mr. K Yes love?

Mrs. K Language!

Mr. K Sorry love, but it IS bloody marvelous, I knew she could do it.

The p/a system announces that the prize giving will be at four o'clock, followed by the drawing of raffle tickets and awarding of other prizes.

SCENE13

Church clock shows almost four o'clock. People begin to gather around the dais. Mrs. Banks and the vicar are in their tent, collecting the takings, recording amounts, putting cash into a strong box. Sir Henry enters

Sir H Well, vicar, .. good day?

Rev. FP Good day, indeed, Sir Henry; isn't it, Mrs. Banks?

Mrs. B Quite so, vicar, best ever, and we're not finished yet.

Sir H My cycle race?

Mrs. B Very good indeed, Sir Henry. We still have money to collect, but the sponsor forms are all in, remarkable result. Do you know that Katie Kegfroth was sponsored for twelve pounds fifty, for each lap, that's over sixty pounds, amazing.

Rev. FP Sixty two pounds fifty, actually.

Sir H (***condescendingly***) Yes vicar, sixty-two pounds fifty pence, very good. Now, do we have a total, it's time for the prize giving and closing ceremony.

Mrs. B Not really, vicar, bit you can certainly say it is a great deal higher than ever before.

The church clock strikes four. Rev. FP and Sir Henry walk to the dais. Sir Henry steps up, taps the microphone, silence, glares at the Vicar, he switches it on and taps again. Rev. FP has followed him but stands back.

Sir H Ladies and Gentlemen, what a splendid day, beautiful weather, excellent turn out, a lot of big spenders. I haven't got a total, but Mrs. Banks assures me that the money collected so far, and there is more to come, is considerably greater than our previous best year.

I am told that my cycle race has been an absolute gold mine, you know I persuaded the dairy to make a contribution, we thank them very much for that (***applause***) but, and this is excellent news, the sponsorship of the children has raised several hundred pounds. (***more applause and cheering***) Without further ado, let's get on with the prizes.

Rev. FP steps forward with his microphone.

Rev. FP Sir Henry, Ladies and Gentlemen. There are three prizes; the first is forthe runner up, and, incidentally, the youngest competitor. It is a full set of cycle safety clothing given by Mr. Saddlepump, ...to, ... Jeremy Tranter.

Applause as Jeremy comes forward and Sir Henry gives him his prize.

Colin is seen retrieving his bike, looking at the buckled front wheel and then kicking it.

The next prize, again a set of cycle safety equipment from Mr. Saddlepump, for the highest placed girl competitor, ... goes to ... Katie Kegfroth.

More applause and cheering as Katie comes up to receive her prize.

Stay there, Katie,Ladies and gentlemen, the prize for the overall winner, a cheque for fifty pounds from the dairy and the Tangletree Trophy, kindly donated by Sir Henry, to be held for the year by,Katie Kegfroth.

More applause, more cheering. Sir Henry puts a sash around Katie's shoulder, shakes her hand and then gives her the prizes. When the applause begins to fade -

Sir H I think we should ask Katie to draw the raffle for us. ***(more cheers, whistling and shouting)***

Rev. FP Excellent idea. Mr. and Mrs. Bowler, perhaps you would come forward.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowler mount the dais with a rotary ticket box and place it on the table as Sir Henry leaves.

Rev. FP The first prize, a hamper, generously donated by Mr. and Mrs. Stamper of the Post Office Stores, ***(Katie takes out a ticket and hands it to the vicar)***green, number three one seven, just a phone number, seven, seven, six, four, two, three. ***(he looks at the crowd. An excited lady shouts***

Lady Here vicar, that's mine. ***(she rushes forward to collect her winnings)***

Raffle action continues as the camera zooms away.

SCENE 14

The village green, most of the people have gone, those remaining are packing things away and tidying up. The vicar is circulating, getting in the way and saying 'thank you' to everyone. The men from the dairy have returned to collect their things; Mr. F is with them. Rev. FP approaches.

Mr. F (*cheerily*) All right, Vicar?

Rev. FP More than all right, Mr. Fullchurn; it's been a simply splendid day.

Mr. F Good, I'm delighted, well done.

Rev. FP You did something to change Sir Henry's mind, didn't you?

Mr. F Sorry, I don't understand?

Rev. FP Sir Henry changed his mind about the cycle race, you had something to do with it, didn't you?

Mr. F Who, me, what makes you think that? Remember, the Fayre was to raise funds for the church.

Rev. FP It had to be you, that phone call?.

Mr. F Come, come, Vicar, you of all people should know that the Lord moves in mysterious ways....

Camera pans to the church. Scene fades ----- END