

THE GOON SHOW:  
THE RENT COLLECTORS

First broadcast on January 17, 1957. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stephens. Produced by Pat Dixon. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Starring Bernard Miles. The orchestra was conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Peter Harris, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC.

Seagoon:

And so say all of us, Wal!

Greenslade:

I say, it's dashed decent of you to concur.

Seagoon:

Ah-ha, isn't it? What's this 1957-bill affair, mate?

Greenslade:

It's a Goon Show called, 'The Rent Collectors'.

Seagoon:

Now, yes...

Orchestra:

*[Olde English link (a la 'Greensleeves', silly Milligan singing off)]*

Greenslade:

In a lonely mountain bog in the Pennines, the chill wind blew a tattered fragment of newspaper onto the face of a sleeping gentleman.

Grytpype:

Moriarty, do you see that fragment of newspaper which has just been blown onto the frontal lobes of that disgusting Lithuanian shepherd?

Moriarty:

Oww, yes! Hand me my mutton-chop telescope.

Grytpype:

There you are.

Moriarty:

Yes, I can read it. Grytpype! Listen to this!

Grytpype:

What?

Moriarty:

Crun and Partners, Commissioners for Oaths...

Grytpype:

*[Gasps]*

Moriarty:

...Will pay handsomely for men willing to face the hazards of rent collecting in the fiend district of East Acton.

Grytpype:

Moriarty, quick! Let's to it!

FX:

*[Whoosh! Whoosh!]*

FX:

*[Pen scratching paper, over]*

Crun:

Er, now, now, now *[mutters]*, what next? Now um, *[reads]* Mister Patrick Murphy, of no fixed abodee, sevenpence-ha'penny behind in his rent. Mrs...

Bannister (off):

Henry, er...

Crun:

*[Writing stops]* What, what, what?

Bannister (off):

Oh... *[mutters, lip smacking]* Henreee!

Crun:

Ah, drat that modern melody-woman.

Bannister (off):

Yim-bom-biddle... *[silly singing, pauses]*. Pfw-o-ow!

Crun:

What do you, what? What is it Min?

Bannister (off):

That cat wants to go out.

Crun:

What makes you think that, Min?

Bannister (off):

He's just put his hat and coat on. Ooooh...

Crun:

Dear oh dear. Why do we have to have a loony moggie that insists on wearing a hat and coat? Why can't he be like other cats and just wear a knitted pullover, I say? Now, where was I..

Bannister (off, interrupts):

Because the dog's wearing the pullover, you know that.

Crun:

Oooh...

Bannister (off):

It's his turn to have the pullover, you know that.

Crun and Bannister:

*[Muttered exchanges]*

Crun:

Now, back to my writing...

FX:

*[Pen scratching paper]*

Crun:

Mrs. Spon, eleven and fourpence.

Bannister (off):

Henry! Henreeeee!

Crun:

What is it now, Minnie?

Bannister (off):

Can't you hear, Henry, there's no-one knocking at the door.

Crun:

Then I won't answer it, Min. You never know who it might not be.

Bannister (off):

Aaaaaaah! But it might not be somebody we know.

Crun:

Oh, then I'd better see who isn't there.

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Grytpype:

Good evening. My name is Grytpype.

Secombe:

*[Cockney idiot, off]* 'Ere! When do I get a part in this play then?

Grytpype:

Later, later, Neddy, later. *[laughs over]*

Secombe:

Page three and no posh chat yet!

Grytpype:

Yes, you'll get your posh chat later...

Grytpype and Secombe:

*[Off, silly exchange, Secombe complaining etc.]*

Grytpype:

Now get back in the wings, will you?

Seacombe:

There will be no brandy left for you, then! *[laughs]*

Grytpype:

Now, Moriarty, will you do the talking while I take the part of Mr. Crun?

Moriarty:

Alright, Grytpype.

Seacombe:

*[Raspberry]*

Moriarty:

Now, are you ready?

Crun:

Yes, I'm ready now. What do you want?

Moriarty:

We want the job as rent-collectors.

Crun:

Yes, well the job is...

Moriarty:

Yes?

Crun:

Collecting the rent from some tenants of ours.

Moriarty:

Owwwww.

Crun:

You see, they owe us eight thousand pound, eleven and fourpence in arrears.

Moriarty:

In arrears!

Crun:

Of which a thousand pounds is yours, if you can collect it.

Moriarty:

Oww, ooh! [*smacks lips*] A thousand pounds! Ow-eh-oh, we'll do it! We'll.. doooo iiiitt. What's the address?

Crun:

Death Grange, Slaughter Hill.

Moriarty:

That place?

Crun:

Yes.

Moriarty:

We'll never do it, Grytpype!

Grytpype:

What?

Moriarty:

It's more than our life's worth, to go to...

Secombe:

[*Cockney idiot, off*] What about me? What about the acting part? I can't stand round the back 'ere drinking brandy all night. I been doin' my nut 'ere.

Grytpype:

Why not? You always do.

Moriarty:

Wait a minute, come here little Neddy. Put down that goat-skin full of brandy and answer me one question. Have you ever heard of Death Grange, Slaughter Hill?

Seagoon:

No. Is it a holiday camp?

Moriarty:

Ohhhhh. This is just the Charlie.

Grytpype:

I'll do the talking, Moriarty.

Moriarty:

Right, and I'll put in the punctuation.

Grytpype:

Neddy

Moriarty:

Comma! *[giggles "coma"]*

Grytpype:

How would you like to earn five pounds

Moriarty:

Question mark!

Grytpype:

All you have to do is to go and collect the rent from Death Grange

Moriarty:

Full stop.

Seagoon:

Certainly, how do I...

Moriarty:

Just get on this bus.

Seagoon:

Does it go past the house?

Moriarty:

Yes, but you can jump off.

Seagoon:

Right! Goodbye!

FX:

*[Ding]*

Grams:

*[Bus drives off]*

Conductress (Sellers):

Fares, please! All fares, please!

Seagoon:

Slaughter Hill, please.

Conductress:

Slaughter Hill? Ooh, you're asking for trouble, you are.

Seagoon:

No, I'm asking for a ticket. Ha ha ha! You're too tall for me. Ha ha ha! A-hem. Fourpenny one please.

Conductress:

Fourpence? It's sixpence to Slaughter Hill!

Seagoon:

Oh, right-o *[aside]* Little does she know that it's actually ninepence.

Conductress:

Little does he know that I'm not even the conductress on this bus.

Orchestra:

*[Passage of time link]*

Grams:

*[Bus noises]*

Conductress:

Slaughter 'ill!

Seagoon:

Well, stop the bus then.

Conductress:

Not likely, won't catch us stoppin' 'ere. You'll have to jump for it.

Seagoon:

Right! Hup!

Grams:

*[Splash of body hitting water]*

Sellers (posh, Uncle Mac):

Oh dear, children. Look what has happened to poor Uncle Harry.

Little Jim:

He's fallen in the wa-tah.

Greenslade:

On arrival in the canal, Seagoon immediately inflated his Mae West, blew up his rubber dinghy, put on his water wings and sank like a stone. Which, of course, brings us to Max Geldray.

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

*[Musical interlude]*

Grams:

*[Man struggling in water]*

Seagoon:

Heeeeelp! Haullp! Hilp! Or if you're French, au secourrrrrs!

Grams:

*[Slow motor-boat]*

Seagoon:

What's that? It's a nautical gramophone playing a recording of a motor-boat.

Grytpype:

Yes, Neddy. We heard your cries of help, help, hilf and hulp.

Seagoon:

Which one are you answering?

Grytpype:

Heelp.

Seagoon:

Gad, you're cutting it fine.

Moriarty:

Now, Neddy. What's all the noise about?

Seagoon:

I have it on good authority that I'm drowning.

Grytpype:

For a fee of one and six, we can salvage you.

Seagoon:

Right.

FX:

*[Coin in till]*

Grytpype:

Thank you, and here is a waterproof receipt.

Seagoon:

Just the thing for my submerged accountant.

Spike (off):

James Grafton!

Seagoon:

And now: Heeeeeeeelp! I'm going down for the third time!

Moriarty:

The second, the second time! That'll be another sevenpence.

Seagoon:

What for?

Moriarty:

For keeping count of the number of times you go down.

FX:

*[Coin in till]*

Moriarty:

Thank you.

Seagoon:

Now please help me out, I've paid you two shillings already.

Grytpype:

Two and a penny, Neddy! And that'll be another half-crown for keeping your account.

FX:

*[Coin in till]*

Grytpype:

Now let us help you into the boat.

Grytpype and Seagoon:

Hup! *[Straining]*

Grams:

*[Man being pulled out of water]*

Moriarty:

Now, Neddy. You want to be taken ashore?

Seagoon:

Of course.

Moriarty:

One shilling please.

Seagoon:

I, er, I haven't any more money.

Moriarty:

No more money? Hup!

Seagoon:

Oh!

Grams:

*[Splash of body into water. Motorboat, speeding up and away]*

Seagoon:

Heeeeelp!

Grytpype:

*[Shouts something]*

Moriarty:

Goodbye in French!

Seagoon:

Dear listeners. Left alone in the canal, with no hope of rescue, I was forced to swim to the bank and climb out.

Grams:

*[Man getting out of water]*

Seagoon:

Huh! Gasp! Gasp!

Constable (Sellers as a toothless cockney policeman):

'Ello, 'ello, 'ello? What's this 'ere mate?

Seagoon:

Constabule!



Constable:

Caught you in the act, didn't I, my dear? Swimmin' in the canal, thereaby crontravenin' by-law thirtny-seven.

Seagoon:

But I had to swim, oh toothless one! Otherwise, otherwise I'd have drowned.

Constable:

Aren't no law in this village against drownin', only swimmin'. Swimmin's a crinimals offence.

Seagoon:

But, Constabule!

Constable:

You'll 'ave to appear before the Magistrate, my dear. Ain't nobody swam b'in the canal since old Jim Prong fell in, dead drunk, in his long underwear.

Seagoon:

And did he have to go in front of the Magistrate?

Constable:

He *was* the Magistrate.

Little Jim:

He fell in the wa-tah.

Constable:

Aahaar! Say it again my little darlin'.

Little Jim:

'Hat man fell in the wa-tah.

Constable:

You 'eard what 'e said. Come on [*unintelligible*] Court of Little Filthmuck. But don't worry my dear, I'll stand by you.

Seagoon:

Why?

Constable:

It'll make me look taller. Aahaar...

Seagoon:

Dutch disease! The curse of the Seagoons!

Orchestra:

[*Descending chords*]

Grams:

[*Farmyard noises, cows, pigs, chickens*]

Omnes:

[*Rhubarb, rhubarb etc*]

FX:

[*Gavel banging*]

Bailiff (Sellers, rustic again):

Silence! Silence in cow-shed. The Court will stand for his worship the Lord Chief Magistrate of Little Filthmuck.

Bernard Miles:

Hello me old dears. Now then, is everybody nice and comfortable?

Omnes:

Aaargh! *[etc]*

Seagoon (off):

I'm not!

Miles:

Nobody's worried about you, 'ere, and keep away from them pigs! We don't want them to catch anything before the Cattle Show. Right, now I declare that I will try the prisoner fairly, and that I am entirely unbiased, one way or the other, right?

Bailiff:

Right, sir!

Miles:

Good! *[aside]* Now, Tom. Just run across the road and get some good, strong rope. Now then. Mr. Spriggs, did the jury swear the hoath?

Bailiff:

Yes, sir.

Jim Spriggs:

Yes, sir.

Miles:

Did the prisoner swear?

Bailiff:

I never 'eard such language, sir.

Miles:

Right then. Proceed with the hevidence.

Bailiff:

Right, sir, ahem. The prisoner was apprehended while swimmin' in the canal. When brought before me, he was soaking wet and drippin' without due care and attention. I asked him his name and he said it was "R. Tishoo".

Miles:

Arrr. Chinese prisoner, eh?

Seagoon:

What nonsense, my name is.. Ah, ah, ah... *[sneezes]*

Bailiff:

You see? He admits it, sir.

Miles:

Ah well, you've heard all the hevidence, now then, what shall we do to the prisoner?

Rustic (Sellers):

*[Yet another rustic, quietly]* 'ang 'im. Little Bootle had two hangings this year and we only had one.

Miles:

Arrr, it'd be a chance on catching up with 'em wouldn't it?

Rustic:

Aaaah. Let's 'ang 'im now.

Miles:

Ooh no. Come, come, come...

Rustic:

Come on, 'ang 'im now!

Miles:

No, no, no, no, no, no... *[over]*

Omnes:

*[Rising "Arrr"s, "'ang 'im"s etc]*

Miles:

No, no, you can't 'ang 'in now. Got to get the tickets printed and send the invitations out.

Jim Spriggs:

Yes, and, and, and then there's the village band. They'll have to get some practice in.

Miles:

Aaaaaar! They were shockin' last time. It wasn't fair to the prisoner. I mean you could see he was upset. This time we should pick a nice tune, something like , well, er, like, well, what?... *[sings, Omnes gradually join in]*

Where be that there blackbird to?

I know where he be.

He knows I, I knows he,

He knows I be after he!

Where be that blackbird to?

Up that wurzel tree! Hoi!

Omnes:

*[Applause, "more!" etc]*

Miles:

Well, thank you very much, very kind of you but save it for the 'anging if you don't mind.

Seagoon (off):

This is ridiculous, you can't hang me!

Miles:

'E's right, you know. He hasn't got a neck. Alright then, alright, me dear! One hundred years 'ard labour.

Seagoon:

A hundred years! I'll never do it!

Miles:

Well, do as much as you can.

Seagoon:

I insist on appealing.

Miles:

Oh! Well! You'll 'ave to see the Squire about that. You'll find him at *Death Grange*.

Seagoon:

Death Grange?

Miles:

Death Grange.

Seagoon:

Death Grange. Deeaath Grange. What a bit of luck, dear listeners. That's the place where I have to collect the rents. I can kill two stones with one bird.

Ellington:

Alright, I'll show you the way, old man. Just follow me.

Ray Ellington and His Quartet:

*[Musical interlude: 'Old Mother Hubbard']*

Orchestra:

*[Descending chords]*

Grams:

*[Wind whistling, over]*

Seagoon:

By nightfall I reached the Grange. A tall, gaunt building with a belt at the back. Through a crack in the portcullis, I perceived two of the inmates had managed to overhear that conversation.

Bluebottle:

Heave, strain! Oh. Do you like exercise, Eccles? Why don't you answer then?

Eccles (off):

Not here yet.

Bluebottle:

*[Mutters]* ...Hearing things... *[Aloud]* Say something, little friend.

Little Jim:

He's fallen in the wa-tah.

Bluebottle:

I'm glad I had that company. Strain!

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Eccles:

Hello, Bottle! What are you doing...*[pauses for applause]* Ah, Bottle, when I was outside, I heard you straining, inside. You...

Bluebottle:

Yes, I was straining.

Eccles:

Were you straining from the inside?

Bluebottle:

I was straining from the inside while I was inside, outside.

Eccles:

Yer, fine, fine. I love all that Aldous Huxley stuff, I love that stuff. Um, now then, erm, what were you straining for, Bottle?

Bluebottle:

It's my new correspondence course in muscle-type development. Straining-type heave!

Eccles:

Do some, do some.

Bluebottle:

Heaving-type strain! Pull-tug! Wrench, lift, wicky-wooky-wooky! Makes funny face, waits for applause, not a sausage. Pull-tug-lift!

FX:

*[Boing!]*

Bluebottle:

Oooh! My cardboard wrist-strap has flown off my muscular wrist.

Eccles:

Yer, it's gone all the way down to your ankles without touching your body, ain't it? When did you start this m-muscle-type course?

Bluebottle:

I'm starting it as soon as I can get this brown-paper parcel open. Cardboard heave!

FX:

*[Ripping sound]*

Eccles:

Oooh! That's my trousers!

Bluebottle:

Ooh look! There it is, the Monroe chest-expander. Arthur Miller recommended me to this, you know.

Eccles:

Oh... He must have had a view from the bridge then!

Bluebottle:

It says here, "jaranteed to put two inches on your chest".

Eccles:

Let me see how big your chest is before you start now. Lift up your arms.

Bluebottle:

*[Straining noises]*

Eccles:

'Ere, let me help you.

Bluebottle:

Ta.

Eccles and Bluebottle:

*[Straining]*

Eccles:

Let me see now. Eight inches, including shoulders, yer.

Bluebottle:

Eight inches? Cor, if I'd have known my chest was as big as that, I would not have sent for this silly stuff.

Eccles:

Eight inches isn't very big, you know, Bottle!

Bluebottle:

I know, but I was breathing out. When I breathe in, it is different, you know. Look! *[Inhales]*  
Look!

Eccles:

Seven and a half.

Bluebottle:

See the difference?

Eccles:

Yer!

Bluebottle:

Now this chest-expander claim to put two inches on.

Eccles:

Two!

Bluebottle:

Watch this. Stretch, ye-ee-eeh! Stretch, ye-ee-eeh! *[strained]* measure it, quick!

Eccles:

Er, six and three-quarters.

Bluebottle:

I've been swindled! Send it back, my good man!

Eccles:

Very well, Lord Bluebottle. *[Aside]* He's not really a lord, folks. But this is a gentlemen's rest-home and we got to humour 'em here, you know.

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Bloodnok:

Ah, Doctor Eccles.

Eccles:

What is it, my good man?

Bloodnok (aside):

He's not really a doctor, ladies and gentlemen, only this is a gentlemen's rest home and we have to humour them, you know.

Abdul (Milligan):

Major Bloodnok, sir! Enemy are approaching, sir!

Bloodnok:

What? Sound the alarm!

Abdul:

Eck dum!

Grams:

*[Bugle call, speeds up and down, over:]*

Bloodnok:

Bluebottle? Man the cannon! Eccles?

Eccles:

Yer-eyrr?

Bloodnok:

Man Bluebottle! Can you see anything?

Eccles:

Yer, there's a man, down there outside the moat!

Seagoon (off):

I say! Are you the Squire?

Bloodnok (aside):

Hold your fire lads.

Eccles:

Okay.

Bloodnok:

What tribe are you?

Seagoon (off):

Tribe? I'm Welsh!

Bloodnok:

That does it! Fi-ii-ire!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Seagoon (off):

Don't shoot! I'm Neddy Seagoon! I want to talk to you!

Bloodnok:

He might be a King's messenger. Let him in, but make him give the password, which is "I don't know".

Eccles:

"I don't know". Okay. That'll fox him.

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Eccles:

Um, hello, my good man. Now then, what's the password?

Seagoon:

I don't know.

Eccles:

Ooh, he got it right first time, too.

FX:

*[Door shuts]*

Little Jim:

He fell in the wa-tah this man, he fell in the wa-tah.

Bloodnok:

Thank heaven you got through, young ensign. Now, any news of General Gordon?

Seagoon:

General Gordon? He was killed at Khartoum.

Bloodnok:

What? This is terrible! *[All sad]* No reinforcements! We shall never hold out against all these savage tribesmen. Eccles?

Eccles:

Yer, Major?

Bloodnok (frenzied):

Fiiiiree!!!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Bloodnok:

And Abdul? Pour me another brandy, will you?

Abdul:

I am sorry Sir, all the european-type brandy has all been drunk, Sir.

Bloodnok:

What? Oh bwani, this means a horrible death by thirst!

Seagoon:

But there's tub full of water over there.

Bloodnok:

We can't use that!

Seagoon:

Why not?

Bloodnok:

No soap!

Seagoon:

Ah. How about that well?

Bloodnok:

I think it's dry.

Seagoon:

Well, you can soon find out by the echo, listen. *[yells into well]* Hellooooo!

Echo (Seagoon, prerecorded):

Hellooooo!

Seagoon (yelling):

Heeeeeeeelp!

Echo:

Heeeeeeeelp!

Seagoon:

*[To Bloodnok]* Good heavens!

Bloodnok:

What?



Seagoon:

There's a man down there calling for help!

Seagoon (yells into well again):

Are you all right?

Echo:

Are you all right?

Seagoon (yelling):

Yes, I'm all right!

Echo:

Yes, I'm all right!

Seagoon:

*[To Bloodnok again]* Ah! No need to bother. He's all right.

Abdul:

The Northwest frontier tribesmen are attacking again with out tack!

Bloodnok:

What? Fii-ii-re!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Seagoon:

Major Bloodnok, please. What's all this about tribesmen attacking, here, in the middle of England?

Bloodnok:

England? You've gat a touch of the sun, old lad. This is Afsponistan. Abdul, bring me a bottle of my "Last Stand" home-brewed whisky. I can't bear the sight of those sun-drenched mountains any longer.

Seagoon:

Sun-drenched mountains? Where?

Bloodnok:

Outside. I never allow them in the house.

Seagoon:

But this is England, I tell you. Out there is a green field with trees and hedges.

Bloodnok:

So you can see them too, can you? Abdul, the mirage is stronger than ever today!

Abdul:

Major, look! Two thousand tribesmen are attacking *[mumbles]*.

Bloodnok:

What? Fire!!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Seagoon (serious):

Major, I can't see any tribesmen attacking.

Bloodnok:

That's funny, neither can I. Hand me that bottle of whisky. *[slurps, gulps]* Ahhhh, now I can see them!

Seagoon:

Ahem. Major Bloodnok, I've come for your back rent. Amounting to eight thousand pounds, eleven and fourpence.

Bloodnok:

Pardon?

Seagoon:

Your back rent. Eight thousand pounds, eleven and fourpence.

Bloodnok:

Er, I can't hear you, that blasted brass band's started again.

Seagoon:

Brass band? I can't hear them.

Bloodnok:

Have a drink of this whisky.

Seagoon:

*[Gulps]*

Orchestra:

*[Brass band music, over]*

Seagoon:

FIRE!

Grams:

*[Explosion, music stops]*

Seagoon:

That stopped them!

Bloodnok:

The tribesmen have broken for lunch. Abdul, what's the total today?

Abdul:

A hundred and thirty-eight bottles of brandy sir. Shall get some more?

Bloodnok:

Yes, yes, yes, certainly. No! No! No, I mean, certainly not! I don't want it to become a habit.

Abdul:

It has!

Bloodnok:

I'll tell me what you can do, though.

Abdul:

What, sahib?

Bloodnok: *[screams]*

FIII-II-RE!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Seagoon:

Major, please. I must speak to you. The people in that village are going to hang me!

Bloodnok:

I know, I've been asked to do the catering.

Seagoon:

But they're going to hang me for nothing!

Bloodnok:

That's damned charitable of them! They usually charge all kinds of things, you know.

Seagoon:

*[Giggles]* I'm desperate here, it says... Please!

Bloodnok:

No Ted Ray laughing, please.

Seagoon:

Can't you sign a reprieve for me?

Bloodnok:

I suppose I could. For a consideration.

Seagoon:

All right. How much?

Bloodnok:

Well, let me see, shall we say, um, eight thousand pounds, eleven and fourpence?

Seagoon:

Aaaoaaah...

Orchestra:

*[End theme over Seagoon screaming and...]*

Greenslade:

That was the Goon Show, a BBC recorded programme featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, with Bernard Miles, the Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray and the orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stephens, announcer Wallace Greenslade, programme produced by Pat Dixon.

Orchestra:

*[Outro]*