

THE GOON SHOW:  
THE SAHARA DESERT STATUE

First broadcast on November 3, 1958. Script by Spike Milligan. Produced by John Browell. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Debby Stark, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC

Secombe:

Stop!

Spriggs:

Ohm, I will stop.

Secombe:

What's this approaching? It's a lorry driven by a Rolls Royce, isn't it? Yes, it is! It's that great thespian star of brouhaha-ha-ha, Berebohm Sellers!

FX:

*[Considerable cheers]*

Spriggs:

Oh, he's not as popular as he used to be! I'll sing that bit, folks. *[Sings]* He's not as popular as he used to beeee!

Sellers *[Heavy actor accent]*:

Aye *[inaudible]* pruns. Noxt week I shall be appearing in "The Impotence of Being Ernest," by Oscar Wilde, the blaggard of Redding Jail. Yours, Neddy.

Secombe:

Ta.

Omnes:

*[Several, each in turn saying Ta, Tee, Ti, Toe, Tuu!]*

Sellers:

All together!

Omnes:

Tooooo!

Sellers:

Oh, what it is to have friends!

Spriggs:

I know, I once... I express sympathy.

Secombe:

"Dear sir: My wife has just made a pancake thirty foot round. Is this a record?"

Voice:

I don't know, try playing it on the gramophone.

Sellers:

Together, the band.

Orchestra:

*[Shout]* Ta-da

Sellers:

Ah! Caught with their instruments down!

Secombe:

And now folks! Take us off slack while we unwrap this brown paper parcel. Look! Ah, look!

Voice:

What a *[inaudible]*

Secombe:

It's a life-sized Goon Show in imitation plastic!

Spriggs:

Oh! And what are these little round things?

Secombe:

Gad, it's a set of spare glass jokes!

Sellers:

Let us hear one, Tom.

FX:

*[Glass breaks]*

Milligan:

Ha-ho, that's an old one, Jim!

Greenslade:

Gentlemen –

Milligan:

"Gentlemen"? What's up with you?

Greenslade:

This, ah, registered brassiere here has just arrived by female –

Milligan:

From a bosom friend! I got it in quick there. Thank you, thank you, it won't last long, folks. And here now, here's an impression of Tom Sellers reading it.

Sellers:

Ta, te, to, ta, too! This message shows this week's story of the French wine yards entitled "I Like Claret and *[sings]* to Hell With Burgundy!"

Milligan:

Oh, and now, here wearing a three knot river is page one.

Voice:

Right!

Milligan:

We all saw it coming, didn't we? Now then, a word from... Peter Sellers!

Sellers:

Drawers!

Milligan:

Next week, another word!

Sellers:

And now, for no reason at all: Where did you get the money to escape from Australia?

Spriggs:

Foor no reason at all – my stand-in will answer that. Forward standee.

Secombe:

My name is Spike "Stand-In" Milligan, but the knees are silent as in trowsers.

Sellers:

Not... Not trembler?

Secombe:

Touche.

Sellers:

Mr. Greenslade, answer that for me as me!

Greenslade:

My name is Peter Sellers.

Secombe:

And who's playing you?

Sellers:

Me!

Secombe:

Then who's Peter Sellers?

Spriggs:

I am! But the "I" is silent as in looking.

Secombe:

Will you care to elaborate?

Spriggs:

Yes.

Secombe:

Well you'll have to wait *[laughs]*

Milligan:

He gets them in somehow. It's a joke, folks, oh-ha, ha, ha-ha-ha!

Secombe:

And ha-ha, ha-ha-ha! is the right answer! So say "Ah!"

Milligan:

Ah!

FX:

*[Gunshot, then tasting]*

Milligan:

.303, my favorite bullet.

Secombe:

Do you like it? I fired it myself.

Sellers:

Too much salt for me.

Secombe:

Who heard of too much salt in Sellers?

Sellers:

I am not salt sellers, my name is Peter.

Milligan:

Salt peter!

Secombe:

That's an explosive!

FX:

*[Explosion]*

Sellers:

Oh, there I go!

Milligan:

Thank you. Triumph of matter over mind.

Hern (*Secombe*):

And now from Peterborough, 17-year-old Max Geldray, and here he is, 17-year-old Max Geldray, from Peterborough!

Geldray:

Oh, boy, at last the breaks!

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

*[Musical interlude]*

Greenslade:

Now, the Goon Show proper. I have in my left ventricle a copy of the edict of Nantes holding an elephant cardigan. Through the hole drilled up the bottom, I can see the House of Commons. In the Strangers Gallery, disguised as strangers, are two sinister figures rampant on a cloth of filetted spon. *[sings]* Spo-o-o-on!

FX:

*[Scratching]*

Moriarty:

Ah, oh, ah, ah, ha, the flin, the flin! Ah!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty, will you stop the revolting buttock-scratching in the Strangers Gallery?

Moriarty:

But I've *got* strangers in my gallery!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Stop this noise in Parliament, you hear? Do you want to wake them up?

Moriarty:

But I ...

FX:

*[Yawning, and water sounds]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

You fool, you've woken up Lord Tavener!

Moriarty:

He's getting out of the bath.

Tavener:

Now, now, members, mems and... As I was saying...

Omnes:

What? Hear, hear.

Tavener:

As I was saying...

Omnes:

What? Hear, hear.

Tavener:

As I, I was saying, do you realize that the Atomic Commission *[fades]*

Omnes:

*[Clapping]* Bravo, hear, hear it for the fellow, me lords.

Tavener:

You had better tell them, Lord Jewels...

Voice *[parliamentarian]:*

We at the Atomic commission have no idea what the effect of an atom bomb would be on a nude Welshman holding a rice pudding.

Milligan:

Do the, do the Russians have this information?

Voice:

No, *[babbles]* is that clear? *[babbles]*

Sellers *[Continental Indian]:*

Gentlemen, the government are willing to pay – thank you – are willing to pay 1,000 pounds in cloth for any Welshman who is willing to stand naked holding a rice pudding and hit by the powers of an atom bomb.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty?

Moriarty:

What?

Grytpype-Thynne:

I know the very man. Come!

Moriarty:

Owww!

FX:

*[Two whooshes]*

Greenslade:

Sure enough, those whooshes were pointed at an early Anglo-Saxon leaping house in Picadilly. Within, two men are repairing the ravages of Roman occupation.

FX:

*[Sawing sounds, thuds]*

William:

*[Singing]* I'm in love with you... Rose –

Seagoon:

William! What are you doing in there?

William:

Cutting me toenails, mate. When I gets in bed at night they tears the ceiling, mate.

FX:

*[Knocking]*

Bloodnok:

I say, you in there!

Seagoon:

Gad, it's Bloodnok, professional soldier and amateur landlord!

Bloodnok:

Have you got a woman in your room?

Seagoon:

I certainly have not!

Bloodnok:

Well, get out of here, will you? This is not that kind of a house, do you hear?

Seagoon:

Now he tells me, after all those nights of raffier and fretwork.

Moriarty:

Knock, knock, knocky, knock chum.

Seagoon:

Knock, knock, knocky, knock chum?

Moriarty:

Yes.

Seagoon:

That's the private number of the door knocker! Come in!

FX:

*[Door opens, rush of feet]*

Moriarty:

Hello, Neddy!

Seagoon:

I recognize those octagonal shins, of course! It's Count Jim "Thighs" Moriarty!

Grytpype-Thynne:

The steamed count...

Moriarty:

Pssssssh...

Grytpype-Thynne:

...has been commissioned to do a statue of the Sahara Desert holding a rice pudding, and he wants you, Neddy, to pose for it.

Seagoon:

Me? Pose as a desert?

Moriarty:

Yes, certane-ment. You're just the right size, and twice as barren.

Seagoon:

Do I... Do I have to pose... N-U-D-E?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Of *course* you do. The Sahara never wears clothes.

Seagoon:

Not even for supper?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Malicious rumors.

Seagoon:

But I can't sit down to dinner nude. Supposing there are ladies present?

Ellington:

Ohhhh!

Seagoon:

To continue: How long would I have to hold the pose for?

Grytpype-Thynne:

You don't have to hold any pose, Ned... You can move at will, just as long as you don't move. Now, for salary, you will be paid in the current Bank of England cigarette card series of famous criminal footballers.

Seagoon:

I accept!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Ta.

Omnes:

*[Each in turn saying: Ta, tee, tey, to, tuu!]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

All together

Omnes:

Toooo!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, coming on very nicely, thank you. And now to contact the British Sahara Desert Atomic Center. But, first, Ray Ellington will... em... Sing through his mouth and other things.

Ray Ellington Quartet:

*[Musical interlude: "When I grow too old to dream"]*

Greenslade:

By placing a microphone near Grytpype-Thynne's trousers, we pick up the thread which shows Ned in the Sahara Desert.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now then, Ned, off with your clothes, Neddy!

FX:

*[Cloth ripping]*

Seagoon:

Whoop! There! How do I look?

Moriarty:

Ohh!

Grytpype-Thynne:

I suppose he makes *somebody* happy... Hold this rice pudding.

Seagoon:

*[Giggles]*

Moriarty:

*[Whispers]* Grytpype! Grytpype!

Grytpype-Thynne:

What?

Moriarty:

It's only three minutes til zero hour before they drop the bomb, hurry! *[Sweetly, to Seagoon]*  
Now, Neddy...

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes.

Moriarty:

Here, stand on this bull's eye and don't move.

FX:

*[Grytpype-Thynne and Moriarty leave in two whooshes]*

Seagoon:

*[Alone]* Don't, don't move, he said. Right. *[hums]* Gad, if only my mother could see me now!  
Posing for a statue of the Sahara, what a proud day for Wales! Not to mention sardines and  
kippers! *[laughs, calms self consciously]* It's a bit early in the show, really isn't it now.

Greenslade:

Ta. Ah, seeing that Mr. Seagoon is in a state of, ah, dishabille...

Seagoon:

Cheeky.

Greenslade:

...It would be appreciated if old ladies with binoculars would all listen with your backs to the  
wireless or place a dark cloth over the speaker.

Bannister & Other Old Ladies:

*[Muttering]* Oh, dear, it's not fair, you know, not fair at all...

Seagoon:

Gad, this is living! Now, what was it that Moriarty said..?!

FX:

*[Whoosh]*

Moriarty:

I said "Don't move!"



FX:

*[Whoosh ]*

Seagoon:

Ah! Wait? What's this approaching across the desert?

Eccles:

*[Singing to self, wordlessly, under...]*

Seagoon:

The ragged soldier carrying cement sack, playing an imaginary piano! He must be one of ours.

Eccles:

*[Singing, under...]*

Seagoon:

Morning.

Eccles:

*[Without interrupting his singing]* Morning. *[Continues singing, finishes. Pause. Starts up again.]*

Seagoon:

Gad, that sun's hot!

Eccles:

Well, you shouldn't touch it. *[Keeps singing, under...]*

Seagoon:

Well, it's touched you! *[aside]* Just then, I caught a glimpse of the label on his head. It said, "Early English Idiot, circa 1899."

Eccles:

Ah, I'm not an in-diot, ask me any question, I'll tell you I'm clever, real clever. C-L... X-L-X - Ah, pronounced "agulgugluglm"!

Seagoon:

All right then, what's your name?

Eccles:

Oh, the hard ones first, eh? Ah, my name *[he knows?]* It's right on the tip of my tongue.

Seagoon:

Stick it out then.

Eccles:

Ahg.

Seagoon:

Ah, yes, "Fred Smith, Esq." So, you're Fred Smith Esquire.

Eccles:

No, that's the name of my tongue.

Seagoon:

We must be related! Smith is the maiden name of my right elbow.

Eccles:

Well, I'd better be getting back to the barracks. How far is it to the fort, Fort Bowels?

Seagoon:

13 miles.

Eccles:

13. That's unlucky.

Seagoon:

All right then, 14 miles.

Eccles:

You see? It *was* unlucky. I'm a mile further away now. I shall go among you.

FX:

*[Fast singing of some sort representing approaching Arabs]*

Eccles:

Look! The rifs.

Seagoon:

I thought they were abroad.

Eccles:

I'm off!

FX:

*[Whoosh!]*

Seagoon:

Now, I mustn't loose my head. If I keep dead still, the Arabs will think I'm a statue of a statue.

FX:

*[Music ends, horses neigh]*

Red Bladder *[Ellington]:*

Bah, well, look! Statue of fat man holding rice pudding! Just what I need, get him up on horse!  
Hupp! Allah!

Omnes:

Allah! Allah!

FX:

*[Music resumes, horses neighing]*

Greenslade:

Dear listeners: What a stroke of luck for Mr. Seagoon. Another thirty seconds and the A-bomb would have burst on that very spot. But wait! Someone approaches the danger zone!

Omnes:

*[Minnie and Henry singing]*

Voice:

It's the long-lost Number Eight Touring Company of *The Desert Song*.

Omnes:

*[Continue singing]*

Actor:

Ah, my dear, look at the peaceful scene.

Minnie:

Oh!

Actor:

Let us rest here in the shade of this grasshopper's leg.

Minnie:

Oh!

Actor:

Oh, the inspiration!

Minnie:

I know!

Actor:

I feel a song coming on, my dear.

FX:

*[Whistling sound of approach of bomb coming closer under their words]*

Both:

Because of you...

FX:

*[Explosion; things settle; two whooshes]*

Moriarty:

*[Out of breath]* Look, Grytpype!

Grytpype-Thynne:

What?

Moriarty:

He's there, a direct hit! But he's in bits! Otherwise, he's all right.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes.

Moriarty:

Come on, wake up, Neddy, it was only an atom bomb *[laughs]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

Let me, allow me, Moriarty, I'm rather good at jigsaw puzzles.

Moriarty:

Yes, yes.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now that bit goes in there...

Moriarty:

Yes, yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

This leg goes there...

Moriarty:

Yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

That bit in there... And this goes in there!

Minnie:

No!

Grytpype-Thynne:

No, it doesn't, no, no. I'm sorry... Wait a moment, wait a moment, this knee fits here.

Moriarity:

The knee!

Thynn:

Gad, he's changed! He's turned into more than one person!

Moriarty:

Well, there was always enough of him!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Let's get him to the Atomic Center!

Moriarty:

Right, we get him there!

FX:

*[Dramatic scene-changing music]*

Greenslade:

There, then, we have the situation. But the capture of the nude Neddy soon came to the attention of the OC, Fort Bowels –

FX:

*[Major music; fort sounds]*

Bloodnok:

Oh, oh! *[various Bloodnokian noises]* Oh, dear, dear, dear, oh, there must be a cure for it, oh, oh...

Captain *[Secombe]*:

Knock, knock!

Bloodnok:

Come in, knock knock!

Captain:

Good morning, Major.

Bloodnok:

Gad, it's Secombe playing a different part! Curse these small-budget shows! What's in that envelope?

Milligan:

The next part of the plot from a messenger in the plain wrapper.

FX:

*[Opens wrapper]*

Bloodnok:

So it is!

Arab *[Seacombe]*:

*[Babbles]*

Bloodnok:

Tell him... We can't understand what he's saying.

Milligan:

Oh. Gala-kane-gogogong gala-taga.

Arab:

Gala-taga? Gala-taga?? *[babbles angrily]*

Milligan:

He says he doesn't understand what he's saying, either.

Bloodnok:

Then I was right!

Milligan:

Yes!

Bloodnok:

Oooh! Even as I spoke, the native plunged his hand into his lunch basket and drew out a glass ball. A daring move on his part.

Captain:

It's a fortune teller's ball.

Bloodnok:

What?! Why weren't we invited? Oh, I can't resist'em, hand me the turban. Now, crystal ball, what can we see, turn up the brightness – ah! It's a nude Welshman holding a rice pudding! Being abducted into Red Bladder's harem! Action! Bugler! Sound the sound of the bugle!

Bugler:

*[Tries to play, clears throat, tries again, is shot, fades]*

FX:

*[Music, real bugler]*

Bloodnok:

Left, right, left, left, come on, pick it up men, *[speeds up marching]* Come on, pick up those doggies *[slower, faster, etc]*

Captain:

Ensign, Ensign.

Bluebottle:

Yes, capicapicaptain, what is it?

Captain:

How far from Red Bladder are we?

Bluebottle:

I think we must be within earshot.

Captain:

Why?

Bluebottle:

He just shot off one of my ears!

Omnes:

*[Singing: "and he's a jolly good fellow and so say all of us, hey!"]*

Bluebottle:

Thank you, thank you, Bluebottlers! I'm glad to back. And the good news now. During the summer hols, guess what happened? I started to grow hairs on my little legs! *[laughs]* Nature is preparing me for marriage! Hoo-ray! For the next part, I will...

FX:

*[Slap]*

Bluebottle:

Eh! Hey, you hit me like that again and see what happens!

FX:

*[Slap]*

Bluebottle:

See what happens?

Captain:

Look!

FX:

*[Train stopping]*

Bloodnok:

Gad, it's the 4:24 from Islington! Dead on time! Take cover, lads!

Captain:

There's the Red Bladder, up in the battlements!

Bloodnok:

Do you think he's going to capitulate?

Captain:

I don't know; I should stand back in case he does.

Bloodnok:

Eccles, Eccles, Eccles?

Eccles:

Yo?

Bloodnok:

You speak the language?

Eccles:

Yeah.

Bloodnok:

You challenge him.

Eccles:

Okay. Red Bladder? You can't frighten me!

FX:

*[Two gunshots]*

Eccles:

Yeow! He frightened me!

Bloodnok:

Bladder! I give you til dawn to get out and surrender! Or the new rent act will come into force!

FX:

*[Scene-changing music]*

Greenslade:

Meanwhile, the PM addresses the House:

PM:

I, mems, ma'ams and mums, I have just received dread news. The Atomic Commission have ascertained that when a nude Welshman holding a rice pudding is struck by an atomic bomb, he turns into a fully clad Number Eight Touring Company of *The Desert Song*.

Voice:

Then Britain leads the world!

Omnes:

*[Cheers, "Land of Hope and Glory"]*

Voice:

Soon, all over England, reactors were set up and atomic furnaces were turning nude Welshmen into Number Eight Touring Companies of *The Desert Song*! Song, song, song, song, sing, sing, sing *[etc, fades into Morse code]* Oh, they've taken over.

Announcer:

And it was ascertained today that England now leads the world in the production of Number Eight *Desert Song* touring companies

Greenslade:

And what of Neddy?

Grytpype-Thynne:

To this day he stands stock still as a statue in a harem. One move would mean... Ha, well, the unkindest cut of all...

Greenslade:

I think they've finished, so would you all leave quietly? Thank you.

FX:

*[Noise and voices of gentlepeople leaving, some light music in the background]*

Greenslade:

I expect you're surprised that was the Goon Show. In real life, they are disguised as Wally Stott's orchestra, the Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray, Harry Secombe, Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan, who also writes the thing. The only unreal persons in this recording were Wallace Greenslade, announcer, and the producer, John Brown, who prefers to be called –

Orchestra:

*[End music]*