

THE GOON SHOW:
THE MYSTERY OF THE MARIE CELESTE (SOLVED!)

First broadcast on November 16, 1954. Script by Spike Milligan and Eric Sykes. Produced by Peter Eton. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by anon, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Home Service. Oooh!

Grams:

[Giant splash]

Harry:

Let that be a lesson to him *[laughs to himself]*. He was about to refer to the highly esteemed - Goon Show!

Orchestra:

[Pathetic chord]

Harry:

Listeners; what does that short, brief chord indicate? It indicated that Mr. Wally Stott has forgotten the music again *[laughs to himself]*. Therefore, *[struggling]* hmhhh

Grams:

[Giant splash]

Harry:

He'll be company for Mr. Greenslade. Now then, Mister reserve announcer

Peter *[Jewish businessman]*:

What is it, nut?

Harry:

Ah, Mr. Snagge. Tell the British Empire and East Acton what we have decided is good for them. Let the joy bells ring!

Peter:

Muzeltoff. Ladies and gentlemen, we have been and got a lot of geezers and schpeelers, and oh -

Grams:

[Giant splash]

Harry:

[Clears his throat] Ladies and gentlemen, on my own responsibility I present, the Mystery of the Marie Celeste - Solved!

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme]

Peter:

[American] Unsolved on the nautical annuals of sea mysteries is that of the brigantine Marie Celeste. But more of that later. Let us trace the thread of a rather unique experiment...

Spike:

One spring afternoon in December Ned Seagoon, a handsome young bungler buster, decided to dine out.

Neddy:

Yes. As I sat in my usual place I opened the Financial Times, and carefully noted the number of chips I had left. I turned to the gossip page and helped myself to some fish. It was then a small notice caught my eye. It said -

Grytpype:

Author of sea-stories will pay five thousand pounds to any person furnishing conclusive proof as to the fate of those who manned the Marie Celeste.

Neddy:

I read no further.

Grytpype:

But you don't know my address.

Neddy:

I read on.

Grytpype:

Apply Captain Grytpype-Thynne, First mate, the buildings, Hackney.

Grams:

[Whoosh]

FX:

[Knocking on door]

Grytpype:

Come in!

FX:

[Door opens]

Neddy:

Captain Grytpype-Thynne?

Grytpype:

Yes, matey?

Neddy:

So this was the author of a thousand sea sagas. He was a tall vile man dressed in the uniform of a sea-going sailor. Under his left arm he carried a neatly rolled anchor, while with his right he scanned the horizon with a pair of powerful kippers.

Grytpype:

Ahoy!

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

Ahoy! Pull up a bollard!

Neddy:

Pardon?

Grytpype:

That thing there is a bollard.

Neddy:

Oh-ho-ho. Oh, is that what you tie ships to?

Grytpype:

Well said. Now, matey, what can I do for you?

Neddy:

I just read your offer in the paper about the Marie Celeste.

Grytpype:

Little Matalo! That was inserted in 1910, 44 years ago!

Neddy:

My paperman has a big round.

Grytpype:

Your paperman has a big round what?

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

Ahoy! Pull up a bollard. Little Bosun, what do you know about the Marie Celeste?

Neddy:

Your offering £5,000 reward for the mystery of it.

Grytpype:

Hmm. Do you come here often?

Neddy:

No.

Grytpype:

Good. Powder-Monkey, let me tell you about the Marie Celeste. Ahoy!

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

Ahoy! At 3 o'clock on the afternoon of December the fifth 1872 'twixt the Azores and 'twixt the coast of Portugal the Marie Celeste was sighted.

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

Ahoy! On board her there was no sign of life, and yet -

Neddy:

Your offering £5,000 reward?

Grytpype:

Have you ever been ship-wrecked?

Neddy:

No.

Grytpype:

I'll arrange for it.

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

Ahoy! Aboard the Marie Celeste all was ship-shape and Bristol fashion. Food freshly laid, no signs of a strudgle, and yet not a soul aboard her. Any questions?

Neddy:

Yes. What's a bollard?

Grytpype:

Ahoy!

Neddy:

Thank you!

Grytpype:

Yes, yes, yes. The crew disappeared without trace. Now, if you can furnish a satisfactory explanation to what happened to them, £5,000...

Neddy:

Right. I'm your man.

Grytpype:

You silly twisted boy, you

Neddy:

Give me a month and I'll have the answer by hook or by crook.

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme]

Peter:

[American] And now -

Greenslade:

On the first stage of investigations Ned Seagoon hurried round to the office of a large shipping magnet

FX:

[Knocks on door]

Neddy:

Come in.

FX:

[Knocks on door]

Neddy:

Come in!

Major:

It's you that's knocking!

Neddy:

Oh, then I'll come in!

FX:

[Door opens]

Neddy:

My name is Ned Seagoon.

Major:

I find no joy.

Neddy:

Are you Leading Admiral Dennis Bloodnok, Chief for the International Shipping Line?

Major:

I have that privilege.

Neddy:

I never knew there were shipping offices on the serpentine!

Major:

Oh yes yes yes. I do all my business from here. What's the time?

Neddy:

Quarter to five.

Major:

Good Heavens!

FX:

[Wooden panel being slid open, whistle]

Major:

Come in Number 49!

FX:

[Wooden panel being shut]

Major:

Well now, what can I do for you?

Neddy:

Admiral Bloodnok, I wish to know -

Major:

Just a moment!

FX:

[Wooden panel being slid open, whistle]

Major:

I won't tell you again, 49!

FX:

[Wooden panel being shut]

Major:

Some people think I run these pleasure boats for pleasure! Now lad, pull up a bollard

Neddy:

Admiral, I was told that you had associations with the ill-fated Marie Celeste...

Major:

All lies, do you hear me? Lies! I was in Bangalor at the time. I deny every word, she's lying I tell you! Lying! And so is Alice Girth and Mary Thula, and all those other women I molested! They're all after my piggy-bank, do you hear me? Oh!

Neddy:

Admiral, please. Marie Celeste was found abandoned at sea.

Major:

Oh, poor girl! How she must have suffered!

Neddy:

The Marie Celeste is a ship!

Major:

Of course! Wait a minute! Of course! The Marie Celeste! I'd almost forgotten!

Neddy:

Right, now, can you tell me anything about her?

Major:

Of course, I have the record here

Neddy:

Ying-Tong-Iddle-I-Po!

Major:

Good! Now I'd like to tell you all about the Marie Celeste, but unfortunately lad, I'm sworn to secrecy, absolutely mum. Yes, it would take a lot to make me talk.

Neddy:

£5,000?

Major:

That's a lot! The entire documents are at your service.

Neddy:

Thank you. For nights I poured over vital documents. Then, when all seemed lost, Admiral Bloodnok suddenly remembered a vital map reference.

Major:

Latitude 38 20 North, Longitude 17 15 West. Off you go lad!

Neddy:

Right, taxi. And now -

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme]

Major:

I waited for Seagoon's return. And then, at dawn...

FX:

[Door opens]

Neddy:

[Panting] Admiral, I've just returned from Latitude 38 20 North, Longitude 17 15 West

Major:

Your soaking wet!

Neddy:

You didn't tell me it was at sea!

Major:

Then it's true, the Marie Celeste was found at sea. Look lad, here.

Neddy:

Yes yes yes yes yes...

Major:

Dear laddy -

Neddy:

Yes yes?

Major:

Here's the name of a ship yard, the very one that built her. Now, um, why don't you go along and see if they can give you any information?

Neddy:

Ay ay!

FX:

[Door shuts]

Major:

Ay ay...

FX:

[Phone being dialled]

Major:

[Singing] Sharing your gladness, my life's desire. Sharing your - Hello? Hello? Bloodnok here. listen Mr. Crun, what we've planned for has happened. Yes, Ned Seagoon's the name. Yes I've sent him to you and he's offering 5 - *[coughs]* - £4,000 reward for any information. All right. Good-bye Mr. Crun.

FX:

[Phone put down on hook]

Major:

Sea man Geldray? Bring 49 in and play us a horn-mouth on your pipe-organ in the C of key Chantey!

Max Geldray and orchestra:

[Musical interlude]

Greenslade:

The Marie Celeste Mystery Solved, part Two. And now -

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme played a bit faster]

Spike:

While Max Geldray was playing that old English bollard how many listeners noticed that Ned Seagoon had gone to a certain ship-rights in Deptford Creek? Hm? You must watch these points!

Grams:

[Ship building machines]

Henry:

[Singing] Put him in the barrel until he's sober, put him in the barrel until he's sober, Minnie?

Minnie:

[Hums jazzy tune]

Henry:

Minnie? Stop that mad, crazy, modern rhythm type singing

Minnie:

Why should I stop my modern, crazy, rhythm... Type singing buddy?

Henry:

Because we are sea-faring folk. If you must sing, sing a Chantey!

Minnie:

Ooooooh! Henry, a chantey! *[Hums jazzy tune]*

Henry:

Minnie!?

Minnie:

Yes?

Henry:

I shall come down there in a minute!

Minnie:

[Hums jazzy tune]

Henry:

Shut up! *[Singing]* Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves, Britain never never never shall be slayed!

Minnie:

[Hums jazzy tune]

Henry:

[Singing] 30 men on a dead man's chest, yo ho hum and a bottle of rum!

Neddy:

Ahoy there!

Henry:

Ahoy!

Neddy:

Ahoy! My name is Ned Seagoon.

Henry:

Oh, Minnie, it's him, Ned Seagoon.

Minnie:

[Starts humming jazz]

Henry:

[Tries to overpower Minnie's singing with "Rule Britannia"]

Neddy:

Thank you Anne Zigla and Webster Booth. Is this the shipyard of Crun, Bannister and Crun?

Henry:

Yes.

Minnie:

Yes.

Henry:

And yes.

Neddy:

Then this firm built the Marie Celeste!

Henry:

Yes I did.

Neddy:

You did? Oh come now, the Marie Celeste was built over a hundred years ago!

Henry:

Oh, then it must be my day off. Ahoy!

Neddy:

Ahoy! Mr. Crun!

Henry:

Ahoy!

Neddy:

I want you to build and man a second Marie Celeste.

Henry:

Mnnnnnnnk...

Neddy:

Don't you see? The idea is to re-sail the ill-fated voyage and reconstruct the mystery.

Henry:

Build another Marie Celeste?

Neddy:

Yes, I want you to build a replica.

Henry:

Oh I'm sorry, I'm a ship-builder, I'm no good at replicas.

Minnie:

Ying-Tong-Iddle-I-Po

Henry and Neddy:

Good!

Neddy:

Now, how long to build it?

Henry:

Oh well there's a lot of work, you know the...

Minnie:

Yes...

Henry:

A lot of it, isn't there Min?

Minnie:

There is, yes...

Henry:

The whole plans will have to be modernised...

Minnie:

The modern style, buddy...

Henry:

Yes, got to have the crazy plans you know. Then there's the wood, very difficult to get the wood, you know...

Minnie:

Yes...

Henry:

And the rope, oh the rope...

Neddy:

Yes, yes, yes. Now give me a rough date.

Henry:

Deck-timbers, oh that's... Canvas to go aloft -

Neddy:

When will the boat be finished?

Henry:

Mmmmmm, after dinner.

Neddy:

You'll have the whole ship completed after dinner?

Henry:

Yes.

Neddy:

What's the delay?

Henry:

The wood, you can't get the wood you know.

Neddy:

All right, I'll just have to be patient. After dinner then. Ahoy!

Henry:

Ahoy!

Neddy:

[Goes off singing]

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme played a bit faster]

Peter:

[American] And now -

Greenslade:

No sooner had Ned Seagoon left the shipyard, then Mr. Crun hurriedly spoke to a sea-faring man.

Henry:

Commodore! Commodore! It's happened at last!

Eccles:

Oooh! Well, well. So it's happened at last, hey? Well, well, well, well, Ooooh! So it's happened at last! Well! It happened at last, hey? Well! It happened you say? It happened!

Henry:

Yes, yes

Eccles:

Ooooh! It happened at last, hey? Ooooh! What's happened?

Henry:

Admiral Bloodnok sent him to us and he's here.

Eccles:

Ooooooh! Here? You mean he? He is really here? It's him?

Henry:

Yes. He's here.

Eccles and Henry:

[Laugh together]

Eccles:

Who's here?

Henry:

Him, Ned Seagoon. You know, the plan we all worked on, the Marie Celeste plan.

Eccles:

Ooh that one!

Henry:

Yes, and there's a reward for four - coughs - £3,000.

Eccles:

Oh! Well I'll go and get the original crew.

Henry:

Yes it's simple, all we have to do is *[fades out]*

Orchestra:

[Mystic harp tune]

Omnes:

[Crowd noises]

Eccles:

Listen, fellows, okay? It's happened fellows, it's happened. And he's offering a reward of two - coughs - £1,000.

Peter:

[Cornish sailor] Did you hear that Secombe Yackamoker? He's offering a reward of one - coughs - £500.

Harry:

What's he say?

Peter:

[Chinese] Honourable man is offering reward of five - coughs - £250.

Harry:

Is he? £250 ey? *[Laughs to himself]* I'll tell cabin-boy Bluebottle!

Orchestra:

[Mystic harp tune]

Bluebottle:

Hee-hee-hee. I have just been told-ed there's a reward of seventeen and nine-pence and an extra Bob a week if we live.

Spike:

Listeners, have you noticed a slight drop in the reward? You must watch these little points!

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme played a bit faster]

Peter:

[American] And now -

Greenslade:

Ned Seagoon hurried back to the author who was offering £4,000 reward -

Neddy:

£5,000!

Greenslade:

I've got to live as well. Anyway, Ned Seagoon informed Admiral Grytpype-Thynne of the progress he had made and that he, Ned Seagoon, was preparing to re-sail the ill-fated voyage again.

Neddy:

Correct, we sail today.

Greenslade:

Now here is a gale warning.

Neddy:

We sail tomorrow. We should reach the exact spot in five days.

Major:

In the meantime, Ray Ellington, pull up a bollard! Ahoy!

Ray:

Ahoy!

Ray Ellington Quartet:

[Musical interlude: "ABC (with Rhythm and Ease)"]

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme played a bit faster]

Peter:

[American] And now -

Greenslade:

The Mystery of the Marie Celeste Solved, part three. Exactly as in 1872 the Brigantine Marie Celeste the second slid gracefully out of harbour.

Grams:

[Seagulls continue over speech]

Greenslade:

Past the boom, and in to the open sea.

Grams:

[Ship sliding in to water]

Neddy:

Ah, we're on our way, Captain.

Major:

Yes, yes. Put your hand out Seagoon, we turn left here.

Neddy:

Some time later I took a last glance at land. It gave one a strange feeling to see the beach head lighthouse pass our stern - we were at anchor! But soon we were on the open sea.

Orchestra:

[Sea faring theme played a bit faster]

Neddy:

After five days at sea I was having dinner in the crow's nest when suddenly -

Eccles:

Ahoy! You up there, Mr, Seagoon

Neddy:

[In the distance] Yes?

Eccles:

Admiral Bloodnok's cwimplimonts. He wants you in his cabin right away!

Neddy:

Right away?

Eccles:

Yeah, but first I want to tell you something!

Neddy:

Coming! Ahhhhhh... *[quickly getting nearer]*

FX:

[Large heavy object hitting wooden floor]

Neddy:

Oh dear! that's a nasty fall, that is!

Eccles:

Are you okay?

Neddy:

I think so. Ohh, arr. Now, what did you want to tell me?

Eccles:

I've taken the ladder away *[laughs to himself]* Your still my friend? Still my friend?

Neddy:

I don't know about that, Eccles.

Henry:

Mr. Seagoon we're nearly there. Then we can re-enact the mystery for you.

Neddy:

Good... Wait a minute! Do you know what happened to the original crew of the Marie Celeste?

Henry:

[Goes off singing to himself]

Neddy:

Mr. Crun! Mr. Crun! Oh, I'll go and ask the Admiral, perhaps he'll explain. Er, excuse me...

Peter:

[Chinese] Yes, most honourable Neddy Sleagoon?

Neddy:

Where is Admiral Bloodnok's cabin?

Peter:

That door there, marked "Ladies only".

Neddy:

Thank you.

Peter:

Chip chap chop chip

Neddy:

Chop chip. I strolled towards the cabin, determined to get to the bottom of the mystery.

FX:

[Quaint "ding dong" on doorbell, door opened]

Peter:

[Seductive woman] Yes?

Neddy:

Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I thought this was the Admiral's cabin

Peter:

Just one moment.

FX:

[Door shuts]

Major:

[Clears his throat, other side of door] Come in!

FX:

[Door opens]

Neddy:

Admiral Bloodnok, you said you wanted to see me.

Major:

Oh yes, yes, yes, yes. Young Neddy, yes. You haven't met my sister have you?

Neddy:

You told me you were an only child.

Major:

In that case meet my mother.

Neddy:

How do you do?

Major:

I'll see you later mother dear.

Peter:

[Woman] Oh Dennis, all right then. *[Laughs to herself]*

Neddy:

But Admiral, you look twenty years older than she does

Major:

Ah yes, lad, but then I've had a lot of worry, you know. Now, Ned, to business, what about the, ahem, money?

Neddy:

When we arrive at the rendezvous tomorrow a naval vessel will be present with the author aboard.

Major:

Author? I don't wish to know any authors!

Neddy:

He's the man with the money.

Major:

Introduce me at once!

Neddy:

He will not furnish the money until he receives a satisfactory explanation as to what happened to the crew -

Major:

Thud me marling-spikes! I know what happened, this is the true story, on the way -

FX:

[Door opened]

Bluebottle:

Pardon me, my little hairy Cap-I-Tain. Enter Bluebottle in rough sea man's itchy jersey and with a patch over one eye and a dirty big stocking on my head. Holé! Not a sausinge.

Neddy:

Curse, just as I was about to find the answer. What's going on here, little ragged pants?

Bluebottle:

We have sighted a British man-o-war, H-M-S Gladys. Points with finger out to sea. Doot-doot-doot-doot-doot-doot. We are getting ready to act the mystery. Stands by cannyon to fire salute.

Neddy:

What - what is the mystery of the Marie Celeste?

Bluebottle:

Nay nay! There is a seventeen and nine-pence reward and until I get it not a word shall pass my lips. Ties himself to mast and waits for 15 lashings.

Neddy:

Here's your 17 Shillings and nine-pence. Now out with it!

Bluebottle:

Hee-hee-hee! Thank you. Takes out seventeen and nine-penny piece which is no bigger than a tanner. Puts it in rough sea man's purse. Prepares to tell mystery *[clears throat]*. When we were - Hee! Sees Admiral out of corner of eye, good job that I have got square eyes.

Grams:

[Whoosh]

Neddy:

I say, little knobbly actor! I say! Where's he gone?

Major:

Where's that naughty little powder-monkey gone? It's time to fire the salute. Eccles?

Eccles:

Okay. Give me the match and stand back!

Grams:

[Explosion of cannon being fired, big splash]

Bluebottle:

You rotten swine you! I was hiding in the cannon! And now I'm drowning! Eaugh! Waves arms about as if in panic. Eaugh! Goes down for third time, then remembers 17 and nine-pence in purse. Climbs back on ship to spend same, exit left for NAAFI.

Neddy:

Perhaps someone will tell me what's going on here.

Major:

I'll tell you. We are the original crew of the Marie Celeste.

Neddy:

Good Heavens, ghosts!

Eccles:

We ain't ghosts.

Neddy:

But you can't be human.

Eccles:

Well that's different.

Major:

I'll tell you what happened. When we sailed the original Marie Celeste we made a raft.

Neddy:

Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes?

Major:

Please, don't do that! Then we set the table, left everything as it was, then we quietly slipped over the side, and thud me grippins that's really what happened. Isn't that right me-hearties?

Omnès:

Ay!

Neddy:

But why did you do it?

Major:

Because we knew that one day someone would offer a reward for the solution of the mystery, and by thunder it's happened. Hasn't it me - hearties?

Omnès:

Ay!

Neddy:

But why couldn't you have just told me, why come all this way?

Major:

They would never believe us, lad. How some people can doubt me, me the very soul of honesty - Isn't that right me-hearties? *[Silence]*

Greenslade:

HMS Gladys on the port-bow, sir.

Neddy:

Splendid. Ha-Ha. On board is Captain Grytpype-Thynne with the £5,000.

Major:

All right, stand by to re-enact the mystery lads.

Eccles:

Okay, okay.

Grams:

[Over speech wave sounds (or oars)]

Major:

[Shouting] Ahoy there HMS Gladys! Captain Grytpype-Thynne? Are you ready with the money?
[Normal voice] That's funny! *[Shouting]* Ahoy there! HMS Gladys!

Eccles:

[Shouting] HMS Gladys? Ahoooooooooy!

Neddy:

Stand back Eccles, let me try. I used to be in the choir. *[High voice]* Ahoy there Captain Grytpype-Thynne! *[Gulp]*

Greenslade:

[On wireless] Here is the news. Two days ago a crew under the command of Admiral Bloodnok in the Marie Celeste the second boarded a British ship HMS Gladys. On board all was ship-shape, but there was no sign of life. Mr. Neddy Seagoon is offering £5,000 for the solution to the mystery of HMS Gladys.

Grams:

[Knock on door]

Neddy:

Come in!

Grams:

[Door opens]

Grytpype:

Ahoy there matey!

Neddy:

Ahoy!

Grytpype:

About the reward money for the solution of the HMS Gladys...

Orchestra:

[Theme tune]

Greenslade:

That was the Goon Show, a recorded programme featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, with the Ray Ellington Quartet and Max Geldray. The orchestra was conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Eric Sykes and Spike Milligan. Announcer Wallace Greenslade. The programme produced by Peter Eton.

Orchestra:

['Crazy Rhythm' outro]