

THE GOON SHOW:  
**THE SPON PLAGUE**

First broadcast on March 3, 1958. Script by Spike Milligan and John Antrobus. Produced by Charles Chiltern. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by anon, corrections by Paul Webster and Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC. It might not sound much but *[tearfully]* it's home to me. *[Sings]* We've been together now fer forty years and it ain't been a day...

FX:

*[Pistol shot]*

Secombe:

Got him, folks! It was the kindest way out. We had the vet's permission, ha ha. Now, folks, by permission of one of the Lord Chamberlain's secretaries, we present -

Orchestra:

*[Timpani roll (come in on word 'secretary')]*

Throat:

'The Great Spon Plague.'

Orchestra:

*[Dramatic chords]*

Sellers:

My name is Doctor Hairy MacSquirter, Squirter MacSquirters of the Clan MacThud and Jim Thudder of Leeds. Our history goes back over half a decade. I have got nothing to do with tonight's show, so I'll bid ye all a guid night.

Orchestra:

*[Tatty chord]*

Greenslade:

The scene opens in a granny-hurling factory in Tooting.

FX:

*[Stone chisel sculpting on granite. Then hammering iron from the forge]*

Grytpype (over FX):

Ah, my masterpiece! Don't move, Moriarty, keep that pose. Ahh - how Michaelangelo would have envied me.

Moriarty:

What are you making?

Grytpype:

A pill, Moriarty.

Moriarty:

Sapristi - you mean you made me pose in the nude to model for a pill?!

Grytpype:

I wasn't using all of you, just a certain area you know. Ahm - round off the pill with sandpaper.

FX:

*[Sharp rubbing with sandpaper]*

Grytpype:

There - swallow that.

Moriarty:

*[Gulps]* Ah, what delicious sandpaper. Banana - the flavour of the month folks. Owwwwwwwwww oww oww, more, folks..!

Grytpype:

Listen, pay attention, you decimated, sparsely-haired French owner of a whopper. I have invented this pill to make us rich.

Moriarty:

You mustn't be too ambitious, Grytpype, we already own three pieces of brown paper and a conker.

Grytpype:

Don't let that dazzle you. We must go on! Remember, 'There comes a tide in the time of every man's affairs'. You know who said that, Moriarty?

Moriarty:

You did, I just heard you. Ah ow ahh, yes, I do - Shakespeare.

Grytpype:

Ignorant swine, it was Henry the Fifth, the great writer. You know the old Apollo Theatre?

Moriarty:

Yes.

Grytpype:

Well, he wrote that.

Moriarty:

What a beautiful tune.

Grytpype:

Now, I must get into this mass of chains.

FX:

*[Chains]*

Grytpype:

Now stand on your head in this bucket of lukewarm boiling water would you.

Moriarty:

Ow...

FX:

*[Head in bucket of water]*

Grytpype:

Now, I pour this bottle of rancid yak butter over your knees, so. Next, I hold this copy of the Feathered World under your nose, and fit this cricket ball under your chin. There. Next, I haul you up to the ceiling.

FX:

*[Quick winching]*

Moriarty (slightly alarmed, oww-ing):

What are you going to do now Gryttype?

Gryttype:

Just talk to you. Can you hear me talking?

Moriarty:

Only in words.

Gryttype:

Splendid, splendid my thing-leddil hi ming thomm... I shall use just words then!

Moriarty:

What? It's a miracle, I tell you.

Gryttype:

You thin-legged steamer, you. This pill is the only known and unknown cure for the Spon Plague.

Moriarty:

Spon!? Spon? Is it catching?

Gryttype:

I don't know, no one's ever had it.

Moriarty:

You, you mean that yar yar yar boo *[goes on for a while]*

Gryttype:

You have it in a nutshell!

Moriarty:

But how do you know people are going to start catching the Spon Plague, Gryttype?

Gryttype:

Ho ho, leave that to me... I have certain arglers on the Splott mickledooodle and the Blim blam bloo...

Greenslade:

And on that beautifully enunciated rubbish we move to...

Seagoon:

Me, folks, Neddle!

Grams:

*[Ovation]*

Seagoon:

Thank you, thank you. You get all free draws for Christmas. Now for a quick bath.

Grams:

*[Splash]*

Seagoon:

Ahh, lovely. Now then, where's that instruction manual. Ah here it is - 'Bath Night for Beginners'? Ahhh. 'Take the soap in right hand and apply to all parts... (fade)'

Sellers (newsreel voice):

This was the great National Health Surgeon, Ned Seagoon, who has just invented dirty necks...

Seagoon:

La ta ta ta teeeeeee... Oooh, ha ha... Flutt!

Flutt:

Yeaaaaa sir?

Seagoon:

Ah, Jimmmm, stand in the sink and take a letter. Now first, what have I got in my diary this week?

Flutt:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Seagoon:

Cancel them. I can't see them till Sunday. Well, I'd better be getting down to the surgery.

Grams:

*[Getting out of bath]*

FX:

*[Door opens and closes]*

Grams:

*[Female screams]*

FX:

*[Door opens in a hurry]*

Seagoon:

Ha ha - I forgot my clothes!

Orchestra:

*[Weird link]*

Greenslade:

The scene - Dr Seagoon's National Health waiting-room.

Grams:

*[Agonized groans, screams. People falling to the floor. Occasional snoring]*

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Seagoon:

Ah, good morning, patients. Sorry to be so late, but I had to stop for a three month's holiday in Paris.

Nurse:

Shall I send the first patient in, dear?

Seagoon:

Yes, darling. Remember, the rich ones first, National Healths last.

Nurse:

You first - drop 'em.

William:

Ta, nurse.

Seagoon:

Now, what's the trouble with you?

William:

I got the Shoo Shoo.

Grams:

*[Crows]*

William:

I got a touch of the birds mate. Get away you - shoo, birdies.

Seagoon:

Gad, crows, starlings, pigeons - you'll soon be the Man in the White Suit. Ha ha ha ha ha. Well, I see - getting the bird is a common complaint.

William:

Yerst, I saw you last week at Coventry, mate. 'Ere, you do all right for fruit, don't you.

Seagoon:

It's all lies, folks, lies, I'm a great success. I was paid off last week.

William:

Well, how can I cure these naughty birdies, mate?

Seagoon:

Well, we'll soon have you well matey, just wear these bird-cages hanging on your legs, and take this bird-lime three times a second.

William:

Oh, lovely.

Seagoon:

Who's next?

Nurse:

The Ray Ellington Quartet.

Seagoon:

What's wrong with him?

Nurse:

Cop this!

Ray Ellington and his Quartet:

*[Musical interlude]*

Greenslade:

What a terrible illness that must be. And now I have pleasure in announcing a knock at the door.

FX:

*[Knocking on the door]*

Seagoon:

I have pleasure in saying 'Come in'.

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Grytpype:

Ah, dear Doctor Ned. I bring you a man stricken with a dread disease. *[Moriarty moaning]* He is Count Jim 'Kidney Wiper' -

FX:

*[Swanee whistle]*

Grytpype:

- Moriarty.

Moriarty:

Owww, save me, Doctor...

Seagoon:

Right, just lie **face-down** on this back here. Now, just run a stethoscope over his pockets. Gad! This man is suffering from poverty. Take this bottle of pound notes and inject them into his wallet three times a day.

Moriarty:

Owwwwwwwwww... What a lovely medicine, ow!

Grytpype:

Dear dear Surgeon, you have overlooked one terrifying aspect of the dear Count's condition. This man has the Spon Plague.

Seagoon:

I've never heard of it.

Grytpype:

That is because the Count is the first man to have caught it.

Seagoon:

Are you sure?

Grytpype:

He has all the symptoms - namely, bare knees.

Seagoon:

Is it catching?

Grytpype:

Yes - stand back please! Oh, I'm too late, yes, you've already got it.

Seagoon:

What what what what what?

Grytpype:

You've got the bare knees.

Seagoon:

No I haven't.

Grytpype:

Roll your trousers up.

FX:

*[Wooden venetian blind pulled up]*

Grytpype:

There - bare knees.

Seagoon:

Ahhhhhhh! I've got the Spon!

Grams:

*[Absolute running at high speed in all different perspectives screaming 'helpppp'. All done at top speed. Repeat top speed and on grams - that is, recorded records, pre-recorded]*

Greenslade:

Even as Seagoon is stricken with the Spon, the British Medical Council are quick to seek a cure.

Grams:

*[Duck quacking]*

Wolfit:

Aaah... Ern, and so, gentlemen, I must conclude by drawing your attention...

Crun:

What, what? Speak up, speak up. What?

Wolfit:

...Quite, please... I must draw attention to the fact that the use of leeches is not only useless but harmful.

Omnes:

Paaah, ha, rubbish - man's unbalanced! He'll lose his stethoscope licence.

Wolfit:

Lose my stethoscope licence eh!

Sellers (confident idiot of middle age):

Hur, hur. Gentlemen, I maintain that I have used leeches for years, and not one of them has ever been ill.

Secombe:

Bravo, there's proof for remedy!

Sellers:

Yes. I might add that neither have I received any complaints from the patients' next of kin.

Grams:

*[Old men's applause]*

FX:

*[Door bursts open]*

Seagoon:

Stop stip stup stap stop! Gentlemen, grave news! A new malignant plague is upon us.

Sellers:

Good. Business is looking up!

Seagoon:

Who's business is looking up?

Sellers:

Bird-watchers. Ha ha - jolly good..!

Seagoon:

It's the plague, I tell you, the plague, the fearsome and fearful plague.

Milligan:

Oh splendid, we haven't had a good plague for years.

Sellers:

No wonder one's get out of touch.

Seagoon:

Gentlemen, please, every patient that I examined this morning at a nominal fee of twenty guineas has the Spon Plague. Even I have it at a nominal fee of two and six. The symptoms are bare knees - roll your trouser legs up.

Grams:

*[Several wooden venetian blinds being pulled up sharply with a clatter]*

Sellers:

Oh, dearrrr! We've got it!

Seagoon:

We've all got it. There's only one cure. Try and run away from your knees!

Grams:

*[Great protesting quacking by drakes and ducks. Boots running into distance]*

Orchestra:

*[Dramatic chords]*

Greenslade:

The Spon Plague spread like wild-fire. Everywhere people were going down with it. Several people went up with it, and one gentleman was known to have gone sideways with it. The country was in a turmoil as one Minister remarked -

Sellers:

They've never had it so good.

Greenslade:

Meantime, in a new satellite town slum -

Grams:

*[Rain pouring down onto floor, musical sound of rain, drops plopping into small pools of water]*

Crun:

Oooh, dear dear oh dear oh dear... Oh dear deaaaar dear... Min? Min, Modern Min? Min Modern Mi-in?

Minnie:

Ow... What is it, cocky?

Crun:

What have you put on the roof? *[wrong line!]*

Minnie:

Can you say that line again because I can't answer the next one...

Crun:

Oh... What... Oh, yes...

Minnie:

What is it, cocky!?

Crun:

Where have you put the roof!?

Minnie:

I sent it to the menders, it was leaking, cocky.

Crun:

Oh, dearrrr modern Min. It's freezing cold in here, Min.

Minnie:

Yes, sit nearer to Africa, it's warmer there you know.

Crun:

Yes, there's nothing like Africa to keep you nice and warm...

Minnie:

Nothing like an african, buddy I tell you...

Greenslade:

Yes, folks - do away with dirty coal - keep yourselves warm with Africa. Africa is now on sale to anyone who wants to make it a second India.

Crun:

D'yer hear that, Min? D'yer hear that, Min?

Minnie:

They'll knock Africa down and build flats there cocky - you mark what I say.

Crun:

I wish Disraeli was back Min.

Minnie:

He will be, Henry, he's just gone down to the shops.

FX:

*[Knock on door]*

Minnie:

Ah, that's him. I wonder if he brought the [???] Come in, come in.

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Minnie & Crun & Seagoon:

Morning, morning.... *[goes on for a while]*

Minnie:

Wait a minute - its evening!

Minnie & Crun & Seagoon:

Evening, evening... *[goes on for a while]*

Crun:

Come in, Doctor Ned.

Minnie:

Come in [???

Seagoon:

How's the Spon Plague?

Crun:

Oh, Doctor, is there no cure?

Seagoon:

None.

Minnie:

None!

FX:

*[Door opens]*

Gryttype:

News, Neddie. I have found the cure - this bottle of pills, ten shillings, please.

FX:

*[Till]*

Gryttype:

Ta, Ned, and a sailor's farewell.

Grams:

*[Queen Mary's hooter speeds up into distance]*

Seagoon:

And so saying, he went through the door and disappeared into the night.

Gryttype:

Did I? Well, I might have been told a bit sooner than this.

Seagoon:

And so saying, he went through..

Gryttype:

Yes yes, they know that, yes...

Seagoon:

And so saying, I read the instructions on the pills. Take three paces south, stretch our the right arm, roll down the trouser legs.

FX:

*[Wooden venetian blinds rolling down]*

Seagoon:

Eureka! Ha ha! Huzza, folks, my bare knees have gone! Taxi!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

William:

Yes, mate?

Seagoon:

The Ministry of Health and Dirt, please.

William:

Right.

Grams:

*[Bloodnok theme. Bubbling cauldron, explosions]*

Bloodnok:

Ohhohh ohh, I can't send these to the laundry. There must be a cure for this I tell you. I, I can't go out in the street, I mean I-

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Bloodnok:

Ooooh! Oh, a taxi.

Seagoon:

Yes, it's the new type.

Bloodnok:

Come in.

Seagoon:

I am in.

Bloodnok:

He am in!

Seagoon:

Bloodnok, I'm here on business.

Bloodnok:

It's the quickest way, I always travel on business. Sit down.

FX:

*[Duck call]*

Bloodnok:

Eeehohhhhh... Every chair a whoopee cushion. Now, here's my brochure. And, an interesting health picture of Sabrina.

Seagoon:

Thank you, and here is a photograph of her clothes.

Bloodnok:

Good heavens, who's that man inside 'em?

Eccles:

It's me.

Bloodnok:

Get out, you fool!

Eccles:

I'm no fool! Ha ha ow...

Bloodnok:

Careful madam. Now, Neddie darling. Oh dear, do know that's quite upset me.

Seagoon:

Bloodnok, here's a statue waiting to be unveiled.

FX:

*[Heavy tearing]*

Bloodnok:

Oooh, it's a statue of you saying -

Grams:

*[Record of Harry saying 'I've discovered a cure for spon plague']*

Bloodnok:

Thank you. And here is a wood carving of me saying -

Grams:

*[Bubbling cauldron. Explosion]*

Bloodnok:

There must be a cure for it, I tell you.

Seagoon:

Yes, and that cure is these anti-Spon pills.

Bloodnok:

Splendid. Now, sir, you'll find my static water tank in the attic.

Seagoon:

I'm not interested in your water tank.

Bloodnok:

So, that's your attitude. Well, sir, I'm not interested in your water tank.

Seagoon:

What? You're insulting the plumbing I love. Just for that, take that!

Max (very loud):

Ploogieeeee!

Bloodnok:

It's Max Geldray! Run for it.

Seagoon:

Run for it!

Grams:

*[Thundering feet into the distance with small explosions, and screams by Bloodnok]*

Max Geldray and orchestra:

*[Musical interlude]*

Greenslade:

Max Geldray is now appearing at the St James's Theatre London. Mr Geldray will shortly be demolished to make way for offices. I have great pleasure now in announcing the chord of C.

Orchestra:

*[Chord in C (nice and big)]*

Grams:

*[Great shovelling of money. Coins everywhere - rolling along the ground]*

Grytpype:

Hear that sound, folks? Money - M-O-N-E-Y, pronounced -

Grams:

*[Record of Grytpype-Thynne, slightly faster, saying 'mooneyyy']*

Moriarty:

Ahhhhh Grytpype, Grytpype, the anti-Spon pills are selling like wild-fire. Ah haha that's nice isn't it Grytpype hahahahah...

FX:

*[Knock on door. Door opens]*

Grytpype:

Yes?

Greenslade:

Meantime, in a Government Laboratory.

Grytpype:

Thank you.

FX:

*[Door closes]*

Moriarty:

Thank you.

Grams:

*[Fade in bubbling cauldron]*

Moriarty:

Listen Grytpype, I can hear the best brains that low wages can buy.

Bluebottle:

Don't you take no notice of dem, Eccles.

Eccles:

I won't take any notice of them, Eccles.

Bluebottle:

Now, my good man, to our works. Remember, we're boy scientists working for our country.

Eccles:

Dab dab dob dob.

Bluebottle:

Picks up Union Jack, cleans boots.

Eccles:

Here, Bottle, I got a rise yesterday.

Bluebottle:

How much?

Eccles:

Three inches.

Bluebottle:

Oh, what did you getted dat for, brainy man?

Eccles:

I, I tell you, come here, come here – I, I wrote a tune.

Bluebottle:

Ohh. Well, would you play it for me, den.

Eccles:

OK.

Grams:

*[Hammering of nails in wood for some time]*

Eccles:

Hoi!

Bluebottle:

I wish I was musical.

Eccles:

Come on, den, come on folks, lets all join in the chorus.

Grams:

*[Great mass of hammering nails in wood at different tempos]*

Greenslade (over):

What a grand sight to see the studio audience hammering nails into each other.

FX:

*[Spot effect carries on hammering with the above]*

Bluebottle:

Hooray for tunes! Now to the anti-Spon experiment. Roll up your trousers for the injection!

FX:

*[Wooden blind rolled up]*

Eccles:

There.

Bluebottle:

Here, you're cured - you ain't got bare knees.

Eccles:

No, I always wear long underpants.

Bluebottle:

Den we got the answer to Spon!

Orchestra:

*[Dramatic chords]*

Seagoon:

Yes, folks, the Ministry of Health acted immediately. Within thirty years everyone had been immunized with long woollen underpants.

Moriarty:

Owwww Gryttype, we're ruined. R-U-I-N-E-D, pronounced -

Grams:

*[Record of Moriarty saying 'ruinedddddddd']*

Gryttype (furious):

Foiled by long woollen things, but I'll get even, mark'ee. Ah ha hoee, taxi!

Grams:

*[Explosion]*

Spriggs:

Oh! Where to, Jim, where to, Jimmmmm? Thank you Jim fans thank you Jim fans - you all get a free taxi.

Gryttype:

Drive me up the wall.

Spriggs:

Right. Wo, wo wo wo wo wo wo wo...

Gryttype:

Thank you. How much?

Spriggs:

That's four and six, pronounced -

Grams:

*[Record of Spriggs saying 'tennnnn bob']*

Gryttype:

Right, take it out of this!

FX:

*[Pistol shot]*

Spriggs:

Thank you, Jim. But I don't like shooting Jim. Jim.

Gryttype:

Moriarty, where's Neddie?

Moriarty:

He's in, in the Scotland.

Grytpype:

What!? Right, let's go and see him!

Moriarty:

Right!

Grams:

*[Whoosh. Bagpipes in distance]*

Seagoon:

Ah, hello, hello, how nice to see you lads.

Grytpype:

Bad news, Neddie, bad news. Roll up your kilt.

FX:

*[Whistle up]*

Moriarty:

Oww owwww...

Grytpype:

Not too high, Neddie... Gaddee marky'ee, gaddee – gaddee, he's got it, Moriarty!

Seagoon:

Got what? What what have I got? What have I got? What have I got then?

Grytpype:

You've got the Quodge!

Seagoon:

The Quodge!?

Moriarty:

The Quodge!

Seagoon:

What's the symptoms?

Grytpype:

It's bare knees covered with long underpants.

Seagoon:

I've got it! I've got it! I've got the Quodge! Aaaahh!

Grams:

*[Record of Seagoon screaming and running boots]*

Orchestra:

*[Dramatic chords]*

Sellers (scottish):

The Quodge spread through Scotland like wildfire. The hospitals were full of Quodge victims. It was a terrible sight ter see those knees covered with long underpants. So that the disease didna spread, a great wall was built by the English ter keep the Quodge north of the border. Contractor Jim Hadrian.

Grams:

*[Wind howling on moor. Distant bagpipes. Horse approaches]*

Sentry:

Halt - who goes there, the noo?

Lalkaka:

Please, do not shoot. We are two gentlemen Western style. We are here to investigate the Quodge on behalf of the Government, I'm telling you.

Sentry:

Advance and be recognized.

Banajee:

...What are you talking about, I don't see the point, sir. You have never seen us before, therefore it is in the extreme of possibilities that you will not recognize us now. Isn't that right so? Isn't that right so? ... I'm absolutely right...

Lalkaka:

I must concur with Mr Banajee. I can recognize him and he in turn can recognize me...

Banajee:

There is much truth in what you're saying, Mr Lalkaka.

Lalkaka:

Indeed, man, indeed yes... Every morning, I'm telling you, every morning *[Banajee: Every morning]* I am arising from my charpoy and I'm looking in the mirror, I am seeing myself and I say 'Hello, there! There you are again, my fine fellow.'

Sentry:

'Ere listen! You'll both get a bullet up yer back if you're no away!

Lalkaka:

Please, European soldier, please let us – let us explain we are, we are selling ties.

FX:

*[Shots, screams]*

Grams:

*[Record of Lalkaka & Banajee screaming in hindu. Running feet speeded up, like wet fish being slapped.]*

Grytpype:

Well done, Sentry, it's patriotism like that that's made Egypt what it is today.

Sentry:

Oh, oh is it, and what is it today?

Moriarty:

Thursday!

Sentry:

Ohoho, it's ma day off!

Grams:

*[Whoosh]*

Grytpype:

Right, open the gates, Moriarty, and let the stricken masses through.



Grams:

*[Record of Greenslade saying 'overrrrrrrr']*

Orchestra:

*[Outro]*

Greenslade:

That was the Goon Show. A BBC recorded programme featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Spike Milligan and George Chisholm with the Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray and the orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Script by John Antrobus and Spike Milligan. Announcer Wallace Greenslade. The programme produced by Charles Chiltern.