

THE GOON SHOW:
THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP

First broadcast on December 29, 1958. Script by ?. Produced by ?. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by ?. Transcribed by Kurt Adkins, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Light Programme. Now here is a variation on that. This is *The* BBC Light Programme.

Cast:

[Murmurs of approval]

Sellers:

The old night school's paying off there, Wal.

Secombe:

Yer, chat on more on it there Wal lad! Give us a bit more of the posh chat der.

Greenslade:

I continue my recital of announcements. The BBC is open to the public on Thursdays and Wednesday afternoons, or, on Wednesday afternoons and Thursdays.

Milligan:

Thank you Jim. Now here folks is Chief Ellinga Yingtoo to say Thursday in Swahili.

Ray Ellington:

Mala toola yo, yarga toola marngo, tula mar gar... Oota mei chicka ofagula tolm... What?

Milligan:

You see how long the days are in Africa folks. Tonight... Forward Mr Seaside with your New Year's resolutions.

Seagoon:

Thank you. Hello folks, hello folks, it is me folks, folks, it is me! Next year folks, I hope to give up 1958 - permanently!

Elder Statesman:

Ungrateful beast, after 1958 all it's done for you, you discard it like an old boot, I won't hear it.

Seagoon:

Let me warn you hairy sir, of the many dangers and donjers of keeping on old years after it's worn out. Mrs Greenslade's husband will now tell you why.

Greenslade:

It was the year 1907 and here is the orchestra to play it.

Orchestra:

[New years-type musical link, singing in the middle; sound fx in music; finishes on a chord]

Seagoon:

Ohhh what a year that was... The South African war had broken out and was now in its second year...

Cast:

[Singing 'Happy Birthday']

Seagoon:

Knock knock knock on a door in Africa.

Bloodnok:

Knock knock on a door in Africa... Gad, that's the address of my door - come in!

Seagoon:

Effects door opens.

Bloodnok:

Ahhh 'effects Ahhh'.

Seagoon:

May I introduce myself?

Bloodnok:

Of course.

Seagoon (announcing):

Ladies and Gentlemen! The man in the blue corner is Neddie Seagoon.

Seagoon (normal):

Thank you. I'm 5th Lieutenant Seagoon reporting from Sandhurst SW9.

Bloodnok:

Oh, sit down on that chair in Africa SE16.

FX:

[Duck call]

Seagoon:

Thank you. I was told to hand this envelope to you with a hand...

Bloodnok:

Oh... Pronounced...

Grams:

[Bloodnok-type Oooooooooooooh!!!]

FX:

[Envelope opening]

Bloodnok:

Oh, these are your secret orders.

Seagoon:

What do they say?

Bloodnok:

Standdddddd atttttt... Ease..!

Grams:

[Regiment standing at ease]

Seagoon (relieved):

Oh, that feels much better sir!

Bloodnok:

Yes, and it suits you what's more. Now to military matters, of milt. Captain Jampton?

Grams:

[Mad dash of coconut shells horses hooves very brief, very fast. approaching to foreground.]

Hugh Jampton:

Ahhh... Sorry I'm late sir, I... Was quelling a native with ah... Quells.

Bloodnok:

You'll get the military piano and bar for this, ah... Now explain the victorious positions of our defeated troops.

Hugh Jampton:

Ah... Intelligence ah... Has established that ah... The people attacking us ar.. Are... The enemy.

Bloodnok:

So - that is their fiendish game is it?

Seagoon:

Gentlemen, do the enemy realise that you have this information?

Bloodnok:

No no, we got 'em fooled, they think they're the enemy!

Seagoon:

...What a perfect disguise!

Hugh Jampton:

Ha ha ha, yes you see Lieutenant Seagoon we have a plan of a plin of a plon of a ploof. The South Africans are magnificent fighters, and it's our intention to persuade them to come over to our side.

Seagoon:

Then that would finish the war sir!

Hugh Jampton:

Oh no. Ha ha ha. Oh dearie no!

Seagoon:

Then how would you keep it going?

Hugh Jampton:

My dear sir; England is never short of enemies!

Bloodnok:

Of course not the waiting room's full of 'em. Now Seagoon, sit down, tell me what's the time back in England?

Seagoon:

Twenty to four sir.

Bloodnok:

Ah... It's nice to hear the old time again... Singhiz?

Singhiz Thingz:

Yes sir?

FX:

[Slapstick]

Bloodnok:

Get out of here now will you! You see, Seagoon, how bad things are! That banana for instance... It's only been eaten once, and look at it!

Seagoon:

But sir, back in England they told me all was well.

Bloodnok:

Back in England, all is well. It's here where the trouble lies.

Grams:

[Explosion]

Bloodnok (over above):

Oh - what the - eh - what?

Grams:

[Approach of old car back firing, grinding of gear, parping on bulb horn, car explodes, gusher of steam, falls to bits, yells.]

Eccles:

Well... I think I'll pull-up here.

Bloodnok:

I say you, you with the apparent teeth.

Eccles:

Oh, a soldier man... Hello soldier... Bang... Bang... Bang Bang... Bang - You're dead soldier!

Seagoon:

Let me talk to him. I speak Idiot fluently... *[Does Eccles impression]* Ow, hello Eccless!

Eccles:

Oh?... You're from the old country..! Oh hohohi *[aside to audience]* Somebody else from the Old Country eh? Well I wish they were back there!

Bloodnok:

Neddie, allow me to humour him with this mallet.

Seagoon:

No no no, leave it to me. *[As Eccles]* Tell us Mad Dan, wha' are you doing in Africa..?

Eccles:

'What are you doing in Africa' I translated. I'm here as an adviser to the British Army!

Seagoon:

[As Eccles] Splendid, what are you going to advise them?

Eccles:

Not to take me.

Bloodnok:

Oh, I respect your cowardice, it warms my heart and gives old Denis a real smart idea. Come over here and warm yourself by this Recruiting-Sergeant.

Sergeant (cockney):

'Ello 'ello 'ello my lad, you look a likely lad.

Eccles:

Hello, hello, hello my laddddd. Yourn loonk linke a ohn...

Sergeant:

Very gude, very gude... Now 'ere lad, 'ow would you like to 'ave a grandstand view of the opening night of the Battle of Spion Kop dere.

Bloodnok:

Here just a moment Sergeant... Spion Kop! He can have my place I tell you!

Sergeant:

Ho ho ho ho ho ho?

Bloodnok:

Yes, just by chance Sergeant I have a vacant uniform in the front rank, he'll see everything from there.

Sergeant:

Now then, you 'eard that very fair offer from the nice Major dere.

Eccles:

He's a nice Major...

Bloodnok:

Yes...

Eccles:

...He's a nice man. How much do you want for dat?

Bloodnok:

Well, it's usually it's free, but just this once it will be seven shillings, so ah shall we say a pound?

Eccles:

A pound?

Bloodnok:

You said it.

Eccles:

Oh... I've only got a five-pound note.

Bloodnok:

Well, I'll take that and you can pay me the other four later.

FX:

[Till]

Bloodnok:

Oh, the old Military till.

Sergeant:

You're a very lucky lad there Eccles.... I'll have a regiment call for you at six tomorrow morning. Meantime here is the well known 'Conks' Geldray. A sittin' target!

Max Geldray:

Boy, in the war my conk holds its own.

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

[Musical Interlude: "This Can't Be Love"]

Orchestra:

[Dramatic 'return to the story' link]

Grams:

[Horse artillery trotting up tile line. Distant tramp of soldiers plodding along rough road.]

Greenslade:

At dawn the British attack was mounted, not very well stuffed but beautifully mounted. Then suddenly through the stilled British front line, a lone voice is heard.

Moriarty (approaching):

Lucky charms... Get your lucky charms before the battle... Get your lucky charms boys. *[Sings]*
Get your self a charm today, and save yourself from harm today.

Willium:

Here... 'ere mate, charm man? 'Ere.

Moriarty:

What is it merry drummer man?

Willium:

Them charms, are they any cop mate?

Moriarty:

Ah, they're... They're real cop mate - Nelson brought one for Waterloo.

Willium:

He... He weren't at Waterloo.

Moriarty:

Of course not, he was in my shop buying a charm. You see how lucky they are?

Willium:

How much is a good one then?

Moriarty:

Well certainly, what part don't you want to be wounded in?

Willium:

I don't want any of me parts wounded in.

Moriarty:

I know, you want the all parts comprehensive charm!

Willium:

Hurry up then - how much?

Moriarty:

Three shillings, it's a real bargain with barg...

Willium:

There snail eater - I pins it on me chest so me chest won't get killed.

FX:

[Pistol shot]

Willium:

Owwwwwwwwwwww mateeeeeeeee...

FX:

[Thud of body]

Moriarty:

Good shot Grytpype!

Gryttype:

Unpin the lucky charm and back on the tray with it. Off you go Morantilly.

Moriarty:

Yes sir - Charms, second hand lucky charms. *[Fading]* Only used once before...

Gryttype:

There he goes, a true son of France and Hyde Park. Who knows what mystic thoughts are whispering in the mossy glades of his krutty shins.

Secombe:

I say, do you mind taking your hat off, old chap? The battle's about to begin, and we can't see you know.

Grams:

["Fire!" - Battle starts - First the volleys of musketry, then distant cannons. The return fire of the enemy is even more distant. Fade down and under. Fade in Big Ben chiming. Fade.]

Elder Statesman:

Gentlemen of the house, the Battle of Spion Kop opened last night.

Cast:

Here Here! Long Live the Empire!

Elder Statesman:

Ahh, but I fear it got very bad notices in the Press.

MP:

You're not thinking of taking it off are you, Mr Prime Minister?

Elder Statesman:

Well, unless Robert Morley puts some money in I can see no other way...

MP:

But what about Binkie and his backers, they'll lose all their money.

Elder Statesman:

Patience sir, patience. We have here Lieutenant Seagoon...

MP:

Have we?

Elder Statesman:

...Who will proceed to give us the reasons for the disaster.

Seagoon:

Thank you, Honourable Members. The reason for it flopping was obvious... There isn't one decent song in the whole battle.

Sellers (as a not her stat):

But soldier fellow, the Battle of Spion Kop isn't a musical you!

Seagoon:

And that's where we went wrong. If the Americans had been running it they'd have had Rex Harrison, and the other wrecks.

Elder Statesman:

Do you know any good composers of battle songs and scores?

Seagoon:

Just by chance and careful planning, I have an Auntie in Grimsby who sits amongst the cabbages and plays an elastic water tank under supervision.

Elder Statesman:

I didn't know there were any of her kind left you know. Now off you go and tell your auntie the good news.

Grams:

[Running footsteps over...]

Secombe:

[Sings 'Land Of Hope And Glory', speeding up into the distance]

Orchestra:

[Dramatic chords]

FX:

[Hammering of a metal hammer on anvil]

Henry Crun (over hammering mutters):

Ohh, dear... There... Now that's got the spoons in fine-spoons fettle Min.

FX:

[Quick two spoons together á la buskers]

Henry Crun (sings):

'Na ahah, ahah, aliah, ah' Now Min, get inside the piano and select me a tuning A.

Grams:

[One sheep bleating]

Henry Crun:

Again Min.

Grams:

[One sheep bleating again]

Henry Crun:

Oh, they don't make pianos like that any more.

Minnie Bannister:

Isn't it time we had it shorn Henry?

Henry Crun:

No, not yet Min, the winters are not upon us, you know. Hand me my knuckle oils.

Minnie Bannister:

Now Crun rub it well into the knuckles... I've get it mixed with Indian brandyyy! Rub it in!

Henry Crun and Minnie Bannister:

[Cres of brandyyy.. Brandyyy]

Henry Crun:

Oh Min...

FX:

[Agonising knuckle cracking]

Henry Crun (muttering over):

It's no good Min, I've got flat-feet in the third knuckle you know Min. Ah well - Now to try for the Pajanynee variations for spoons arranged - Crun!

Grams:

[Disc of variations]

Henry Crun:

[Plays spoons and whistles]

Henry Crun:

Stop! Stop stop! This spoon is out of tune, Min. Have you been eating with it again?

Minnie Bannister:

No.

Henry Crun:

Then what's that your stirring the soup with?

Minnie Bannister:

A violin.

Henry Crun:

She's always got an answer the old cow. Now to compose the last tune for the battle of Spion Kop!

FX:

[Busker spoons in tempo]

Minnie Bannister and Henry Crun:

[Sing 'Dolly Grey', fade]

Grams:

[Fade up battle noises, explosions, etc. Large explosion.]

Bloodnok:

Aaaaaahhh! Aaaaaahhh! Ellinga... turn the volume of that battle down.

FX:

[Door bursts open]

Seagoon:

Major! The enemy are...

Bloodnok:

Aaaahh!

Grams:

[Whoosh]

Seagoon:

Good heavens, he's gone. Ah! Here are his boots. They're still warm - he can't be far.

Bloodnok:

Aaahhh, there ain't nobody here but us chickens I tell you.

Seagoon:

The voice came from a cowardly red-face on the top of a chicken wardrobe.

Bloodnok:

Oh, it's you Seagoon, you you coward.

Seagoon:

Why have you deserted your post?

Bloodnok:

It's got woodworm sir.

Seagoon:

Old jokes won't save you.

Bloodnok:

They've saved Monkhouse and Goodwin, well that's good enough for me.

Seagoon:

Major...

Bloodnok:

What?

Seagoon:

...There's still hope.

Bloodnok:

Oh! Where?

Seagoon:

Crun's vital battle songs have arrived.

Bloodnok:

It won't be easy sir, the enemy have just attacked in E-Flat and we had to retire to G-Minor.

Seagoon:

Never mind sir, these old songs are all written in six-sharps.

Bloodnok:

The most powerful brown key of them all. Get Ellinga and his Zulu bones to dash off a chorus towards the enemy.

Seagoon:

Fiiiiire!

Ray Ellington and his Quartet:

[Musical interlude: "Mr Success"]

Orchestra:

[Dramatic chords]

Grams:

[Bugle calls at varying pitches, murmurs of troops taking up positions]

Seagoon:

At dawn under cover of daylight we took up our positions with our teeth blacked out.

Milligan:

Every man had his ammunition pouches bulging with offensive military songs and spoons at the ready.

Seagoon:

Right. We'll just have to sit and wait.

[Long pause]

Bluebottle:

Do you tink we're gonna win, Captain?

Seagoon:

Never was victory more certain little lad.

Bluebottle:

Oh... Then why have you got that taxi waiting for you at the end of the trench.

Seagoon:

Ha ha... Well here's half-a-crown little lad. I think we can forget all about it now.

Bluebottle:

No... I can't forget about it.

FX:

[Colossal clout]

Bluebottle:

Ahh! I've forgotten about it!

Seagoon:

Now explain to me why you're lying down two-inches below the level of the ground and speaking through a tombstone.

Bluebottle:

Well, I was doing an impression of a zebra crossing when... Squelch! A taxi ranned over me breaking both my boots above the wrist.

Seagoon:

What agony igony ogony oogany mahogany... Did it hurt you?

Bluebottle:

No because I'm making it all up. Ha hee...

Seagoon:

Taxi!

Grams:

[Taxi approaches at terrific speed; jelly thud sound]

Bluebottle:

Oooh! You've taxied me. Look, the Christmas strings coming off my legs.

Seagoon:

Swallow this first-aid book and custard. I'll have your legs relacquered free and exported to Poland.

Bluebottle:

You're a fair man, sir... Meryll Kribynss.

Eccles:

Ooh, Bottle. What you doing under that taxi?

Bluebottle:

It ran over me, Eccles.

Eccles:

You must be rich... I can only afford to be run over by buses.

Bluebottle:

Well my man when you're in the big money you know, you can do things like this.

Eccles:

You see, one day I'll have enough money to be run over by a Rolls-Royce with a chauffeur.

Bluebottle:

Well, pull me out then.

Eccles:

Right-o. Hold this.

Bluebottle:

What is it?

Eccles:

I don't know, but I got it cheap.

Seagoon:

Let me see what you got cheap?

Grams:

[Tiger growl]

Seagoon:

Good heavens! It's a genuine hand operated 1914 tiger!

Bloodnok:

Seagoon, put that tiger back in its stripes... We don't want any scandals during ladies night.

Abdul:

Pardon me, sir. All the men are ready with their music.

Bloodnok:

Good, let's have those spoons then lad.

Orchestra:

[Each man issued with two spoons. They make noise like buskers.]

Bloodnok:

Oooh... What a terrifying sound. It's a good job nobody heard it.

Seagoon:

Now men, to your military Crun music and take up your vocal positions with your voices facing outwards.

Bloodnok:

And don't sing men until you see the whites of their song sheets. Are you ready? Bugler, sound the elephant.

Grams:

[High pitched trumpeting by single elephant]

Bloodnok:

Ohhh!

Hugh Jampton:

Here they come now, sir.

Bloodnok:

Quick, me spoons and me music. I'll show 'em!

FX:

[Two spoons busking in tempo to...]

Bloodnok:

[Singing 'Goodbye Dolly I Must Leave You']

Bloodnok:

[Shouts] Come on you fools, there's more of this where that came from. *[continues singing]* 'Off we go and fight the foe.' *[shouts]* Sing up lads!

Cast:

[All join in singing and rattling spoons]

Grams:

[Shells start bursting in their midst. Starting slowly and increasing in intensity.]

Bloodnok:

[Continues to sing but gradually his morale is destroyed, he breaks off.]

Bloodnok:

Run for it lads... Oooh, these songs aren't bullet proof!

Grams:

[Whole army runs away yelling in terror. Speed up and fade.]

[Pause]

Grams:

[Arctic gale howling, occasional wolves]

Bloodnok:

That's far enough lads, where are we?

Seagoon:

The South Pole sir.

Bloodnok:

Well, no further, we don't want to back into them. Oh... Plant the Union Jack will you? The national flag of the Union of Jacks. I claim the South Pole in the name of Gladys Pills of 13 The Sebastibal Villas, Sutton.

Seagoon:

Who is she, sir?

Bloodnok:

I don't know, but obviously we're doing her a big favour.

Seagoon:

There's still a chance of victory. Look what I've got in the brown paper parcel

FX:

[Rustling of paper]

Bloodnok:

Good heavens white paper, what a glorious victory for England.

Seagoon:

Look under the stamp.

Bloodnok:

What? A fourteen-inch naval gun.

Eccles:

And guess what's in the barrel?

Bloodnok:

I've no idea.

Seagoon:

Major, inside the barrel are photographs of a British military dinner.

Bloodnok:

Really... Keep it going lads, keep it going.

Seagoon:

I intend to fire that photograph at the enemy canteen during their lunch break. When they see the size of British military dinners, they'll desert.

Bloodnok:

I know... Half our men deserted when they saw the size of 'em. However it's worth a try. Take aim... Fire!

Grams:

[Colossal explosion; followed by piles of bones falling on to the ground]

Bluebottle:

Ehhh... That's the last time I kip in a barrel, I tell you. Collapses, and is left out of show from now onwards. Goodnight everybody.

Grams:

[Cheers applause]

Bluebottle:

Oh... By popular request I come back again.

FX:

[Slapstick]

Bluebottle:

Aie!

Seagoon:

All we can do is to wait and see what effect that photograph of a military dinner has on the enemy. Meantime - a sound effect.

Grams:

[Wind up and wolves howling]

Greenslade:

Meantime in Parliament the British Government had written off the Battle of Spion Kop as a dead loss.

Ancient Statesman:

Gentlemen, urn, um... To save face and the honour of England, we're going to bring back that old favourite urn, ah... The Battle of Waterloo.

Cast:

[Ancient murmurs of approval]

Elder Statesman:

Gentlemen, we shall send out immediate notification to the original cast.

Orchestra:

[Marseillaise-type link]

Moriarty Bonaparte:

[Snoring]

FX:

[Door opening]

French Neddie:

Mon Emperor, wake-up!

Moriarty Bonaparte:

How dare you wake the Emperor Napoleon up in the middle of his retirement.

French Neddie:

Wonderful nouvelle wonderful news... By special request we have to do an encore of the Battle of Waterloo.

Moriarty Bonaparte:

What... But we lost it.

French Neddie:

This time we've got a British backer.

Moriarty Bonaparte:

Sapristi nabolas! Get my trousers oiled and unwrap a fresh Josephine... Ahh, there's going to be fun tonight in the camp!

FX:

[Thwack]

Gryttype:

Down Emperor down... Back to your grave. You know you're not allowed out after your death.

Moriarty Bonaparte:

Blast those silly rules.

Gryttype:

My card Neddie.

Seagoon:

This is a piece of string.

Gryttype:

Have you no imagination lad? I am Lord Ink.

Seagoon:

Not Pennan?

Gryttype:

Yes, Pennan Ink.

Orchestra:

[Chord in C]

Seagoon:

Don't worry folks, it's getting near the end now. All pay offs will be gratefully received.

Gryttype:

One coming up, Ned. Unfortunately my client Moriarty is appearing in 'The Death of Napoleon' at the local knackers yard... It looks like being a very long run,

Seagoon:

It looks like being a long run? 'What does?

Gryttype:

Ten miles.

FX:

[Pistol shot]

Bloodnok:

They're off!

Grams:

[Two pairs of running feet]

Seagoon (panting):

As we ran we discussed the contract for the Battle of Waterloo. Later at Preston Barracks Brighton, we auditioned for the part of the Duke of Wellington.

Grams:

[Fade in Sellers singing last part of 'Any Old Iron' mate]

Seagoon:

Thank you. Wait inside the piano one moment will you. What do you think?

Gryttype:

He's not the Lord Wellington type you know.

Seagoon:

Yes. *[Calls out]* I say we'll, we'll write and let you know.

William:

Let me know what?

Seagoon:

That you're no good for the part.

William:

Rite, then I won't take another job till I hear that, then.

Seagoon:

Next please.

Eccles (singing):

"I'll follow my secret heart till I find you..."

Seagoon:

One moment. *[Aside]* Where's my pistol?

Grytpype:

No Neddie no one moment...

Moriarty Bonaparte:

Grytpype... With Eccles playing the part of Wellington this time the French are bound to win the battle of Waterloo!

Grytpype:

Right... Eccles? Button the hat and sword. Now charge...

Grams:

[Great galloping of horses into distance with shots screams and more shots]

Seagoon (in tears):

No... We've... We've lost the Battle of Waterloo!

Moriarty:

Get your new history books... Get your new history books here... Read how the French won Waterloo folks.

FX:

[Phone rings]

Seagoon:

Hello?

Bloodnok:

Seagoon, look here, a right twit you made of yourself firing that photo of a dinner at the enemy. Do you know what they've fired back?

Seagoon:

What?

Bloodnok:

The photograph of an empty plate.

Seagoon:

Ha ha ha... An empty plate..! Well, there you are folks, the old anti-climax again!

Orchestra:

['Old Comrades March']

Orchestra:

[Outro]