

THE GOON SHOW:  
THE HISTORIES OF PLINY THE ELDER

First broadcast on March 28, 1957. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stephens. Produced by Pat Dixon. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Debby Stark, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Light Program.

Secombe?:

Whopp!

Greenslade:

History for schools, question 1: How do you spell C-A-T?

Secombe:

Cat! Well done!

Greenslade:

Question 2: Name two English queens called Elizabeth.

Secombe:

Jim.

Greenslade:

Question 3: What is the Goon Show's first name and give an example of.

Secombe:

That's a trick question, Wallace! So here is a trick answer entitled, *The Histories of Pliny the Elder!*

FX:

*[Imperial Roman music, sounds of gulls & waves]*

Greenslade:

And so in the year ex-el-one-one-one B.C., Julius Caesar set foot on the British shore and was greeted by the natives.

Eccles:

Hello!

Caesar (Grytpype):

Veni, vidi, vici.

Eccles:

Eh?

Caesar:

I came, I saw, I conquered!

Eccles:

Oh! Fine, fine, well, I'm just going in for a dip, give me old kippers in a steam. *[Laughs; exist, singing inaudibly]*

Caesar:

Brutus Moriarius, seize that Britan and prepare him for a life of slavery.

Moriarius:

Ave six and two, Caesar. Cave! Here comes another Charlie Britannicus!

Seagoon:

*[Sings]* When you're tramp, tramp, tramping along the high road, when you *[inaudible]* all upsiiiiide down! *[To audience]* Hello, folks! Who cares?

Caesar:

Gad, he's up early.

Moriaritus:

Must be one of the early Britons.

Caesar:

Quiet, you few-months centurion. Tell the men to pull the galley ashore quickly.

Moriaritus:

*[Exits, mumbling to self]*

Caesar:

Ah, good morning!

Seagoon:

Hiyo, I see your boat's all loaded up. *[Laughs]* Going 'round the light-house?

Moriaritus:

You savage English fool! This is the imperial Julius Caesar! We are Romans! Prepare yourself for combatus!

Seagoon:

Right-o, right-o, yeah, right-o... I'll go and get our lads together, only being Sunday they'll be in the pubs, you know!

FX:

*[Bloodnok music ]*

Bloodnok:

Ohhh! So the Romans want to take the field against us, do they?

Seagoon:

That's right, Britannicus. They're very keen to have a duel with us you know. And, you never know *[laughs]*, we might win!

Bloodnok:

Win? No, we mustn't! We don't want to spoil our record!

Seagoon:

Oh... Well, ah, what'll I tell 'em, then?

Bloodnok:

Well, tell them to put their goal on the edge of the cliffs, that will give their goalie a bit of a rough time, won't it?

Both:

*[Laugh]*

Seagoon:

You don't care, do you? Right, oh, kick off 2:30 then.

Bloodnok:

Splendid, splendid, yes, yes....

FX:

*[Roman music ]*

Greenslade:

And so the Britons, in their blue woad, took the field before the might of the Roman Army.

FX:

*[Cheering]*

Caesar:

Brutus Moriarius! Here, what kind of army is this that takes the field in blue jerseys with a ball at their feet?

Moriarius:

Must be some kind of trickus. Look! They're forming up.

FX:

*[Whistle]*

Caesar:

That must be their signal to attack.

Moriarius:

Forward, men, to battlus!

FX:

*[Charging, fighting sounds ]*

Bloodnok:

Ahh! I say they're...

Eccles?:

Oh, 'ere, 'ere...

Bloodnok:

...they're a rough lot, these Romans!

FX:

*[Whistle]*

Bloodnok:

Ohhh!

Moriarius:

What? What's this, why have stopped for?

Seagoon:

Rough play, that's what we've stopped for, I'll tell ye. Why! Every time I come up the wing your outside right swipes at me with a dirty big sword!

Caesar:

*[Approaching]* I say, what is all this hold up about?

Seagoon:

Well, rough play, that's what..

Eccles:

Yeah, yeah...

Seagoon:

Well, I mean, and then, *and then*, Jack, we can't do with all this javelin practice when the ball's in play! And another thing, you're only allowed eleven men on the field. I've counted 693 of yours so far!

Caesar:

All right, I'll send one off.

Seagoon:

Right, carry on!

FX:

*[Resume play / fighting ]*

Greenslade:

The result: Romans, 900; England, 3. War stopped play.

FX:

*[Marching, whistling Lily Marlene. Marching continues in background of following monologue]*

Voice:

Like a mighty octopus, the legions of Rome spread across England. For ten years Caesar ruled with an iron hand. Then with a wooden foot, and finally with a piece of string. How much of this could Britain take?

FX:

*[Lute music]*

Minstrel (Milligan):

Oh, Caesar! I come to sing melodies divine to you!

Caesar:

Sing on, proud minstrel.

Minstrel:

Thank you. *[Sings]* Oh, Caesar is a noble man, a king of great renown. A gentleman every inch of him, from his feet to his head *[and?]* the crown... *[singing off to the distance]*

Caesar:

Moriaritus? This man is a bit of a crawler... Why does he follow such a profession, Moriarius?

Moriarius:

For money, Caesar. He tells me he wants to die rich.

Caesar:

And so he shall. Give him this sack of gold and then strangle him.

Moriarius:

Yes, Caesar.

Minstrel:

*[Strangling sounds]*

Moriarius:

I see that ten years in Britain have not changed your imperial Roman outlook, Caesar.

Caesar:

True, Moriarius, always a Roman eye.

Moriaritus:

Will you take wine?

Caesar:

No, thanks I think I'll take a half of mild and a packet of crisps.

FX:

*[Crowd sounds]*

Greenslade:

Caesar, Caesar.

Caesar:

Oh, it's Stomachus Grossus!

Greenslade:

Caesar, there is an angry rabble outside. We have their leader captive.

Caesar:

Is he bound?

Greenslade:

Of his health I know not, sir.

Caesar:

Bring him hither, sir...

Bloodnok:

Ohh! Take your hands off me! You want to catch something? Ahh! So you're Julius Caesar, eh?

Moriaritus:

Caesar is all things to all men.

Bloodnok:

Oh, it must be hell in there! Senecus, Senecus... Look here, Mr. Caesar, we've just discovered why you're been here ten years. You've conquered us!

Moriarty:

Eh?

Bloodnok:

Well, get out, I mean, get out or we shall ban mid-week matches – and mid-week cigarettes as well!

Greenslade:

Beware, Britannicus Bloodnockus. The gods are angry.

Bloodnok:

I know, I've just been hit with a rotten tomato. Oh, the birds, the birds...

Moriaritus:

Why don't you stop him, Julius Caesar?

Bloodnok:

How can I when I'm playing the part of Bloodnok?

Moriaritus:

Now listen... Now listenus. For this rebellion, Bloodnockus, you will be thrown to the wolves!

Bloodnok:

Now that team, no! I'm a London man, please, I...

Greenslade:

Good Britannicus, you have one alternative.

Bloodnok:

What?

Greenslade:

You'll be freed providing you give us four good men for the Coliseum games in Rome.

Bloodnok:

Yes! I've got some likely English charlies who would suit you perfectly! They were very successful at the Scottish games.

Moriaritus:

Did they do well?

Bloodnok:

Very well. They managed to get away with their lives, you know, it's...

Moriaritus:

Very well. Deliver those men to Caesar's royal barge at XXIXXI and a half tomorrow.

Bloodnok:

I'll do that. Here is the first one, Maxelsus Geldrayicus!

Moriaritus:

I hope he does better than—

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

*[Musical interlude starts immediately with "Come On Get Happy" song]*

FX:

*[Seagoing music; boat-bound voices in background; ship sounds]*

Greenslade:

And so, some months later, a Roman slave galley drew nigh to Ostia.

Slave Driver:

In! Out! In! Out! In!...

Eccles:

Make up your mind...

Bluebottle:

Have you ever rowed a gallery before, Eccelus?

Eccles:

Is that what we're doing?

Bluebottle:

Yes.

Eccles:

No, I've never done this before.

Slave Driver:

Faster, you dogs!

Bluebottle:

He wants us dogs to go faster.

Slave Driver:

Silence, you scum!

Eccles:

He wants us scum to go silent –

Slave Driver:

Or do you want a taste of the lash?

Bluebottle:

No, thanks, I just had some cocoa.

Eccles:

Oh, look, they're bringing a new slave from the reserve.

Bluebottle:

Goody!

Seagoon:

Let me go, you devils! How dare you? Take your hands off me! Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. How dare you chain me to this oar? I shall write to the *Times* about this! Jim Crint!

Flowerdew:

Shut up, you! It was perfectly quiet until you came along! You're not the only man chained to the oars, you know...

Seagoon:

*[Shouting]* Now listen to me, all of you!

Rower:

All of me is listening to you.

Seagoon:

I am the Welsh Chieftan Caracticus Seagoon! *[Raspberry, tries again]* Caracticus. I for one will never surrender to the might of Rome! I'll fight them up hill and down and Mrs. Dale.

Eccles:

Wait a minute, how did they take you prisoner then?

Seagoon:

I was in the bath. The one day a year they could catch me with my socks off.

Eccles:

Must have been hell in there...

Bluebottle:

What are you going to do then, Caracticus? How can we file through these chains?

Seagoon:

How? How?

Bluebottle:

Yes.

Seagoon:

*[Secretly]* This evening I received a cake from a friend, and guess what's inside?

Bluebottle:

You mean there's...

Seagoon:

Yes! Raisins!

Seagoon / Eccles / Bluebottle:

*[Inaudible]*

Slave Driver:

Stop that talking in the back there!

Bluebottle:

It wasn't me, sir! It was Harold Prott!

Seagoon:

I don't wish to know that!

Greenslade:

*[Inaudible]*

FX:

*[Lash lashing]*

Bluebottle:

Aieeee! You flicked my knee!

FX:

*[Sea-going sounds]*

Omnes:

*[Sea cries, including:]* from the BBC out of here...

Greenslade:

That night, the galley docked at Ostia and the slaves were put up for auction.

Auctioneer (Sellers):

*[Clears throat]* All right, new then, come on now, what am I bid for these three British-type slaves? Eccelus, a lovely piece of property, claimed to be descended from his father. No bids? Come on, anybody now.

Seagoon:

Three dinars!

Auctioneer:

You fool you're up for sale as well!

Seagoon:

Oh!

Auctioneer:

There you are, a chap with initiative. All right then, what about this last one? A pair of genuine English knees with a hat attached called Bluebottleus. Can tie knots, rub two sticks together, and kill his grandmother.

Cyril:

I'll bid 10,000 dinars the three.

Auctioneer:

Sold!

Cyril:

It's my lads, I've seen them, I've seen them!

Seagoon:

I say, this is dashed decent of you to buy us. Who are you?

Cyril:

Me? I do all the bookings for the Coliseum. I've seen them, I've seen them, I've seen them.

Seagoon:

So you've seen them, eh? The Coliseum? Could you get us a couple of tickets?

Cyril:

You won't need any.

Seagoon:

Oh, what's on?

Cyril:

You are.

Seagoon:

Am I?

Cyril:

Yeah, tonight, tonight.

Seagoon:

*[Laughs]* Better get the old Hobson's choice going, hadn't I? *[Sings]* Keep a welcome in the hillside  
– *[to Cyril]* I've done the Palladium, you know?

Cyril:

You've got a lovely voice for –

Seagoon:

*[Sings]* In the hillsides, mi-mi-mi – Oooh!

Cyril:

Lovely, lovely!... Lovely! Now try shouting "help".

Seagoon:

*[Clears throat]* HEEEEELLLLPPPP!

Cyril:

Marvelous! That'll come in very useful.

FX:

*[Scene-changing music]*

Cyril:

Right, now, you wait in there, boys. I'll tell you when it's your turn to go on, it'll be all right...

FX:

*[Closes door behind him ]*

Seagoon:

I say, what a wonderful agent that fellow is! My first night in Rome and I've got a booking already!  
*[Laughs]* Well, now, let's have a look at the program!

Eccles:

Oh! It's a good progum.

Seagoon:

Yes.

Bluebottle:

What is the top of the bill?

Seagoon:

Oh, it's got a lovely opening act. Let me see now, "Captive East Finchley boy scout will fight four starving lions."

Bluebottle:

Ooooooh... I do not like this lion game...

Voice:

*[Off]* All right, baby.

Bluebottle:

Let me out of here...

FX:

*[Rattles door]*

Seagoon:

You coward, Bluebottle! Face it like a man!

Bluebottle:

Yes, well, look at the encore there: "Caracticus Seagoon will be strangled by a gorilla..."

Seagoon:

*[A beat, then gulps, screams]* Let me out! You can't do this to me! I'm a British subject! I shall write to the *Times* about this! Help! Let me out! HEEELLLPPP!

Flowerdew:

Oh, shut up, it was perfectly quiet until you came along!

Seagoon:

It's all right for you, you're a sailor and sailors don't care –

Flowerdew:

Ooooohhhhoho!

Seagoon:

Now, don't panic everybody! I've got a plan. We'll overpower the guards.

Bluebottle:

Yes!

Eccles:

Right, I'll take my boots off.

Seagoon:

I don't think they want to know that...

Greenslade:

*[Inaudible]*

Seagoon:

Good!*[Laughs]* Now, we'll get the keys and make our way down to the Tiber.

Eccles:

What's the Tiber?

Seagoon:

Half past niber.

Voice:

*[Off]* That's what they want?

Seagoon:

I don't wish to know that – please!

Several:

*[Inaudible, with "I saw look here"s and "shhhh"s]*

Voice:

I say, I say.

Seagoon:

Kindly leave this prison. Shhh!

Voice:

Hello, boys and girls.

Seagoon:

Shhh! Here comes the guard now!

FX:

*[Door is unlocked, opens]*

Voice:

Take that!

FX:

*[Womp]*

Guard:

Ohh!

Seagoon:

Right! Run for it!

FX:

*[Running]*

Greenslade:

Dear listeners, I thought you'd like to know that the groan of pain you heard just now was not done by a Roman soldier but by me... And I though I did it jolly well. I'm sure you all feel the better for knowing that. *[Laughter]* Thank you. And now, Ray Ellingbaum.

Ray Ellington Quartet:

*[Musical interlude: Ellington sings medley, including "You made me love you," "This can't be love"]*

FX:

*[Roman music ]*

Greenslade:

Through the catacombs our heroes managed to reach the great water pipe that runs under the Via Appia. Known, of course, in the Army as the famous Appia Pipe [=Up ya pipe]

Seagoon:

All right, lads, I think we are safe now.

Eccles:

Oh, oh, wait a minute, look. There's a manhole cover right above us.

Seagoon:

Shine the beam of this candle on it.

Eccles:

Right.

Seagoon:

I'll push it off. Eccles? Stand on my shoulders and pull me up.

Eccles:

Okay [*Straining*] I'd like to see 'em do this on television.

FX:

[*Straining sounds from all*]

Bluebottle:

Can I put the manshole cover back on now? Otherwise, if it rains, the hole will get wet.

Seagoon:

No, leave it open. We don't want to loose the place – shhh! Behind those bushes! Someone's coming! Quick!

FX:

[*Running, splash*]

Little Jim:

He's fallen in the water.

Seagoon:

Little Jim! Little Jim! Little Jim!

Bluebottle:

Little Jim!

Seagoon:

Little Jim! Little Jim!

Little Jim:

[*Babbles*]

Seagoon:

Thank you again!

Little Jim:

Yes.

Willium:

Ooooh, oh help me, oh!

Seagoon:

Grab my hand and foot, ear, nose and teeth – Hup!

Willium:

[*Strains*] Oh, I didn't see that hole, you know? You don't see'em on the corners, you know?

Seagoon:

Are you a Roman?

William:

No, mate, I'm a gloman, I am... My name's Hannibal. You see any elephants running down the road?

Seagoon:

Elephants? You must be General Hannibal of Carthage!

William:

No, mate. I'm William Hannibal. I looks after the elephants at the Coliseum there. I'm a Battersea slave, mate, there.

Seagoon:

How did you get captured?

William:

Oh, 'ere's a lovely little boy.

Little Jim:

Get away, dirty man.

William:

Well, it were my Saturday off, you see, an' I was taking the dog for a pull an' this Roman fellow come up an' said, "Take you 'at off!", see? Like that. And I does, an' he says, "That's a nasty lump on your bonce", an' I said, "Where?" an' he said, "There", an' pointed it out with a dirty great club. Ohh, mate, oh! When I come to I feel my nut an' he was right! There *was* a dirty big lump on it. But it was too late by then, you see, I was carrying buckets for the elephants at the Coliseum.

Seagoon:

But we are English-type slaves, too! Would you care to join us?

William:

Why? [*Carefully*] Are you coming apart?

Seagoon:

What's the year?

William:

49 BC.

Seagoon:

That proves how old that *gag* is! That proves how old *that* gag is.

Eccles:

Yeah

Seagoon:

That *proves* how old that gag.

FX:

[*Various, raspberries*]

Voice:

[*Inaudible*] White paper now—

Seagoon:

[*Laughing, sighs*]

Eccles:

That proves how old you are, too, ha-ha-ha.

FX:

*[Splash]*

Little Jim:

He's fallen in the water again.

Seagoon:

Now you can put the lid on.

William:

I tell you what, mate... A lot of our lads joined... Joined an escaped gladiola called, um, Sparticus from Produgal. He comes only from Produgal, Sparticus, you know?

Seagoon:

Where is he?

William:

He's hiding in the old top of Visunruberis...

Seagoon:

Let's to him!

FX:

*[New scene music]*

Omnes:

*[Inaudible]*

Spriggs:

Halt, halt! Who goes there? Who, who goes there?

Seagoon:

*[Shouting]* Escaped English slaves!

Spriggs:

Advance and be recognized! *[Musically]* Recogniiiiized!

Seagoon:

I am Caracticus Seagoon. I come from Wales.

Spriggs:

I can see you don't come from sardines, Jim.

Seagoon:

*[Raspberry]*

Voice:

*[Through laughter]* Lovely! Thank you.

Spriggs:

Hoo-ray! Hoo-ray! I'll take you to Sparticus the Gladiola. Follow me.

FX:

*[Walking, knocking on door]*

Spriggs:

I'll knock.

Bloodnok:

Ohhh! Oh, just a minute, oh! Don't come in, please! I'm just changing my knees. Ohh! Quite right.  
*[opens door]* Now – Ahh! Ohh! Ohh!

Seagoon:

Britannicus Bloodnockus! How did you get to Italy?

Bloodnok:

Ask the writers, I've no idea.

Spriggs:

He has no ideeeeah.

Bloodnok:

Yes.

Seagoon:

You are Sparticus?

Bloodnok:

Yesus, I was forced to change me name, you see? I fell out with Caesar.

Seagoon:

You, you fell out with Caesar?

Bloodnok:

Yesus!

Seagoon:

How did that happenus?

Bloodnok:

We were in a chariot and we hit a bump in the road, it went ooooooh!

Eccles:

It was me!

Seagoon:

Come now!

Bloodnok:

It went ohhh!

Seagoon:

Come now! I want the trith, and nothing but the troth!

Bloodnok:

Well, the trith is – how can I put it? – You know that saying "Caesar's wife is above suspicion"?

Seagoon:

Yes?

Bloodnok:

Well, I put an end to all that rubbish! Oh! Oh, the little beauty, oh!

Seagoon:

Are we safe here?

Spriggs:

Are we safe?

Seagoon:

*[Spriggs-like] Safe heeere?*

Bloodnok:

My dear lad, we are actually inside the crater of an extinct volcano.

Seagoon:

Thank heaven! Safe at last!

FX:

*[Rumbling sound]*

Seagoon:

I say, chaps?

Voice:

What?

Seagoon:

I say, look, look, look!

Bloodnok:

Oh, ohhhh!

FX:

*[Explosions, from volcano, screaming]*

Greenslade:

Next week History for Schools tells the story of *The Last Days of Pompei*.

Voice:

Well, is that the lot for the old series there, Wal?

Greenslade:

Yep.

Voice:

Right. 'Round the back for the old brandy, there!

FX:

*[Footsteps]*

Orchestra:

*[End theme]*

Greenslade:

That was the last of the present series of the Goon Show, a BBC recorded program featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, with the Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray, and the orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stevens, announcer Wallace Greenslade. Bobby Jay has been on the mixing panel, and the special effects were supplied by Ian Cooke and Ron Belshay. The production was by Pat Dixon.