

THE GOON SHOW:
QUATERMASS O.B.E.

First broadcast on February 2, 1959. Script by Spike Milligan. Produced by Peter Eton. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcription adjusted by Paul Webster, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Home Service.

Sellers:

Hold it up to the light – not a brain in sight.

Secombe:

Ah, John friar Sellers! Taste this script.

Sellers:

[Eating noises] What is it?

Secombe:

A freshly-cooked version of:

Orchestra:

[Science-fiction-type fanfare]

Grams:

[Over music: The Thing sound effect – a mysterious echoing electronic effect]

Sellers:

[over] Quatermass, OBE.

Orchestra:

[Crescendo, then diminuendo under first part of next line]

Timothy *[recorded]*:

This is the terror-stricken service of the BBC. Today at approximately this afternoon, a discovery was made on the site of the Notting Hill Gate site of the government's new dig-up-the-roads-plan-for-congesting-traffic scheme. Workmen in the absence of a strike settled for work as an alternative. It was during this brief lull in high-powered inertia that Morris Onions, a scaffolder's knee-wrencher, stumbled across something he'd found. Ding-dong-billy-bong! I would like it known that though I read this stuff, I don't write it. Ftang!

Grams:

[Shovels]

Throat:

Will the [??] never turn up? Cor, blimey, my life! *[The rest is unintelligible]*

William:

Here, Julian!

Julian:

What's that, man?

William:

Here, over here, mate. Here!

Julian:

Coming, Basil.

William:

Get your trousers on. Hurry, Julian. Look at this!

Orchestra:

[Dramatic chord, held under effect]

Grams:

Thing sound effect, continuing under next dialogue]

Julian:

Oh, dear! Saints preserve us!

Workman:

[Approaches] He, what's all this about... hey!

Julian:

What's this, now?

Workman:

Ohh! That's a human skull.

William:

Is it?

Workman:

Aye. Must be a woman – the mouth's still open. Ha ha!

Julian:

Here, we'd better call an Irish doctor.

Irishman 2:

Yes, let's get one.

Workman:

Too late for that, it's a goner, man. She's a goner.

Julian:

Oh, dear!

William:

Call the Chinese police. Here, hold this whistle and play that note.

FX:

[Police whistle]

Grams:

[Running footsteps approach]

Julian:

[Over] Listen! He's coming. He's almost here. *[as footsteps slow down]* He's arrived.

Constable :

[Panting and out of breath] You were playing my song. I'm sorry I'm late, but the frim of the flong succumbed the nim of the ploong.

Julian:

A likely story.

Workman:

No have a look at this, by here.

Constable/Greenslade:

Gad, the head of a skull! I'd better take its fingerprints. Ladies and gentlemen, in my dual role of constable and announcer, I now assume the mantle of the latter, but only for a brief announcement. – Next morning, after my report as a constable, a man and a woman from the Ministry of Certain Things were flown in from Battersea by road, with a rug over their knees that traveled with them. Plung!

FX:

[Shovels, under next dialogue]

Henry Crun :

Mnk... Knick ...

Minnie Bannister :

Knick the knack.

Crun:

Knick the knack...

Bannister:

Knick.

Crun:

Ohh!

Bannister:

Knick knack, knick knack. *[Sings]* Paddy-whack, give the dog a bone... *[Rhythm-type humming]*

Crun:

[Hums accompaniment to Min's line]

Crun and Bannister:

[Hum for a while, then stop]

Crun:

What are you doing, Min? The dog's had four bones already, you know. Three of them are mine, I tell you. Now, look, another one. Oh, look!

Bannister:

Ohhh! Lord Crun?

Crun:

What?

Bannister:

This skull is 5 million years old!

Crun and Bannister:

[Sings] Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you.

Crun:

[Sings] Happy birthday, dear Minnie, happy birthday to you.

Bannister:

Thank you, thank you, Hen, it's nice of you to remember my skull.

FX:

[Shovels, under next lines]

Bannister:

Now, dig on! Dig on! The power.

Crun:

Aha!

Bannister:

Ohhhh!

Crun:

Min!

Bannister:

Ohh!

FX:

[Shoveling stops]

Crun:

Stop wallpapering my trousers while I'm straining with the trowel.

Bannister:

You must get a new pair, then. The paint's coming off the knees, you know.

Crun:

I will have them returned.

Bannister:

Coming off the knees!

Crun:

Oiled springs, I would *[Rest incomprehensible]*

Bannister:

[Senile mutterings]

Crun:

I can't understand it, you know. These knees were hand-painted by Anna Goonie.

Workman:

So, will you be long in your the restorations? Only the workmen are waiting to start work on the tea break, d'y'see?

Crun:

Oh. [??]

Workman:

Aye? Aye?

Bannister:

Ohh!

Workman:

Thank you.

Bannister:

I know that.

Crun:

This is the vital brown archaeological site, sir. It could be that on this very spot the first men existed. Can you see that this we've dug up just now? Do you recognise it?

Constable:

It appears to be a piece of mud.

Bannister:

And there's more where that came from.

Constable:

Now look, I may be ignorant, but I...

Bannister:

[Interrupts] I'm sure you are.

Constable:

Look... Look, I will turn a deaf eye to all that nonsense.

Bannister:

You'll get a punch up the conk!

Crun:

Too-fish!

Constable:

I was saying I don't see the archaeological importance of mud.

Bannister:

Ohhh!

Crun:

Ah, no, no!

Constable:

Morning.

Bannister:

Morning, morning.

Crun:

Here comes Professor Ned Quatermass.

Bannister:

Whoopie!

Orchestra:

[I Want to Be Happy' music-hall-type intro]

Ned Quatermass:

Hello, folks, it's me, Ned Quatermass, son of the scientist and doctor of darkness, two for the price of one. Hup! Hoy!

Grams:

[Cheers]

Quatermass:

Stop! Thank you. *[Laughs]* Now, what's all this about, eh? What what what?

Crun:

Look at that.

Bannister:

Ohh!

FX:

[Pick]

Crun:

Something's under the ground.

Quatermass:

So it is.

FX:

[Taps with small pick]

Quatermass:

It's hard. Here, hold my coconut tree while I have a look. Cor, this is a job for those sons of fun, the army!

Orchestra:

[Brass fanfare]

Quatermass:

Ladies and gentlemen, his excellency, rifleman Green of the Third Collapsing Fusiliers.

Omnes:

Cheers and applause.

Quatermass:

His Grovelling Excellence, sergeant St. Tom Flair of the Second Royal Army Games.

Omnes:

[Hubbub and rhubarb]

Quatermass:

And now... Give over... And now, Mr. McTrouble of 1958, Major Denis Bloodnok, OBE and bar.

Orchestra:

[Majestic brass fanfare, segueing into Bloodnok theme]

Grams:

[Explosion]

Major Denis Bloodnok :

Ooeugh! Will I never be free of them? Oh, dear! Now, then, what's the trouble?

Quatermass:

An unexploded German bomb.

Bloodnok:

What?? Agggh!

Grams:

[Whoosh]

Bloodnok:

[Off] Send it to Brighton, lads, they'd soon have it safe. Sergeant Spandrick, dig it up with the ...
[?]

FX:

[Shovels]

Sergeant Spandrick and Throat:

Oh, I don't know, I don't know what's going on here...

Quatermass:

Thus, with ten men holding one million shovels, they dug away at the direction of – The Thing!

Milligan:

Thing!

Orchestra:

[Dramatic music link, under sound effect]

Grams:

[Thing sound effect, continues under next dialogue]

Quatermass:

As they dug, the thing took shape – twenty foot long, red, as large as an engine boiler, with an entrance on the side and a sealed compartment at the front.

Bannister:

Oh, dear! Dear, dear, dear.

Crun:

I don't like the look of it.

Grams:

[Effect stops]

Quatermass:

Well, we can't change it now – it's the only one we've got.

Crun:

Yes, there is something in what you say.

Quatermass:

Yes, it can happen to the best of us.

Crun:

Indeed it can.

Quatermass:

Yes. Well, ha ha, that seems to have explored that argument in full, doesn't it? Ha ha!

Crun:

But what is this thing?

Bannister:

[Sings] Called love

Crun:

[Hums in accompaniment]

Bannister:

[Sings] This funny thing.

Crun:

[Sings] This funny thing.

Crun and Bannister:

[Rhythm-type humming]

Crun:

Min! Cease that power-singing and stop flashing your insteps, Min.

Bannister:

Ohh!

Quatermass:

Well, we can't stand around here doing nothing. People will think we're workmen.

Bloodnok:

[Approaches] Gladys, how's the work going on that silly, harmless old bomb, eh? Oh, you were all frightened of nothing, you know.

Quatermass:

This line the Major spoke from inside a suit of armour, inside a Cromwell tank.

Bloodnok:

You like it? I wear it all the time during explosions, you know.

Quatermass:

It must be hell in there.

Chinese :

[General chinese muttering]

Bloodnok:

Listen – there's a chink in my armour!

Greenslade:

In my capacity as announcer, I will say this: During the night, those concerned continued their digging. F'tung!

FX:

[Rhythmic knocking on hollow wooden blocks]

Crun:

Mnk... mnk...

Bannister:

Oh, listen! Ohh!

FX:

[Rhythmic knocking]

Bannister:

[Rhythm-type humming in time with knocking]

Crun:

There's no doubt about these rhythm-skulls, Min. They are 50 million years old.

Bannister:

Nonsense. According to my quillolocalnivviespoons, in my opinion, these skulls were dropped by the Germans in 1943.

Quatermass:

Unexploded German skulls? I hadn't thought of that.

Bloodnok:

Elephant soup with sqad spuds.

Quatermass:

I hadn't thought of that, either.

Bloodnok:

Sabrina in the bath.

Quatermass:

Ha ha ha ha ha! I do have some spare time.

FX:

[Shovels]

Bannister:

I don't think she has. Gentlemen, look! From the bones we discovered, I have reconstructed an Irish stew.

Quatermass:

Then this is what prehistoric Irish stews look like?

Bannister:

Yes!

Bloodnok:

I knew it, I knew it! We are all descended from Irish stews. Oy, vey!

Grams:

[Thing sound effect and Willium muttering]

Quatermass:

Listen! Listen! Someone screaming in agony. Fortunately, I speak it fluently.

Sergeant Willium Ftang :

Oh, me krills are plurned!

Quatermass:

Sergeant Ftang, what's up? Your boots have gone gray with worry.

Willium:

I was inside the thing, picking up prehistoric fag-ends, when I spots a creature crawling up the wall. It was a weasel, and suddenly it went...

FX:

[Pop]

Quatermass:

What a strange and horrible death.

William:

Then I heard a hissing sound, and a voice say, 'minardor.'

Quatermass:

'Minardor?' We must keep our ears, nose, and throats open for anything that goes 'minardor.'

Bannister:

Yes.

Crun:

Be forewarned, sir, the minardor is an ancient word that can be read in the West of Minster's library, you know.

Quatermass:

Well, it so happens that I have a Westminster Library on me. And gad, look! There I am inside, examining an occult dictionary.

Bannister:

Oh, yes.

FX:

[Pages flipping]

Quatermass:

Minardor... Minardor... Hmm, hmm, hmm... Min min min min min...

Bannister:

Yes yes yes yes yes?

Quatermass:

I feel an attack of conks coming on. Quick, the brandy!

Max:

Oh boy – now you know the real power of my conk!

Max Geldray and orchestra:

[Musical interlude]

Greenslade:

Meantime, Professor Quatermass is endeavoring to open the front compartment.

Quatermass:

Now, workman, I want you to drill through this place here, do you see?

Eccles :

Yup yup yup.

Quatermass:

Now, you're sure you know about using micro radium-tipped drills for non-porous surfaces?

Eccles:

Ya, ya, man. I've got *[unintelligible]*

Quatermass:

Right.

Eccles:

OK, then. OK, men, switch on!

Grams:

[Dentist's drill; electric discharge and static, continuing during next line]

Eccles:

[Drawn-out cries of pain and agony]

Quatermass:

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

Eccles:

Yeah, but I'm willing to take a second opinion.

Quatermass:

Look! There's a hole appearing.

Eccles:

Oh. Let me look through – I specialise in appearing holes. Let me have a look. Ohh!

Quatermass:

What can you see?

Eccles:

A glass eye.

Quatermass:

What's the matter? Doesn't he trust you? Ha ha ha! I say! *[Giggles]* Can you smell something?

Eccles:

[Sniffs] Yeah, yeah.

Quatermass:

[Yells] Major Bloodnok!

Eccles:

No, no. This smells like Irish stew.

Quatermass:

Gad! My brain raced in various directions – the frontal lobes to Charing Cross...

Eccles:

Ohh!

Quatermass:

...And Isle of Rill *[??]* to the Antipodes. Listen, this smell ties up with Minnie's replica of the Irish stew. Break that door down, with this brake.

Eccles:

Leave that to me.

FX:

[Pounding on door, then scratching on door, then sawing etc., continues for some time]

Eccles:

[Over, sounds of effort; at end of effect, exhausted] I know when I'm beaten.

Quatermass:

Hold this coconut tree. Let me try.

FX:

[Doorknob turned; hinge creaks]

Quatermass:

It was open all the time.

Eccles:

Ohhh!

Grams:

[Thing effect, briefly]

Quatermass:

Dear listeners, inside the sealed compartment were the complete skeletons of three serge suits along with the bones of a bowler hat.

Crun:

Min, go and preserve these specimens in brown fume spirit and quilled leather. [??]

Count Jim Moriarty :

[Off] I say! I say! Hello, Fred? Are there people there? Grytpype, what is that, there?

Hercules Grytpype-Thynne :

It's daylight, Count.

Moriarty:

Oh, lovely, lovely. Have you any food? *[Approaches]* Have you some food down there? Any nice food? Any small chips and things?

Quatermass:

Who is that hovering on the stairs?

Grytpype:

That is the great international leaper and balloonist extraordinary, le Compte Viscompte de Compte Jim 'Winds'...

Grams:

[Speeded-up descending string glissando]

Moriarty:

[Cringing muttering]

Grytpype:

...Moriarty, known as the Mantovani of Piccadilly. There he goes.

Seagoon:

Gad! Time for Ray Ellington and – brandy there! *[Runs away]*

Ray Ellington:

The introductions he gives me...

Ray Ellington Quartet:

[Musical interlude]

Spriggs:

We'll I sing a melodies that...

Ellington:

Melodies from old Ireland...

Quatermass:

There he goes – the Webster Booth of Ghana!

Greenslade:

We are now approaching the climax of this thrilling serial in one part. Around the great scarlet capsule the entire cast are assembled. That's me in the wig.

Quatermass:

My friends, you've just one hour to find out the origin of this giant crimson-scrimson-scroo-yakabakaka-koo! After that, they're letting the press in.

Bluebottle :

Yes, hurry up, man, I'm waiting for a headline.

Quatermass:

Gad, it's a trilby hat on legs.

Bluebottle:

Steady on, my man. I am Ace Bluebottle, known in Fleet Street as Scoop Bluebottle, wonder boy reporter.

Quatermass:

What paper do you represent?

Bluebottle:

Brown paper. What is the weekly organ of the Finchley Beat Generation, editors Bluebottle and Bluebottle. Headline: 'Boy Reporter Bluebottle Scoops.'

FX:

[Typewriter]

Bluebottle:

[Over] Headline: 'From under the nose of Lord Breathingbrook: Flashee! Giant German bomb a hoax. "I did it in my spare time," says Sidingham night watchman. Quotee. Sitting in his watchman's hut, gray-headed, sixty-seven-year-old Tom Onions, of Puker's Lodge, Mon., said, "It all comes so easy in the dark hours."'

Eccles:

You're making it up!

Bluebottle:

Silence, man!

Eccles:

[Incoherent exclamation]

Bluebottle:

Bend down.

FX:

[Tearing cloth]

Eccles:

Oww! Oww!

Bluebottle:

It's Professor Eccles!

Eccles:

Ho ho!

Bluebottle:

The brains behind...

Eccles:

What?? What's that?

Bluebottle:

The brains behind the Winscot Disaster [??].

Eccles:

Ohh!

Bluebottle:

Scoop! 'Prof Eccles give the Brown Paper Daily exclusive statement.'

Eccles:

What what what?

Bluebottle:

Can I quote you on that, please?

Eccles:

No. My 'what what what's are private.

Bluebottle:

Well, give us an exclusive statement, then, prof.

Eccles:

OK, then. *[Mutters to self, then declaims]* I like chips in brown gravy.

FX:

[Telephone receiver lifted; phone being dialed]

Bluebottle:

Ah – this will be good ...Flasho! Hello? Give me the Cintin Desk.

Grams:

[Speeded-up voice over phone says 'Hello? City Desk here.']

Bluebottle:

Listen, Ace, Scoop Bottle hear. Clear the front page.

Grams:

[Speeded-up voice says 'What for, my lad?']

Bluebottle:

Professor Eccles denies paternity case. 'I like chips in brown gravy,' he telled the judge.

Grams:

[Speeded-up voice says 'Great work, kid. Keep it up.']

Bluebottle:

Thanks, Ace. Now for the exclusive picture. Scene. Professor Quatermass pretends to sing, and all the others, put your fingers in your ears. Ready? Points super junior candle flash-gun, with cardboard built-in trigger leads. Say 'cheese.'

Grams:

[Thing effect; explosion]

Bluebottle:

[Over] Oiee! Oh, my spones! Who's been meddling with my field equipment?

Gryptype:

Gentlemen, the Count and I have the solution to the red capsule thing.

Quatermass:

How do you know?

Gryptype:

We have just watched the last installment on the television.

Eccles:

That reminds me – I must pay my last instalment on my television. *[Laughs]*

Quatermass:

Fell rather flat, didn't it? Try singing it.

Eccles:

Anything to save it. Ahem. *[Sings]* That reminds me – I must pay the last installment on my television set. Aha ha ha ha, ha ha ha... *[Spoken]* No.

Quatermass:

No... Well, try it with full orchestral accompaniment.

Orchestra:

[Melodramatic ballad accompanies next line]

Eccles:

Ahem. *[Sings]* That reminds me – I must pay the last installment on my television set.

Grams:

[Splat]

Bloodnok:

Who threw that stuff at the Count?

Quatermass:

Gad! Look what it is!

Bloodnok:

The phantom strikes again! Oh, it must be hell in there, and there's obviously more where that came from.

Quatermass:

Now it's coming clear!

Bloodnok:

Is it?

Quatermass:

Yes. Poltergeists throw stuff about!

Eccles:

They must be in a bad way.

Quatermass:

This proves my theory. This scarlet capsule is the seat of spirit beings!

William:

Sir, the gentlemen of the press is here. I tried to hold 'em back, but they burst through by putting money in me hands.

Quatermass:

Spoken like a true commissioner!

Grams:

[Splat]

Quatermass:

Gads!

Eccles:

What?

Quatermass:

He's been struck by a neolithic Irish strew. It's the spirits at work again! There's only one answer. Eccles, prepare a series of TNT charges to destroy the Thing!

Eccles:

Leave it to me. I've got a...

Grams:

[Splat]

Eccles:

[Strangled exclamations]

Quatermass:

Another one!

Orchestra:

[Dramatic chords, last held under effect]

Grams:

[Thing sound effect]

Grams:

[Big Ben chiming]

FX:

[Bell struck]

Greenslade:

All night, preparations to explode the Thing continued. For miles around, people had to be evacuated.

FX:

[Knock on door; door opens]

Cynthia *[seductive]*:

Yes? What is it?

Quatermass:

Oh, I... I'm terribly sorry to knock you up so late. Ha ha.

Cynthia:

They all say that.

Quatermass:

I'm afraid you have to be evacuated.

Cynthia:

[Embarrassed surprise] Oh! Come in. I'll just pack a few things.

Quatermass:

Well, I... I...

Greenslade:

At this point the script was heavily censored. But we leave the ensuing silence for the listeners to imagine what followed. *[Pause]*

Bloodnok:

You filthy swines! Back to your own beds, now!

Eccles:

Major, dynamite's all ready in the Thing.

Bloodnok:

Oh? Well, tell everybody to take cover.

Eccles:

[Yells] Take cover, Major!

Bloodnok:

Thank you for telling me, lad. Get hold of this plunger, lad.

Eccles:

Ohh!

Quatermass:

Stop! There's a man called Moriarty tied up inside the thing.

Grytpype:

Yes, yes, yes, I know – it's all right, Ned.

Quatermass:

All right? He'll be blown to bits!

Grytpype:

Don't worry – I have the Count heavily insured against such things.

Quatermass:

No no no, I... I... I'm afraid I can't allow you to do such a thing.

Grytpype:

Will fifty pounds be enough?

Quatermass:

Right. Ahem. *[Yells]* Stand by plunger! 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3... Erm... 2-1-fire!

Eccles:

[One second pause] Ha ha ha, I forgot to connect it up.

Quatermass:

Well, get over and fix it, then.

Eccles:

OK. *[Incoherent babbling as he moves off]*

Quatermass:

And nobody touch that plunger.

FX:

[Phone receiver lifted; phone being dialed]

Grytpype:

[Over, hums] Hello? Imprudential Insurance? Can I take out another one of those, erm, policy things? Eccles, yes. Mad Dan Eccles, that's right. Another fifty be enough, Ned?

Quatermass:

Uh-huh.

Grams:

[Explosion and speeded-up Eccles cries of anguish]

Timothy *[recorded]*:

This is the flibby-dabby-dee service of the BBC. The giant capsule was today exploded, and went – BANG! London transport experts have, however, discovered what the Thing was. Apparently the remains of the three blue serge suits found inside inside were in fact those of three sit-down tube strikers, and the capsule was a tube train that had been shunted into a siding and forgotten. The mystic word 'minardor' was in fact the word 'mind the doors.' Not a very good ending, but tidy, don't you think? Goodnight. *[Splat]* Ohh!

Bloodnok:

And there's more where that came from, Tim!

Orchestra:

[End theme]

Female announcer:

That was The Goon Show, a BBC recorded programme starring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, with Ray Ellington and Max Geldray. The announcer was Wallace Greenslade, the music was by Wally Stott and the script by Spike Milligan. The programme was restored by Ted Kendall and produced by John Brow.

Orchestra:

[Closing theme: 'I Want to Be Happy']