

Vintage E02 - The Greatest Mountain In The World

Transcribed by Alan Dicey. Final corrections by Helen.

GREENSLADE:

This is the BBC.

GRAMS:

OLD FASHIONED GRAMOPHONE RECORDING. GRADUALLY SPEEDS UP OF A TRUMPET FANFARE, OUT OF TIME AND OUT OF TUNE. END UP ALMOST EXACTLY ON A UNISON NOTE.

SECOMBE:

(ON GRAMOPHONE, SPEEDING UP) Hello, hello, hello. Modern British-style comedy show. Presenting:

SELLERS:

(ON GRAMOPHONE, SPEEDING UP) The Greatest Mountain in the World! Or...

ORCHESTRA:

FANFARE AS BEFORE. WIDLY FLUCTUATE GRAMS SPEED

SELLERS:

(ON GRAMOPHONE, SPEEDING UP) The Greatest Mountain in the World! Or...

ORCHESTRA:

THREE DESCENDING CHORDS.

SEAGOON:

Yes. (LAUGHS) Oh. The Greatest Mountain in the World. Thank you, folks. It all started, folks, in the basement of a disused fish-squirting factory and corset-exploding depot in Alaska, which at that time was in London.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT:

(MUTTERING UNDER SPON WHO DELIVERS A SPEECH OF BARELY-COMPREHENSIBLE TWADDLE)

LORD SPON:

[MILLIGAN]

Never has the British Empire... in all parts of the world... The First Minister...

BACKBENCHER 1:

[SECOMBE]

(BACKGROUND) Jolly good show!

LORD SPON:

(MUMBLING) ...of Jane Mansfield.

BACKBENCHER 1:

We all know...

BACKBENCHER 2:

Jolly good.

LORD SPON:

[UNCLEAR].

BACKBENCHER 1:

What are your vital measurements?

LORD SPON:

[UNCLEAR]. Yet the drains at...

FX:

GUNSHOT

LORD SPON:

Aaaaah.

SEAGOON:

Thank you, Gentlemen. I'm sorry I had to do that to Lord Spon, but I have now an important announcement to make to this House. You remember in 1953, Tensing and Hillary performed a prodigious feat by climbing the mountain that no man had ever climbed before.

BACKBENCHER 2:

Yes.

SEAGOON:

Well, I'm going to go one better. I intend to climb the highest mountain in the world!

BACKBENCHER 2:

But dear fellow, it's already been climbed.

SEAGOON:

Herherherher. You're thinking of the one Hillary and Tensing climbed. Oh, no. This is another, *higher* one.

BACKBENCHER 2:

And what is is called?

SEAGOON:

A mountain of course.

BACKBENCHER 2:

I know that. What is it's name?

SEAGOON:

Well, I... I can't keep it a secret forever. It's called... Mount Everest. After my mother.

BACKBENCHER 2:

Was she called Mount Everest?

SEAGOON:

No, but she looked like it! Hahahahahahaha...!

BACKBENCHER 3:

[MILLIGAN]

Pardon me, sir, but the mountain has already been clumbed... climbed! Climbed.

SEAGOON:

Who cloombed it?

BACKBENCHER 3:

Erm... Hillary and, er, Jim Tensing.

SEAGOON:

So they've beaten me to it. Oh. A dirty trick! Never mind. I'll not be beaten by this dishonest, sportsmanlike trick. I'll find a *higher* mountain.

BACKBENCHER 4:

[SELLERS]

Aaaaaaah, yes, in... in Peru, yes. But where are we going to find this... ah... higher mountain... ah...?

SEAGOON:

Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? Where? I'll find a way! I'll... find some way.

THROAT:

Why not build one?

SEAGOON:

What rubbish. Build one? Get out.

THROAT:

Right.

SECOMBE:

Well. It's agreed then. We start work at dawn tomorrow.

ORCHESTRA:

VIOLIN & HARP DUET. 'LE CYGNE' BY SAINT-SAENS. SPRIGGS ON BACKING VOCALS.

GREENSLADE:

As the music depicts, work started on the mountain.

SEAGOON:

Yes, a large area of Hyde Park was cleared, despite the protests of several Guardsmen and nurses.

GRAMS:

NOISE OF CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY

SEAGOON:

Ah, what a sight! Five hundred English workmen. Three of them working!

FOREMAN:

[SELLERS]

(MUMBLE)

SEAGOON:

Ah, its foreman Fred Scruntlit.

FOREMAN:

(MUMBLE)

SEAGOON:

Have you drained all the water out of the Serpentine?

FOREMAN:

(MUMBLE) (IRISH ACCENT) Aye, sir, and we filled it with concrete.

SEAGOON:

Concrete? Splendid, I'll go ahead with the plans.

ECCLES:

(HAPPY GURGLING)

SEAGOON:

Gad, its the famous Eccles.

ECCLES:

Hallo. Hallo.

SEAGOON:

Eccles, thats a... that's a terrible great lump on your bonce.

ECCLES:

I just... I just dived in the Serpentine.

SEAGOON:

Fool! It's solid concrete.

ECCLES:

That saved my life, then, I can't swim. I'm one of the greatest swimmers on Earth, you know. No good in the water but very good on earth. Ha, ha, ha!

SEAGOON:

Ha, ha, ha. Yes, yes.

ECCLES:

That's [UNCLEAR] number one, 1951 [UNCLEAR]... what?

CRUN:

Ah, good, Seagoon, I'm sorry to interrupt your corny jokes and laughter but there's a time and place for everything.

SEAGOON:

IIII... do believe you're right.

CRUN:

Yes. I want you to have a look at what I have got in this cardboard, er, box, sir.

SEAGOON:

In the old cardboard box. Well, I'll... I'll just put my looking-into-cardboard-boxes glasses on. There! By gad, you've got a lump in that box.

CRUN:

Yes, a lump, I put it on the ground, so. There. And there is your mountain.

SEAGOON:

(SPLUTTERS) But it... it (SPLUTTERS) It looks like a molehill!

SELLERS:

Yes, I'm going to make a mountain... out of it!

OMNES:

(LAUGHTER, BECOMING SYNCHRONISED)

GRAMS:

LORRY PULLS UP.

ELLINGTON:

Er, Mr Seagoon?

SEAGOON:

You want me, lorry-driver?

ELLINGTON:

Yeah. Whattaya all lyin' down for?

SEAGOON:

You just ran over us.

ELLINGTON:

You hurt?

SEAGOON:

No.

ELLINGTON:

All that for nothin'? There's a parcel on my lorry for you, mate.

CRUN:

Ah, that'll be the mole for this molehill. Help me unwrap it, men.

SEAGOON:

Right. Right. Together!

GRAMS:

TEARING OF PAPER.

CRUN:

Careful, careful. Don't tear the string. You never know, we might have lean years. Aaah, the mole.

ECCLES:

Oooh, yeah. Hello, little mole. Nice little mole. He must be hungry.

CRUN:

Yes. Here, boy, here's a nice worm for you.

ECCLES:

(GULP) Thank you, any more?

SEAGOON:

You fool, Eccles! That was for the mole, Eccles!

GRAMS:

GROWLS, AS OF HUNGRY LION

SEAGOON:

I say. Are you... are you *sure* this thing is a mole?

CRUN:

Of course I am, buddy-Neddie. Read the label round his neck.

SEAGOON:

Oh, yes, yes, it says L - I - O - N. L-I-O-N. Mole? L-I...

CRUN:

Well, well, what does it say? What does it say? Thats what I want to...

SEAGOON:

(SHOUTING, FROM FAR OFF) It's a lion!

CRUN:

Oh. Do you... do you think its a lion, Ellington?

ELLINGTON:

(SHOUTING, FROM FAR OFF) Yeah!

CRUN:

Aaahhhhooohhh!

GRAMS:

ENORMOUS ROAR OF LION

CRUN:

Puss, puss, puss, puss, puss! Nice hairy puss, yes. Puss, puss. Eat this pussy, eat this, it's all for you.

ECCLES:

Put Me Down! Aaaaooow!

GRAMS:

LION SNARLS

GREENSLADE:

While the studio audience are being entertained with that speeded-up recording, we open this tube containing a liquified Max Geldray. And *dashed* good value it is, too!

MAX GELDRAI:

'DEED I DO'

GELDRAI:

Thank you. And for an encore I present The Greatest Mountain on the World Part 2, Ploogie!

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC LINK

GREENSLADE:

For months, work went ahead on the mountain. By nineteen scrampty-phew! it had reached 21,000 feet. Then - disaster. Ohhhh, Woe.

GRYTPYPE:

Good Morning, sir.

SEAGOON:

I'm innocent, I tell you! It's a lie! I'll agree to a blood test! I was playing golf at the time and losing!

GRYTPYPE:

Yes, yes.

SEAGOON:

I remember that!

GRYTPYPE:

Yes, all right, lad, it's alright, it's alright. I'm... I'm not a policeman, I'm dressed like this to allow me to ride free on buses.

MORIARTY:

Free!

GRYTPYPE:

Shut up, Moriarty.

MORIARTY:

(WITTERS IN BACKGROUND)

GRYTPYPE:

You must excuse the poor Count. You see, he was born in a trunk at the Princes Theatre.

SEAGOON:

(SINGS)

GRYTPYPE:

You'll get a punch up the conk in a minute.

SEAGOON:

What do you two want?

GRYTPYPE:

Is this your mountain?

SEAGOON:

It is.

GRYTPYPE:

Oh, dear. Oh, dear. Well, it'll have to be dismantled. Hand me that stick of fyern dynamite.

MORIARTY:

Ooooooww.

GRYTPYPE:

Time for a quick 'ow', then.

MORIARTY:

Owwwww.

GRYTPYPE:

We insert in the mountain, so. And now, we light the fuse. Show your teeth.

MORIARTY:

Cheeeese.

FX:

SCRATCH. CRINKLE OF CELLOPHANE.

GRAMS:

FEET RUNNING AWAY

ECCLES:

(MUTTERING, GROWING LOUDER. SNIFFS) What's that? What's that smell? Ooooooooooooh. Ooh, it's something stuck in a mountain. I felt no pain. It looks like a cigar. Lit, too. I think I'll take a puff.
(DEEP INTAKE OF BREATH)

GRAMS:

EXPLOSION

ECCLES:

Mmmmmm. Strong.

ORCHESTRA:

TATTY CHORD

SEAGOON:

Round the front with a mole.

CRUN:

Eccles. What are you doing up this tree?

ECCLES:

I er... Ooooooooooh. Where's... where's the... where's the... where's the mountain?

CRUN:

Its gone. Neddies mountain's blown to pieces. We'd better tell him, I suppose.

ECCLES:

I think he knows.

CRUN:

Why?

ECCLES:

He was sleeping on top. Look out, here he comes!

CRUN:

Quick, put this piano on the ground, we must break his fall.

SEAGOON:

(DESCENDING SCREAM)

FX:

THUMP, TWANG OF PIANO-STRINGS.

CRUN:

Are you all right, Mr Seacroon?

SEAGOON:

Yes, thank heavens. I fell on the black keys in F sharp.

CRUN:

Its a good job I had my foot on the soft pedal.

SEAGOON:

Indeed. Now then, what's happened to my Hyde Park-type mountain?

CRUN:

It was exploded by bang.

MORIARTY:

(GARGLE) You see, we did it. (WITTER)

GRYTPYPE:

Allow... allow me. Allow me. Section ninety-free, Ministry of Work and Kipping, states that all mountains above knee-level within a radius of Nelson's Column must be exploded by bang.

SEAGOON:

What! Form a committee to form a committee to inaugurate a council to petition a body to agree to a quorum to find public money to create a thingamajig and the Maple Syrup Foreverrrrr!

ORCHESTRA:

TATTY CHORD.

SEAGOON:

Thank you, thank you, rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb, rhubarb.

OMNES:

(COMMITTEE MUMBLINGS)

SEAGOON:

Lord Europe is perfectly right. If we can't build our mountain in England, we'll have to build one elsewhere. Therefore, I call for advice from Major Bloodnok.

ORCHESTRA:

BLOODNOK THEME

BLOODNOK:

Ohhhhhh. Ohhhhhh. Ohhhhhh. The Bank of England? What a silly place to leave money. I'll just take it for safety. Now, whats all this about?

SEAGOON:

The mountain, sir.

BLOODNOK:

Oh, the mountain, yes. Well, I... I have discovered that Mount Everest is 229,141 feet high, but it's miles wide. That means, you see, if it was laid on its side, it would be higher than it is now.

SEAGOON:

But in heavens name, Major, how do we tip Mount Everest on its side?

BLOODNOK:

How? Isn't it obvious?

SEAGOON:

No.

BLOODNOK:

Then they must have another idea.

SEAGOON:

I don't wish to know that.

SPRIGGS:

Wait a minute, Ji-iimmm.. I know of a higher mountain than Everest.

SEAGOON:

What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What?

SPRIGGS:

I'll stop at the Red Lion.

SEAGOON:

(CHICKEN CLUCKING NOISES)

SPRIGGS:

Yes, Jim, it's true. It'sss truuueeee. It is true. This mountain is forty thousand feet high. There's a snaggle. It's under the sea. It's under the seaaa.

SEAGOON:

Its worth a try, yodelling Jim. Those in favour of climbing, raise your right leg.

MILLIGAN:

Steady.

SEAGOON:

Splendid, agreed. Ellington? Clear the decks.

ELLINGTON:

Yim bom bulla boo!

RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET:

"RUN JOE"

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC LINK

FX:

RUNNING WATER, CONTINUES UNDER...

SEAGOON:

We fitted out a magnificent expedition vessel. And in three months we hove to above the mighty underwater mountain, part two.

CRUN:

Lower the anchor.

ECCLES:

Ayeawwarrrrrr... Aye!

FX:

SPLASH

CRUN:

Shouldn't it have had a chain attached to it?

FX:

RUNNING WATER STOPS

ECCLES:

Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, but it, er... I don't think it was a very good anchor.

CRUN:

What do you mean?

ECCLES:

Well, it sank, didn't it? Must have had a hole in it I sup...

ELLINGTON:

May I interrupt you for a second?

BLOODNOK:

Yes, what do you want?

ELLINGTON:

Nothing, I just want to interrupt.

BLOODNOK:

Get out of here, you naughty blan.

SEAGOON:

Major. Major, according to our calculations we are almost above Mount Fred.

BLOODNOK:

Then action! Men, to climb this underwater giant we shall need the following: alpenstocks, skis, rope, crampons, crevices, grappling irons and tents.

SEAGOON:

Tents? But this climb is underwater, sir.

BLOODNOK:

Sink me, you're right. Include umbrellas, raincoats... and Miss Myrtle Penelope Dimpley.

SEAGOON:

Whats she for?

BLOODNOK:

I love her, sir.

SEAGOON:

How are we going to carry all the heavy equipment?

BLOODNOK:

Camels.

SEAGOON:

Camels? Camels live underwater? (JEWISH ACCENT) My life, thats mad, yet.

BLOODNOK:

Of course it's mad, only mad camels could live underwater. Do you think I'm crazy, sir?

SEAGOON:

Yes.

BLOODNOK:

What a splendid judge of character you are. Now, what's next? Aahh, provisions, yes. Most important: paraffin cookers for cooking paraffin.

SEAGOON:

You can't...

BLOODNOK:

[UNCLEAR].

SEAGOON:

You can't cook underwater.

BLOODNOK:

Of course you can't, we shall surface for all meals.

SEAGOON:

Oh.

BLOODNOK:

Now, how far is it to the base of the mountain? Get ready all you drivers.

SEAGOON:

I say. How do you intend getting down to the mountain?

BLOODNOK:

Simple. One digging, one filling in and one looking. No, no, no, I mean... my famous fireman system.

SEAGOON:

(UNDER) Rhubarb!

BLOODNOK:

You see, what we do is we lower a greasy pole over the ship's side, providing he doesn't object, and we all...

SEAGOON:

(LAUGHS) The old Stanislavsky! (LAUGHS)

BLOODNOK:

And... we all slide down to the mountaintop and plant the British flag.

SEAGOON:

No, no, no, that will never do, that would be a foul, sir. You can't climb *down* to get to the *top* of a mountain.

BLOODNOK:

I don't... what?

SEAGOON:

You can't!

BLOODNOK:

Ah.

SEAGOON:

No. The International Alpine Club states categorically, sir, and I repeat that word, categorically, that all mountains must be climbed up to get to the top.

BLOODNOK:

Flood me cistern with galloping crabs! You mean..

SEAGOON:

With pleasure!

BLOODNOK:

...we have to climb to the bottom and then climb up again?

SEAGOON:

Yes.

BLOODNOK:

How far is it to the very bottom?

SEAGOON:

Erm... approximately three miles. To be exact: three miles.

BLOODNOK:

Much too far to walk. Everybody in the car, we'll drive down. Ellington, away we go.

GRAMS:

CAR ACCELERATES AWAY.

SEAGOON:

Oooh.

FX:

BIG SPLASH. BUBBLING, AS OF A SUBMERGED BOTTLE FILLING WITH WATER, CONTINUING UNDER...

GREENSLADE:

To enable the story of the underwater epic to be continued, the BBC have installed microphones at the Base Camp on the North Col and at the end, at the summit. Now: read on.

GRAMS:

CAR SPEEDS BY.

BLOODNOK:

Stop the car.

GRAMS:

SCREECH OF BRAKES.

BLOODNOK:

We're lost. Lord Seagoon, ask a native where we are.

SEAGOON:

Right, sir. I'll knock on this oyster.

FX:

RAT-AT-TAT-TAT ON DOOR. FOOTSTEPS. CREAK OF DOOR OPENING

MINNIE:

Yes?

SEAGOON:

Is Pearl in?

MINNIE:

No. No, she's not but I'm her mother.

SEAGOON:

You must be mother-of-pearl! Haaaaaaaaaaa! Oh, aha-ha! Mother-of-pearl! I don't know where I get 'em from! Ha-ha! Mother-of... Pearl. (CLEARS THROAT)

MINNIE:

What do you want, naughty buddy?

SEAGOON:

Could you direct me to Mount Fred, sir.

MINNIE:

Ohhhh! I'm sorry, I'm a stranger down here, buddy.

SEAGOON:

You'll regret this, buddy-wuddy. You can't trifle with the British Empire!

BANNISTER:

Get out, buddy or you'll get something...

SEAGOON:

You long, stringy, needle-nardle-noo.

MINNIE:

You... you great big steaming...

SEAGOON:

I won't stand for it you know!

BLOODNOK:

Come along Seagoon, let's get out of here.

SEAGOON:

Long live the Union Jack!

MINNIE:

Down with it, I say.

BLOODNOK:

Well, well. Get in and drive on, Ray, drive on. Drive on!

ELLINGTON:

OK, man.

GRAMS:

CAR DRIVES OFF

BLOODNOK:

He should have waited for us.

SEAGOON:

Now we are obviously lost.

BLOODNOK:

Lost?

SEAGOON:

Yes.

BLOODNOK:

Rubbish, I know exactly where we are.

SEAGOON:

Where?

BLOODNOK:

Here.

SEAGOON:

I do believe you're right. Nevertheless, someone must surface and see where we are. Now let me see, who shall it be? Bluebottle?

BLUEBOTTLE:

I heard you call me, Captain, I heard you call me! England expects.

SEAGOON:

What?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Sticks hand up jumper in Lord Nelson pose. Moves left of stage. Waits.

SEAGOON:

Bluebottle, I want you to get to the surface.

BLUEBOTTLE:

The surface it shall be! I shall surface. Quickly puts on LCC men's night-only bathing drawers. I'm ready, Captain.

SEAGOON:

Good. Now just grab the horns of this submerged mine.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh, jolly good. 'Ere, wait a minute. Don't mines go bang?

SEAGOON:

Aha, ha, ha, ha. Of course not, Bluebottle.

BLUEBOTTLE:

I knew it was safe. Ehehehe! Moves forward to mine. Grabs horns, very gently. Eeeheheh. It *is* safe. I did not believe you at first, but now I know that it...

GRAMS:

EXPLOSION.

FX:

TELEPHONE RINGS

SEAGOON:

Hello?

BLUEBOTTLE:

(ON TELEPHONE) You rotten swine, you! You deaded me again, I die in my prime. Farewell! Pushes button B, gets money back, exits to NAAFI for a quick cup of tea.

SEAGOON:

I... I... I've deaded him. I have to tell his mother.

ECCLES:

Oh, that should cheer her up, anyhow.

CRUN:

I've come to tell you that the explosion has blown Mount Fred to bits.

SEAGOON:

Curse! That's ruined our plans.

ECCLES:

Oh, never mind, there. You have the... the rest of this cigar that I took out of the mountain.

SEAGOON:

That's very, very kind of you, Eccles, thank you very much.

ECCLES:

Oh, I got it from a Ministry workman,

SEAGOON:

Strong, aren't they?

ECCLES:

Yeah.

GRAMS:

EXPLOSION.

GREENSLADE:

We regret to announce the death of Lord Seagoon, Mr. Crun and Eccles. The program was recorded. Goodnight.

ECCLES:

Good... goodnight, folks. Have a good time.

GREENSLADE:

You're supposed to be deaded.

ECCLES:

No, I'm not, that's only acting.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yeah, you were deaded like all of us.

SEAGOON:

(OVER ECCLES) Come on Eccles, be dead, we're deaded!

ECCLES:

No, I ain't. Oh, no!

SEAGOON:

Well, you've got...

ECCLES:

I don't want to be dead.

SEAGOON:

...to get used to the idea.

ORCHESTRA:

PLAYOUT

GREENSLADE:

That was 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, announcer Wallace Greenslade, the program produced by Charles Chilton.

Vintage E02 - The Greatest Mountain In The World

Notes:

"Simple. One digging, one filling in and one looking..." refers to a joke of the time, roughly about 3 monkeys helping a fourth who has chronic diarrhea.

LCC = London County Council