

WHAT the Honourable Nedward Seagoon was doing off the coast of Ireland, where he was last heard of, is anybody's guess or nobody's or both, though we ourselves think he was probably walking backwards to Christmas across the Irish Sea. What's more to the point is that he learned from his solicitors, Messrs MacHairy MacLegs, that he had inherited a million smackers. The Honourable Nedward established his identity with his solicitors with no more trouble than usual. Then since he must become a Peruvian before he could claim his inheritance, he set out for South America, where he tried to prove among other things that all Peruvians are Welsh. Not that it mattered one way or the other, anyway, for the man who had left the million smackers, Baron Seagoon, was not, of course, dead—he had just overslept one morning.

If your inclination after reading this little story is to analyse it or turn to the next page you had probably better do that anyway, because it means you are a solemn person—a psychiatrist, maybe, or a radio critic—and that *The Goon Show* is away above your head. If you merely give a short maniacal laugh in the key of E flat and keep on munching away appreciatively at the living room curtains, you'll know you haven't gone sane yet and can safely read on while you reach over with one of your free hands and set your talking-type wireless to the nearest Commercial station. Then wait long enough—till Sunday, September 22—and you'll hear the new *Goon Show* series galloping in right on the heels of the old one. Starting off with the story of the Honourable Nedward Seagoon and his inheritance—"Drums along the Mersey" is, of course, the obvious title—the new series is dedicated like the others to the destruction of humanity. As the Goons' old producer Peter Eton once observed: "It's no laughing matter."

After 18 months of *The Goon Show* in New Zealand and five or six years of it in Britain, people are still trying to kid themselves they can explain it. There was the London radio critic, for instance, unwilling or unable to admit himself at a loss for words, who described a Goon as "someone of inarticulate language with a one-cell brain who thinks in the fourth dimension"—he at least (like Pergolesi) made a stab at it. The psychiatrist, on the other hand, who went along to a rehearsal to find out the awful truth and say the last word on it, just sat attentively and unmoved to the end, then left the studio saying, "Thank you. I've had enough." That is just what the Goon addict has never had.

Terence Alan Patrick Sean Milligan (see cover), scriptwriter-in-chief to the Goons, who started his qualifying course for the job by climbing the 300-foot spire of the Cathedral in Rangoon (he would do it in Burma), once said of his job: "Characters just seem to happen. It's all very confusing"—which is as good a description of the new series as any we can think of. In "The MacReekie Rising of '74," for instance, MacScotland is in Macperil, and the Laird, Redhairy MacLegs, announces that the great Hairy Cabre of the Clan MacReekie has been stolen by the Sassenachs. Elsewhere, elsetime the buried treasure of King Arthur turns out to be the stolen regimental plate of the 2nd Poona Horse; a ship identi-

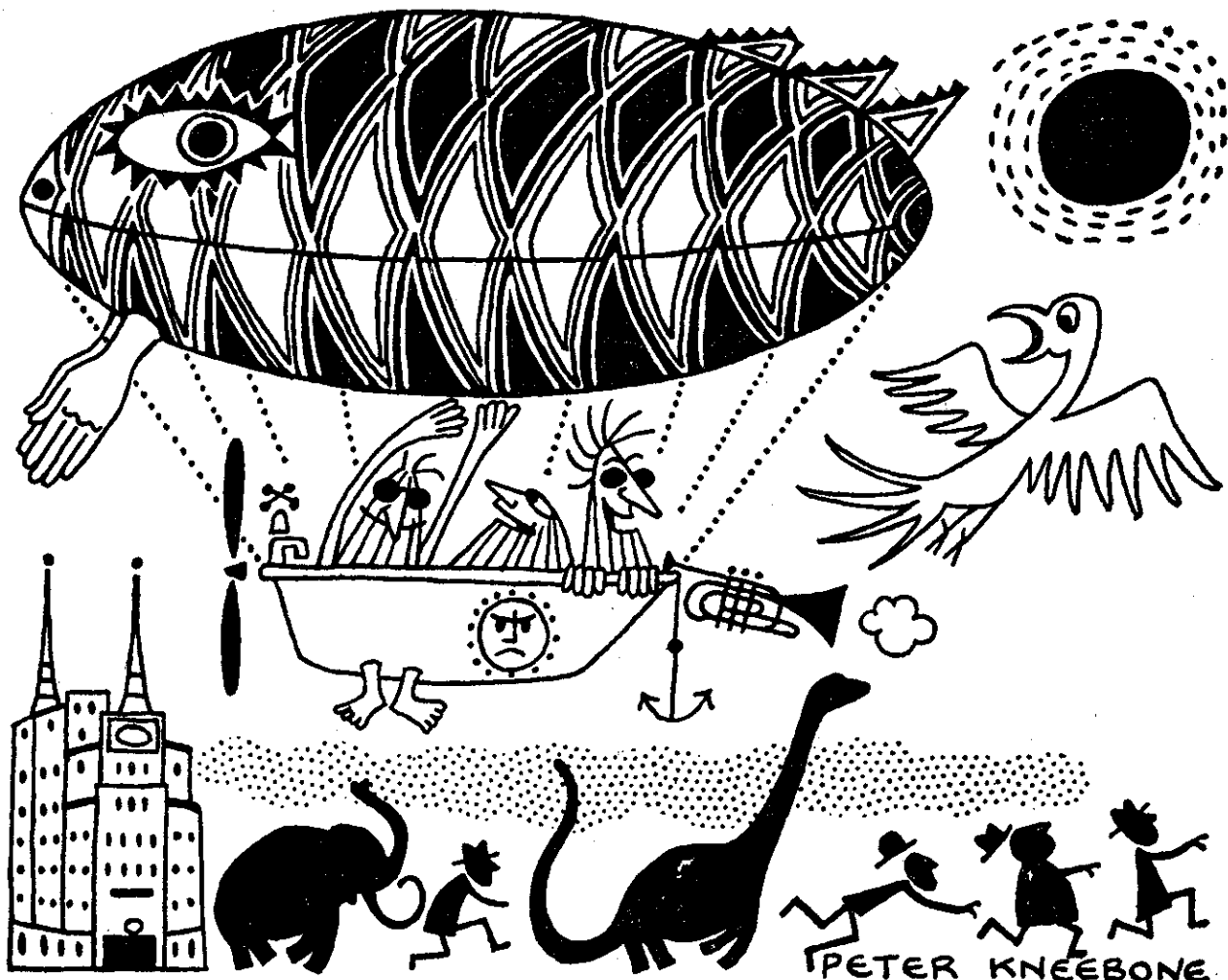
fied as Dutch by the clogs it is wearing threatens to sabotage the British Fleet, Grytpype-thynne and Moriarty persuade Neddie Seagoon to insure the English Channel against the risk of fire (the laugh's on you—it does catch fire), and these three are concerned with an adventure in a dustbin, a noisy episode with 68 pianos and a visit to a picture restorer's workshop. Those who know their theatre and their popular fiction will recognise old friends in "Six Charlies in Search of an Author"—and "I'll Met by Goonlight." Guests for the new series will include Valentine Dyall, Jack Train (Colonel Chinstrap of *ITMA*) and George Chisholm, and Terence Alan Patrick Sean Milligan, who claims that his forebears were Irish, takes a night off for the MacReekie rising.

This seems as good a place as any to answer the many queries about who is who (or what) in *The Goon Show*. According to a recent *Radio Times*—this is one time when we get in before Wallace Greenslade—Spike Milligan (alias Eccles, Count Jim Moriarty, Minnie Bannister, Adolphus Spriggs and Larry Stephens) has numerous convictions, e.g., that the world is flat, that iron ships won't float. He is author of *Sid Multh—Demon Plasterer, Her Secret Leg*, etc., etc. He was only 37 when he wrote his first song, "The Little Old Dutch Time Bomb (tick tock BANG)"—a novelty funeral march arranged for balalaika, gas-guitar, bones and E flat bucket. Peter Sellers (alias

Grytpype-thynne, Major Dennis Bloodnok, Henry Crun, William Mate, MacRedhairy MacLegs and Bluebottle), or to give him his incorrect name, Sir Grimbald Crab, was born in and was educated at, and is a man of whom Lord Nymn said, which is hardly surprising, taking into account. Before becoming a professional immigrant, he was employed as, worked in, and later held the post of. He broods. Harry Secombe (alias Ned Seagoon) was educated at Mill Hill Junior Mixed, Balls Pond Road Senior Girls, and Swansea Municipal Baths, where he studied drowning under Professor O. J. Pules-Bladdock, Q.C., and also under water. A singer of conviction (for humming without due care and attention), he has a criminal record at present number 57 on the Hat Parade, and is persona non grata with Councillor Mrs Spavey's Folde-Rols.

RIGHT: Art is a retreat for Milligan. Here he is sheltering behind his portrait of Eccles

BBC illustrations



THE GOONS

