

Don't Mention the Cross!

In the style of the 1950s/60s comedy radio show, The Goon Show. All actors stood in a row at microphones, visibly reading from their scripts. Silly voices, play on words, sound effects interrupting things, wacky and over-the-top. Using references and characters from The Goon Show and also (mixing genres!) Fawltly Towers' "The Germans" ("Don't Mention the War") episode – see page 5 for details.

Characters: Greenslade – posh radio announcer; Advisor/Major Bloodnok – old and warbly (but as there's a woman playing this part it will sound more like Meryl Streep playing Julia Child in "Julie & Julia!"); Eccles – very thick country bumpkin type; Bluebottle – dim with whiny child-like voice; Seagoon - the Advisor is making him nervous and he's trying to keep the peace and over-compensating by being jolly and enthusiastic. (= HORN HONK)*

This sketch demonstrates how Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross is essential to the Christian festival of Easter and the gospel message. Without the cross there is no salvation, and no Christianity.

1 Peter 2: 24 ~ "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." ; Colossians 1: 19-20... reconcile... through his blood shed on the cross; 1 Corinthians 15: 12-19 incl v. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 ~ "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.."; and the Easter story: Matthew 26: 47 – 28: 20; Mark 14: 43 – 16: 20; Luke 22: 63 – 24: 53; John 18: 1 – 21: 14.

Greenslade: (6 PIPS) *(in serious announcer voice)* You are listening to RPC Radio. This is the RPC Home Service presenting a comedic sketch entitled "Don't Mention the Cross".

(TRUMPET FANFARE)

Advisor: You've called me in as an advisor because you want Easter to rival Christmas as a holiday celebration, and you want your church to be in the fore-front of Easter upping it's game. It's simple: Don't mention the cross. At Christmas it's ok to talk about Jesus because he's a cute little baby, children get to do the nativity, there are carols. All good. What's Easter in the church got? Innocent man dying horribly on a cross. I'm not surprised you've not been able to sell Easter. It's a terrible idea for a holiday. Here's what I want from you – a presentation of Easter with no mention of the words sin or death. Only happy words are allowed. And don't mention the cross. Listen to it: "CROSS". "Cross" is not a happy word. Let us brain storm. Begin! Show me what you've got!

Bluebottle: Rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb...
& Seagoon

Eccles: Custard

(TELEPHONE RINGS)

Bluebottle: 'scuse me. The telephon-ey wants me. It may be the finance department saying we're unprofitable.

(DOOR OPENING AND SHUTTING SOUND EFFECT)

Advisor: You two then. How do you think we should go about selling Easter, given my guidelines?

Seagoon: It had crossed my mind* that we could start by asking a cross-section* of the local community what represents Easter to them. No doubt they'll say Easter Bunny and Easter eggs. Then I could say "Ah-Ha, yes, you say bunny and eggs, and I say cr*... er, Jesus...

(DOOR OPENING AND SHUTTING SOUND EFFECT)

Advisor: Have the finance department shut us down?

Bluebottle: I do not know. They have gone what is called bankrupt. They kept having jaffa cakes instead of digestives. They phone-ded to say "don't forget to turn out the lights, every penny counts". But if we turn out the light it will be too dark to count pennies. And anyway, that is the job of the finance department, isn't it Eccles?

Eccles: Fine... fine, fine, fine!

Seagoon: Psst! Bluebottle, listen, don't mention the cross! I mentioned it once, but I think I got away with it alright...

Advisor: Where were we? What were you saying about Jesus?

Bluebottle: Jesus got deaded on a cross by some dirty rotten swine.

(HORN HONK)

Eccles: You'd better be quiet Bluebottle, we're not mentioning the cross!

Bluebottle: Why is we not mentioning the cross?

Advisor: Because "cross" is not a happy word. And we want people to be happy about Easter, don't we?

Seagoon: But Easter is essentially about Jesus dying on a cr..

(HORN HONK)

Advisor: What did I say about death and dying? Happy words! We are aiming for happy words!

Seagoon: *(clearing throat, trying again)* Easter is about Jesus because he rose again from the de...d... daises!

Bluebottle: Jesus was pushing up the daises

Seagoon: *(rushing on)* And daises are pretty happy flowers that remind us of spring! Which is about new life! Jesus came to bring us new life by die... die... daring to conquer sin*, No! Sorry! Cross that out! Daring to conquer mistakes...

Advisor: So, because of Jesus we are all friends now, eh? Us and God, we'll all be in heaven together, old differences forgiven, and no need at all to mention the cross!

Eccles: You're sweating. I think you've got the lurgy. You've gone cross-eyed!

Seagoon: It was the mental gymnastics that did it.

Eccles: You look like you've done an Olympic session on the cross-bar

Seagoon: I feel like I'm being cross-examined!

Bluebottle: You know what it is we could do with a daisy?

Advisor: Hmm?

Bluebottle: We could make a nice cross-stitch! That is what we could do with a daisy.

Eccles: Shhh! Don't mention the cross, my good fellow! If you're not more careful you're going to cross swords with the scarey lady!

Bluebottle: I don't like this game!

Advisor: *(HORN HONK, HONK, HONK!)* I'm still here you know! I can hear you! Everyone keeps mentioning the cross! Stop it!

Bluebottle: It's not me! I have been caught-ed in the cross-fire, that is what has happened!

Eccles: I won't mention the cross again! I cross my heart and hope to die!

Advisor: *(HORN HONK)* That could be arranged!

Greenslade: There will now be a short musical interlude, performed by the Easter Advisory Committee.

Advisor: *(operatic and very warbly)* Give me oil in my lamp, keep it burning / Give me oil in my lamp I pray / Give me oil in my lamp, keep it burning / Keep it burning to the break of day

Bluebottle: What a lovely voice you've got Eccles!

Advisor: Sing Hosanna / Sing Hosanna / Sing Hosanna to the King of Kings / Sing Hosanna / Sing Hosanna / Sing Hosanna to the King!

Eccles: *(not singing the right tune)* dum de dum, oil....de dum de do...lamp..... da da dum, burning.... de dum de hosanna etc etc

Seagoon: *(playing tambourine to wrong rhythm)*

Bluebottle: *playing rattle and right at the end adds: "Of kings!"*

(HORN HONK)

Seagoon: Focus, everyone! Focus! I think we're getting somewhere. We've reached a cross-roads between the old presentation and the new, and now all we need to do is dot the i's and cross the t's.

Bluebottle: I am thinking with my brain that what we should do is make a cross-reference to Christmas and then what is what will happen is people will know it's the same Jesus what we are talking about.

Advisor: *(HORN HONK)* Cross, cross, cross! Is that all you people can think about?!

(pause)

Seagoon: Now you've made her really cross.

(HORN HONK)

Bluebottle: *(whispering an aside to Seagoon)* Would doing a funny walk help make people happy again?

Seagoon: *(angry loud whisper, losing patience)* No! It would not! BECAUSE We-are-on-the-radio!

(CLIP CLOP OF COCONUTS, IN RHYTHM, THEN OUT OF RHYTHM)

Seagoon: What's that?

Bluebottle: It is a horse doing a funny walk on the radio

Eccles: You're the most cleverest person what I know!

Seagoon: Dear Lord, give me strength!

Greenslade: We interrupt this broadcast for an important announcement: We cannot have Easter without the cross. The events of Easter are as follows: Jesus is killed on a cross; Jesus is the Son of God; when Jesus died on the cross our sins were put to death with him and the punishment due for our sins taken by Jesus once and for all; Jesus does not stay dead; He is resurrected to full life. We have been saved from facing punishment for our sin and an eternity away from the love and peace of God as long as we accept Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour. That is the only part we play in salvation, Jesus does the rest.

Eccles: Ooh! What do you say to that?

Seagoon: Maybe we got our wires crossed?

Bluebottle: What we need to do is cross over to a different way

Eccles: The scarey lady will have cross-words to say about that

Bluebottle: Maybe she won't notice?

Seagoon: Cross your fingers and hope for the best

Advisor: *(HORN HONK)* I'm leaving! I know when I'm not being appreciated!

Seagoon: If that were true you would have left four pages ago!

Advisor: Hmph!

(DOOR SLAMS)

(pause)

Seagoon: *(exhales in relief)* Tea and hot cross bun anyone?...

(EXIT MUSIC - PETER SELLERS, "OH LADY BE GOOD")

Greenslade: *(over the top of exit music)* That was Don't Mention the Cross, an RPC program, featuring *(..... list the real names of your actors here!)*. The orchestra was conducted by Ron Goodwin, and salvation was and is provided by Jesus Christ. Thank you and good night.

Credits and Additional Information:

1951-1960: Broadcast by the BBC Home Service, The Goon Show, written by and starring Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, and Harry Secombe.

We have changed "BBC" to "RPC" in the script as those are the initials our church is known by!

1975: Series 1, episode 6 of Fawlty Towers' "The Germans" ("Don't Mention the War") written by John Cleese and Connie Booth.

1968: There was a 30 minute televised version of an original "Goon Show" script, broadcast by Thames Television. The Three Goons reunited with the addition of John Cleese as announcer.

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