

# UPDATE 4 – JANUARY 2023

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> & SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

Hi Folks,

Can you believe it is 2023? I can remember when 1984 seemed futuristic, but I am getting older by the minute. Let us hope that the next year will not be so sad as the last one in that we lost a lot of friends, family and Sons.

So HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE. Remember that our Southend Extravaganza is getting nearer. I have been doing lots of bits and pieces for the event at my end. At your end, if you haven't yet done so, you need to arrange your hotel accommodation. And I would be grateful if you can please make payment for the event by February.

The weekend before our event it is the European Convention. I will remind the attendees that we have limited space but if they would like to attend (and of course we would like them to do so), they must get 'organised'.

Last month I included the itinerary. I have made a slight change for the Sunday programme in that the first show at 11am will be **FRED & BILL – TWO LEGENDARY PIONEERS** and the afternoon show will be **DO-OH! - A TRIBUTE TO FIN** They have swapped places.

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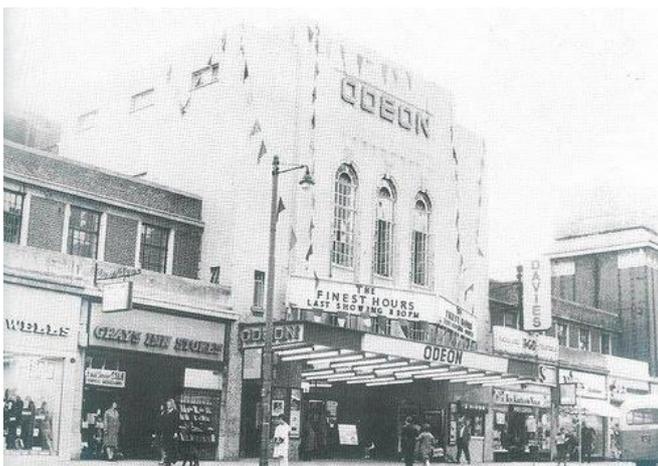
I have previously included some photos of the Park Inn, Palace Hotel where we are holding our event and where Laurel & Hardy stayed with their wives in August 1952. So, I thought I would now take you on a five-minute walk down Southend High Street (pedestrianised) from the hotel and seafront to the venue where Laurel & Hardy performed. If you walk under the railway bridge, on the left you will see a block of shops with a green dome at either



end. In the middle is a higher block which was the original entry into the 'The Astoria', the town's new luxury cinema opened in 1935. The new venue seated 2,750 people in elegant surroundings and employed 100 staff. It boasted a restaurant and even had its' own dance band and orchestra. In 1940, it became part of the Rank Group and was called 'The Odeon Theatre'. The Odeon was a firm favourite with Southend residents not only for showing the



top new film releases, but for staging live shows in its plush surroundings.



Arthur Levinson was the deputy manager when Laurel & Hardy appeared at the Odeon. He can be seen in the background as Stan and Ollie have a little bit of fun with two usherettes. Later Mr Levinson became the manager and was known as 'Mr Entertainment'. He hosted many live shows featuring stars such as Cliff Richard, Chuck Berry, Louis Armstrong, The Rolling Stones and in 1963, the Beatles. Here he is with the 'Fab Four'.



We will be telling you much more about Laurel and Hardy's visit to Southend at our 11.0am show on Saturday 16th September with a lot of unusual photos, clips and information on screen. Not to be missed. There is nothing quite like being at the cinema and enjoying Laurel and Hardy classics and rarities.

# At the Cinema



**If you have any queries about the event, then please do not hesitate to contact me.**

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**THIS UPDATE WILL BE SENT OUT IN THREE OR FOUR SEPARATE E-MAILS TO DIFFERENT GROUPS**