



◆ For more than thirty years, and over three generations, the Laurel and Hardy Museum in Ulverston has celebrated the lives and careers of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy in a very modest way, says Mark Greenhow. He reports, "We think it's time to change that. We've come up with a fantastic new exhibition in the main room at the Roxy cinema building. I want to share some exclusive photos of what we've done."

☆ The museum is at <http://www.laurel-and-hardy-museum.co.uk> and on Facebook and Twitter.

Ulverston's museum

It first opened in 1983, relocated across town in 2009, and on Sunday [16.06.13.] the Laurel and Hardy Museum celebrated its latest move.

Fans from as far as Glasgow and the Wirral turned out for the official opening in the larger downstairs section of the Roxy. Fittingly, if Ulverston's most famous son was still alive, it would have been his 123rd birthday.

The attraction has moved from a smaller section of the art deco building, providing more space for the exhibits and the capacity to host live comedy, starting from around September.

Manager Mark Greenhow, who is open to ideas as to what other events could be held at the venue, said: "We're really pleased with how it's turned out. It's been a heck of a job doing it. It's been a two-man job doing the place up, but the museum is looking the best that it has for a long time now and the feedback has been really positive."

Mr Greenhow's late grandfather, Bill Cubin, first opened the museum in Upper Brook Street after what started as a personal collection grew and grew.

It opened to the public in 1983, when Jeffrey Holland of *Hi-de-Hi!* fame cut the ribbon, but years later opened in the Roxy in April 2009 on the same day the Laurel and Hardy statue was unveiled in County Square.

Lucy Cubin, 85, wife of the late Bill, who uncovered the birth certificate to prove Stan was born in Ulverston, said: "It started in such a small room and it's just developed over the years and done such a lot of good for Ulverston. It has been an incredible 30-odd years."

Averril Renton, Grand Sheik of the Wirral-based Midnight Patrol 2 Tent of the Sons of the Desert fan club, visited with vice-chief Paul Bailey and Claire Joan.

She said: "We've come to support Mark and the family. The whole idea of the Sons of the Desert is to keep Stan and Ollie alive. We'd travel the world for Stan."

Also in attendance was Brian Worthington, who directed the film *Stan's Childhood*, which included several shoots in Ulverston and premiered in Wigan in September last year. Both he and Mr Greenhow agreed it would be a great idea to stage a screening in the new museum.

Mr Worthington, a lifelong Laurel and Hardy fan, said: "We're here for the birthday celebrations. Because we were so interested in Stan's younger life with the film, it always makes it a bit special coming here."



Mark Greenhow and Marion Grave, who run the museum, pose with one of the displays



North West Evening Mail (18.06.13.)



*Bill Cubin
[from Bowler Dessert's vaults]*

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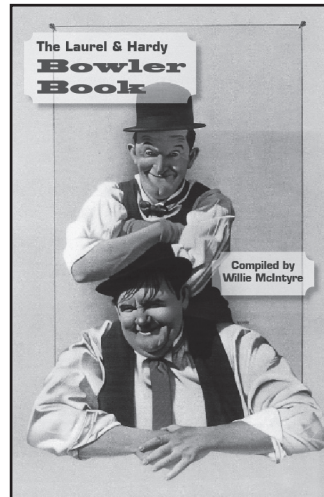
bowler.dessert@talktalk.net.

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Two special issues are also available at 80p (€1.00, \$1.50) each: *Sons of the Desert* – a souvenir of the movie and *Bowler Dessert: the early years*.



The Laurel & Hardy Bowler Book

184 pages
156mm x 233mm
Softback
Hundreds of illustrations
ISBN 978-0-9532958-1-4

HALF PRICE

OFFER:

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Cheques etc should be made payable to Sons of the Desert.
You can also purchase online.



Autumn 2013

Bowler Dessert

Final issue

This issue marks the end of the road for our paper magazine. Your editor earnestly thanks everyone for their enthusiasm and encouragement over the last thirty-seven years. Your support has been amazing.

Don't forget that *Bowler Dessert Online* continues and that we also have a page on *Facebook*. Remember too that lots of back issues are still available (see above).

◆ Now visit your editor's desk on pages 24 and 25.



C 35th UK Convention

*Hosted by the Be Big Tent of Manchester,
in association with the Blotto Tent*

*Based at the Britannia Airport Hotel,
Northenden, Manchester, M22 4FH*

2nd till 5th May, 2014

FRIDAY

Registration from High Noon.
6.00pm to 8.00pm: Happy hour.
6.00pm: Parade of the Tents, followed by
the first of many meals.
8.00pm till late: Live entertainment.
Don't forget your dancing shoes!

Booking forms to

Paul Brodie, 4 Woods Lane, Dobcross,
Oldham, Lancs, OL3 5AN.
Email: paulbrodie@aol.com.
Tel: 079 7320 5986.

SATURDAY

11.30am: Very short trip to sunny
Stockport. Marvel at the majestic
Plaza, refurbished to its original 1920s
style cinema/theatre, the only one of its
kind in the UK.
12.00 noon: Two hours of free time.
Suggested is a free visit to the nearby
Hat Museum, to see how a fez or a
bowler is made (some steps to negotiate
but not with a piano).
2.00pm: Guided tour behind the scenes
of the Plaza, followed by a large screen
showing of our heroes, open to the
public for a fun-filled family matinee.
Even Ethel may show up.
5.00pm-ish: Return to hotel. Evening
meal, followed by star professional
entertainment. Jitterbug till late.

SUNDAY

Games at Northenden Social Club: Oliver
Hardy golf putting competition; Night
Owls slipper throwing; try to knock
over the cats; plant pot hurling; pee
wee.

After-games drinks with amazing, great
discounted Northern beer prices and
real ale.

Stan Hooton Memorial Quiz, presented
by Eric Woods.

Finger buffet, followed by *Sons Entertain*.
Visit the local John Wayne bar (Crown
Inn) for a fight and a pint.

Visit the historic St Wilfred's Church and
climb the tower.

6.00pm: back to the hotel. Sunday Roast,
followed by another *Be Big Night of
Entertainment*.

MONDAY

Grand Sheiks Meeting – all welcome.
Passing of the Pineapple.

Cost:

£190.00, based on two people sharing.

♦ Early birds £35 per person, bed and
breakfast.

♦ Cheques etc payable to Sons of the
Desert.

Boys at the Bull

On Saturday 22nd June, the Nottingham Beau Hunks Tent made their annual eastern expeditionary trip to the Bull Inn at Bottesford. More than twenty-five Sons enjoyed an afternoon of films and fun at the pub once owned by Stan's sister Olga and visited by Stan and Ollie in the early 1950s. This year our film show was themed on Steam, Boats and Model Ts. Regular tent members John and Sue Palmer kindly brought their special car to show – a genuine vintage Model T Ford. This was a very special attraction which provoked much interest with tent members and local passers-by, both young and old. It also presented many photo opportunities and of course there were many film re-enactments including the customary throwing out of the clutch.

In the morning several Sons paid their respects at the final resting place of Stan's father (Arthur Jefferson) and visited Olga's 1940s pub, the Plough Inn in Barkston. This year, it was a very special visit as we had the pleasure of the company of John and Jean Cooper. John is Olga's nephew – but more specifically he is the son of the brother of Olga's husband, Bill Healey. . . tell me that again! The Plough Inn is no longer a pub but is privately owned accommodation. However, with thanks to the current tenant of the lower flat, we were all invited in to view what was originally the main bar room with the original 1940s bar. This was the first time that John had been back inside the old Plough in over sixty years and it was a thrill for us all to be there when the memories began flooding back. John was able to recall many happy times when he stayed at the Plough with his parents whilst Bill and Olga were away on holidays or away following the Boys on their 1947 UK tour. He had many fond memories of his uncle and auntie and also of AJ, who sadly at this time was not very well in his final years. But, extra-specially, he was also able to recall the time when he personally met Stan and Ollie, and obtained their autographs inside the pub when they visited on the afternoon of 16th March, 1947.

This was yet another Perfect Day for the tent and certainly much fun was had by all. Roll on next year.

Dave Tomlinson



2007 Euro Convention on YouTube

I have finally uploaded the 2007 Sons of the Desert documentary that was filmed at the Euro Convention in 2007 in Dublin. I know I'm biased but I think it's a great insight into our organisation and very well put together by the production company.

I would love all Sons to see it and I'm delighted finally to be able to share it after much copyright wrangling.

It's in three parts, linked to one another. Go to *YouTube* and punch in "Sons of the Desert Euro 2007 Dublin".

Liam Muldowney



Liam Muldowney

Scots banner

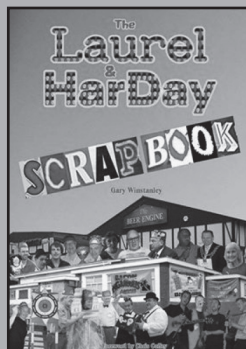
Janice Hawton was at the Ulverston Carnival on 6th July. Janice says, "That



night, in the Laurel and Hardy Museum, the curator, Mark, was holding a kind of 'show and tell', whereby you could take along something from your Laurel and Hardy collection and talk about it. I told everyone about our banner, the journeys it has been on around the world, and the fact that the template was devised

by Les Macdonald from the Leave 'em Laughing Tent, and stitched together by Doris Wright from our very own Bonnie Scotland Tent. Sadly they are no longer with us, so it is a very special tent heirloom."

Laurel & HarDays remembered



The Laurel & HarDay Scrapbook by Gary Winstanley (publication date 1st September 2013) is a compilation of photos, reviews, articles and news stories. It covers the first twenty-one Laurel & HarDays in Wigan, the one-day Laurel and Hardy annual events founded by Chris Coffey. Available via lulu.com for £10.00 plus p&p. 153pages (A4).

- ◆ Contact Gary Winstanley (address on page 58).



report on the 34th UK Convention, a story about Laurel and Hardy visiting a sweet factory in Smethwick, a close look at *Sleeping Beauty*, in which Stan Laurel played a part in 1907, a page about the pair of shoes (allegedly worn by Stan Laurel) sold recently at auction, a further look at unusual Laurel and Hardy books, an account of the trip of Saps and friends to see three statues, a page about a Tin Lizzie, a feature on Jeffrey Holland's one-man show, plus a look at a DVD and a couple of books.

There is always a page of letters, *Cockles and Mussels* and regular columns from Dave Wyatt and Jason Liddiard.

Essential reading.

- ◆ Send £12.00 to Roger Robinson, 115 Neil Armstrong Way, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 5UE for four (quarterly) issues or email roger.robinson5@btinternet.com.

The Perry Winkle

Issue 59 of *The Perry Winkle* was bulging with great articles. From the item on the Boys' eastern connections (!) to the back page photo of them with Victor Carreiro (who?) one was amazed, as usual, at the wealth of material.

There were a couple of pages about the Palace Theatre in Plymouth, where Stan and Ollie were booked to play the last of their British tour dates in 1954. There was a reassessment of *Atoll K* following a large screen presentation of a 98-minute version. There was an analysis of Dukinfield connections with Laurel and Hardy, an *Onwards to the Moon* feature, reflections from John Rowling, a spotlight on a "blonde, slim, sexy" Zizi, and a look at some unusual Laurel and Hardy books.

Issue 60 had a



Logo

Bowler Dessert's logo was drawn for us by Barrie Finney. He said that it was his favourite drawing. Although Barrie is now an absent, dear friend, we are pleased that his work lives on.

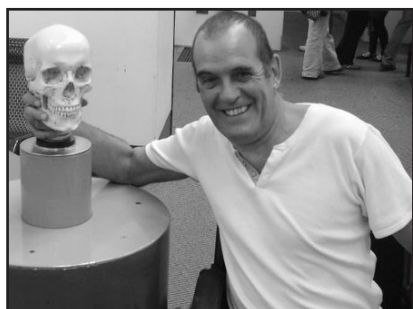


Frank Sugden steps down

Frank Sugden gave his final film show at the February meeting of the Be Big Tent. Frank had been our Film Vizier since joining the tent with his wife Joyce in 1982. Frank chose as his final offering his personal favourite, *Fra Diavolo*. The tent presented Frank with a very nice picture of Fin which had been drawn by Lucy Southward, a special celebration cake which was organised by Austin Stigwood and a framed photo of Frank himself with Steve Hill and one of Frank's projectors. We wish Frank a happy retirement and hopefully he will still pay us a visit from time to time.

We held our AGM before the tent meeting. Bob Hickson continues as Grand Sheik and I continue as Vice Sheik. Steve Hill steps into Frank's shoes as the new Film Vizier. Austin Stigwood and Mike O'Donnell represent the members-at-large.

Dean Carroll



Soldier Colin

Colin Mitchell, the past Grand Sheik of the March of the Wooden Soldiers Tent, has been in and out of hospital for the last two years with spine problems. He is now in a wheelchair. He says, "But apart from that I'm fine!" He sent us this photo and says, "I'm the one on the right!"



Laughing Gravy's 20th

Thursday 1st April 1993 seems such a long time ago. And yet here we were twenty years later celebrating our birthday. 130 people turned up on 4th April to make it a very special night.

As well as our usual film show, we wanted to raise a few "bob" for the brilliant Sandwell Young Carers. And thanks to the hard work of our Laughing Gravy helpers, and the generosity of our members, we raised £299.

Can I say a big "Thank you" to everyone who has supported Laughing Gravy over the years, especially our fantastic members.

Not everybody made our twentieth birthday, but we will never forget Terry Weir, Bill Bolger and of course Barrie Finney for making our tent the very best.

John Ullah



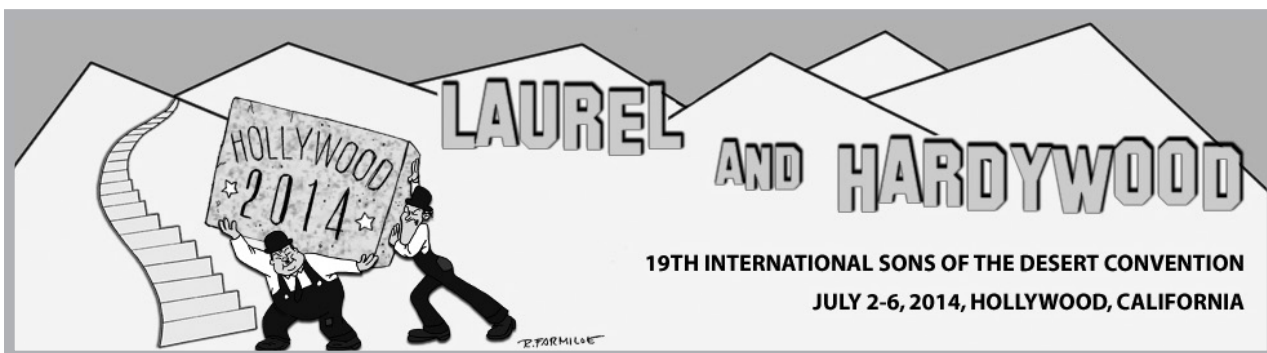
Pat and Mandy Finney
cut the cake

What's happening?

One of the best ways of keeping up to date with worldwide happenings in the world of Laurel and Hardy is through the email newsgroup run by Gino Dercola, a very dedicated Son of the Desert. Contact him at stanlaurel@verizon.net to be put on the mailing list and you will be amazed at the wealth of valuable information which is circulated regularly. Highly recommended.

Laurel & Hardy Forum Member of the Year

At the start of this year the *Laurel & Hardy Forum* announced, "After extended deliberations, several urns of demitasse, ham sandwiches, dancing girls, one payoff and no apple pie, we're happy to say, 'Congratulations to the *Laurel & Hardy Forum* Member of the Year – Tboneator64! You've done well to make the *Forum* a better place. Enjoy your year as king of the hill. It'll look good on a résumé.'"



2014 International Convention

The website for the 19th International Convention is now up and running. Visit www.Laurelandhardywood.com and register your email address to receive direct updates on the exciting events of the 2014 convention.

Also, Sons can get hotel registration information off the website and are encouraged to make room reservations now at the host hotel, Loews Hollywood Hotel in the heart of Hollywood. It is much better to have your reservation in hand now while rooms are still available. One can always cancel reservations if needed without a penalty as the dates get closer.

I am excited about the many plans that are in the works and honored to be the chairman on this conclave.

Bob Satterfield

Sons of the Desert – the play

I just thought that I would let you know that Royal Court Liverpool is producing a stage version of *Sons of the Desert* this September and October. This is the first time that anybody has

attempted to transfer the show to the stage but, don't worry, we're going to stick to the film script and keep it as true to the original as possible.

We're also going to run a short *Laurel and Hardy Revue* before each show (as *Sons of the Desert* is only an hour long) so you get more Stan and Ollie for your buck.

We do group discounts and if you are travelling from afar then we can set you up with a hotel that will offer discounted rooms. Hell, if you want to hold a convention we can probably help with that too!

The show runs from Friday 27th September to Saturday 26th October and tickets are from £13. More details are at www.royalcourtLiverpool.co.uk. Tel 0870 787 1866.



Legendary comedy duo Laurel and Hardy are heading for Liverpool in a world premiere production of *Sons of the Desert*.

The Royal Court will put on the slapstick comedy – the first time it has ever been seen on stage – in September with new artistic director Ken Alexander taking the helm.

Actors playing Stan and Ollie are yet to be revealed.

But the show will form part of the Liverpool Comedy Festival.

The script for the play is a direct transcript of the famous 1933 film and producers have secured the rights to transfer the show to the West End if it is a success. It has the backing of the rights holders to both the Laurel and Hardy franchise and the film itself.

Royal Court chief executive and *Sons of the Desert* producer Kevin Fearon said today: "This is a show I've been hoping to be able to produce for a few years now. I've always been a big fan of Laurel and Hardy and everyone involved in the project has leapt at the chance to be involved. There are some big challenges involved in transferring a film to stage but we know how dedicated Stan and Ollie fans are so we are determined to get it just right. We know how much our Liverpool audience loves a good comedy so we're producing one of the best."

The real Laurel and Hardy appeared on stage three times in Liverpool – at the Empire in 1947, 1952 and 1953.

Liverpool Echo (27.06.13.)



Iain Christie

Constant support

We have many readers who have subscribed to *Bowler Dessert* since the very first issue. We cannot list them all, but we simply must mention Bob Spiller, who has constantly contributed to our magazine throughout its long life. Bob continues valuable proof-reading for us and his comments are always appreciated. His knowledge of all things Laurel and Hardy is second to none. Thanks, Bob. You have now earned a welcome rest.

Slapstick

I attended Bristol's Slapstick Silent Film Festival for one event, *Bill Oddie's Laurel and Hardy Classics* on 27th January, showing *Them Thar Hills*, *Tit For Tat* and *Busy Bodies*. Bill Oddie said that, when making most of *Busy Bodies*, until the end tunnel scene, Hal Roach had run out of money, making the earlier part of *Busy Bodies* cumbersome. I don't know if the money side is true or not, but I don't think the earlier part is cumbersome.

Peter Andrews

Another Fine Mess Tent

After an unscheduled break (family emergency) the Another Fine Mess Tent of Northern Ireland met again on Saturday 24th November.

Since this was the Christmas meeting the programme had a distinctly seasonal flavour. Enjoyed were some fun and games for both adults and children alike, and, as usual, there were some lovely prizes.

We had a great meeting on 15th June to celebrate Stan's birthday and forty people came along. We were over the moon.

Gerry Dunne

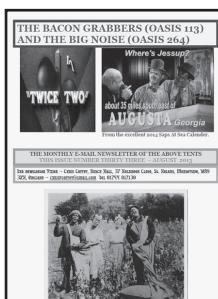


♦ *Bowler Dessert* has always revelled in trivia tidbits. In 1985 we offered a cluster of snippets and we have spread a few of these throughout this final issue of *Bowler Dessert*. First up is. . .

The Club Laurel et Hardy de France was formed in 1935 with the support of the French subsidiary of MGM and the weekly *Le Journal*. Based in Rue Condorcet, Paris, it not only published for its members a newsletter called *Cri Cri*, but organised meetings, competitions, raffles and screenings. The club's master stroke came on 10th October, 1935, when they sent a giant postcard bearing the club logo and covered in signatures as a greeting to their "patrons et amis" who received it on the set of *Our Relations*. By 1939 the club's substantial membership had spread throughout Europe, but then World War II intervened. So move over, *Sons of the Desert*. You are only Johnny-come-latelies!



Twice Two newsletter



Chris Coffey issues a free email newsletter each month, with a wide range of worldwide news and features. Contact Chris at chrisc Coffey@gmail.com. A very useful publication.

CLARIFICATION



Elsecar charity success

In April, Paul Hickling and Geoff Willis organised their annual Laurel and Hardy Charity Night at the Market Tavern in Elsecar, near Barnsley, in aid of the Sheffield Children's Hospital PACT charity. The room was once again packed and local businesses donated numerous raffle prizes.

The new Chantry Brewery from Rotherham as well as donating a large main prize of chocolate also donated a barrel of Diamond Black Stout 4.5% – with all of the profits going to the fish! Or was it the charity – I can't remember – hic!

Sean Page, a brewery director, even attended dressed as Ollie and assisted in drawing the raffle.

Overall the event raised well in excess of £1,000 and congratulations once again go to Mrs and Mr Hickling and Mr Willis and Wife!

The brewery invited the Brats Tent to a brewery visit and the tent went on 3rd August.

John Burton

Cuckoos at Panopticon

The Call of the Cuckoos Tent (now in its twenty-first year) started its eighth season at the Britannia Panopticon Music Hall in Glasgow on 3rd April. In spite of the low temperature, the evening went well and hot water bottles were available!

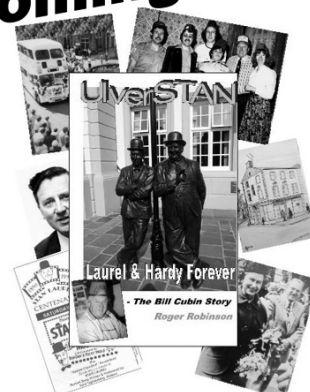
The meeting on 5th June had almost a full house. We even had a lady join in the fun who had travelled down from Wick.

On 7th August *Sons of the Desert* played to a full house. It was one of our most successful shows ever.

The Laurel and Hardy Pound Shop was popular, with some items reduced to 50p.

Willie McIntyre

Coming Soon



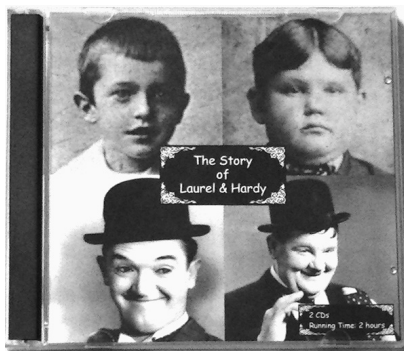
UlverSTAN

Stan Laurel was born in Ulverston. It is impossible now to visit this lovely Cumbrian town and not be aware of the link with Laurel and Hardy. There is a plaque on the house of Stan's birth, the Laurel and Hardy Museum and the beautiful Laurel and Hardy statue. But this has not always been the case and the reason is entirely down to the enthusiasm and determination of a remarkable man, the late Bill Cubin. To celebrate his life and achievements, Roger Robinson will be publishing a new book later this year. *UlverSTAN - Laurel & Hardy Forever - The Bill Cubin Story* is written with the approval and great assistance of Bill's family.

Those of us who knew Bill know that this larger-than-life and lovely man was an inspiration to many Sons of the Desert and so proud of his home town. He founded the Laurel and Hardy Museum, now run by his grandson Mark (see page 2).

All profits from the sale of the book will go to the museum.

The Story of Laurel and Hardy



This unique audio documentary by Steven Gittins chronicles the lives of the double act.

Available on two CDs, hear how it all began from humble beginnings to becoming icons of the silver screen and the legacy they left behind.

The price for the double CD set is £9.00 (inc p&p).

Contact Steven: tel 01388 777521, email gittinsfender@aol.com.

On tour

After the UK Convention, there was a visit to Durham by some Sons. Amongst the group were Roger Robinson, Paul Allen and Janet, and Dave Simpson from the Southend Saps at Sea, Chris Coffey and Norman Leigh from St Helens and Bolton, Irv Hyatt from New Jersey and Cliff Sawyer from Massachusetts.

They travelled to Birmingham to visit sites associated with Charlie Hall, then up to Ulverston, then came to Bishop Auckland where I was pleased to escort them on the Stan Laurel Trail along with fellow Hog Wild Tent member Brian Haywood, who owns the house where Stan's sister Beatrice was born.

From Bishop they went up to North Shields to visit Dockway Square and see Stan's statue. Next they headed back south, detouring to Nottingham to visit the Bull Inn and AJ's grave.

Tony Hillman



Interactive Dirty Work Tent

Our November meeting was a really fun night, as we held our first "interactive" meeting. There may be some debate whether or not this is a first but it's definitely a first for Dirty Work and our twin tent Midnight Patrol.

Although our twins weren't at our meeting in person, it was nice to see them as we linked up "live via satellite" (well live via a wireless internet connection and Skype!) and they attended our meeting once again. We had a nice little chat with Antony, Joanne and Joshua Mitchell-Waite. We were given a tour of their Laurel and Hardy shrine at their home, which has lots of wonderful memorabilia. Via our own webcam our members waved to our twins in Staffordshire. We also took time out to pose for a photo shoot.

Later we screened *You're Darn Tootin'*, where our members happily ripped up pieces of newspaper during the pants ripping scene, creating some great "surround sound" effects!

Gary Winstanley

Blockheads Tent

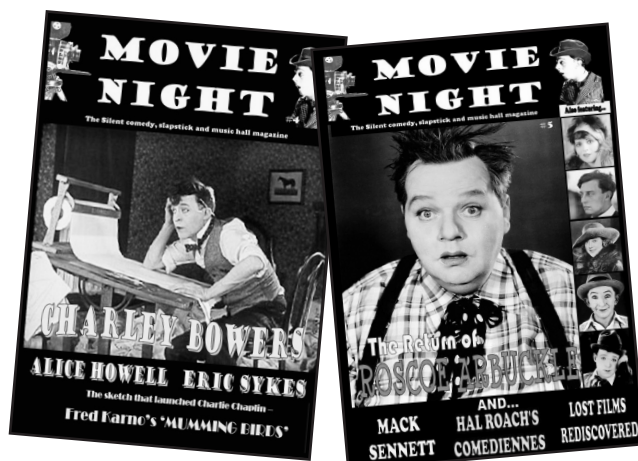
The Blockheads' June meeting happened to coincide with what would have been Stan's 123rd birthday, so we couldn't let the occasion pass without marking it with not one but two cakes and a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday!"

Gordon Davie



✧ The Edinburgh City FC Clubrooms will be moving to new premises, possibly in Leith Walk. The move is not expected to take place before the end of this year. The Blockheads Tent will meanwhile continue to meet in the current premises and will move with the club to its new premises in due course.

Autumn 2013



Movie Night magazine

After a few delays issue number 4 of the marvellous *Movie Night* emerged, followed by number 5. In the latter there are articles on Mack Sennett, a lost Three Stooges film rediscovered, the "It Girl", the return of the Charley Chase Columbia shorts, plus Keaton, Hay and Lane. We also read about Roscoe Arbuckle, *Hal Roach's Funny Ladies*, Eddie Dunn, *Dummies* (with Larry Semon), some thoughts on *Perfect Day* and a review of the book *Little Elf: A Celebration of Harry Langdon*.

Editor Matthew Ross invites comments, suggestions or articles for future issues.

* The magazines are available free of charge as PDFs from matthewross22@googlemail.com.

On the radio

Chris Evans had a feature on his breakfast show (Radio 2, 04.12.12.) about the Dad's Army Museum in Thetford (where the exterior shots for the show were filmed each year for two weeks). The curator had just secured Corporal Jones's original butcher's van for the museum. After the feature Chris asked listeners to text in other obscure museums they knew of. The Laurel and Hardy Museum was mentioned as was the Lawn Mower Museum and also a museum dedicated to hedgehogs! You don't believe me!

Mark Rodgers



Nice cut

John Bogie recently moved from Cumbernauld to Crieff. He writes, "I thought you might like this image of the Boys I came across in a gent's barber shop window in the High Street in Crieff. Amazing, eh, proving that, no matter where you move to, the Boys go with you!"

Page 9



Rolduc 2013

When shock news came that the European Convention in Itzehoe in Germany had to be cancelled, alternative plans were made. There will be a simple gathering in Rolduc, the conference center in Kerkrade, Netherlands, on the same dates as Itzehoe, 13th till 15th September 2013.

Bram Reijnhoudt writes, "Go to <http://www.rolduc2013.eu> and read about the programme, the costs and how you can register and book your room. Prices for the weekend, when you stay for three nights, are around 120 or 170 euro, with breakfast included. Other meals will be extra. Find all details on the website."

One Good Turn Tent

If you want to use email to contact the One Good Turn Tent of Huddersfield, contact Mark and Georgina Wall at general.langsdorf@gmail.com. They also have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mark.wall.902.



Cinemagic

On 19th April in the Old Court House, Antrim, Northern Ireland, a local arts group, Cinemachine, held a magical evening of silent comedy with piano accompaniment and sound effects.

Stephen O'Hagan (sound effects) and Nick Boyle (piano) gave us a great night's entertainment. Each member of the audience was given a cue sheet on entry, and, in turn, we became hungry ship's passengers in *The Immigrant* – making slurping noises during the soup scene; we became noisy guests during the party scene in *Mighty Like a Moose*; we cried during the final scene in *Big Business*, and in *One Week* we threw our shoes to the ground during the wedding scene, booed and hissed at Buster's rival and tore our cue sheets in time with the tearing of the calendar dates. Never was an audience called upon to work so hard!

There was a great touch when Nick played a lovely little Scottish motif during Fin's first appearance in *Big Business*.

Gerry Dunne

Hog Wild Tent

After many years of holding our meetings at Bishop Auckland Town Hall the Hog Wild Tent was forced to move due to increased charges being made by the council.

We quickly found a new home at the town's 24-hour Asda store, which has a small meeting room which is equipped with a TV and a DVD player. They are letting us have it free of charge.

In addition there's a large free car park which saves us struggling to find a space near the Town Hall and for those of us who like a drink there is ample choice on Asda's shelves at a cheaper price than the Town Hall bar, so it's a win-win situation all round.

For any Sons finding themselves in the Durham area and wanting to visit us we are continuing to meet on the first Tuesday of the month, except January, July and August, but now at 7.00pm until at least 9.00pm. The address is Asda, South Church Road, Bishop Auckland. Go to the store's Customer Service desk and ask for the meeting room. We started meeting at our new venue on 7th May.

Tony Hillman

Bonnie Scotland Tent

The Bonnie Scotland Tent headed for Carnforth in Lancashire on 20th July. They met up with a few Sons from the Chickens Come Home and Bacon Grabbers Tents.

The Bonnie Scots also went on their annual trip on the Waverley paddle steamer on 17th August, when they sailed from Glasgow to Tighnabruich.



Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem

It's interesting to take a look once in a while at where visitors come from to see the Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem, Georgia. Taking a look at just June, here are the statistics:



From USA: 443 visitors, from 23 different states.

From foreign countries: 41 visitors, from 9 different countries (which includes 8 from Puerto Rico and 8 from Saudi Arabia!).

Thus, the total for the month was 484 visitors. Very good for one month, I must say. Thanks to volunteer Gary Russeth for providing the statistics.



Gino Dercola

The Finishing Touch Company presents
Jeffrey Holland in
...and this is my friend
MR LAUREL

A one act play written by Gail Louw
& Jeffrey Holland

Jeff and friend
As we went to press, Jeffrey Holland was about to star in . . . *And This is My Friend Mr Laurel* at The Gatehouse in London from 21st till 25th August. He plans to take the play on a UK tour.



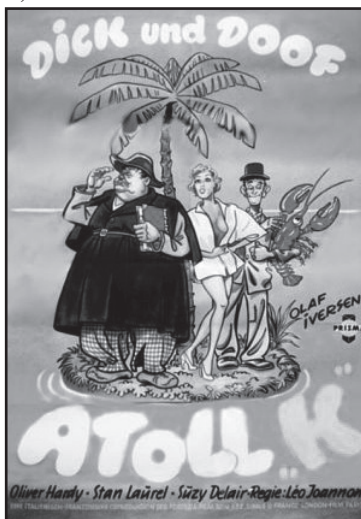
Stephen and Nick, making sweet music!
Gerry is in the middle

Roger reports

End of an ear

So after 37 years and 77 editions, *Bowler Dessert* will be no more. You would have thought that the editor might have tried to give the magazine a little time to get established, wouldn't you? Some would say that this is the end of an era. I would say (well, I would, wouldn't I?) it is the end of an ear. It is the lobe. You see earlobes seem to me not to be an essential part of our body but we would miss them dreadfully should they be removed. Where would we dangle our earrings? Wiggling our ears would be more difficult and the remainder of the ear would look unfinished without the lobes. We sure are going to miss *Bowler Dessert*. There will be nowhere to dangle our Laurel and Hardy titbits, we will not be able to "hear" what other people are up to, and the Sons of the Desert will seem incomplete without *Bowler Dessert*.

Now I happen to be in the "know". I used to be in the "yes" and wanted to be in the "no" but my spelling wasn't that good. Anyway, what I am coming to is that I know the real reason that *Bowler Dessert* is coming to an end. Willie McIntyre has made an absolute fortune producing *Bowler Dessert*, so much so that he has now bought himself some real estate. Out of the profits of *Bowler Dessert*, he has bought himself an island. It is his *Utopia*, his *Atoll K*, his *Robinson Crusoeland* (shouldn't that one belong to me?). It was either an island or a Swiss



(Miss) bank account to avoid the Scottish taxman. He chose an island in the inner Outer Hebrides. Or is it in the outer Inner Hebrides? It has cost him, or maybe I mean us, something in the region of 50,000 tiddlywinks but this investment

☆ Roger is our most prolific writer for *Bowler Dessert*. He has been for a long, long time and he has supported the magazine in many diverse ways. Your editor thanks him for all his kindness and friendship. You helped to keep us sailing on course for many years, Roger, and that makes me very happy.

Willie McIntyre

is now part of his future plans. He has named his acquisition *Bowler Dessert* Island. With his newly found fame as a DJ on Inverclyde Radio he will broadcast his new programme *Bowler Dessert Island Discs* direct from the island. Is this Scotland's answer to the late Roy Plumley?

How does this leave the rest of us on the mainland? Well I suppose we could wait our turn to be his castaways on the programme but I have a cunning plan. You see I am not going to let a canny Scotsman have the last laugh when it comes to the final *Bowler Dessert*. This Sassenach has learned something (from a Scotsman!) about last editions and how collectable they are. Did you read about Des Barr, the newsagent in Paisley, Scotland, who persuaded the printers of the last-ever *Dandy* to run an extra print for him and sold 10,000 copies within



a few days? Well I am going to make a similar arrangement with Mr McIntyre. I believe that the last *Bowler Dessert* will be as much sought after as the last *Dandy*. I will then make my own fortune and will also be able to retire to a remote Scottish island, called, of course, Robinson Crusoeland. I will start up my own radio programme *Utopian Slipped Discs* and invite stowaways on the show.

That's the cunning plan. In the meantime, like everyone else, I will be reading *Bowler Dessert* 77 with many thoughts running through my head. Just in case you are interested, I thought I would tell you mine.

* First and foremost – the previous *Bowler Dessert* had so much content that it was extra thick. I loved this because I have a wobbly table and by sticking it under one leg (the table's not mine) it is now stable.

* Second and fourmost – I think that the Royal Mail service will now be in danger of closing without *Bowler Dessert*. If it does, then how will I manage to send out a Christmas card to my Welsh Auntie Peggy in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwilllantysiliogogoch?



* Third and fourmost – what will become of *Roger Reports*? For years and years Willie has printed my rubbish to keep me sweet. This could affect my health, if I can't find an outlet for my ramblings. It could be enough to make a grown man cry.



* Fourth and firstmost – oh dear, where to start? A new paragraph is called for.

* It is firstmost, foremost and the most difficult thing to say. Willie McIntyre, you are amazing. *Bowler Dessert* has been as solid as a rock for Sons of the Desert since it was first published. It has been there forever, keeping the family together, wooing us, encouraging us, educating us and entertaining us. It has always been essential reading for Laurel and Hardy fans. We can only guess at the hard work, the frustrations, the time and money that you have spent satisfying our appetite for *Bowler Dessert*. On behalf of all Sons, whether they have read just a single copy or been a continuous subscriber over the years, "THANK YOU."

Your pal, Roger Robinson



TV Comic

Quite a while ago you printed a letter asking if anyone knew how many *TV Comics* Laurel and Hardy appeared in.

Well, I don't know exactly, but I have a pretty good idea. From research for the book on comics, we do know that they appeared in all issues from 841 to 1291 – making 450 appearances. However, they also appeared in at least three annuals and three holiday specials. Then they started to reprint strips somewhere between issues 1563 and 1600.

From 1600 to the last issue, 1697, they appeared in every issue, we believe, making 97 more appearances minimum, 134 maximum.

In conclusion, they appeared in somewhere between 547 and 584 comics. We go into more detail on this in the book... with plenty of pictures, including a reprint of the first strip and adverts, and letters page!

Antony Mitchell-Waite

Calendar

I was saddened by the lack of a Laurel and Hardy calendar this year. In the final *Bowler Dessert* I appeal to see if we can all make sure that future years are not free of Stan and Ollie in terms of calendars.



☆ The Laurel and Hardy calendar is back. Conventioneers at Southend were all given a splendid calendar for 2014. The host tent has a few spare copies. Email AllenMadpaul@aol.com for availability.

Mimo

Bowler Dessert 76

I have a lot of back numbers and would like to help you go out in a blaze of glory with this last letter!

Page 9: Anthology *Alternate Warriors* features short story *The Firebringers* by David Gerrold with Laurel and Hardy among the crew dropping the first atom bomb. I remember a '60s *Batman* comic with a couple of comic crooks called Rosy and Weeper clearly modelled on them.

Page 30: I do remember *Hollywood Cavalcade* – Al Jolson having to sing *Kol Nidre* because they couldn't get clearance for any of his popular *Jazz Singer* songs.

Page 42: *Hi-de-Hi!* – Remember episode in which Ted and Peggy dressed up as Stan and Ollie to teach Spike a lesson?

Page 45: *The Honeymooners* – nearest thing to a new Laurel and Hardy.

Page 60: George Macdonald Fraser's meeting with Ollie is fully recorded in his *The Light's on at Signpost*, which I highly recommend – if you're not politically correct!

Mark Taha



Fave shot

Below is what I think is my all-time favourite picture of Laurel and Hardy, which for me sums up their relationship on and off the screen. It's plainly obvious, despite it being a candid off-screen shot, apparently sharing a joke, of the love and respect they had for each other.

Jonathan Hayward



Film Fun

I think someone once said, "A picture is worth a thousand words." On the left is a picture from *Film Fun*, with words that you don't often see in print.

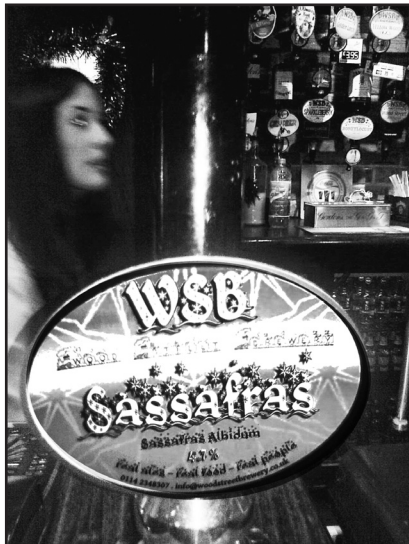
Dave Oyston



On the box in the USA

On the first weekend in March on the PBS television station, they had a 1½ hour show called *An Evening with Jerry Lewis: Live from Las Vegas*. I saw part of it. And in that part, he talks for a minute or two about his love and admiration of Laurel and Hardy and what they meant to him and to all comedians. He mentioned that, during the last five years of Stan's life, he visited Stan about twenty times a year. He talked about the advice that Stan gave him about show business, and you can tell how important it was to him. You can surely feel how Jerry Lewis loved Stan Laurel. If you're a Jerry Lewis fan, I think you'll enjoy watching this show – keep a watch for repeats to appear on PBS.

Gino Dercola



Frassasas

Brian Jessop came across a beer recently in Sheffield as detailed on the pump clip on the photo on the left. I wouldn't mind trying a pint of Frassasas myself.

John Burton



Bring me sunshine

I have been watching the 1978 cult horror film *Blue Sunshine* and in the scene in the above picture the kids are watching. . . *The Flying Deuces!*

Stephen Barlow

International

At a tent meeting it occurred to me that although the man in the street might consider Laurel and Hardy to be an American act, out of the five people we toast only one was actually born in the USA. That's Ollie, of course. Of the others, Stan and Charlie Hall were English, Fin was Scottish and Mae Busch was Australian. Still, if the American Sons are nice to us maybe we'll let them join "our" organisation!

Gordon Davie



Spotty Dog

Can't seem to get away from Norman Leigh – I spotted this in Lauder.

John Robertson

✧ Ed: Norman is famous for his Spotty Dog act at conventions.

Helpmates

At the Helpmates event in May it was a pleasure to meet Grand Sheik Jo Mitchell-Waite and hubby Antony. He was telling me how he put together three or so books in the *Antics* series. Very interesting. I brought my *Animated Antics*, concise version, so I could have it signed by both of them.

There are rumours of bringing the UK Convention to Bristol in 2016 or 2017. Three separate people even said, "When's it coming to Bristol?" This could happen if I attend the UK Convention in the next two years and make a bid for it. I certainly have helpers to make this possible.

Peter Andrews

Is there a future?

It's a shame that the films are not on television now. Today's children will miss out unless their parents are fans. The same applies to other comedians from the same era. Will Hay, the Marx Brothers, Abbott and Costello, WC Fields and George Formby regularly had film seasons. I suppose it is easier and cheaper to show repeats of *Flog It!* and *Coast*.

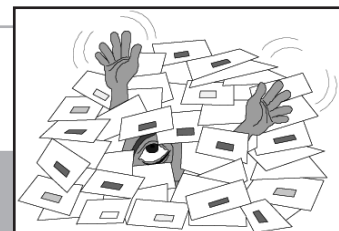
There will always be a section of film fans who will search out the old stuff and – who knows – the BBC might surprise us and buy back the rights.

In the late 1960s, I got my first glimpse of Buster Keaton on a programme called *Golden Silents*, introduced by Michael Bentine. Channel 4 screened most of his silent films in the '80s. I've just bought all the latest Kino DVD releases, which play on Region 2 and they are fantastic. The point is that I first saw him on television over forty years ago and he made such an impression that I had to find out more. Most people under thirty won't have heard of him. I hope that doesn't happen to Laurel and Hardy.

Steve Bolton

Nancy says

Nancy Wardell has been in touch and wants us to know that she is still interested in Sons' affairs though her health no longer allows her to attend meetings etc. She sends her good wishes.





Brats at Christmas

Thirty-six Sons attended the Brats' Christmas meeting on 10th December on a cold winter's eve. We were welcomed by our hosts at the New Crown Inn who advertised our event on the chalkboard outside, which was a pleasant surprise!

Everything was set up for a perfect night as everyone brought along a prize for the annual "Bring a Prize, Win a Prize" raffle where everyone wins – someone brought along a bottle of strong cider whose name reminded us of the tent's Exhausted Ruler! Things became a little calamitous when the DVD player refused to recognise any discs – landlord Gary Fairchild kindly unplugged his own DVD player and installed it. However, unbeknown to Gary, the remote control wasn't working and the DVD player did not allow access to the menu to find films other than the first film on the DVD, which meant that we would not be able to screen the Christmas classics – although fortunately *Laughing Gravy* was the first film on one disc so the festivities commenced.

In the interim John Burton braved the elements to disconnect his own DVD player and install it in time for our next film, *Big Business*, and the evening continued perfectly. Whilst *Below Zero* was being screened, at the point where Stan looks through his expandable wallet for money to pay the bill, Brian Jessop (to the delight of everyone) produced an exact same wallet as it was his turn to buy a round of drinks!

After a buffet, the loyal toasts and a singalong, a few stalwarts hung around for a photo shoot and to say seasonal

farewells, although for most it would happen all over again as we had forty Sons attending the Brats Annual Christmas Turkey Dinner on 17th December at the same venue.

We also distributed *Bowler Desserts* to all annual members and sold every spare copy with everyone commenting on how fantastic it was. (That's before reading it – they were all admiring the cover!)

John Burton



Laughing Christmas party

Grand Sheik David Bulmer tells us that the Christmas Party of the Laughing Gravy Tent of Tingley went well, with three prospective new members and a visit from Georgina and Mark Wall of the One Good Turn Tent of Huddersfield. He says, "All are eternally welcome!"

Be Big Tent's Christmas

At our Christmas meeting twenty-seven people watched *The Fixer-Uppers*, *Below Zero* and *Big Business*. The Cricket Club looked really smart with the lights on low and the Christmas decorations up. Thank you to Tata Pie Ted for the catering. We also had our usual singalong, loyal toasts and raffle.

Dean Carroll

Twin Christmas meal

On 7th December we held our first "twinned" Dirty Work / Midnight Patrol Christmas Party. There were nineteen Dirty Patrollers present for the meal at the Venture pub, Wigan.

It was nice to be in the company of Joanne and Antony Mitchell-Waite, who travelled from Staffordshire to be with us on our special night. And indeed, it was good to see our "regular" Dirty Workers there.

The staff presented the table well for us with Christmas crackers, party poppers and excellent service. I had also arranged some nice party fezzes for each of us to give that special Laurel and Hardy touch to the night.

Dirty Worker Ian Parker invented a new game which we named "Parker's Comet". This involved a used party popper and a tinsel tassel from a party fez. The object of the game was to launch the makeshift "dart" into an upturned plastic fez. This was good fun and we are now considering the idea for a Laurel and HarDay game!

We livened up the Venture as we sang the Sons anthem together.



For those of us who are old enough to drink alcohol, we headed into the town centre for an evening of social drinking and having a swell time. We did ourselves quite proud as we kept the party going until 4.00am!

Gary Winstanley



Laughing Gravy Annual

As usual, the *Laughing Gravy Annual* had a stupendous collection of articles and news from Birmingham's very active tent. This keenly awaited publication is a vital part of each festive season.

Bonnie Scots' Christmas

At our Christmas lunch on 1st December at Kilty Kiltys in Paisley there was the usual good food and Glasgow banter and the quiz and the raffle. There was a really top quiz prize, which was won easily by Kenny MacLaren. I know there was no cheating going on, because Peter Clancy, who was at the same table, won the booby prize. The top prize for the quiz was lifetime membership of the Laurel and Hardy Museum in Ulverston.

Janice Hawton
in The Cement Mixers' Bizarre

Two Italian oases

After nineteen years of being Grand Sheik of the Chumps at Oxford Tent, Tiziano Medici has stepped down. The new Grand Sheik is Benedetto Gemma from Bari, a city in southern Italy, where the tent's headquarters will be located. Contact enciclopedia@laurel-e-hardy.it.



There is a new tent in northern Italy – the Blotto Tent. It's in the city of Cremona, near the larger city of Modena. The Grand Sheik is Giancarlo Menfredini. Contact fradiavolo9@yahoo.it. They had their first meeting on 9th June.

I think all Sons congratulate the wonderful tenure of Tiziano, and we wish Benedetto and Giancarlo all the very best with their new roles as Grand Sheiks.

Gino Dercola

The Boys in Vancouver

Recently I visited my dad's cousin, who lives in Alloa with her husband Bob. I was telling them about the convention in Southend, and while he was looking through the programme Bob casually mentioned that he had actually met Laurel and Hardy!

It happened when he was a little boy, living in Canada, and it must have been around 1930 or 1931. His parents took him to the cinema in Vancouver and once inside he ran away from them, as children often do. He tripped and fell and two gentlemen helped him up and dusted him down – Laurel and Hardy!

I don't know whether it was a promotional appearance at the showing of one of their own films, or if they just happened to be in town and went to the pictures to pass the time. Obviously records of their movements and appearances within the USA and Canada aren't going to be nearly as detailed as when they came to Europe, but does anybody have details of a visit to Vancouver around that time?

Gordon Davie

Dirty purple rhubarb

At their March meeting, the Their Purple Moment Tent commemorated the recent deaths of Richard Briers and Bob Godfrey by showing a *Roobarb* cartoon, *When Roobarb Was Being Bored Then Not Being Bored*.

The rest of the programme consisted of some *Dirty Movies* from the Dirty Work Tent's DVD, then *Habeas Corpus* and *Pack Up Your Troubles*.

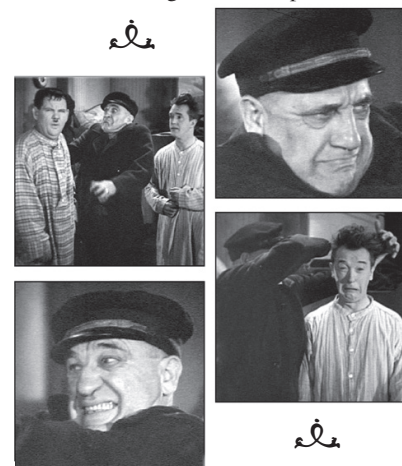
I hadn't shown *Habeas Corpus* for years, and had forgotten how good a film it is. It went down a storm with those present, especially the bit when Stan is standing on Ollie's head trying to climb the cemetery wall.

The Universal copy is very clear and sharp, although I think some frames may be missing and also, I think, one of the title cards.

Dougie Brown



Who can forget the indignities that the skipper of *The Live Ghost* inflicted upon our two heroes? The role no doubt came easily to him for, in a 1922 film *Moran of the Lady Letty*, Walter Long had already played a vicious sea captain. On this occasion he shanghaied Rudolph Valentino!



Way Out West again

Steve Martin was reported to be scheduled to play Laurel and Hardy in a new version of *Way Out West* to be directed by Robert Zemeckis.

"We will use some CGI," said The Man with Two Brains, "but this will be largely live action, with me playing both roles."

The beloved comedy duo were a sublime comedy double team so how will Martin face the challenge of playing not one part but both?

"When I was acting in *The Jerk* I sat down and I wrote a list of comedy heroes, but I wanted to overcome and defeat – to eat up whole, if you like. Phil Silvers as Sgt Bilko, Spencer Tracy in *Father of the Bride*, Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau. I think – without wanting to appear hubristic – that I've managed to achieve my ambition."



Set in stone

Terry Baxter saw this and thought, "Every gnome should have one."



Although *The Rogue Song* is lost, the soundtrack of the film still exists on disc. So praise be, the Laurel and Hardy dialogue is preserved.



Blotto archive



Bram Reijnhoudt, the editor of *Blotto* magazine in the Netherlands since 1984 reports that most of the past issues of *Blotto* are now online and available for all Sons to see.

Bram says, "I completed the website on which the first forty issues of *Blotto* (several thousands of pages) are available for free as flipbooks and searchable PDFs. The current issue is #45. The last five issues will not be on the website at this point, but, as soon as issue 46 is published on paper, issue 41 will be uploaded as an electronic flipbook. *Blotto* is published by the Perfect Day Tent of Amsterdam. Site navigation is in Dutch and English. The magazine itself is in Dutch only, but *Blotto* has always been heavily illustrated.

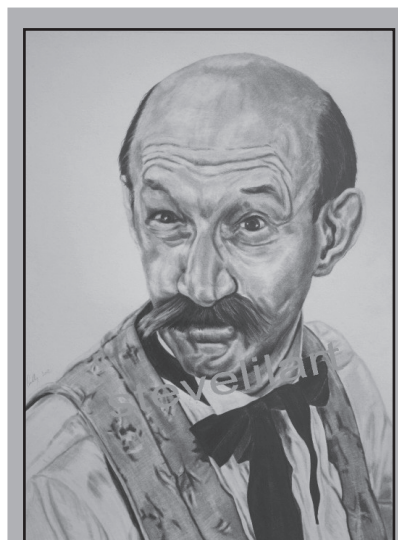
◆ <http://www.blotto.nl>

☆ Gino Dercola adds, "Note that when you go to the website, on the first page, clicking on item #1 can get you to information about subscribing to current/future issues of *Blotto*. Clicking on item #2 allows you to get to the past issues for you to see online."

Haywain charity event

The Men o' War Tent held a charity fund-raising evening on 6th April for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Grand Sheik Paul Harding says, "We were pleased to support Andy Newton, landlord at the Haywain, Little Bromley. Around seventy people attended. The total raised for the evening was £536. Thanks to everyone who was able to make this such a fun evening and a huge success for fund-raising. We had an excellent selection of shorts lined up for the evening – great for the general public as well as seasoned Laurel and Hardy fans."



Great Fin

From Steve Lilly comes this cracking portrait of James Finlayson.

Laurel and Hardy in rescue

Sorting through some old TV mags that had been languishing in the loft I came across a piece on Frank Randle, an old British comedian. One summer season Frank Randle had his yacht moored off the North Pier in Blackpool. Laurel and Hardy sailed round the bay in it with him and had to be brought back by what passed for air sea rescue at the time as Frank liked to drink and had become unable to skipper his own yacht.

Tony Hillman

SM1 1THY

At the DVLA in Swansea an auction of select vehicle registration marks (number plates) on 14th/16th November 2012 had SM1 1THY selling for £28,500. Dave Oyston says, "I wonder if the purchaser would be interested in my copy of *Smithy*. He could have it for a fiver."

Wanted

Wanted by Peter Andrews, 14 Mackie Avenue, Filton, Bristol, BS34 7ND:

Intra-Tent Journal numbers 44, 47, 56, 59 plus all issues prior to Spring 1981.

Bowler Dessert numbers 8, 10-18, 20-22, 24-26 and 36.

✧ Peter says he will pay good money to complete his collection.



Gyles Brandreth with John Ullah

The One Show

Gyles Brandreth and Lucy Lane from *The One Show* came along to film scenes about Laurel and Hardy at the Birmingham Hippodrome and the Barton Arms pub. The short film they made was televised on 13th May on BBC1, along with comments from studio guest Ricky Gervais.

A really enjoyable few minutes. I already knew that Ade Edmondson and Matt Lucas love Laurel and Hardy. I now know that Ricky Gervais also loves them.

Why can't we start our own petition to get Laurel and Hardy back on television?

Terry Baxter

✧ A petition is referenced on page 39.

Big fans

Rich Kaplan from Illinois saw an article in the *Wall Street Journal* for 25th May that contained a review of the book *Hollywood and Hitler: 1933-1939*. Rich noted that the article cites that Mussolini was a "devoted fan of Laurel and Hardy" and cites that Hal Roach once commented, "Mussolini was the only square politician [meaning fair and honest] I've ever seen."

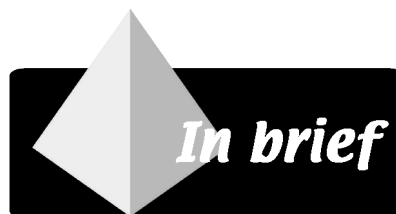
It's interesting to note that two other big fans of the Boys included former Yugoslavian dictator Marshal Tito and the Soviet Union's Josef Stalin.

Gino Dercola

Muzik

At our July meeting twenty people watched *The Music Box*, *Beau Hunks* and for the very first time at our tent gatherings we saw *Should Married Men Go Home?* As a bonus we also watched *The Muzik Box* – a short film made by Jonathan Hayward starring members of the tent, including Howard Byron and Peter Wood playing Stan and Ollie.

Dean Carroll



* The meeting on 6th November marked thirty-three years of the Leave 'em Laughing Tent. The Liverpool oasis showed *Pack Up Your Troubles* and *Scram!*, reports Samantha Jane Bell.

* There was a Laurel and Hardy film show at the Woolton Picture House in Liverpool on 18th May, organised by Eric Woods. *Block-Heads* was the main attraction.

* The Fraternally Yours Tent enjoyed meetings in February, March and April and were due back again in September.

* Del Kempster changed his email address early this year to delkempster@gmail.com.

* The Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem, Georgia, is now on Facebook.

* On television in the USA on 18th January, TCM screened English and foreign language versions of *Chickens Come Home*, *Blotto*, *Be Big!* and *Laughing Gravy*.

* Still doing great things is the *Another Fine Mess-Age* magazine of Northern Ireland's Another Fine Mess Tent. It is now distributed electronically. Contact Gerry.Dunne@niassembly.gov.uk.

* The newsletter of the One Good Turn Tent in Germany is published every three months. Go to <http://www.saartent.de>.



* The *Two Tars Journal* from the Two Tars Tent, Germany, is published by Wolfgang and Vera Günther. Contact info@laurel-hardy-museum.de. It is mostly in German, with some in English, and there are lots of photos.

* At the Barbican Cinema in London *Laurel and Hardy: Rebellious Clowns* was screened on 2nd June, with live musical accompaniment by Neil Brand.

* Willie McIntyre gave a talk about Laurel and Hardy to the Probus Club in Lenzie on 12th April and showed *Another Fine Mess*. A member of the audience remembered Glynn MacDonald, a past, very prominent, member of the Call of the Cuckoos Tent who went to live in the USA. Glynn tells us that he still keeps a close watch on Laurel and Hardy matters via the internet.

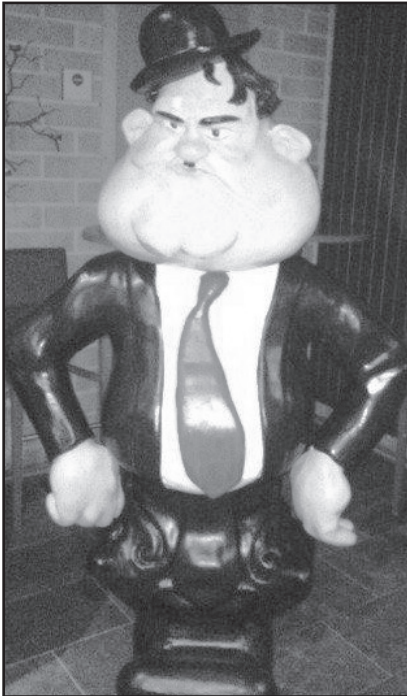
* On 13th October the Saps at Sea Tent will be celebrating its fifteenth birthday. This promises to be Party Time on-screen and off-screen.

Mary beer

Mary Christmas has a mention in *Way Out West*. It is also the name of a beer produced by Ilkley Brewery and spotted by Dave Oyston. Dave says, "Sadly I was unable to sample this beer. It sold out immediately it went on sale. According to the spirits manager at Booths, Ilkley, it was the fastest selling beer they have ever stocked."

Rescued statues at jubilee

Marc de Coninck reports



Marc with his statues

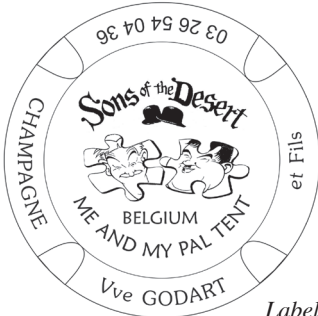
The most famous carnival in Belgium is held in the town of Aalst, just three miles from where

I live and the town where I work. Every year, before the forty-day period of fasting begins (as you know, that is the period before Easter), there is a big carnival parade in Aalst. Unlike in Rio de Janeiro, the parade in Aalst is much more a thing for the common people, heckling all sorts of mishaps in local city government, national government, religion, etc. Nothing is sacred and every issue is mocked. Around seventy-five carnival groups, some small and some big, participate in the parade and make their own floats, decorated with cartoon figures of politicians, religious leaders or anyone who made the news.

Last year there was a particular float that had Laurel and Hardy statues on it. I don't remember the theme of the group, but Laurel and Hardy were amongst the figures used. I do remember that all the figures were in the same colour, a light yellow/green.

After the carnival, all those floats are stripped down and the statues are destroyed in order to make a whole new float for the following year. Now, one of the men who was part of the "Laurel and Hardy float" remembered he had a friend who is a fan of Laurel and Hardy and is, in fact, a member of my tent (his name is Koen Wijnant). So, before discarding the statues, he contacted our member asking if he was interested. Of course he was. And he contacted me. I told him I was very interested in having those figures for the tent. Since they were going to be destroyed, he got them for free. I then had the idea of using them for the tent's silver jubilee and I asked if someone could paint them in lively colours. Another member of our tent, Yves De Bodt, was happy to accommodate. I got him colour photos of Laurel and Hardy and he worked three afternoons to get the job done. And what a job he did!

The statues are made with styrofoam with a light coating of plaster. They weigh close to nothing – they are very light. But, one has to be very careful in handling them because they are very fragile. The slightest bump into something can cause some damage. Sculpting the styrofoam is done with a hot iron wire to cut out the features. It is a real work of art done by true artists. And they are all volunteers of the carnival groups. One of our tent members inquired as to how much it would cost to replicate them; the answer was about \$3,000!



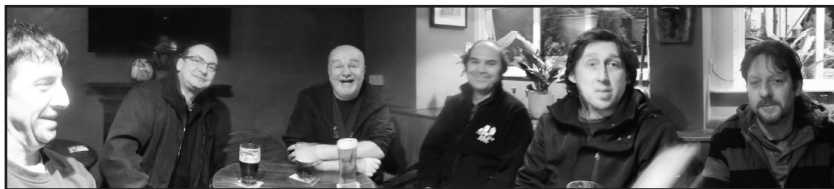
Label

- ♦ The Me and My Pal Tent has its meetings every three months. Every meeting has a film show with a special theme. We always have about twenty-five to thirty Sons attending, with occasionally some forty-five people present.

On 23rd March we had our silver jubilee, 25th anniversary meeting of the Me and My Pal Tent. Around sixty-five people showed up despite the bad weather forecast. And indeed, we had a heavy snowfall. Our members were in for a few surprises. To make some money for the club, I had a special champagne made with the tent's logo on the label and on the champagne capsule that is just above the cork. A real collector's item. I had three hundred bottles and sold half of them to a champagne club and capsule collector. The other half was bought by our members.



Capsule



Chickens in Ulverston

The annual Chickens Come Home Tent's winter trip to Ulverston (or Winter Ollie-day as we've come to call it) was another success in the middle of February.

The sun was shining as our train pulled into Ulverston station and who was there to meet us but Marion? After some light refreshments and time to catch up, we were joined by Mark (covered in paint and looking like an extra from *The Finishing Touch*) who told us that the changes to the museum were coming along nicely and would we like to come and have a look? When the stampede had finished, we arrived at the Roxy Cinema and were treated to a first look at the all-new museum, and what a museum it was set to be.

If you were impressed by the previous museum, then imagine it three (or so) times bigger, complete with cinema screen, coffee bar and full cinema entrance (including ticket booth)! Disabled access and coach access will also be available, making it a sure-fire winner with all of the Sons. The end result is a great place to visit and it is bound to bring the tourists in from far and wide.

After our visit we all said our goodbyes and boarded the train as the sun set on Stan's home town. Another brilliant trip out and many thanks to our hosts Marion and Mark for their usual warm reception!

Mike Duckles



Festival of Silent Cinema

The third Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema took place from 13th till 17th March. Scotland's only silent film festival returned with a longer and louder live cinema-going experience in the beautiful setting of the hundred-year-old Hippodrome picture palace in Bo'ness.

On 17th March there was a full house for a Laurel and Hardy triple bill of *Putting Pants on Philip*, *Their Purple Moment* and *Double Whoopee* with live piano accompaniment by Günter A Buchwald.

Earlier, on 18th February, the cinema screened *Way Out West*.

Slim Whitman

Melvin McFadden reckons that the passing of Slim Whitman at the age of ninety on 19th June is worth a mention as he recorded *The Old Spinning Wheel*. Melvin says, "I've heard Slim singing it and it's in his own style and rather good."



Great tribute on YouTube

Alistair Nicholls is sixteen years old and has been a huge Laurel and Hardy fan for many years. He says, "Both Stan and Ollie are such fantastic inspirations to myself and a friend (who is also a massive Laurel and Hardy fan) that my friend and I have made our own tribute videos to the

Boys, trying to mimic their mannerisms and characteristics."

The video is terrific and is well worth viewing. Go to *YouTube* and punch in "FaceMeltingprods" then select *A Pie for a Pie* for part 1 and *Boys Behind Bars* for part 2.



Alistair Nicholls and Ryan Martins

The all star outpost

*Denis Gifford wrote about
some of the members of his
Film Funsters in the first
Bowler Dessert in 1976*

Film Fun billed itself as the All Star Comic and, true to tradition, the Film Funsters lay claim to being the All Star Outpost. There are, of course, many fans of Stan and Ollie in the profession, and the staunchest of these have become Honorary Officers in the club. Bob Monkhouse, renowned for his collection of old time comedy movies and host of *Mad Movies* of pleasant memory, clocks in as Vice Sheik (that is to say, the Sheik in Charge of Vice). Our supporting stars are divided into Honorary Stanleys and Honorary Ollies, as duly befits. Eric Morecambe is a Stan while Ernie Wise is an Ollie. Syd Little is a Stan and Eddie Large an Ollie, and Roy Castle and Ronnie Barker, who actually played the Boys in a marvellous *Comedy Playhouse* type of production on BBC TV some time ago, are similarly categorised. Harry Secombe is an obvious Ollie, while Peter Cushing, the only star who actually played in a Laurel and Hardy movie (*A Chump at Oxford*), is a suitable Stan.

Other important people on our roster of officials include Leslie Halliwell, every Filmgoer's Companion. Leslie is the chief film buyer for the ITV network and as such is a key figure in our operation. He is dubbed Arch Archivist. Terry Wakefield, the cartoonist, is our Hon Artist, of course, and drew our letterhead, badge and first poster/leaflet. Alan Warner of UA Records is dubbed Musical Vizier, and Honorary Members now include "Inspector" Michael Watts of the *Sunday Express*. Brian Tesler, an important chap from London Weekend Television (and the man who first put *Looks Familiar* on television), is a keen member, along with his horror-struck son, Simon. Willis Hall (plus family) has also joined, and so has horror story anthologist Peter Haining and W Lofts, who co-wrote *The Men Behind Boys' Fiction*.



Ronnie Barker, whose talents extend beyond those we already see on TV, drew this quick cartoon for the club

LOOKING BACK

Items from early issues of Bowler Dessert



Fate and a leg of lamb

*This item by W Lofts, abridged from the second Bowler Dessert,
originated from a hand-out at a meeting of the Film Funsters*

One is fat, the other thin. Both are very ordinary, simple folk, but the pair are the funniest and most popular screen comedians of all time. They are, of course, the great, lovable, ageless pair, Laurel and Hardy.

Since 1926, when fate in the form of a leg of lamb brought them together, millions upon millions of people from all corners of the world have enjoyed their antics on the screen. The times their films have been repeated on television and to fresh viewers is practically uncountable. I'm certainly not unusual when I say it does not matter how many times I see repeats of their films; each showing is laughter afresh and admiration for the sheer genius and magic the priceless pair hold over the appreciative viewer.

Oliver Norvell Hardy – the fat one – was born at Harlem, Georgia, in 1892. His father died when Oliver was young. Oliver took his unusual Christian name from his mother's surname. Oliver eventually graduated into films, where he was billed as "Babe Hardy" – a heavyweight complete with large black moustache, who usually played the villain.

Stan Laurel – the thin one – was an Englishman, born in Ulverston, Lancashire, in 1890. His real name was Arthur Stanley Jefferson. One could say that he was born into the theatre, as his father was a famous music hall actor-manager and his mother was on the stage. He joined Fred Karno's famous group, and later went out to America on a cattle boat with Charlie Chaplin, as his understudy. He then went on to make numerous films (a few appearing with Hardy but not as the famous team) before fate drew them together again.

Now about this leg of lamb. Hardy was not only a great eater (rather like Billy Bunter) but was also fond of cooking. One day, whilst cooking a leg of lamb, he badly scalded his arm, and could not appear in a film. Laurel substituted. Soon *Putting Pants on Philip* was made. Two other films were made before this was released, and then gradually the lovable pair's fame grew and grew, their technique developing all the time, so that by the late twenties they were world famous.

Both Laurel and Hardy off-screen were totally different than in their film roles. Stan was the brainy one, writing nearly all the scripts, having many wives, and a reputation as a lady killer. He had a strong Lancashire accent (which he never lost) but probably the most surprising thing about him was his red hair. This was something which I never imagined in all the black and white films I saw. In general he was totally obsessed with his film making and that was his main hobby and life.

Oliver Hardy (like most very large people) was very self-conscious of his bulk. Shy, extremely sensitive, he took very little interest in his film making, and was never happier than when away from the set, playing golf. He hated personal interviews and firmly believed that his private life was his own. Professor John McCabe soon found this out when preparing his brilliant biography *Mr Laurel and Mr Hardy*, which every fan should not be without. McCabe faced an interviewer's nightmare when he spoke to Oliver Hardy in preparation for his work.

Query: Mr Hardy, the purpose of all this is to find out about your background in relationship to comedy.

Hardy: (Very long pause) I see.

Query: Your life will take all the second chapter.

Hardy: That won't take long.

Query: In what sense?

Hardy: What I said, it won't take long. I hate to be discouraging, but there is very little to write about me.



Like Stan Laurel's red hair, I was greatly surprised to learn in McCabe's book that Oliver was 6 foot 2 inches tall, and, whilst his weight fluctuated through the years, at its height it was a staggering 25 stone. Probably the most beautiful thing about him was his voice. It was a fine tenor and, coming from the South, it was always brimming over with Southern Virginian Colonel type of courtesy – stopping of course when pushing Laurel out of the way to walk first out of a door or room. In real life, he was reported to be always extremely polite, was beautifully dressed, a model of good behaviour, and was always a credit to his profession. Similar to Stan's crying act, his mannerism of twiddling his tie with a nervous laugh to cover some embarrassment originated before the pair had teamed up together. It brought a great laugh, and so he remembered it for future use, it soon becoming one of his best trademarks.

Probably the saddest thing about Laurel and Hardy was how they seemed to age so quickly after 1940, and their films seemed to suffer also from bad scripts and plots. But they had already achieved immortality and a place in film history by their marvellous early films.

Oliver Hardy died in 1957 and Stan Laurel in 1965. Their famous song from the film *Way Out West – The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, sung in a saloon bar, was in late 1975 almost top of the Hit Parade and their fame today is as great as ever.

If laughter is the cure for most of the troubles in our present world, then Laurel and Hardy deserve the highest accolades that society can give them. In their place up in the sky, Ollie's and Stan's stars must be very bright indeed.



Twice two thumbs

GW Thompson reminisced in the third Bowler Dessert

I remember sometime just after the war, when Laurel and Hardy did a tour of England and were staying at the Clarendon Hotel in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. I was only a lad at the time and my brother and I, passing the hotel on the way home from school, happened to glance in the revolving door and noticed a portly gentleman sitting on a sofa in the foyer. The gentleman was none other than Ollie. We took the chance to draw his attention to our little bit of mime, the one with the top of the thumb being removed from the left hand. (The left thumb bent at the joint, the right also bent, put the two together, then conceal the join with the right index finger, then pull apart.) On seeing this he was greatly amused and repeated the movement back to us. That little episode has always remained with me; I would love to have met them.



The incident was a flashback to The Bohemian Girl (1936)

Our artists

Artists who have made *Bowler Dessert* cheerful over the years include Anthony Stubenrauch, Johan Amssoms, Barrie Finney and Steve Mullin. Don't forget Tony Bagley (see pages 3 and 55) and Jean Poulain (see page 22).



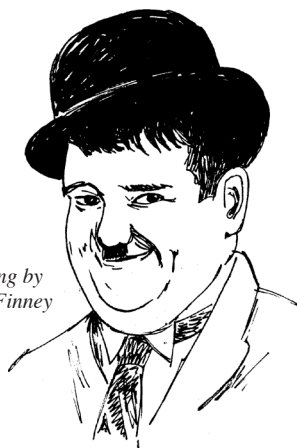
Drawing by Anthony Stubenrauch



Drawing by Johan Amssoms



Drawing by Barrie Finney



Drawing by Steve Mullin



Come Clean script variations

Randy Skretvedt scrutinised the script for Come Clean (1931) and noted differences from the released film.

He wrote about this in Bowler Dessert in 1988

On paying for ice cream, Ollie never gets his change from the \$5.00 bill because he is charged \$4.25 for broken eggs on the counter. He takes the last unbroken egg and smashes it on the floor in disgust.

A more elaborate scene was planned for arousing Mae Busch from unconsciousness after near drowning: Ollie works her arms up and down. Stan's knee accidentally presses her stomach and Mae spouts a stream of water into Ollie's face. She mumbles something about being at peace seeing a beautiful face – and then she sees Stan. The shock of it wakes her and makes her realise she is still alive.

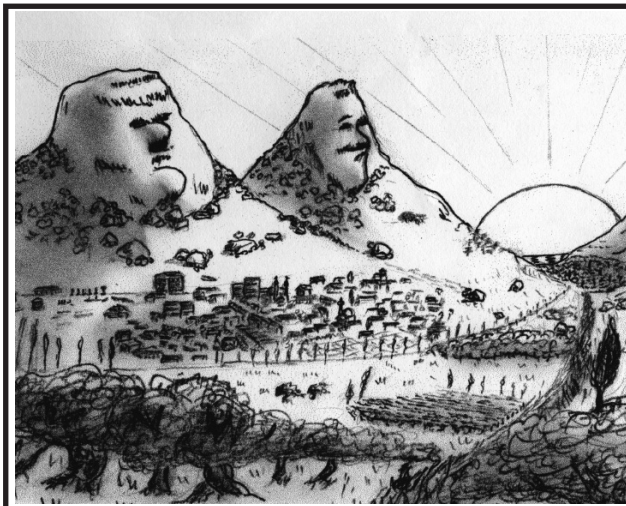
Mae Busch (referred to in the script as "Suicide Annie") has bid the world "adieu". Preparing to save her, Ollie takes off his coat. Stan also does this then begins to remove his trousers. Ollie stops him with, "That won't be necessary." Stan goes to find a rope. He returns just as Ollie is making a running jump over the dockside wall. Ollie trips over the rope and lands in seventy-five cents' worth of chocolate ice cream.

Harry Bernard's deleted scene was a brief dialogue exchange. After Mae/Annie/Kate has told Stan and Ollie that they will now have to take care of her, a cop enters the scene and asks the trio why they are all wet. Stan explains that they all fell out of a boat. The cop for some reason accepts this and moves on.

When Ollie is about to "come clean" to the wives about Mae, the script has the wives busily gossiping about a very similar situation involving some poor husband and a gold-digging floozie. Mrs Hardy exclaims, "And he expected his wife to believe that!" This, of course, prevents Ollie from coming as clean as he'd like.

When Mae is in the Hardy bedroom, changing her clothes, she is supposed to be singing rather loudly. This was supposed to prompt Ollie to say, "It must be the radio." Evidently the whole

existing scene with Stan and Ollie playing their crockery to the tune of *Stars and Stripes Forever* and marching triumphantly into the Hardy



Sunrise on Delphos mountains

One of our favourite cartoonists is Jean Poulain. This is a fine example of his early work for *Bowler Dessert*.

bedroom was dreamed up during the filming.

Many of the gags concerning the Boys' attempts to hide Mae were quite different in the script. At one point, the suspicious Mrs Hardy marches past Stan. Not quite seeing who it is, Stan grabs her and hurls her into the bedroom closet. Then he tells Ollie that at last he's got her hidden. Mae in reality is hiding under the covers of the Hardy bed. Stan doesn't know this but he finds out when Ollie asks him to get a bed sheet. As Stan yanks the bed sheet away Mae is revealed. And Mrs Hardy's suspicions are further aroused as Ollie flings open the closet door, throws a bed sheet over her and brings her down to the floor. By the time Mrs Hardy regains her breath and Ollie regains his senses, Mae has fortunately hidden under the bed. But it's a folding bed and it begins doing exactly that – nearly exposing the whole ugly plot. Ollie hurriedly sits on the bed as the wives stomp out in disgust.

Ollie nearly has Mae out of the apartment when an approaching wife signals disaster. Ollie hurls Mae into the bathroom and Stan after her. The wives wonder where Stan's gone and Ollie alibis that he's taking a bath. Through the locked bathroom door, Stan exclaims, "Yeah! I'm taking a bath! You can't come in – I'm all undressed. Believe it or not!" The wives have already entered the bathroom through a side door and they see Stan in his fully-clothed splendour.

Stan realises that his falsehood is exposed, even if he isn't. But he figures that if he goes through with it maybe the wives won't see that he is fully clothed. So, operating on the Emperor-has-no-clothes principle in reverse, Stan jumps into the tub and starts scrubbing himself furiously with a long-handled brush. So furiously does he scrub that he manages to yank the shower curtain off,

thereby revealing the ubiquitous Mae. Now there is nothing left to do but hide, so Stan submerges himself in the tub. When his wife snaps at him for doing this Stan explains that he was looking for the soap, adding, "I wanted to come clean!"



Randy continues, "I always figured that the filmmakers wanted to use that line in the bathtub scene. If you look closely at the last shot of the film, you will see a splice in the negative right after Ollie has explained that Stan has "gone to the beach." I'll bet the line that was edited out was, "He wanted to come clean!"

The scene ends as Ollie accuses Stan of bringing Mae into the apartment. Mae retorts, "Why, you big bozo, you brought me in yourself!" There are no detectives, no doormen, nothing to resolve the story – just a strange, strange gag wherein Laurel and Hardy, running away from the wives, pass by a board fence with a sign reading "Gents" and a hand pointing. Seeing the door open, Stan and Babe duck in. The wives come up to the entrance, just as a man comes walking out and, seeing the sign, they pass on. Stan and Babe poke their heads out, see that the coast is clear, and come out. As they close the door after them we see that the sign says "Gents' Furnishings". Fade out.





Oliver Hardy and Freemasonry

As last year's Laurel and HarDay was held in the wonderful surroundings of Bryn Masonic Hall, the Dirty Work Tent thought it appropriate that it should have a display about Oliver and his connection with Freemasonry. Ian Parker assembled the display shown above, from material kindly supplied by Dennis Moriarty. We have extracted part of it here.

Oliver was accepted into his local lodge in 1916. His lodge was the Solomon Lodge, situated in Jacksonville, Florida, where Oliver was already working as a motion picture actor. Films in those days had to be made in the sunnier states to guarantee sunlight.

The document below was filled in by Hardy and is in effect his application to join the Freemasons, dated 20th March, 1916, when he was twenty-four years old, still quite a young man and working as an actor in Jacksonville, Florida. This was way before he joined up with Stan and became famous.

Petition for Initiation

Jacksonville, Fla. March 20, 1916

To the Master, Wardens and Members of the

Lodge No. 20 Free and Accepted Masons

Having conceived a favorable opinion of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of

Free and Accepted Masons

and a sincere wish of being serviceable to my fellow creatures, unobscured by friends, and uninfluenced by pecuniary motives, I do freely and voluntarily offer myself as a candidate for initiation into the mysteries of your time honored institution in your lodge, and if elected, will cheerfully conform to all the ancient and established usages and customs of the Fraternity.

1-Where were you born? Harlem, The Columbia County

2-What was the date of birth? Day of March 20, 1892

3-What is your occupation? Actor

4-Where is your place of business? Picture Palace

5-Where is your residence? 221 May St

6-How long have you resided there? 6 months

7-How long have you resided in the State of Florida? One year

8-Have you ever, to your knowledge, been proposed as a candidate for initiation in a Masonic Lodge, and if so when and in what Lodge? No

9-Do you believe in the existence of one ever living and true God? Yes

10-Do you know (by any physical, mental or moral means which should prevent you from becoming a Free Mason)? No

(The regulations of the M. W. Grand Lodge, F. & A. M., of the State of Florida, render it unlawful to initiate any person who is not a native born citizen of the United States, and who is not a member of one of the recognized bodies of the Fraternity.)

(Sign full name.) Oliver Hardy

We recommend above candidate.

Harry Hoppe to accompany the petition.

Initiation Fee, First Degree _____

Item 10 of his petition to join has some quite disturbing reading and states:

The regulations of the MW Grand Lodge

F&AM of the State of Florida renders any man engaged in selling intoxicating liquors ineligible for initiation into the mysteries of Freemasonry and forbid any Mason under its jurisdiction to engage in such business.

Although the American prohibition laws were in place between 1920 and 1933, at the beginning of the twentieth century there were temperance organisations in nearly every state and, by 1916, over half of the US States already had statutes that prohibited alcohol.

It was seen as anti-German and part of the war effort to undermine the large and well established German brewing industry in America.

It was only an offence to sell and never an offence to drink the stuff.

During this time Ollie was nearly thrown out of his lodge after several brethren saw him behaving badly in public, apparently drunk and staggering about, being rude and abusive to passers-by and being a general nuisance.

The following day Ollie was summoned to appear before the Solomon Lodge to account for his behaviour. There was great relief by the brethren when Ollie explained to the assembled brethren that whilst they were witnessing this unforgivable public display of drunkenness they had actually failed to see the camera filming a scene from his next film.



The original lodge building still exists

Behind the scenes



Oliver Hardy visits the set during the shooting of the final scenes of The Flying Deuces



The above photos are on <http://www.facebook.com/laurelhardy.archive>. There are thousands of rare photos to be seen there! Harry Hoppe is in charge of the amazing pages.



The time has come

I was proud and humbled to receive an award at the UK Convention in May. On behalf of the Sons, Paul Allen



presented me with a lovely commemorative clock to mark my retiring from *Bowler Dessert* duties. My thanks go to Paul, Roger and everyone involved in the thought behind this very kind gesture.

Good place to stop?

Is there any significance in *Bowler Dessert* terminating at issue number 77? I trawled the internet to see if that number was special.

☆ During World War II in Sweden at the border with Norway, “77” was used as a password, because the tricky pronunciation in Swedish made it easy to determine whether the speaker was native Swedish, Norwegian or German.

☆ In some numerological systems, the number 77 is associated with Jesus Christ. CHRIST is C = 3, H = 8, R = 18, I = 9, S = 19, T = 20, which added together equal 77.

☆ 77 is the sum of three squares, $4^2 + 5^2 + 6^2$.

☆ 77 is the sum of the first eight prime numbers.

☆ 77 is the 22nd discrete biprime and the first of the (7,q) family. Since both 7 and 11 are Gaussian primes, this means that 77 is a Blum integer. Tell me that again!

Funny gauge

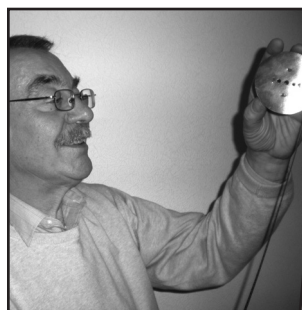
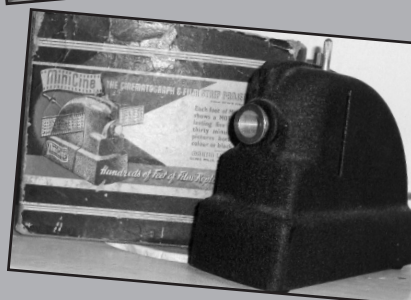
When Dave de Kort visited me last Christmas we inevitably started reminiscing about our film collecting days. I suddenly remembered that I had two 9.5mm projectors in my loft. I brought them down and Dave noticed that one of the films was a cutdown from *Helpmates*. He managed to get one of the projectors to work and an impromptu film show ensued, though it was inevitably brief. This could have been the only screening of the Boys on 9.5mm in the whole wide world that Christmas, or any other recent Christmas for that matter.

Back to my childhood

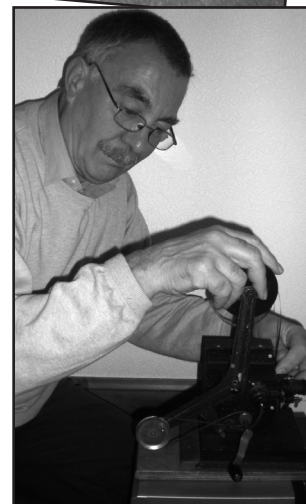
On the internet I discovered some photographs which took me back to my childhood and to my introduction to film collecting.

A firm called Film Stips (sic) had a series of film strips each with around sixteen still photos. I had *Way Out West*, *Block-Heads* and *Busy Bodies*. I showed them on a Junior Television Set as shown below on the pages of <http://www.filmstips.com>. Happy memories.

I also had a Mini Cine projector, which is shown on the same site. No Laurel and Hardy films were available for that, however, as far as I know.



Dave de Kort





Cheerful

My weekly show *Reasons to be Cheerful* on Inverclyde Radio continues every Tuesday at 7.00pm (repeated on Sundays at 11.00am). It is an eclectic mixture of music and vintage comedy dialogue.

My *Stan and Ollie Show* on 22nd January was a special edition with all the items selected by prominent members of the Sons of the Desert. *Reasons to be*

Cheerful had its second Laurel and Hardy special programme on 26th February.

Earlier in February the show included a version of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, sung by Jimmy Donley and recorded in 1957. I went one step further on 13th August by playing a 1913 wax cylinder recording of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, with vocals by Manuel Romain.

There have been many Laurel and Hardy items throughout the series, which has been running since last October. Log onto www.inverclyderadio.com.



Flashback

Flashback to 1981 when the 4th UK Convention was held in Largs. Pictured are Bill Crouch and me.

**Bowler
Dessert
Online**
*continues
to have*
**REGULAR
UPDATES**

<http://www.bowlerdessert.co.uk>

The End

I have had scores of messages of goodwill regarding the end of *Bowler Dessert*. My thanks go to all those who have expressed sadness and appreciation. Modesty prevents me from publishing them (!) but it has been very touching and satisfying to know how highly the magazine has been regarded for thirty-seven years.

I am grateful to everyone who expressed kind thoughts. I am also supremely appreciative of all the support which readers and contributors have given the magazine. At times it has been overwhelming.



Travelled all over the world

Loved by everyone

*We are also on
Facebook*

The continuing influence of silent films in Laurel and Hardy's sound films

By Eric Schultz

The decade we most often associate with Laurel and Hardy is the 1930s. That was when they made most of their greatest films, so it is natural that most people think of them in the context of those films. For many years, their sound short films were regularly shown on television, and this is how millions of people came to know Laurel and Hardy. Many people didn't even know that Laurel and Hardy had ever made any silent movies until Robert Youngson made his compilation films, from 1958 to 1970. In fact, it was during the silent era that Laurel and Hardy became a team and developed their style. The Youngson films showed many clips from Laurel and Hardy's earliest films, introducing many to their silent work. Films like *Laurel and Hardy's Laughing '20s* and *The Further Perils of Laurel and Hardy* demonstrated just how funny they were in their silent films.

Ironically, some of today's Laurel and Hardy fans seem to steer away from their silent films. I've even read occasional comments by some who say that they like Laurel and Hardy, but not their silent films. This article is being written to point out that much of what they did in their sound films in the 1930s and '40s actually came from their silent films of the late '20s. In a very short period, from the summer of 1927 to early 1929, Laurel and Hardy developed their characters and style, and made some very memorable two-reel comedies. A great many scenes, gags and routines which we enjoy so much in their sound films were actually first done in their silent films. Because their silent work was so good, they made a point of reusing much of this material in their sound films.

Silent films remade as sound films



Duck Soup

This was the very first film that Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy appeared in together at the Hal Roach studios. *45 Minutes From Hollywood*, made earlier, did indeed feature both comedians, but only in separate scenes. *Duck Soup* features the two working together as if they were already a comedy team. In 1930, Laurel and Hardy remade it as a sound film *Another Fine Mess*, with hardly any changes to the way that they played it in the first film. Filmed in the fall of 1926, and released early in 1927, *Duck Soup* has Stan and Babe together from beginning to end, and they work together so well that it was a great surprise for film historians when they first saw it many years later.

Lost for almost a half-century after it ran in theatres, no one knew what *Duck Soup* was like until it turned up in a Belgian archive in 1974. Up until that time, many books and articles about Laurel and Hardy stated that, before teaming, the two gradually appeared in more and more scenes together, until they finally had a truly team effort in *Do Detectives Think?* It was speculated that *Duck Soup* might have been the basis for *Another Fine Mess*, but no one knew. It wasn't until *Duck Soup*

was found that it was discovered that the two performed in this film as if they were already a comedy team. *Another Fine Mess* was, in fact, a very direct remake of *Duck Soup*. In both films, Laurel and Hardy are on the run from the authorities, and end up hiding inside a mansion. When a married couple arrive, looking to rent the place, Ollie pretends to be the owner, and Stan puts on a wig and dress to impersonate the maid. Ollie shows the husband around "his" house, while Stan stays with the wife. By the end of the film, the real owner of the house returns to find what is going on, and there is trouble!



Duck Soup

The main differences between the two films are few: in the first film, Hardy appears as an unshaven vagrant who wears a monocle and a top hat, so he looks a little different from the "Ollie" we know and love. In *Duck Soup*, Stan only dresses as the maid, while in *Another Fine Mess*, he first puts on a butler's suit and later the maid's dress, and then switches back a couple of times. Laurel and Hardy's motivation for hiding in the house in *Duck Soup* is a little different than it would be in *Another Fine Mess*. In the silent film, soldiers are rounding up local "bums" to help fight a forest fire, and the Boys are trying to avoid this potentially dangerous situation. In the talkie remake, their only reason for running is that Stan has inadvertently offended a policeman (Harry Bernard) by calling him "ma'am". In the first film, there is more screen time given to the Boys before they arrive at the house. We also see a very rare scene of the two riding on a bicycle (Hardy pedalling while Laurel sits on the handlebars). The talkie remake ends with them being chased out of the house, dressed in a wildebeest costume, riding a tandem bicycle (most likely ridden by stunt doubles, with Laurel and Hardy's voices dubbed in).

Love 'em and Weep

This film features Stan Laurel, teamed with James Finlayson, in a situation comedy about a businessman (Finlayson) who is running for mayor. Stan is his assistant, who tries to help him deal with a woman who is trying to blackmail him with an old photo of them together on a beach. Finlayson is hosting a dinner

party that evening, so he sends Stan over to Mae's place to keep her occupied. She is furious, and soon drives over to the house with Stan, where Finlayson introduces her to everyone as Stan's wife. Oliver Hardy makes only a very brief appearance as a guest at the dinner party. When Finlayson takes a gun out of a drawer, Mae faints. Stan and Fin try to get her out of the house by putting her "piggyback" on top of Finlayson, and covering him with a large coat, so that Stan can leave the house with "his" wife. It looks just as ridiculous as it sounds.

In 1931 Laurel and Hardy remade this as the three-reel *Chickens Come Home*. In this film it is Hardy who is the candidate, and Stan repeats the same role he played in the first film. Finlayson is now in a small role as Ollie's butler, and Mae Busch again plays the blackmailer. Much of *Chickens Come Home* is practically a scene-for-scene duplicate of the silent film. One of the very few differences between the two films is that in *Love 'em and Weep* there was a brief scene of Stan and Mae going to dinner at a restaurant (where they are seen by the town gossip), which was not in the remake. In *Chickens Come Home*, there's some added business of Stan having difficulty trying to write Ollie's campaign speech. At the end of the film, they repeat the gag of trying to sneak an unconscious Mae out of the house by putting her on Ollie's back (with his pant legs rolled up), as Stan tries to leave. This time, the gag is extended when they run back into the living room, and then put Mae (still unconscious) on Stan's back, now with Ollie accompanying her to the door, with his pant legs still rolled up! Fin has a wonderful "take" at the sight of this!

Slipping Wives

Another early, pre-team film from 1927, which was remade years later as a Laurel and Hardy sound film. In this case, some changes were made to the remake's storyline, in order to accommodate the characters of Stan and Ollie. In the original film, Stan plays a deliveryman who brings cans of paint to the house of an artistic painter. The painter's wife feels that she is ignored by her husband, who is always obsessed with his work. A friend comes up with the idea of inviting Stan to stay at the house overnight as a guest, so he can pretend to romance the wife, in hopes that this will make the artist husband jealous, and thus reawaken his love for his wife. Babe Hardy plays the butler, who doesn't like the guy who has come to stay. Stan and Babe have a few interesting scenes together. Butler Babe is a tough bully towards meek Stan, who was already starting to develop the characteristics that he would use in Laurel and Hardy movies soon after. Instead of performing as a team, the two are characters at odds with each other.

Eight years later, in 1935, Laurel and Hardy made one of their last shorts, *The Fixer-Upper*. In this film, they use the basic premise of a wife who feels that she is neglected by her artist husband, but overall this film is much different. None of the supporting actors in this film was in the original silent. Stan and Ollie are a couple of greeting card salesmen who happen to meet a lady who sadly tells them that her husband ignores her. Stan comes up with the idea of getting someone to pretend to romance her, in order to make the husband jealous. The plan works all too well. The husband enters the scene just as Ollie is kissing his wife. He immediately becomes furious, and challenges Ollie to a duel, and the movie takes off from there, departing from the original film's storyline. Oddly enough, Charley Chase would make a film at Columbia in 1937, *Man Bites Love Bug*, which would be a much closer remake of *Slipping Wives*.

Hats Off

Hats Off was the basis for Laurel and Hardy's only Academy Award-winning film, *The Music Box* (1932). This 1927 silent

is the only Laurel and Hardy film to be completely lost. Part of *The Battle of the Century* is lost, and most of *The Rogue Song* is missing (not a Laurel and Hardy-starring film), but of *Hats Off*, we don't have a single frame. Someone ought to write an article about that! We know a lot about *Hats Off*, because a "cutting continuity" script was written, which was basically a shot-by-shot description of the film, after it had been edited and made ready for release. Over a dozen still photographs exist of Laurel and Hardy and their co-stars posing in character, while the film was being made, so we can see what it looked like. *Hats Off* was made in 1927, just after Laurel and Hardy had become a regular comedy team. In this film, they repeat the suits and bowler hats look which they had used in *Do Detectives Think?*, thus establishing this as their regular appearance. *Hats Off* was also the first film in which Stan had his hair standing up on end.



Hats Off

In *Hats Off*, Stan and Ollie get a job selling washing machines, and they end up at the foot of an incredibly long outdoor flight of stairs which reach up to the top of a hill. Because of a couple of misunderstandings with Anita Garvin (she calls them from the top of the stairs to ask if they can mail a letter for her, and they think that she wants to buy the machine), the Boys carry the bulky machine all the way up the stairs, and it goes rolling down again! Five years later, Laurel and Hardy's 1932 sound short *The Music Box* won an Academy Award for the Best Short Subject of the Year. In the 1932 film, they return to those same stairs, only this time the Boys are carrying a piano. Using an even larger prop may have made the situation even funnier, but it sure would be nice to see that lost Laurel and Hardy film.

We Faw Down

We Faw Down (1928) was basically remade as the 1933 feature *Sons of the Desert*. It is interesting to consider that what is usually thought of as a lesser silent short was to become the basis for one of Laurel and Hardy's greatest feature-length films. In *We Faw Down*, Stan and Ollie leave the house under false pretences, so that they can go to a poker game. They tell their wives that they are going to meet "The Boss" (not Bruce Springsteen!) at a specific theatre. On the way there, they help a young lady get her hat out from under a car, and end up getting soaked by a street-cleaning truck which happens to pass by at that moment. The lady and her friend invite the Boys to their apartment to dry their clothes. Meanwhile, the theatre that they were supposedly going to has burned down, and the news is spread about the disaster. The wives run out of the house to find out if their husbands are all right. Meanwhile, the Boys are in the ladies' apartment, dressed in robes, waiting for their clothes to dry. Suddenly, a jealous boyfriend arrives, and they hastily make their escape through the kitchen window (it's a good thing

that this was on the first floor!), just as the wives come along. They go back home and Ollie tells the wives about what a “great show we saw”, until Stan discovers the latest newspaper, which tells of the disaster. This film could have been called *In Trouble Again!*

In 1933, Laurel and Hardy made *Sons of the Desert*. In this feature, they also go somewhere apart from the wives, under false pretences. In *Sons of the Desert* they want to go to a fraternal organization’s convention, but Ollie’s wife won’t let him go, so they claim to be going on an ocean cruise for Ollie’s health. The real ocean liner ends up sinking, and the wives think that they were in a terrible disaster. Once again, the Boys find out about the disaster from a newspaper’s headlines. I’m sure that everyone reading this article is familiar with the film, so I won’t go into too many details, since you already know what happens. In the end of this classic feature, Ollie once again tells a ridiculous story about where they were, until Stan breaks down and tells the truth. The idea of Ollie pretending to be sick comes from the 1931 sound short *Be Big!*, which was a reworking of the general idea of *We Faw Down*. In *Be Big!* Ollie pretends to have a terrible headache, as part of a pretext for him to stay behind while the wives go off on vacation, so that the Boys can attend a wild party.

Angora Love

This was Laurel and Hardy’s last silent film. In this “strong, dramatic story”, as the opening title says, Stan and Ollie get into the goofy situation of having a goat follow them, after Stan has fed it a doughnut. They bring the goat into a boarding house, trying to hide its presence. After a number of run-ins with the landlord, played by Edgar Kennedy (in what I consider to be one of his funniest performances with Laurel and Hardy), they end up giving the goat a bath. They spill enough water on the floor to drip through to Edgar’s bedroom, which just happens to be directly under their room. They end up having a fight in which everyone (including a neighbour, played by Charlie Hall) throws buckets of water at each other, until a policeman gets drenched.

Only two years later, Laurel and Hardy made *Laughing Gravy*, which is a reworking of *Angora Love*. In this 1931 short, Stan and Ollie are in a boarding house with a little dog, and Charlie Hall plays the landlord. Most of the film is different, in that it takes place on a snowy night in the winter, and much of the film is occupied with other types of scenes. During this film, Stan and Ollie go up onto the roof of the house, after the dog has climbed up the chimney (as Stan once said, in *Going Bye-Bye*, “It could happen”). Once they get back into their room, they have to wash themselves and the dog, since they are all covered with soot. Here, some of the business with the water is repeated, except that they don’t go into an all-out water fight like they did in the silent *Angora Love*.

Routines, gags and entire scenes from their silent films which were reused in sound films



Laurel and Hardy often used material in their sound shorts and features which had first been used in some of their silent films. There are probably too many examples for this article to go over completely, but I’ll mention the more noteworthy reworkings and reappearances of certain gags and routines.

Do Detectives Think?

This was the first time that Laurel and Hardy used their familiar

bowler hats and suits, with Stan wearing a bow tie. It was also the first time that Ollie did his “me, first!” gesture, just before sitting on a metal spike for stacks of paper on a desk. He would often insist on being first in many films afterward. This early film basically set the tone for all Laurel and Hardy films afterward, from the wearing of bowler hats, to the big-brother-little-brother relationship of Stan and Ollie.

The opening courtroom scene of *Do Detectives Think?*, as well as the basic premise of the story, would be used again seven years later, in *Going Bye-Bye*. In this first silent film, Judge James Finlayson has sentenced a criminal, who promises to escape and come after him. When the news gets out that the murderer has indeed escaped, Fin calls a detective agency which sends Laurel and Hardy to protect him. Some dubious protection indeed! In *Going Bye-Bye* (1934), Laurel and Hardy are the ones that a criminal is coming after. He is found guilty because of Stan and Ollie’s testimony, and soon escapes in order to get his revenge on them.

Also in *Do Detectives Think?*, Stan and Ollie do a “William Tell” routine. Ollie tries to impress Finlayson with his skills with a gun by putting an apple on top of Stan’s head, and then shooting from across the room, hitting instead a statuette, which is located quite far away from Stan. Sixteen years later, in 1943, Stan is forced by a bad guy to try to shoot an apple off Ollie’s head in the 1943 MGM feature *Air Raid Wardens*. Incredibly, Stan hits the apple so perfectly that it flies off Ollie’s head.

Hat-switch routine

This was first done in *Do Detectives Think?* in 1927, and repeated again in many of their silent films, such as *Hats Off*, *You’re Darn Tootin’*, *We Faw Down*, *Liberty* and *Wrong Again*. The business of their putting each other’s hat on was occasionally used in their sound films, as well. They did a three-way hat-switch with a policeman in the Spanish language version of *Below Zero*, in 1930, which is a nice variation on this gag. They had some funny hat-switches in *The Music Box* in 1932, and much later had a series of hat-switches in the 1944 feature *The Big Noise*.

Reciprocal destruction fight

Another situation which Laurel and Hardy used a number of times in their silent films was the “reciprocal destruction” fight, as a way to end their films. This was first done in *Hats Off*, and then the basic idea of this type of fight, which started off on a small scale, and then escalated until Stan and Ollie were fighting with more and more people. Here are the silent films where they repeated this:

The Battle of the Century (1927): This is the most famous example of this type of fight, where an incident with Charlie



The Battle of the Century

Hall escalates into a huge pie fight, involving dozens of people and hundreds of pies.

You're Darn Tootin' (1928): Shin-kicking and pants-ripping.

Should Married Men Go Home? (1928): Literal mud-slinging on a golf course.

Two Tars (1928): Probably the largest-scale destruction of property of any Laurel and Hardy film. A huge traffic jam and an angry crowd of motorists.

Big Business (1929): Probably the greatest "tit for tat" battle of all: Laurel and Hardy versus James Finlayson. He destroys their car and they wreck his house.

Then, in the sound era, they continued this "reciprocal destruction" tradition with an escalating fight in rowboats in *Men o' War*, where everyone splashes water and hits each other with the boats' seat cushions. They then engage in a rice-throwing fight in *The Hoosegow*, and there were a couple of memorable escalating battles with Charlie Hall in *Them Thar Hills* and *Tit For Tat*. As we can see, a great many things that Laurel and Hardy did in their sound films were already done by them in their silent films.

Duck Soup

Laurel and Hardy's opening scene in the once-lost *Duck Soup* was basically reworked in their second feature film, *Pack Up Your Troubles*. In the silent *Duck Soup* the Boys are "tramps", sitting on a park bench, reading the newspaper. Forest rangers are rounding up vagrants to help fight a forest fire, and the Boys get up and start walking away to try to avoid this. *Pack Up Your Troubles* begins with Laurel and Hardy once again on a park bench, reading the paper. It is wartime, and soldiers are rounding up tramps to enlist them in the army. A sergeant approaches them in the same manner that the forest ranger did in the silent *Duck Soup*. Ollie tells Stan to "act nonchalant," and then slips off. When Stan finds Ollie gone, he takes off running.

Why Girls Love Sailors

Speaking of formerly-lost films, *Why Girls Love Sailors* was another early pre-team film which was generally unseen for decades. Released in 1927, it wasn't publicly confirmed to exist until 1986. At the film's conclusion, a sea captain's wife (Anita Garvin, in her first appearance in a film with both Laurel and Hardy) suddenly shows up and beats him up. Years later, the Laurel and Hardy sound short *The Live Ghost* has another tough sea captain (Walter Long) who this time is surprised by an unexpected appearance of the mate's wife (Mae Busch) at the end of the film. She starts to beat up the mate (Arthur Housman).

The Second Hundred Years

The early Laurel and Hardy "team" film *The Second Hundred Years* has a scene where they are convicts who are tunnelling out of prison. Stan holds a candle too close to Ollie's rear, burning him. At first he doesn't feel it and, when Stan asks if he can smell anything, Ollie tells him that they are under the kitchen, and that it's the bacon frying. Then he can feel it and reacts. Soon, Ollie breaks open a water pipe with his pick axe, and they have to tunnel upward, where they end up directly inside the warden's office!

Twelve years later, in 1939, in *The Flying Deuces*, they reworked the tunnelling-out scene. In this film, they are in the French Foreign Legion, and they are to be shot at sunrise for having set the entire pile of laundry on fire (quite accidentally, of course). In this film, the tunnel out of the jail cell has already been made, so all they have to do is to crawl through it. Again, Stan accidentally gets a lit candle too close to Ollie's posterior, but this time Ollie simply jumps with an immediate reaction. Soon after, part of the tunnel collapses ahead of them, so they

have to dig upward, where they end up in a wine cellar inside the Legion's fort.

Leave 'em Laughing

Leave 'em Laughing sets the tone for boarding-house scenes in many other Laurel and Hardy films, such as *Angora Love*, *They Go Boom*, *Laughing Gravy* and *The Chimp*. Charlie Hall seemed to be a natural choice for playing the landlord in many of these films. He just seemed to have the right style and on-screen personality for that type of role. He played the landlord in many of these films (except for *Angora Love*, in which Edgar Kennedy played the part, and in *The Chimp*, with Billy Gilbert in the role). In *Leave 'em Laughing*, Laurel and Hardy have their very first run-in with Charlie. Stan is often the cause of some sort of disturbance which keeps Ollie from sleeping. In *Leave 'em Laughing*, Stan is crying over a toothache. In *Angora Love*, Stan does some "exercises" which wakes up the landlord as well. In *Laughing Gravy*, Stan has the hiccups, which wakes up Ollie and their dog.



Leave 'em Laughing

Leave 'em Laughing features a scene in a dentist's office, where Ollie takes Stan to have a sore tooth removed. Stan is scared, so when the dentist tries to give him some laughing gas (which would ultimately give the film its title situation), he resists. One of Stan's greatest close-ups is in this scene, when the doctor first puts the gas mask on him. At first, Stan looks around curiously, then becomes fearful and then all-out panics as he starts to kick and fight. Ollie tells the dentist to step out of the room for a minute while he gets Stan relaxed. In order to use psychology, Ollie sits in the dentist's chair himself, to show Stan how easy it is. In the other room, the dentist asks his colleague to go in and pull the tooth of a difficult patient for him. The other dentist pours some chloroform into a large wad of cotton, and enters the room. Thinking that Ollie is the difficult patient, he puts the cotton over Ollie's face. After a funny struggle, Ollie falls unconscious, and the doctor pulls Ollie's tooth. Stan's sheepish attempts to tell the dentist that Ollie isn't the patient go unnoticed. When Ollie wakes up, we see one of his great close-up shots. He moves his tongue around his mouth to discover that he is missing a tooth, and then sees Stan holding the dentist's pliers!

In Laurel and Hardy's first feature-length film, *Pardon Us*, they repeat this scene in an abbreviated manner. In this 1931 feature, the Boys are convicts in a prison. Stan has a loose tooth that makes a buzzing noise, and so he is sent to see the prison dentist. Again, Stan is scared. The dentist (Charlie Hall, this time!) leaves the room to get his pliers and asks the other dentist to pull the tooth for him. Just as Ollie sits in an adjoining examination chair, to show Stan how easy it is, the other dentist quickly enters the room and pulls Ollie's tooth before anyone

can do anything. When Ollie tells him that he isn't the patient, the dentist simply goes over to Stan and pulls out his tooth, as well!

In *Leave 'em Laughing* both Stan and Ollie unintentionally inhale a large amount of laughing gas and leave the office in hysterics. After obstructing traffic, policeman Edgar Kennedy puts them in the back seat of their car and drives them around the corner, where they sink into an incredibly deep mud puddle, so that the entire car goes down under the water. Such a puddle like this had submerged Charley Chase's car in his 1924 short *All Wet*. Later, in Laurel and Hardy's early talkie *Perfect Day*, Laurel and Hardy, their wives and uncle (Edgar Kennedy again) drive their car into another such puddle, with the same results.

The Finishing Touch

In their 1928 silent *The Finishing Touch* Stan pulls the wrong lever in a truck, causing it to dump a whole load of pre-fab window frames. Ten years later, in the 1938 feature *Block-Heads*, Stan again gets behind the wheel of a truck, and pulls the wrong lever, dumping the truck's entire load of dirt on Ollie's car! In the 1943 feature *Air Raid Wardens* Stan dumps another load of dirt on both Ollie and another character. In *The Finishing Touch*, there is a gag which Stan had used in his 1923 one-reeler (co-starring James Finlayson) *The Noon Whistle*, in which he carries a seemingly endless plank of wood, and turns out to be on both ends of the plank! Years later, in the 1942 feature *A-Haunting We Will Go*, this gag is repeated.

From Soup to Nuts

From Soup to Nuts was a 1928 silent film which they basically remade as an extended scene for their 1940 feature *A Chump at Oxford*. In the silent short, Laurel and Hardy are both hired as butlers to serve at a fancy dinner party hosted by Anita Garvin and Tiny Sandford. Stan causes quite a commotion when he is ordered to serve the salad "undressed". He takes off his suit and brings in the salad, dressed in his long underwear! In *A Chump at Oxford*, another fancy dinner party is hosted by Anita Garvin and James Finlayson, who plays her husband. Laurel and Hardy are sent there by an employment agency. The employers have requested both a maid and a butler, so Stan dresses up as a maid, as he had done in *Duck Soup* and then again in *Another Fine Mess*. Once again Stan is told to serve the salad "undressed", with the expected results. The Boys' employment is immediately terminated.

You're Darn Tootin'

You're Darn Tootin' is another 1928 film from which Laurel and Hardy repeated a routine. They are having lunch and Stan has some trouble getting salt out of the shaker. He opens the top, in order to put a little salt in his bowl of soup, but puts the top back on without screwing it back on, so that when Ollie picks up the shaker and tips it, the top falls off, dumping all of the salt into his soup. Ollie switches their bowls. Then Stan does the same thing with the pepper shaker, so that, when Ollie decides to put in a little pepper, it all gets dumped in his soup! They repeated this routine the next year in their early talkie *The Hoosegow*. The only difference is the setting: in *You're Darn Tootin'*, they are in a boarding-house dining room, and in *The Hoosegow* they are prisoners having their lunch outdoors. Again, Stan ruins Ollie's soup.

Their Purple Moment

Their Purple Moment, also made in 1928, was Laurel and Hardy's first "domestic" comedy, and set the tone for many other such films that they would make. This was the first of many times in which Stan and Ollie would be at odds with their wives. In this film, Stan has hidden some money inside a picture on the wall (which actually shows some intelligence

on Stan's part). When his wife discovers this, she replaces the money with worthless coupons. Stan and Ollie go to town with the wallet, where they meet a couple of young ladies who have been abandoned by their dates, with a restaurant bill. Ollie, who is ever the gentleman, steps in and promises to take care of everything. Then the Boys go in and order themselves steak dinners, along with new dinners with the girls¹ as well as for their taxi driver, who is waiting to be paid a mounting fee on his taxi meter. When Stan discovers what is really inside the wallet, he has some wonderful reactions. Then he shows it to Ollie, who also reacts. By this time, the wives arrive, and the Boys are in double trouble (or should I say, "quadruple trouble"?). This theme of going out away from the wives and getting mixed up with two other women would be further explored later that year in *We Faw Down*, and that film would establish the basis for their great 1933 feature *Sons of the Desert*.



Should Married Men Go Home?

Should Married Men Go Home?

1928's *Should Married Men Go Home?* begins with Ollie at home with his wife, enjoying a nice quiet time, and then Stan shows up at the door. They don't answer the door, pretending not to be at home. Stan knocks a few times, and then leaves a note. He sees the note being pulled under the door as Ollie takes it to read it, and then knocks again. Ollie hastily pushes the note back out! Stan sees this and is dumbfounded. Then he sees Ollie and his wife looking out of the window. The 1931 sound short *Come Clean* begins almost exactly the same way. The only difference is that now Stan arrives with his on-screen wife (in the first film, he arrived alone). Instead of seeing Ollie through a house window, it is an apartment, with a little "speakeasy"-type of window on the door, which swings open, revealing that they are home. Mrs Laurel is played by Linda Loredo. She was in some of the Spanish language Laurel and Hardy films, before appearing in this regular short. *Come Clean* was her final film, filmed only three months before her sudden death.

Also, in *Should Married Men Go Home?* there is a scene in an ice cream parlor, where Stan and Ollie are buying soda pop for a couple of girls they have just met. There isn't enough money for all of them, so Ollie tells Stan not to order anything, but, of course, Stan gets confused about this. Finally, they order a glass of soda pop, and Ollie drinks all of it. It turns out that there isn't enough money to pay the bill, so Stan leaves his watch to cover the charge ("It was that type of watch", a title card informs us). In the sound short, *Men o' War*, they repeat this scene almost exactly. In the first film, Charlie Hall was the

1. I have long wondered why the two ladies would order a second dinner. They had just been stuck with the bill, which means that they had already eaten.

“soda jerk” and in the talkie it was James Finlayson. This time, it is Stan who drinks all the pop, and ends up putting his last coin in a slot machine, which gives him a jackpot.

Habeas Corpus

In the 1928 silent film *Habeas Corpus*, Stan and Ollie are on a dark street at night and can’t read a street sign. Ollie climbs up to the top of the signpost, to get a better view, only to find that the sign says, “Wet paint”! He slides down to discover that his dark suit now has white paint all over it. This gag was done by Charley Chase in a 1924 short, *Oh, Baby!*, where he wears a light suit and climbs up a signpost with wet black paint. Many years later, in the 1944 feature *The Big Noise* Ollie once again climbs up to the top of a signpost at night, only to get paint all over his suit once again.

Also in *Habeas Corpus* there’s an hilarious scene where Ollie has hurt his foot, so he takes his shoe off and lets Stan do the digging (they have been hired by a crazy man to rob a grave). As Stan digs, he throws the dirt on top of Ollie’s foot, so that only his toes are left sticking through the top of the dirt pile. When Stan sees the slowly moving toes, he gets scared and tells Ollie. Ollie doesn’t realise that this is his own foot, so he also gets scared and tells Stan to hand him the shovel. There is a funny moment of anticipation for what we know is going to happen, as Ollie slowly raises the shovel, and Stan gets a rock ready to throw. After a perfectly timed pause, Ollie smashes his own foot and gets up to run around in reaction to this.

Six years later, in 1934, we see a direct reworking of this gag in *Oliver the Eighth*. Stan and Ollie are in a bed in a spooky house, afraid that a lunatic Mae Busch is coming to try to kill Ollie. They are keeping guard with a rifle, which Ollie has unwisely given to Stan to hold. When Stan sees Ollie’s bare foot on the footboard of the bed, he gets scared, and tells Ollie that there is “a man’s hand” on the bed. Ollie tells him, “Get the gun, and shoot to kill!” Stan takes aim and shoots Ollie’s foot. We see this from another angle, so that the footboard hides his foot from our view. Feathers fly upward when he shoots, and Ollie gets up to run around, just like he did in *Habeas Corpus*.

Wrong Again

In *Wrong Again*, from 1929, Ollie tells Stan that rich people are different from the rest of us. (Is this a reference to a famous line from F Scott Fitzgerald’s 1926 short story *The Rich Boy*?) Ollie indicates that rich people have everything twisted around, gesturing with his hand, as if he were turning a giant light bulb. Stan repeats this gesture. This gesture reportedly came from Hal Roach himself, who told gag writers that comedy was the taking of a normal situation, and then finding that “twist” that made it funny. In *Wrong Again* they use this gesture a number of times. Fifteen years later, in the 1944 feature *The Big Noise* there are a couple of brief references to the hand-twisting gesture.

In *Wrong Again* Laurel and Hardy are in a mansion. Ollie stumbles and falls onto a statue of a nude woman, breaking it into three sections, separating the hips from the torso and the legs. He hurriedly puts the statue back together, covering up the hip section with his jacket, out of modesty. When he takes the jacket off the statue, he walks away, not noticing that he has placed the midsection on backwards, so that the lady’s rear end is no longer in the rear! Stan later has a wonderful scene where he sees the statue, gets confused, expresses shock, then further confusion, then finally decides that this is just another example of how the rich have everything twisted around. He indicates that “twisting” gesture, and then walks away, content that he now understands.

The gag of the broken statue was ineffectively used again many years later in the 1942 feature *A-Haunting We Will Go*.

The scriptwriters of their 1940s features often would arbitrarily insert old gags from the classic Laurel and Hardy films of the ’20s and ’30s. Sometimes the gags were used properly and would be funny, such as when Ollie gets his key-chain stuck in the door in *The Big Noise*, but in other cases the gags were simply thrown in clumsily, in haphazard fashion. In the 1942 feature, Stan and Ollie quickly put the same type of statue together as Ollie did in *Wrong Again*, but then they walk out of the frame. The film’s editor only allowed the audience to see the incorrectly assembled statue for a second or two, for a quick laugh, and then there is no more reference to it.

Big Business

Big Business is a singularly remarkable film and the idea of an escalating battle between Laurel and Hardy and a foe is reworked in 1935’s *Tit For Tat*. In the silent *Big Business*, Stan and Ollie do comic battle with James Finlayson, as he destroys their car and inventory of Christmas trees, and they do a lot of property damage to his house. In *Tit For Tat*, Laurel and Hardy do comic battle with Charlie Hall, who runs a grocery store next door to their electrical appliance store. In case anyone missed the connection between the two films’ stories, there is a sign in the window of Laurel and Hardy’s store which reads, “Now open for big business”!



Double Whoopee

Double Whoopee

In 1929’s *Double Whoopee*, Ollie makes a fancy ceremony about signing his name on a hotel register. Then Stan takes a long time to prepare himself to sign his name, only to write an “X”. Stan ends up spilling a bottle of ink on the register, compounding the silliness of it all. In the 1932 sound short *Any Old Port the Boys* do all this again, only this time it is at a run-down “fleabag” hotel, which makes their ceremonious way of signing all the more absurd.

Bacon Grabbers

In their second-to-last silent film *Bacon Grabbers*, the Boys are deputies at the Sheriff’s office, and are sent to repossess a radio. They have a funny routine of repeated absent-mindedness. First they forget the paper with the address on the boss’s desk, then go back to get it, then leave one of their hats on the desk, then go back to get it and leave the paper, etc, repeatedly having to go back and forth to the desk to pick up something that they’ve left behind, to the point of getting a paper-stack metal spike stuck on a hat, and then leave through the wrong door, so that they end up in the bathroom. They did this business all over again in the 1931 four-reel “featurette” *Beau Hunks*. This time they are in the French Foreign Legion Commandant’s office. Again, they go through the wrong door, right into the Commandant’s private bathroom.

In their last silent film *Angora Love* the Boys are sitting down in a boarding house, and Ollie's feet are sore. He reaches down and takes Stan's foot, and starts rubbing it as if it were his own. Stan just sits there and smiles. Ollie does this for a while, smiling contentedly, as if his own foot were feeling better. Then Stan says, "Scratch my back". Ollie reacts by saying, "Go scratch your own back. I've got problems of my own." (There isn't a title, but you can read his lips as he says this.) Then he notices that he has been rubbing Stan's foot, and throws it down in disgust. In the 1931 film *Beau Hunks*, they repeat this business in the barracks scene, after a long day's march. Ollie reacts the same way, with the same words.

Also in *Angora Love* there is a scene where the Boys are hanging up their clothes on a hook on a closet door. As Ollie undoes his tie and takes off his coat, he keeps finding that Stan has hung up his coat, then his vest, his hat and his tie. Each time Ollie takes Stan's article of clothing off the door's hook and throws it into the closet, only to turn and see that Stan has hung up something else. Finally, Ollie takes his coat, tie and hat, and hangs them all together on the hook, only to see it all fall down onto the floor. This business was done again in *Be Big!* in 1931. This time Ollie reacts to this by leaning back onto the closet door-frame, only to slip and fall into the closet.

Routines which were reused in silent films too



Even though Laurel and Hardy made silent films together for only a very short time, there were a few times in their silents where they reused gags and situations from earlier silent films. Here are a few examples:



Sugar Daddies

The gag of a "double-decker" woman routine from *Love 'em and Weep* is repeated in *Sugar Daddies*. This was the last film made before Laurel and Hardy officially became a team. In *Sugar Daddies*, there's sort of a three member team of Laurel, Hardy and James Finlayson. Finlayson is being threatened by Noah Young, so Laurel and Hardy (almost a team by this point) try to sneak him out of a hotel by having Stan put on a wig, an oversized coat and a lady's hat, riding "piggyback" on Finlayson. Hardy meets Young in the hallway, and tells him that this is "the little wife!" as Young reacts with disbelief. The comic possibilities of this business are fully explored, as they end up going through a hotel lobby, a dance hall, and then into a carnival fun-house, where they go through crazy passages. They eventually enter a giant horizontal cylinder, which starts to rotate and knock them off their feet!

In *Do Detectives Think?* there is a scene where Laurel and Hardy have to walk by a cemetery in the dark of night, getting scared by the very thought of it. Stan quickly steps over from one side of Ollie to the other, so that, when Ollie turns to speak to Stan, he isn't there. When Ollie turns to look behind him, Stan taps him on the shoulder, startling him so that he jumps. The wind blows both of their hats into the cemetery, and Stan has to go in and get them, leading to the very first of many funny hat-switch routines that they would do in many more films. Their approach to the cemetery would be repeated in the 1928 *Habeas Corpus*. Again, Stan switches sides, so that Ollie wonders where he went. Stan taps Ollie's shoulder again, and again Ollie jumps. This time, Stan is holding a bag and a shovel, so that when Ollie jumps, Stan drops his shovel, which then makes both of them jump in comic fear.

In *The Second Hundred Years* escaped convicts Stan and Ollie are dressed in tuxedos at a fancy dinner party. They are served a fruit dish, and Stan has a great deal of difficulty in picking up a loose cherry with his fork. Instead of picking it up, he is only able to move it around the dish. His cherry eventually falls off his plate, and he vainly tries to pick it up as it rolls down the table and onto another guest's plate. He eventually causes it to fly up into the air and into James Finlayson's eye (which fits in with his famous squint). Less than a year later, in the early 1928 Laurel and Hardy short *Love 'em and Weep*, they are butlers at a similar dinner party, and the hostess Anita Garvin is the one chasing a cherry around her plate. In real life, Stan had a great appreciation for Anita's comic acting talents, and so he probably gave this routine to her, knowing that she would be very funny with it, and she certainly was.

A fairly frequent situation which usually happened to Oliver Hardy would be that he would step into what looked like a normal puddle, but would actually be several feet deep, so that he would plunge in, literally up to his shoulders. This happened in *Putting Pants On Philip*, and then in other Laurel and Hardy silent films, like *Should Married Men Go Home?*, *Habeas Corpus*, and in their final silent film *Angora Love*. This occurs in the 1924 Charley Chase film *Accidental Accidents*, and then again in a Max Davidson comedy, in which a policeman, played by Oliver himself, steps into such a mud puddle, ruining his cop's uniform.

Finally



In conclusion, we can see that Laurel and Hardy's work in silent films continued to influence directly what they did in the sound era. Even though they made the transition to sound more ably than most other comedians, they never lost their sensibilities as pantomime performers. Their voices and characteristic dialogue added extra dimension to their work, but they would still choose to perform many scenes with a minimum of speech. This is demonstrated quite clearly in their 1933 short *Busy Bodies*, which has long stretches of time in which Laurel and Hardy perform their scenes without saying anything at all. In their 1937 feature *Way Out West* there is a scene where Stan steps into a cold-storage closet with Mary Roberts (played by Rosina Lawrence), to tell her what has happened up until that point. This is obviously a nod to the silent days, because we can see them



only through a glass window in the door, and all we can hear is music, while Stan communicates purely with pantomime. It is a most delightful moment.

If you are not familiar with Laurel and Hardy's silent films, you should watch them all. Each one has something to delight audiences, more than eighty years after they were first shown in theatres. Besides the films mentioned in this article, there are other silent Laurel and Hardy films which are hilarious, as well, such as *Liberty* and *That's My Wife*. The only one of these films which cannot be seen is *Hats Off*, which is, sad to say, a lost film. The others still exist in complete form (a few minutes of *The Battle of the Century* are missing), and can be seen online and on DVDs around the world. So, go ahead and watch these silent classics, and you will see how good that Laurel and Hardy were, right from the start of their association as a comedy team.



Laurel and Hardy Central

The *Laurel and Hardy Central* website is once again up and running and now contains reviews of every Laurel and Hardy silent film, sound short and feature, as well as a review of several compilation films that feature Laurel and Hardy.

We have also brought back reviews and comments on the team's work in radio, television and vinyl recording.

John Larrabee and John V Brennan, <http://www.laurelandhardycentral.com>



Flashback to 1979

Lois Laurel (left) and her lifelong friend Lolo were guests at the second UK Convention, hosted by the Be Big Tent in Ashton-under-Lyne in 1979. UK Grand Sheiks present were (left to right) Rob Lewis (Helpmates Tent), Philip Martin Williams (Be Big Tent), Willie McIntyre (Bonnie Scotland Tent), Jonathan Hayward (Brats Tent) and Bill Cubin (Berth Marks Tent). On the extreme right is Cathie Mackenzie, Grand Sheik of the Any Old Port Tent of Rotterdam.

Dr Macro

We remind readers that a very rich source of Laurel and Hardy stills is at Dr Macro's High Quality Movie Scans. Visit www.doctormacro.com.



Twice Two



Night Owls



Bonnie Scotland

This Australian daybill poster from 1935 is posted on *Laurel Hardy Archive*. Richard Finegan added the comment, "That poster is being truthful – but only if one were to remove all the William Janney-June Lang-Anne Grey subplot. Then we'd have the advertised '60 minutes of joy'!"



Incredibly there have been more than forty film versions of Stevenson's classic tale *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, but the one that eclipses them all for ingenuity is *Dr Pyckle and Mr Pride*, a two-reeler made in 1925. In it Stan creates a brilliant parody of John Barrymore's performance from the 1920 version.



34th UK Convention of the Sons of the Desert

Hosted by the Saps at Sea Tent of Southend-on-Sea

3rd till 6th May 2013

We are delighted to have some special guests with us throughout the weekend. Jeffrey Holland, star of many TV comedy series and a huge Laurel and Hardy fan, will be here with his lovely wife, Judy Buxton. Judy has a long career on TV and stage in a variety of roles. Shelli and Richard Cingalee are illusionists and regular pantomime performers at Blackpool Tower. Shelli's sister Claudi and husband Charlie Cairoli Jr have spent a lifetime entertaining audiences on stage and in the circus. Charlie is part of the famous clown family that has enthralled families down through the years. Shelli and Claudi's grandfather was The Great Cingalee who toured and performed with Laurel and

Hardy during their 1952 tour. Pauline, their mother, was also part of this tour as she was one of the Lonsdale Sisters who, with their tap and rhythm dancing, opened both halves of the show.

Louise Murchison is the great granddaughter of the famous Fred Karno, who helped a host of comedians in their careers to fame and fortune including, of course, Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel.

Our sincere thanks to all our guests for joining us at the convention. We hope you have the time of your lives.

On Friday evening we stage *The Southend Revue of 1952*, a tribute to Laurel and Hardy and all their supporting acts when they were in town.

*Roger Robinson
in the extensive convention booklet*

Eleven years ago the Saps at Sea Tent hosted a tremendous convention in and around Southend-on-Sea and we all welcomed the news when it was confirmed that the tent would again host the UK Convention.

Grand Sheik Paul Allen had a team of experienced and talented helpers, led by Roger Robinson, so success was guaranteed. With guests from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the USA, the mix was perfect.

Registration on Friday was lively at the Skylark Hotel and each goodies bag contained a very detailed souvenir programme, a commemorative mug, a 2014 calendar, novelty money, a colour collage, rock and a key ring. Optional T-shirts were also popular.



A memorabilia room was open early. Outside the hotel, was a large line-up of classic cars and motor bikes. When they paraded, things augured well for a fine weekend. Even the sun was shining!

The opening banquet was followed by an introduction of the special guests and *The Southend Revue of 1952*, which was a tribute to the show in which Laurel and Hardy had starred in Southend sixty-one years earlier.

Saturday morning saw coaches leave for the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. A short trip on the miniature train which carried Laurel and Hardy in 1947 took us from Hythe to New Romney, where the Sons were welcomed by the mayor. There was an enthusiastic Parade of the Tents. Displays, exhibitions and refreshments at the station made the visit unforgettable and there was



Jeffrey Holland and Judy Buxton

a re-enactment of Laurel and Hardy's reopening of the railway. Then the train was boarded again and took the throng to Dungeness to meet coaches for transport back to the base hotel.

Laurel and Hardy lookalikes pictured on this page, and throughout the convention, are Alan Chapman and Stuart Burrell

After dinner, extracts were presented from the enticing musical play *The Nine Wives of Laurel and Hardy*. Next *Big Business* was projected on the big screen, but the big difference was that there was a live musical accompaniment and audience participation for sound effects. It worked tremendously.

The Zoltans, a jump jive band, went down a storm well into the small hours.

The Fancy Dress Parade was an essential ingredient and the standard of entries was high.

Sunday morning was time for the Games and this year, the weather being glorious, outdoor competitions were apt, with golf and paper aeroplane championships.



Gary Winstanley and Simon Hampson won the Fancy Dress Competition and the runner-up was Doreen Berg



Buses took us into town to the Park Inn Palace, where we could see the blue plaque which commemorates the visit of Laurel and Hardy, plus the Laurel and Hardy Function Rooms. The highlight of the visit was a film show entitled *The Boys at the Palace*, introduced by Dave Simpson.

Free time allowed folk to explore the town before returning to the Skylark Hotel for the Stan Hooton Memorial Quiz and memorabilia sales.

Martin Tierney and Charlie Lewis won the quiz



[Above] Tony Bagley won the Golf Championship and John Saunders won the Paper Aeroplane Contest

The final banquet was followed by the presentation of prizes and a monster raffle draw. As on each evening, toasts were proposed in the time-honoured custom.



Among the celebrity guests throughout the convention were Jeffrey Holland and Judy Buxton, who were very popular, and a live audience with the couple on stage was most enlightening, with questions from the audience and humorous tales from the pair.

To complete the very full day was a *Laurel and Hardy Magic Show* and the traditional *Sons Entertain* spot.



Norman Leigh



Mandy Finney



Martin Tierney and Sandy Divine

On Monday, the Grand Sheiks' Meeting was quick, the main item being deciding the location of next year's UK Convention. This will be hosted by the Be Big Tent (in association with the Blotto Tent) in Manchester.



Paul Allen presents the pineapple to Bob Hickson

**Report by
Willie McIntyre**

Our thanks go to the Saps at Sea Tent for a splendid conclave in the established traditions of the Sons of the Desert, with some unique touches and, above all, another fine tribute to Laurel and Hardy. Special thanks are offered to Paul Allen and Roger Robinson, but also to the whole majestic tent who made it work like clockwork.

Convention on DVD

DVDs of this year's UK Convention are now ready to order. £10.00 each. Email Dave Fox at dvdfox842@gmail.com for further information.

Convention asides



Convention brews were on tap



Tony Bagley provided an illustrated quiz, which was won by Phil Ruston



A road near where Roger Robinson lives in Leigh-on-Sea was spied by Jonathan Hayward

The Boys in the Film Registry in the USA

The Sons owe much to Stan Taffel and many others who worked diligently to see that Laurel and Hardy's 1933 film *Sons of the Desert* was inducted into the National Film Registry in the fall of 2012.

The program was created by the US Congress in 1989 to preserve films for their cultural and historical significance. The Registry's latest additions bring the total number of movies given this honor to 600, including independent films, documentaries, Hollywood produced features, and early historical films.

What makes it so exciting is that Laurel and Hardy have two films, more than any other motion picture comedy team, included in the registry. The first is *The Music Box*, produced in 1932 and inducted in 1997.

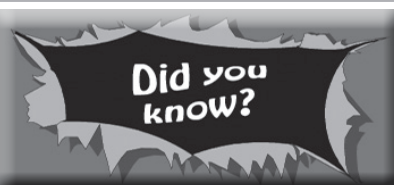
Few motion picture comedy teams have made it, only *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, inducted in 2001, *Road To Morocco* with Crosby and Hope in 1996, *Punch Drunks* with Wheeler and Woolsey in 2002, and *Duck Soup* with the Marx Brothers in 1990.

What the inclusion of Laurel and Hardy means is that the two films will be available for viewing and research far into the future. Who knows, the Boys may be popular in the year 2101 and beyond.

Those that were involved in the voting have performed a great service for the Sons of the Desert and all who love Laurel and Hardy.

Roger Gordon

Intra-Tent Journal (Summer 2013)

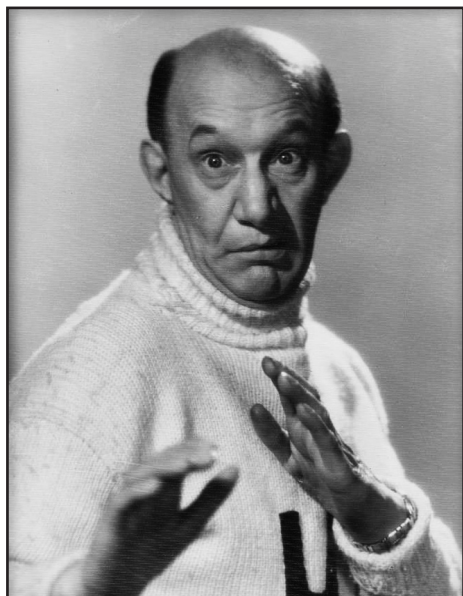


In a comment in *TV Times*, Leslie Halliwell reminded us how famous actors such as Orson Welles and Richard Burton lent their voices to films without personally appearing in them. But there is nothing new in the use of this "voice over" technique and examples can be found in Hal Roach films of the thirties: Billy Gilbert's voice was used for the announcement of the steamship company official in *Sons of the Desert* and Oliver Hardy's yells were used in *Choo-Choo*, an Our Gang short of 1932.



Curios and oddities

With Laurel and Hardy was Colin Tibler at his exhibition in Grantham in 1952. The inscribed photograph was auctioned in September last year, with an estimated value of £800 to £1200. We do not know how much it actually fetched.



* As always the *Nutty Nut News Network* brings us unusual photos (including the ones on this page) and can be found at www.nuttynutnewsnetwork.co.uk and www.nuttynutnewsnetwork.com. You will also enjoy the site's *Facebook* pages.





WEBWATCH



Honolulu Baby

The song *Honolulu Baby* resides on *YouTube* in a production conceived and performed by long-standing Sailors Beware Tent member Bobby Kemp, as a tribute to the Sons of the Desert. The track was recorded and performed in Stockholm whilst Bobby was laying down tracks for his latest album.

This version of the classic grass-skirted ditty is well worth sharing with all Laurel and Hardy fanatics everywhere. Go to *YouTube* and enter "HonSonsVidYT.mov".
Graeme Green



The Southbank Show

Peter Jaconelli sent us links to television's *The Southbank Show* on Stan Laurel, from years gone by. It is split into six parts. Go to *YouTube* and enter "Stan Laurel – biography".



Bumblehums

Martin Tierney and Sandy Divine's performance at the UK Convention is now on *YouTube*. Punch in "Bumblehums".

Gordon Davie



Bei Mir Bist Du Scheen

YouTube has Laurel and Hardy set to music as never before! Go to *YouTube* and enter "Bei Mir Bist Du Scheen". The clip is absolutely marvellous, with over two million hits!



Piano movers

Liam Muldowney found a clip of Bert and Ernie moving a piano on *YouTube*. "Coincidence?" he wonders and adds, "I think not." Punch in, "bert and ernie piano movers".



The Belverdes

Here is one of the rare times I will send out something that does not pertain to the Boys, so please excuse me.

Lots of you who know me know that I was a professional musician many years ago, for about twenty years. My brother and I started a very successful band called The Belverdes in the Washington, DC, area, starting in the early years of rock and roll. I thought that some of you might enjoy hearing what the band sounded like. Go to *YouTube* and enter "Tommy Cole and The Belverdes – Birdie" for the soundtrack of one of the songs being played by the band. It's an up-tempo, instrumental tune that was popular with people dancing the jitterbug.

Gino Dercola



Then and now

I have spent some time visiting Los Angeles and I have compiled quite a few "then and now" location photos, which I have put onto *YouTube*.

We Faw Down: <http://youtu.be/IuRqEWKnu2g>

Men o' War: <http://youtu.be/GlQID8knkio>

Going Bye-Bye: <http://youtu.be/HPYkcPdN17A>

County Hospital: <http://youtu.be/K5AUIk-J2U4>

The Music Box: <http://youtu.be/QmQvffBwnQY>

Perfect Day: <http://youtu.be/5P7ZqQFoslY>

Towed in a Hole: <http://youtu.be/6Nar8u2P6t4>

Leave 'em Laughing: http://youtu.be/X-OBqT8J_8o

Big Business: http://youtu.be/_gzkX7lliQg

And a few Our Gang locations:

Pups is Pups: <http://youtu.be/qyBFRwcaUEk>

Hook and Ladder: http://youtu.be/Xf56_KLjIp0

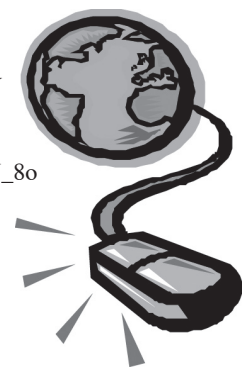
Free Wheeling: <http://youtu.be/f-3uwJDqcoM>

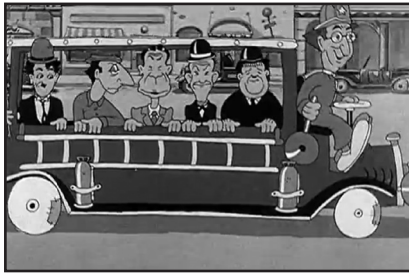
Boxing Gloves: http://youtu.be/VJt7zt_rdRk

Forgotten Babies: <http://youtu.be/cfB6DD9VX4Q>

Hi'-Neighbor!: <http://youtu.be/B45gKp6jLOc>

Chris Bungo





Oswald the Lucky Rabbit: The Merry Old Soul

Carrin Hare passed along a *YouTube* item she received from a friend of hers named Hess. It's a cartoon and has a number of famous people (in cartoon image), including Laurel and Hardy, who appear briefly at about 2:18 into the film, then again at 5:26 with a nice pie fight. It's about eight minutes long. Go to *YouTube* and enter "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit: The Merry Old Soul".

Gino Dercola

Laurel and Hardy Website of the Year 2012

The *Laurel & Hardy Forum* announced the Laurel and Hardy Website of the Year 2012 to be *LettersFromStan.com*. The *Forum* calls it "a brilliant website which you will never tire of, regularly updated and highly informative." It adds, "Congratulations to *Letters From Stan* creator Bernie Hogya (aka *Forum* member Sap at Sea) who takes the title for the second time in five years. Join us in applauding Bernie and long may the *Letters From Stan* website continue to grow."

There are *Laurel and Hardy Forum* interviews with Bernie at <http://youtu.be/G5AQ20SiQog> and <http://youtu.be/PXBIhIVLb1M>.

♦ *Bowler Dessert* adds our congratulations and appreciation. The site is wonderfully enthralling and it is a very worthy winner of this prestigious award.

Chuck McCann interview

Ross Owen's radio interview with Chuck McCann is part of *Ross and Nightmare's Celebrity Interviews* on Black Sky Radio and lasts 51 minutes.

♦ <http://rossandnightmare.blogspot.co.uk>

Shades of Men o' War

I've watched this a few times. This simple rescue operation definitely didn't go as planned. At least they tried! Doh!

Graeme Green

♦ http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=558_1365032489

Scottish links

BBC News had an item on its website on 15th June, entitled *Another Fine Mess? Unravelling Laurel and Hardy's Scottish Links* by Steven McKenzie, BBC Scotland Highlands and Islands reporter.

♦ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-22312474>

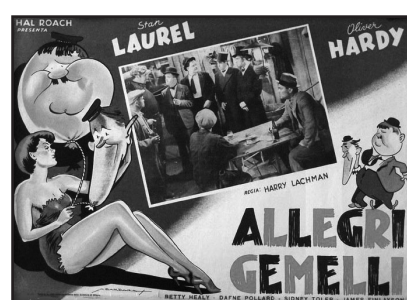
Petition to get the Boys' films back on terrestrial TV

On the *Laurel & Hardy Forum* we've started a petition to get the Boys' films back on terrestrial TV. I've spoken to CCA who say it's merely a formality if the BBC, for example, wanted to broadcast Laurel and Hardy films. I've also heard back from the BBC who say they will listen and take action if we get enough demand via our petition.

For decades upon decades, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy's brand of humour has been the inspiration behind many of today's (and yesterday's) comedians. Today, almost one hundred years since they first graced our screens, their movies are still loved worldwide by audiences of all ages. So why aren't they shown on TV any more? It seems the executives who commission TV programmes for terrestrial television think people have forgotten Laurel and Hardy and that they wouldn't attract enough viewers to justify showing them. Let's prove them wrong. We need at least 20,000 signatures on this petition to prove that the public want to see Laurel and Hardy films on terrestrial television again. Don't let future generations miss out on the works of Laurel and Hardy.

Ross Owen

♦ <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/please-show-laurel-and-hardy-on-tv-again-so-future>



Harry Hoppe's <http://www.facebook.com/laurelhardy.archive> continues to amaze us with many unusual lobby cards

Swiss Miss bliss

It is with extreme happiness that I can now share my latest Laurel and Hardy memorabilia acquisition with my fellow Sons. This is a pair of short pants (lederhosen) worn by our beloved Oliver Hardy in the 1938 Hal Roach feature film *Swiss Miss*. They are made of a soft material and have a brown colour. They have lavish Swiss type embroidered designs on them and black laces that tie on both sides. I do not know which scenes Babe wore these particular lederhosen in. I like to believe that perhaps he might have worn them while he and Stan walked across that shaky suspension bridge high in the Swiss Alps, while carrying that piano. It was in that very funny and famous scene where the Boys met up with the gorilla, played by Charles Gemora.

On YouTube there is a video showing Henry Brandon (aka Barnaby from *Babes in Toyland*) wearing Stan Laurel's *Swiss Miss* lederhosen, while he sings the *Schnitzlebank Song*. If anyone might know where these pants are now or if they might be for sale, please contact me at jeffveroff@hotmail.com. They would make an incredible set indeed!



The blacked-out label has the name "Hardy" written on it

Pardon Us pants

Since *Pardon Us* has always been one of my favorite Laurel and Hardy films, I once wondered whatever happened to the prisoner costumes worn by Stan and Ollie in that film. Sadly, they are not known to exist, to the best of my knowledge. However, I was shocked to discover that a pair of "prisoner" pants allegedly worn by another actor in this film had recently been discovered. Fortunately I was able to acquire them. I was surprised by how thin these pants are. They are like very thin jogging pants.



The bottoms of these pants are slightly dirty from wear. They are a grey colour and were made by United Costumers. On the name tag are the initials "JG". I have no clue which actor had these initials. I have researched a few different cast listings and have not found

any actor whose name matches. I can tell you that whoever he was, he must have been approximately six feet tall. They are long pants. Next to that tag, written on the inside of the pants is "AM 15". I'm not sure what that means. Perhaps some readers might



be able to solve some of these mysteries.



Found a star

Jimmie Finlayson was the most popular Laurel and Hardy co-star. He appeared in thirty-three Stan and Ollie comedies beginning with the silent *Love 'em and Weep* in 1927 and ending with *A Chump at Oxford* in 1940. His contribution to those films is immeasurable. No actor could have portrayed those roles any better than good ole Fin. It would be hard to imagine Laurel and Hardy films without him. His bulging eye double-take expressions were absolutely priceless!

I had never seen nor heard of any James Finlayson movie clothing memorabilia known still to exist today. That is why I was quite surprised to find this jacket, allegedly worn by



Jimmie in the 1937 Hal Roach feature film *Pick a Star*.

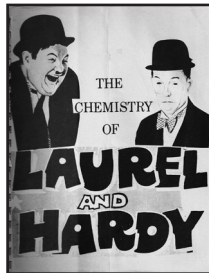
I believe that Jimmie wore this jacket while playing the role of Laurel and Hardy's director in the opening scene of *Pick a Star*. This is one of the few instances when we can see Jimmie without a mustache. It always makes me laugh whenever I see Stan sit down next to director Fin and he asks Fin, "Well, when am I supposed to look dumb?" Frustrated Jimmie doesn't appear pleased. Doh!



Jeffrey Veroff

Chemistry book

As Sons, we are lucky that there have been many books written about Laurel and Hardy or with Laurel and Hardy as the primary theme – I have well over 100. One of the more unusual biographical books is entitled *The Chemistry of Laurel and Hardy*, written by Fred Muro. There is no information about the date this was published nor is there any company identification, although it appears to have been published by the author in a simple way (my opinion), probably typewritten, and using a spiral binding. The covers are thin cardboard (or some may call it heavy-duty construction paper). The book has 43 pages, 8½ inches wide by 11¼ inches high. There are some references at the end to the Boys on 8mm and 16mm films, in a way that seems to date this book before DVDs and more modern technology.



Gino Dercola

✧ Along with the 8mm and 16mm film references, the primitive cut and paste photocopy cover indicates it is pre-computer. Since Laurel and Hardy sound films were not readily available uncut in 8mm until the late 1950s, and self-publishing did not get affordable until the 1970s, I would put the publication of this book in the mid-1970s. By 1980 he would have been talking about VHS for the popular home movie format.

However I would not eliminate the mid-1960s, but it would have cost much more to self-publish then. I wonder if the author was a teacher and this book was tied to his class teachings.

Paul Mular

✧ I have a copy of this – it was also made available as a reel-to-reel audio tape. I think I bought this around 1973. It was produced by a guy who ran a newsletter about Super 8 movies, which I was collecting pretty fervently at the time.

Randy Skretvedt

The way forward?

One of the things often spoken about is how a whole generation has now not seen Laurel and Hardy on TV and what can be done. Well, to be honest, there is a lot of Laurel and Hardy on YouTube so I guess downloading is the future of Laurel and Hardy.

Nick Rich

Tom McGrath's play at the Watermill

Tom McGrath's play Laurel and Hardy was at the Watermill Theatre near Newbury from 13th June till 20th July. In The Good Review (20.06.13.), Peter Coe enthused. . .

There's an eerie moment at the start of the Watermill's current production, when Gavin Spokes appears on the stage as Oliver Hardy and, wordlessly, looks out at the audience.

It's not just that Spokes resembles the great comic physically, which he does. It's more to do with his unspoken attitude, the look in his eyes. The combination of the actor's demeanour and the ghostly stage lighting briefly creates a convincing illusion that Hardy himself has materialised in Berkshire and wandered in to the theatre.

As the show unfolds, we see Spokes and his co-star Paul Bigley recreate both the physicality and the sound of Laurel and Hardy with uncanny accuracy.

Bigley's resemblance to Stan Laurel is less immediately obvious but he has captured the man to a tee: the hapless persona; the unique vocal delivery and distinctive accent; the deliberate walk; the shrugs of bemusement; the air of vulnerability.

In Spokes' performance, meanwhile, we see Hardy's precise, dainty, over-elaborate mannerisms and hear his unmistakable snorts of frustration and howls of pain and rage. These performances are more than just impersonations. It's as if the actors are channelling the spirits of the legendary duo.

Fans of Stan and Ollie's comedy will find plenty to enjoy in this show, as it features several scenes of well-choreographed slapstick.

But Tom McGrath's script has plenty of shade among the light. We learn a lot about the real men behind the characters.

Laurel's life, in particular, seems fascinating. Belying his hapless on-screen persona, he was a talented director, writer and editor who railed against the constraints of working for Hal Roach's studios. This is the man Buster Keaton ranked above both himself and Charlie Chaplin as the greatest comedian of their generation.

Hardy, by contrast, seems easy-going and unassertive, happy to appear in the pictures, but equally content to let his partner do the creative heavy-lifting and the battling over contracts.

What comes across clearly is that these two men are great friends, with a loyalty to one another that survives after their style of comedy becomes dated, their star wanes and they are hit by health problems as they age.

The duo's appeal endures, though. In a recent edition of Radio 4's arts programme *Front Row*, the poet Gwyneth Lewis chose Laurel and Hardy's dance routine from the film *Way Out West* as her favourite cultural work.

Bigley and Spokes perform the same dance at the end of the Watermill show, and it's a joyous thing to behold. Well worth checking out in its original form on YouTube, and in this fascinating, moving and ultimately heart-warming piece of theatre.

Laurel and Hardy is directed by Paul Foster and features ingenious design and lighting, by Laura McEwen and Richard Howell respectively. The show's engaging original music is composed by Richard Sisson, who also provides live piano accompaniment.

Continuity lapses

I noticed these when we showed *Hog Wild* at a meeting. . .

Stan causes his car to backfire, causing Ollie's trousers to smoulder. As Stan throws a bucket of water over Ollie's backside, there is an obvious bulge of a protective block.



Ollie falls from the roof into a pond twice but each time when he's seen at the top of the ladder going back on the roof he is dry.

Having inadvertently driven away from the house, Mrs Hardy, on foot, catches up with the Boys but how did she know where they were?

Tony Hillman

The Fighting Kentuckian



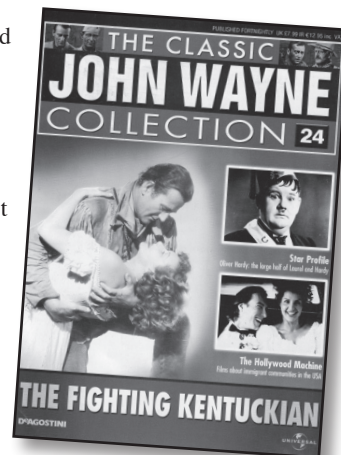
The cover photograph on *Bowler Dessert 75* was from *The Fighting Kentuckian* (1949), which starred John Wayne, with Oliver Hardy teamed in a supporting role.

Dave Oyston recalls that the film was included as part of *The Classic John Wayne Collection* in 2007. The *Collection*, issued by De Agostini UK Ltd, was a series of magazines with accompanying DVDs and *The Fighting Kentuckian* was number 24 in the series.

Dave sent us a copy of the magazine and we have extracted a few sections from it here. The magazine also included a two-page article on Hardy, with reference to some of the most popular Laurel and Hardy films.

Wayne is a natural at this sort of stuff. With bluff and charm, he's charisma personified as Breen. But best of all are his moments with Oliver Hardy as Willie Paine. A fine buddy-buddy teaming, they play off each other with real affection and some great comic timing, even fitting in a few chunks of cheery slapstick for good measure. On this evidence, it's a shame that Hardy didn't do more "straight" acting.

The film's plot – a scheme hatched by Randolph and Hayden to con the French settlers out of their land – climaxes in a rousing battle scene between Hayden's nasty riverboat thugs on one side and the French soldiers and the Kentucky riflemen on the other. Full of gunplay and guts, it neatly rounds off an unpretentious and energetic matinee movie.



✧ "I was always mad at Yates when he made me use Vera [Ralston] in that film," he [John Wayne] said, "because I think we lost the chance to have one damn fine picture."

At least Wayne got his way when it came to casting the film's other major role, comic relief

Willie Paine. Wayne had recently worked with Oliver Hardy of Laurel and Hardy fame on a charity tour of the play *What Price Glory?* and thought he would be perfect as the laconic, food-loving Kentuckian. He offered Hardy the role, but his first reaction was to refuse. With his comedy partner Stan Laurel struggling with diabetes and unable to work, Hardy (known as "Babe" to his friends) didn't want rumours to start circulating that the pair were splitting up.

But when he mentioned Wayne's offer to Laurel, he



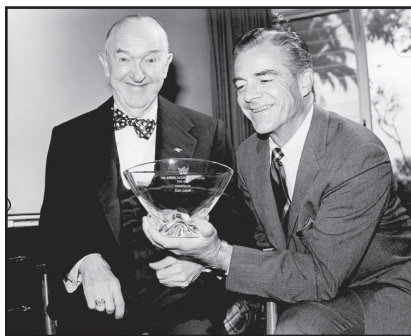
immediately said, "You're going to do it, aren't you?" Hardy said no, saying he "didn't want any stories getting out that you and I are battling".

"Oh, for God's sake, Babe," said Laurel, "just because I'm sick and can't work, there's no reason you shouldn't. You're crazy not to do it. Do it!"

So Hardy signed on, more than making up – in Wayne's mind – for the handicap of having Vera Ralston in the cast. "Duke said to me, 'Nobody's gonna remember Vera in our film because all they're gonna remember is Oliver Hardy and me doing our comedy scenes,'" said Paul Fix. He was right.

✧ Perhaps unfairly forgotten now – especially since Wayne's next movie was his Oscar-nominated turn in *The Sands of Iwo Jima* – *The Fighting Kentuckian* did decent business at the back end of 1949 and earned some solid reviews. *Variety* called it a "swift moving melodrama" and complimented Oliver Hardy on his "natural thespian ability". *The New York Times* was more circumspect, calling it "standard" stuff, but even they found time to compliment both Hardy and the "handsome, laconic and... formidable" Wayne.





Stan Laurel with Dana Andrews and Stan's award

Awarding

We all know of the honorary Oscar Stan Laurel was given by AMPAS. However, he was given another special award that came from his peers.

Every year the Screen Actors Guild honors a member for their contribution to entertainment. Certainly you've heard or seen the annual show but did you know that Stan was the second honoree? His award was not televised but he is in the record books nevertheless.

Stan Taffel

Stan's school

More than £600,000 has been spent protecting a burnt-out school once attended by Stan Laurel in the last five years. Concerns have been raised that Durham County Council is not doing enough to sort out the future of the derelict King James I Grammar School, in South Church Road, Bishop Auckland. The Grade-II listed building was extensively damaged in an arson attack in 2007. Since then it has been protected by plastic sheeting, scaffolding and a metal fence.

Durham County Council has spent £614,718 in the last five years on emergency stabilisation work, ongoing project work and security measures. About £426,000 was recovered from the insurance company following the fire.

Dani Webb

The Northern Echo (15.03.13.)



No Surrender

I recently watched (on VHS – I don't think it's on DVD) the Alan Bleasdale film *No Surrender* which features a fancy dress competition won by... Laurel and Hardy! Above is a screen snap from my phone of a VHS print so it's not of stunning quality.

Stephen Barlow

The Laurel and Hardy editor

An article (abridged here) by John E Lewis was spotted by James Beyer in *9.5 Magazine* number 152 (Winter 2013)

Almost every cine enthusiast must have shown a Laurel and Hardy film at some time or other whether it is on 9.5mm or any other gauge. But it's a fair bet that not many of them can name the man who edited most of those films, or are even aware of the fact that he was British.

Albert Adrian Jordan was born on May 5th, 1887 and entered the film industry via his father who owned one of the first cinemas in Cambridge. In 1913 at the age of twenty-six he went to London and worked for various companies learning the basics of the craft before landing a job as a cameraman for the Lions Head Film Co in Croydon. In those days he often had to process his own film and print the rushes, and sometimes the director would also draft him in to assist with the editing. So when Bert and his wife went to seek their fortune in the United States in 1916, he was not exactly inexperienced, but there was still a lot of competition from the local technicians for any work available.

With the 1920s approaching, Bert Jordan decided to become a film editor and joined the Vitagraph Company. Several Vitagraph dramas were released on 9.5mm. However, Jordan didn't stay with Vitagraph for long as he moved to the Hal Roach Studios around 1921. He was already mildly acquainted with Oliver Hardy who he once recalled playing "a heavy" in Larry Semon comedies, but he didn't meet Stan Laurel until 1926. At that time Laurel was directing comedy shorts for Hal Roach.

When shooting started on the first Laurel and Hardy comedy, Bert Jordan had already established a friendship with them, and fortunately the material ended up in his cutting room. Bert's sense of timing and his creativity soon endeared him to both members of the comedy duo. Indeed, Stan soon trusted Bert implicitly and allowed him to make his own decisions with a freedom that most other film editors of that period – or any other – would have envied. Unfortunately, that level of input was not recognised on the screen credits. Between 1920 to 1932 Richard C Currier, head of the editing department, claimed the film editor credit on nearly every Roach production, and his contract with the company ensured it.



Comic

The above is from issue 144 of *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*, cover-dated December 1971. Jimmy and his friends have travelled to Scotland where they meet some stereotype kilted characters, including this one. It's clearly meant to be Fin, as the name proves.

It was written and drawn by the great Jack Kirby, who is to comics what Laurel and Hardy are to film comedy.

By the way, MacFinney turns out to be a baddie and ends up being eaten by the Loch Trevor monster. Hey, it was a simpler age back then. . .

Gordon Davie



Auction

A 45rpm record was up for auction on eBay that made me smile. It was by a group called HARDY Brendle and his Virginia Pardners, and it was on the LAUREL label (from North Carolina). There's no connection to the Boys, but it still made me curious.

Gino Dercola



By strange coincidence, two of Stan Laurel's "leading ladies" with the same Christian name – Mae Dahlberg and Mae Busch – both came from Australia.



Stan and Ollie caused a stushie

LAUREL and Hardy created a fine mess when they arrived in Glasgow in 1932.

The pair, then the biggest comedy double-act in the world, caused chaos as fans young and old mobbed their city base, the Central Hotel.

For Stan it was a homecoming of sorts. As a youth he spent a few years in Glasgow while his father managed the old Metropole Theatre, in

SEND US YOUR PICTURES
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Stockwell Street, next door to where the Scotia Bar still sits. This was the first of four tours the original Little and

Large of comedy made of the UK. They returned to delight audiences in 1947, 1952 and 1954.

Quite what Ollie, a southern gent from Harlem, Georgia, made of Scotland, sadly, isn't recorded.

On this trip, they appeared on stage at the old La Scala cinema in Sauchiehall Street, which is now the Waterstone's bookshop.

Evening Times (16.11.12.)

From Laurel and Hardy to Pudsey, now she's seen it all!

Queen lights up 100th variety show

By Rebecca English and Alisdair Glemie

SHE was just 21 when, as Princess Elizabeth, she attended her first show in 1947. On the programme were Laurel and Hardy, Bud Flanagan and Gracie Fields.

Those legendary performers long ago ascended to the great music hall in the sky. But the gala they graced has carried on, and the princess who became Queen was there last night for the 100th Royal Variety Performance.



Smiling through the years: Attending her first show as Queen (above) and right, arriving last night

Daily Mail (20.11.12.)

BY ROYAL COMMAND, A CENTURY OF SPECTACLE



LAST NIGHT

BBC History magazine (November 2012)

QUICK QUERY

Q. Who was 'The Amazing Regurgitator'?

A. Probably born in Egypt in 1888, Hadji Ali was an unlikely star of music hall in Europe and vaudeville in America.

'Regurgitation' acts, in which performers swallowed liquids or objects and then threw them back

up in supposedly entertaining ways, were quite common at the time but Ali's became the most famous of all. In its climax, he swallowed vast amounts of water followed by a pint of kerosene. He ejected the kerosene in a long arc and thus turned a small flame on the stage into a blazing conflagration. He then doused the fire by spewing out the water he had swallowed.

Also billed as 'The Human Volcano' and 'The Ninth Wonder of the Scientific World', Ali died in Wolverhampton, west Midlands in 1937 of natural causes. Nick Rennison

A lithograph poster depicting Hadji Ali spouting water. The caption translates as: 'Ally, the Mysterious Egyptian', 1913



We are familiar with Hadji Ali because of his appearance in an extended European version of Blotto

EXTRA!!! The Times EXTRA!!!

In the news

Press items (the usual caveat applies) spotted by Peter Andrews, John Bogle, Billy Cooper, Bill Crouch, Janice Hawton, Tony Hillman, Clive Mitchell, Mark Rodgers, Tony Traynor and Eric Woods

Comical cost

● A LAUREL and Hardy DVD went up for auction on eBay with a £1.5 million price tag.

The triple bill DVD was listed by First Rhythm Music Ltd of Manchester and the £1,563,645.76 price is believed to be a typing error.

Now that's what you call another fine mess!

Sunday Post (02.12.12.)

ON THIS DAY 1927



Silent short *Putting Pants on Philip* was released and starred slapstick kings Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy in their first 'official' outing as a madcap double-act.

TV Times SCOTLAND (03.12.12.)

Daily Mail, Friday, December 20, 2012

From Laurel and Hardy to Strictly, how Christmas Day TV has changed in 60 years

By Simon Cable, *Stobrother Correspondent*

A CHURCH service in the morning, some Laurel and Hardy in the afternoon, then an evening in the company of Norman Wisdom before being tucked up in bed at 11pm.

Christmas Day television in 1952 was a rather modest affair. There is no more a much bigger proportion of it devoted to religious programmes. Bare but some classic programming. Bare

Forthright and the Queen.

DECEMBER 25 BBC1 SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS 1952 - 2012

1952	1972	1992	2012
11am: MOON CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE from the Church of St. Dunstons, All Saints, Shrewsbury, East London.	11.30am: A STOCKING FULL OF STARS hosted by Michael Angel and Roy Castle and featuring Bruce Forsyth.	12.45pm: THE TWO BORNES Sketches, jokes and songs from Robbie Williams, Gills and Gills.	2pm: TOP OF THE POPS Featuring performances from Robbie Williams, Gills and Gills.
2.30pm: LAUREL AND HARDY Serial War 1938 film starring the comedy duo as mounting soldiers.	2.30pm: TOP OF THE POPS Performances from David Cassidy, Ron McKean and Rod Stewart.	2pm: TOP OF THE POPS Live performance by The Vire and Light Cold Fred.	2pm: TOP OF THE POPS Featuring performances from Robbie Williams, Gills and Gills.
4.30pm: MARIA RUD PRESENTS FOR THE VERY YOUNG ANDY PANDY (below)	6.55pm: CHRISTMAS NIGHT WITH THE STARS presented by Cilla Black and the Two Poppies.	3pm: QUEENS MESSAGE (left) 2.10pm: INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE First screening.	3pm: QUEENS MESSAGE (left) 2.10pm: INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE First screening.
	8.15pm: HOLLYWOOD AND WISE BOY (below) Featuring performances by Vera Lynn and Shirley Bassey.	6.55pm: ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES Starring David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst.	8.15pm: DOCTOR WHO A special Christmas episode starring Matt Smith (above).
	9.15pm: BAKEFOOT IN THE PARK 1967 film starring	8.50pm: SHIRLEY VALENTINE (below)	

Daily Mail (21/12/12)

★ A page from *The Daily Telegraph* (29.12.12.) reflected on a glorious year for the British motor industry. It featured this illustration from Goodwood, with the heading "Reasons to be cheerful".





A bit of a find

I've had a bit of a find and thought I'd tell you about it. (I'm determined to get in the last *Bowler Dessert*.)

I had parked around the back of Jago Close off Plumstead Common Road in London to drop off the missus so she could go to the local off license. (Sweeties for her and my girls, beer for me.)

When looking about I noticed two familiar faces. I immediately had to get out of the car to have a look. Getting closer I was completely surprised to see the Boys in some Banksy-like graffiti on the back wall of the Star pub.

I took a photo with my iPhone. But as it was nine at night the picture wasn't brilliant.

When my wife came back she wondered how I had ever managed to see the graffiti from such an obscure angle and in the dark. I said then I would go back and get a better picture when I had time in the daylight.

After a few weeks I was going through my pictures and was reminded of the task. So I went over there whilst getting a Sunday paper. And here are the results (above).

After taking the photos I was about to go back home, when a lady got out of her car and I recognised her as one of the barmaids of the pub. While she knocked on the side door of the pub to be let in to start her shift I asked her if she knew anything about the graffiti?

As she was telling me, "No," an elder man came to the door to let her in, so I asked him if he knew anything about it either.

He said no, it just turned up a few months ago, then corrected himself saying it was exactly the same time as the Olympics had started.

I asked him if he liked it and made sure he had no plans to paint over it.

Then he told me there was another piece of graffiti further back by the flats that was just of the rose, the same that Stan was holding. I've included that picture as well.

As you can imagine, I was quite excited about the find. Being at the back of a pub it could be a good pilgrimage for Laurel and Hardy fans.

And if it was a Banksy. . . well!

Steve Trodd

☆ The artist is called Flower Guy. He has a *Facebook* page and he does great art on canvas and tote bags and the roses are everywhere. Just thought I would let you know that's is not Banksy.

(Miss) JC Daniels



Olympia's Maureen

Dublin's oldest serving barmaid Maureen Grant of the Olympia Theatre was honoured in Dublin in June for all her years of service. She still works there. She served the Boys in 1953 and remembers them well.

The Sons who attended the Euro Convention in Dublin in 2007 remember her fondly and still ask me about her.

Liam Muldowney



◆ In Dublin's Olympia Theatre images of celebrities past and present line the walls. And, beaming alongside almost all of them is one Maureen Grant, 88-year-old stalwart of the Olympia and doyenne of its stalls bar where she first started working as a barmaid 64 years ago.

Now, having been selected by the Children's Charity Variety for the Variety Gold Heart Award for Outstanding Contribution to Irish Entertainment, Grant chills out with a cup of tea in the bar that bears her name and reflects on her time there.

Of the galaxy of stars Grant has met in her 64-year tenure some have shone extra bright. Laurel and Hardy were "a pair of crackers"; matinee idol Tyrone Power was "only gorgeous, you could powder your nose in his eyes"; Micheál MacLiammóir and Hilton Edwards were "like a pair of cats, always fighting and scrapping – but they were great."

Irish Examiner (07.06.13.)

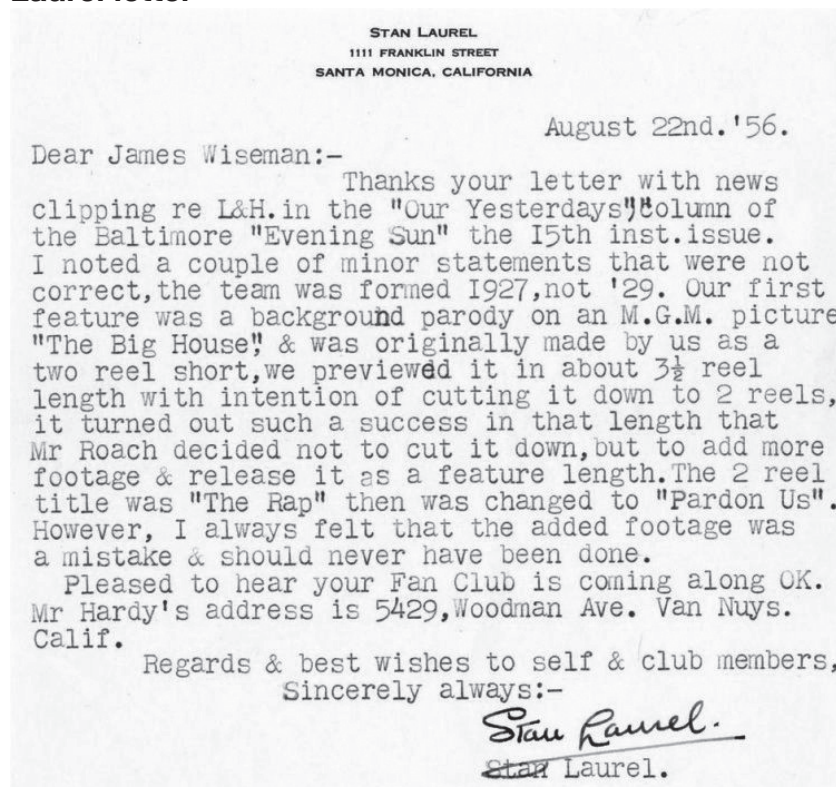


Bygone friends

The pics above were taken on my forty-first birthday at Bygone Times, Ecclestone. I wasn't expecting to meet my old friends Stan and Ollie!

Stephen Barlow

Laurel letter

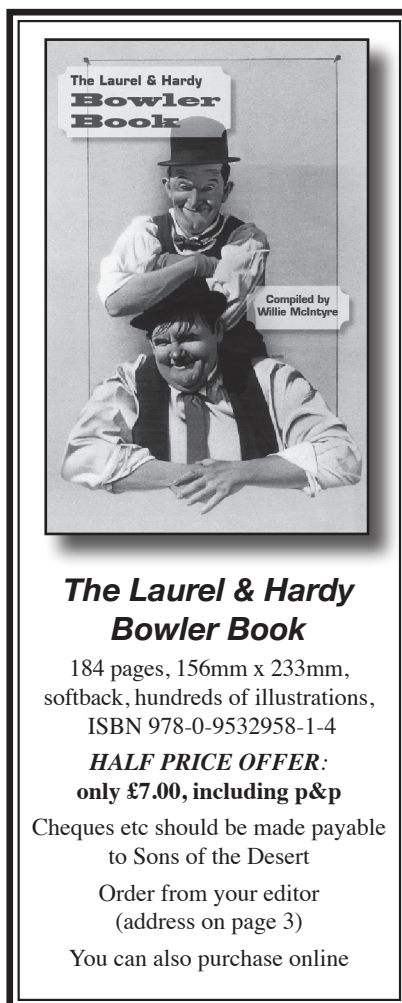


This letter is a new addition to the Gallery of the Nutty Nut News Network



Cuckoos in Ulverston

On the way back from Cornwall in July, Rachel and Andrew Macleod, of the Call of the Cuckoos Tent, stopped off at the Laurel and Hardy Museum in Ulverston. Their photo includes their dog, Misty.



Blocks

On auction on eBay in July was a set of three prop over-sized building blocks. These had originally been purchased by the seller at a Hal Roach studio sale in Culver City in the early 1960s prior to the studio being torn down in 1963. These were used in films like the *Our Gang* and Laurel and Hardy comedies. Similar blocks from the same set were used in *Babes in Toyland*. They were constructed of plywood and had hand-painted paper panels. The starting bid asked was US \$3,200, but there were no bids.

On the telly in the USA

Warner Bros on 7th May unveiled a new streaming television subscription service to give viewers access to its archive of productions dating back to the 1920s.

Warner Archive Instant features films including Laurel and Hardy's *Bonnie Scotland*.

The service, which is priced at \$10 a month after a free trial, allows consumers to watch on a computer or via the Roku streaming television box.

"There will be more of everything as we're trying to strike a balance," the company said in a tweet. "Stay tuned and join when you like the programming."

The service is only offered in the United States meanwhile.



★ Did you see the nice Laurel and Hardy items Eric Sykes had on the tribute show *The Late Great Eric Sykes* on BBC2 on 3rd November? He had one poster.

Have you seen the Volkswagen car advert on TV, *Go to Sleep my Baby*? It is being sung by, I guess, the Avalon Boys.

Nick Rich

★ On *Antiques Road Trip* (BBC2, 26.11.12.) David Barby (now sadly deceased) tried on an old bowler hat in one of the shops and said, "I look like something out of a Laurel and Hardy." (He didn't add the word "film" to the end of the sentence.)



Above was the moment when Jimmy Tarbuck paid a warm tribute to Laurel and Hardy at the *Royal Variety Performance* (ITV1, 03.12.12.).

Mark Rodgers

★ *Panto!* (ITV1, 27.12.12.) was supposedly set in Lancaster but actually featured an exterior shot of the Coronation Hall in Ulverston, clearly showing the Laurel and Hardy statue.

Steve Robinson

★ I was watching *The Battle for Malta* (BBC2, 07.01.13.). They showed that they had a cinema at the base and there was a picture of the Boys on the bill. It looked like *A Chump at Oxford*. Brilliant.

On one interview, Ade Edmondson said he has a study set up with a digital player and a large screen and he watches Laurel and Hardy all the time. He said all of their gags you still see people do and said that they must have got them from someone too.

Hairy Bikers' Best of British (BBC2, 23.04.13.) mentioned Stan and Ollie having food smothered in onions, in an Ollie voice. Brilliant! Mentioned on prime time again.

Alan Chinner aka UlverStan

★ On the BBC1 quiz show *Pointless* broadcast on 18th January, contestants were asked to decipher the names of five silent movie stars that were made into anagrams. The answers included Stan Laurel and Charlie Chaplin, the others being Marlene Dietrich, Mary Pickford and Rudolph Valentino. (Or should that have been Rudolph Vaselino who starred in *Mud and Sand*?)

The contestants struggled and managed to identify Charlie Chaplin and presenter Alexander Armstrong correctly identified Stan.

John Burton

★ My wife was watching the Alan Titchmarsh show (ITV1, 06.03.13.). He asked his guest Ade Edmondson which comedy shows he watched on TV and Ade said he didn't bother with any of them but had a six-foot screen with a projector in his study and preferred to watch "Laurel and Hardy films". You can't beat that can you? Advertising Stan and Ollie on prime time telly!

Terry Baxter

★ Did you see *Flog It!* on BBC2 on 9th March? They had Laurel and Hardy autographs that came from their tour in Scotland. A hairdresser who had cut their hair then had got both their autographs. The team was very excited but the autographs didn't reach the reserve price.

David Dearle

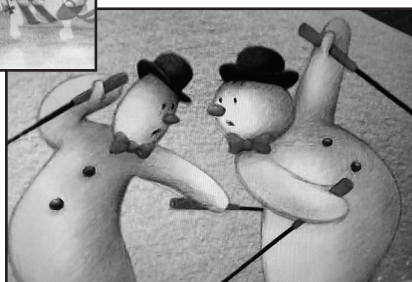


★ Did you see *The Snowman and the Snowdog* (C4, 24.12.12.)? A couple of snowmen looked an awful lot like Laurel and Hardy.

Roger Robinson

★ At least in a way we did get a glimpse of our "dear old friends" over Christmas on mainstream TV via Raymond Briggs's seasonal offering!

John Burton



★ We saw Laurel and Hardy type of snowmen on Christmas Eve. That was two days in a row! Mr Stink was playing the theme tune when he was with the PM.

Jo Mitchell-Waite

★ *How the Snowman Came Back to Life* (C4, 30.12.12.) had a clip from *Way Out West*, showing how the Boys' dancing was used to model some of the animation.

Willie McIntyre

★ Adding to TV items from deepest, darkest Africa, I saw something else on 16th March which was a nice surprise. On the Travel channel, there was an episode of *World's Greatest Motorcycle Rides* which featured Georgia and South Carolina. The presenter stopped in Harlem, Georgia to observe the town's annual Oliver Hardy Festival. There were no interviews, just scenes of the parade and festivities and the lookalikes amongst the large crowd.

Dave Fullbrook

★ Sky Arts aired an hour-long documentary called *Clowns* over the Easter period. Made in 2011, I think this was the first time that the programme has been shown but I may be wrong. Tracing the history of clowns on stage, film and circus, there was excellent vintage film of the likes of Little Titch, Grock, the Fratellini Family and Popov. Chaplin was deservedly given a good mention, but it was good to see that Laurel and Hardy were also recognised with the *Shine on Harvest Moon* song and dance from *The Flying Deuces* and some UK tour footage. Amongst other film clips were also Harpo Marx and Jacques Tati and, bringing the story right up to date, some footage from the wonderful *Slava's Snowshow*. Keep your eyes open for repeats. Long live clowns.

Roger Robinson

★ Steve Hewlett, the ventriloquist who brought the house down at the UK Convention, was a contestant on *Britain's Got Talent* on 18th May (ITV1). They showed only a few seconds of his act but the judges seemed to enjoy it as much as we did and he got four "Yes" votes.

Note – I don't normally watch this programme but I appear to be on Steve's mailing list after sending him a message saying how much I'd enjoyed his act at the convention, and I got an email from him telling me he was going to appear.

Gordon Davie

★ On *Coronation Street* (ITV1, 31.07.13.), in a scene in Roy's Rolls café, present were Roy, who's been having sleep walking problems, Hayley and Sylvia.

Hayley: Stood there, fast asleep, frying onions and whistling the Laurel and Hardy theme.

Roy: It's actually called *Dance of the Cuckoos*.

Sylvia: I used to love them when I was a child.

Sylvia started whistling the tune.

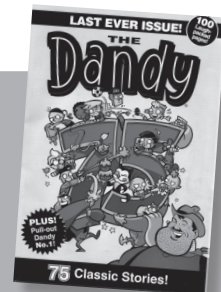
Tony Hillman



The Dandy

The final printed issue of *The Dandy* appeared last December.

In its pages was a two-page spread which was of interest to Hal Roach devotees.



Funny Fellows, Every One—Join Our Gang and Have Some Fun.

OUR GANG

All these boys and girls play in the famous Hal Roach film of "Our Gang," and appear here by courtesy of M-G-M.

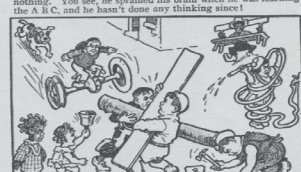
Head The Gang: Alfalfa Buckwheat, Scotty Beckett, Darla Hood, Billy Thomas, Porky Lee, Baby Patsy May, Spunky, and Spot the dog.



1—There was a big meeting in the Gang Clubhouse the other day, with Buckwheat Thomas, Scotty Beckett, Alfalfa Switzer, Billy Thomas, Darla Hood, Spunky, and Porky Lee all present. Even Spot the Pup was there, and everybody except Alfalfa was trying to think of something the Gang could do. Alfalfa folded his arms and thought of nothing. You see, he sprained his brain when he was learning the A B C, and he hasn't done any thinking since!



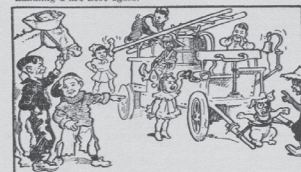
2—Then in came Baby Patsy May with a proper brainwave. "Let's make a fire engine," she said. Billy Thomas got so excited at the notion that she hit Alfalfa on the head with the mallet. But nobody noticed this, because it made the same sound as if the mallet had hit the wooden box. Porky was dreaming of food as usual, and his dreams came true, for his hair was ironed out by Scotty's messy feet.



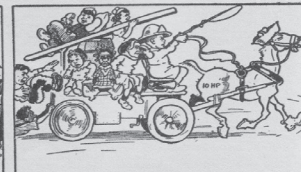
3—And here's how the Gang got busy with the job of building their fire engine. Just look at Scotty with the old back-axe, and Buckwheat Thomas with the garden seat. Buckwheat was mighty worried about that seat. He couldn't help thinking, "Wonder if Pa will get a drop when he sits down in the place where he was and finds it isn't there!" Darla Hood vowed she would take a lesson in snake-charming before handling a fire hose again.



4—But there was no slacking. In two wags of Spot's tail that fire engine began to look real, with wheels, seats, a bell, and even a ladder. Then along came Buckwheat and Spunky McFarland with an old barrel to serve as a water tank. Billy Thomas cheered them on, but they wouldn't have thought so much of her cheers if they had known she was inside the barrel!

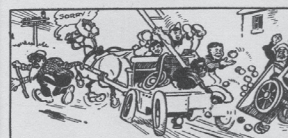


5—"What will we do for a motor?" asked Spunky. "Motor mix!" said Buckwheat. "We gotta dog." And Spot was trying to tell everybody that he was only a Dog Power dog when Alfalfa came along with a 10 Horse Power horse. It was a real fireman's horse, too, for it wore a helmet—though it was only a straw helmet. However, they yoked him up and got ready.



6—"I'm firemaster on this job," chorried Spunky. As he was the best fighter in the Gang, no one argued. So off went the latest 1937 fire brigade, and the four-legged engine, galloping along with a horse-laugh on its face, was a great success. It had lost a shoe, and had a bit of a limp until Scotty found that one of his father's boots fitted its hoof!

Our young scamps on the ramp—Make the tramps rather damp



7—Round the town they dashed, but never a fire did they see. However, they upset Fruity Funsyface's apple cart and Alfalfa did himself a bit of good by catching the fruit as it fell. Buckwheat was greedier. He tried to catch a lot in his hat, but forgot that the hat had no crown! Ninety-year-old Gaffer Smith had to hop out of the way like a nine-year-old, and the engine was two miles away before he got his breath back.



8—Then all of a sudden, as they thundered up towards Buttercup Farm, where they thought they might start a fire of their own, a couple of nasty tramps sprang out and stopped the engine. "Scram onto this!" said one. "We don't want you guys snooping around!" snarled the other, and he presented Alfalfa with a copy of his fingerprints, and Spot the Pup with a sample of his footprints.



9—So the Gang had to turn and go back, and they went with their hearts in their boots. Even the horse's heart must have been down in Scotty's father's boot. "It's funny these brakes turned us out," said Scotty. "They're got no right to the farm. It don't belong to them!" Alfalfa gave a shout. "Ge! You're right. Guess they're up to no good. Maybe they're the two toughs the cops are looking for."



10—Meanwhile the fire engine had drifted back to town, and Scotty and Alfalfa had just wandered off to see if they could smell out a fire when Fatty came tearing up. "Hi, kids!" he yelled. "I got the good news." Yes, indeed, there was a fire up the road. The engine was turned round faster than a merry-go-round. "All aboard," roared Spunky, and off dashed the brigade.



11—Up the road they went like a streak of greasy lightning. And they took the first bend so fast that there was a bill and a smack! That fire engine had given the two town cogs a tip—yes, a tip into the ditch! But the Gang didn't mind. They were getting the hose ready. Alfalfa was jumping up and down as if his pants were full of nettles. He could see smoke ahead.



12—Now Buttercup Farm they found the fire all right. Clouds of smoke came pouring over the hedge. So Firemaster Spunky grabbed the hose while Scotty worked the pump. Porky got the bellows, Billy Thomas used her water pistol, Darla Hood filled her mother's jug, and Baby Patsy May got so tied up in the hose that she splashed enough tears to put a damper on any fire.



13—The water went whoosh! over the hedge. And what do you think the fire was? The two tramps had stolen a chicken and were roasting it for dinner over a fire they had built in the field. The water flattened them out, and they hadn't had a bath for so long that they nearly passed out with the shock. So the Gang jumped on them.



14—Then up came the cops. The Gang thought they were in for trouble, but when the two boys in blue saw the tramps they gave a cheer. "Great work, kids!" they sang out. "Them's the two we want, and there's a fat reward for capturing them." And so the Gang had puffs and pies and pastries galore that night. And who ate most? Why, Porky!

Our Gang has lots of laughs for you—in next week's "Dandy," No. 2.

Similarities between WC Fields and Laurel and Hardy

By Eric Schultz



Ever since I was quite young, I have loved classic film comedy, especially the work of WC Fields, Laurel and Hardy and Buster Keaton. From time to time, I have noticed some similarities in the work of Fields and the team of Laurel and Hardy. Many people might think that Stan and Ollie were a lot different from WC. Stan and Ollie were usually so polite (even when fighting with each other and others), while Bill Fields often would be quite blunt (“Get away from me, kid, you bother me!”). In spite of this, I’ve noticed that their approach to comedy and pacing were very similar. Laurel and Hardy and WC Fields aren’t as different as some might think.

For one thing, in the films of Laurel and Hardy and WC Fields, we see a methodical pacing, where many of the gags are allowed to develop and occur as if these silly occurrences were completely natural. We also see some quick and unexpected slapstick gags, but in general there is more of a step-by-step process in which gags and funny situations happen in these films. Some writers have mentioned a “telegraphing” of gags in Laurel and Hardy films, where they “tip off” the audience to what is about to happen, so that a great many of the laughs come from the anticipation of what is about to occur.

In Donald Deshner’s 1966 book *The Films of WC Fields*, there is a 1934 article written by the great man himself, in which Fields describes this very same thing:

“Professors of Humor will tell you the audience must not be allowed to guess what is coming, that humor is always based upon surprise. The theory is often true, but in *You’re Telling Me*, my most recent moving picture, I have a scene in which the laugh depends upon the fact that the audience knows in advance exactly what is going to happen.

“I play a stupid and self-important inventor and I explain the details of my new burglar trap. According to my plan, I shall become friendly with the burglar, invite him to sit down and talk things over, and, when he sits in a chair, a lever will automatically release an immense iron ball which will hit him, Socko!, on the head and kill him instantly.

“From that moment the audience knows what’s coming – that pretty soon I’ll forget about the iron ball and will sit in the chair myself. The laughter begins when I start toward the chair. It reaches its peak before the ball whams me on the bean.

“If I sat in a chair and the ball fell on my head, and then it was explained that it was a burglar alarm, the scene would fall flat. The success of the scene depends upon the absence of surprise.”

This gag occurred in Fields’s 1934 feature, *You’re Telling Me!*, which also features Del Henderson, who occasionally appeared with Laurel and Hardy, such as in *Wrong Again* (1929), *The Laurel-Hardy Murder Case* (1930) and *Our Relations* (1936).

We see examples of this time and time again in the films of Laurel and Hardy. In one of their very earliest films together

as a comedy team, *Leave ‘em Laughing*, a 1928 silent short, there’s a scene where they play a couple of poor tenants in a cheap boarding house, sleeping in one big bed. Stan has a toothache, so Ollie gets up to get him a hot water bottle. He twice steps on the same tack on the floor, and the film gives us a nice close-up shot of the tack each time, to let us know what’s coming. The humor is not in any surprise on our part, but on Hardy’s reaction. Once he’s got the hot water bottle in place, he gets back in bed and tries to sleep, but then the film gives us a close-up shot of the plug slipping out of the bottle, and the water pouring out all over the bed. Then we see an extended close-up shot of Oliver Hardy, at first asleep, and then waking up to become slowly aware of the water that’s soaking the mattress just behind him. Again, the humor is in seeing the expressions on his face.

In a great many other films, like the 1930 talkie *Hog Wild*, we first see a slapstick gag, followed by two close-up shots: first, one of Hardy reacting, and then one of Laurel, looking sheepishly embarrassed. Usually the close-up shots of the two comedians reacting is at least as funny as the gag was in itself. In other films, we see Hardy’s on-screen wife yelling at him, while he quietly sits there, looking like a child who was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. In WC Fields’s 1941 feature *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break* there are a couple of moments where the film producer (played wonderfully by Franklin Panghorn) expresses his disgust with the ridiculous script that Fields has brought him to read. There are a couple of close-up shots of Fields with an embarrassed look on his face, in which he plays it very much the way that Oliver Hardy would have done.

Both Fields and the comedy team of Laurel and Hardy were famous for improvising their way through many of their scenes. Fields would spend a lot of time in story conferences, where they would make changes to the script, and then, when the camera was rolling, he would deliver a completely different line, and improvise bits of business which weren’t written anywhere in the script. This was the same case with the films that Laurel and Hardy made while they were at the Hal Roach studios (from their teaming in 1927 until the end of the ’30s). Henry Brandon, who appeared as a villain in Laurel and Hardy’s 1934 feature *Babes in Toyland*, told years later of his first day on the set. Stan Laurel went over the scene with him, explaining what everyone would say and do. Then Laurel announced that they were ready to shoot. When Brandon asked if they were going to rehearse the scene first, Laurel replied, “What, and spoil it?”

Both Stan Laurel and WC Fields understood the value of spontaneity in comedy. They knew that it most often had to be fresh for the audience to enjoy the performance. In Ronald J Fields’s 1984 book *WC Fields: A Life on Film* he gives us examples of this. Grady Sutton, who appeared with Fields in such classic films as *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* in 1935

and *The Bank Dick* in 1940, found that Fields would never play a scene the same way twice. When a director got angry because Sutton didn't deliver his line during a scene in which Fields ad-libbed the dialogue, Fields told Sutton, "Now look, Son, we'll work it this way. When you think I've said enough, well you just butt in."

Stan Laurel was the unofficial director or co-director of the Laurel and Hardy films of the 1930s, just as WC Fields was in most of his films. Laurel always insisted on flat, even lighting of the whole set, so that he and Hardy would be free to go anywhere in any particular shot, as inspiration came to them as they performed the scene. Fields did this, too, in his films. In Ronald Fields's book, we read Mary Brian's memories of co-starring with Fields in *The Man on the Flying Trapeze*. Of Fields, she said that, "He used to have the set completely lit. Every corner would be lit and ready for action because we never knew where we might end up once a scene began. He might say, "Daughter! Find my bathrobe." Well, we hadn't rehearsed it, but I'd have to go and look. Another time, my phone conversation about the Irish Woolen Mills at the end of the picture was not rehearsed. It was that loose."

So we can see that although the public image of WC Fields and the comedy team of Laurel and Hardy may be somewhat different, they were very similar in their approach to making great comedy films. May their films always be available and be seen by millions of people around the world.



Laurel and Hardy in Dublin

In this photo that I recently came across, the Boys are shown presenting the "Little Willie Polio Fund" with a cheque in Dublin on 22nd September, 1953.

Little Willie O'Reilly was left on the steps of a convent in Baldoyle, Dublin as a baby. He suffered from polio and lived with the nuns until he was eighteen. He became the face of the Polio Fund and would be taken out and dressed up for special events in order to publicise the Fund.

He still lives in Dublin today and whilst remembering being the face of the charity, he has no memory of meeting the Boys.

Sadly, I have no idea who the little girl is.

Stan and Ollie were asked to help out with the charity work after Oliver Hardy visited Louis Copeland, a master tailor whose son now runs the business in Dublin. Being the Boys, they agreed and the press climbed on board too. I have seen three other photos from this event and am currently trying to get prints.

The Boys, of course, were in Dublin writing *Birds of a Feather* for their 1953 tour. "Thank you," goes to Klaas De Jonge for expertly retouching this great find.

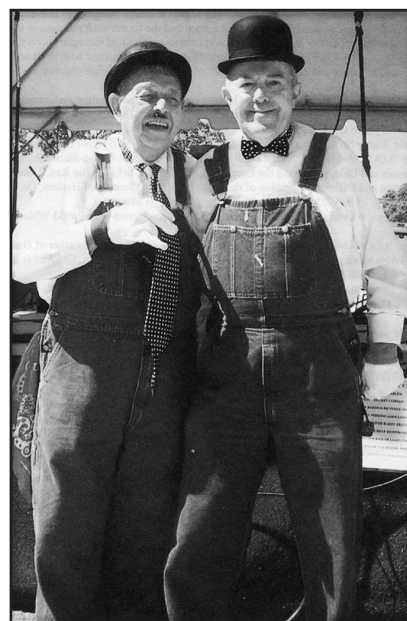
Liam Muldowney

Bess Flowers

Fellow Son, Rich Kaplan, of Chicago, shared with me a very interesting tidbit (below) that he received from his son, Jeremy, who also is a Laurel and Hardy fan. Bess Flowers was affectionately known as "Queen of the Hollywood Extras." She had an acting career for 41 years. She passed away in 1984 at the age of 85. . .

I was reading about Bess Flowers, the actress who played Mrs Laurel in *We Faw Down*. It turns out that she may have been the most prolific performer in the history of Hollywood, appearing in over 700 movies, including 22 Best Picture Oscar nominees and 5 Best Picture winners!

Gino Dercola



The "Look-a-Likes" Dale and Dennis

Oliver Hardy Festival

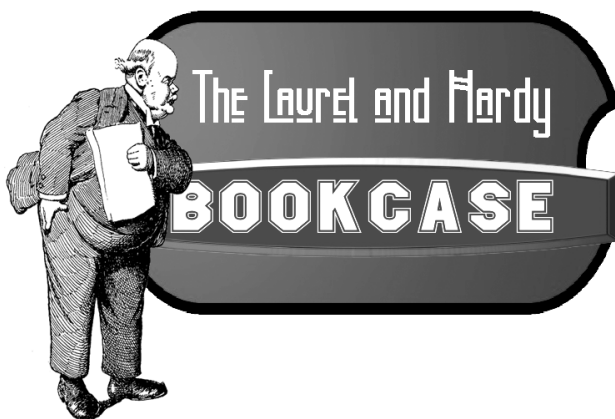
Ambassadors will return for the 25th Annual Oliver Hardy Festival on Saturday 5th October 2013 (including the Sons of the Desert Reception and the Berth Marks Tent's meeting on Friday evening, 4th October).

This will be the 20th Oliver Hardy Festival in a row for the "Look-a-Likes" from Ohio to be a part of this community event and to preside as Parade Grand Marshals, including a week of being in costume at various locations.

The "Look-a-Likes" have been featured in at least a half dozen travel brochures since July 2002, promoting Harlem, the Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem, Ga and the annual Oliver Hardy Festival, and in assorted State of Georgia travel guides.



Illustration from the programme for last year's Festival



Artistic value

THE ARTFUL ANTICS OF LAUREL & HARDY

By Antony and Joanne Mitchell-Waite

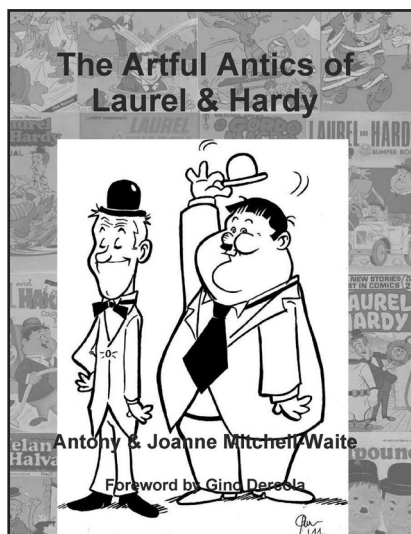
Published by Midnight Patrol Books, May 2013.

352 pages, 215mm x 279mm, softcover.

ISBN: 978-1-291-38990-6.

£14.99 + £2.99 p&p direct from lulu.com; £14.99 including p&p from Amazon.co.uk.

Antony and Joanne did a *great* job on researching and presenting this material, never fully documented until now.



It covers Laurel and Hardy in comic books, graphic novels, newspaper strips, graphic art, fan art, etc. It has over 600 illustrations and information from the 1930s to the present day, and a very useful appendix and index.

It's surprising to learn how the comic images of Laurel and Hardy were used in so many countries

around the world, in so many art forms. I believe that over 95 percent of the illustrations you will see in this book will be new to almost all Sons. It's an excellent addition to any Son's book collection. Congratulations to the work accomplished by Antony and Jo.

Gino Dercola

✧ This is described as the third part of the *Antics* series. I cannot help but marvel at this enormous book and at the dedication and thoroughness that the authors have put into it. It is one of those subjects which you always wished had been properly documented, but which daunted everyone else but Ant and Jo. It is pleasing to see a lot of *Bowler Dessert's* artwork preserved in this masterpiece, which of course endears it to me. But that is only a very small fraction of the total. This is one book which looks good, is good and can best be classed as simply "terrific".

Willie McIntyre

Jimmy's story

STAN LAUREL'S VALET

By I Joseph Hyatt

Published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, April 2013.

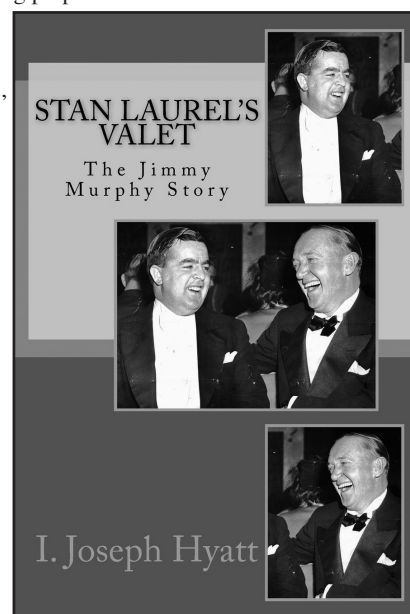
194 pages, 226mm x 152mm, softcover.

ISBN-10: 1484164474; ISBN-13: 978-1484164471.

Price: £13.85 including p&p from Amazon.co.uk.

This book on Stan Laurel and Jimmy Murphy, Stan's valet, has been released by Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk, etc. It has been written by our good friend Irv Hyatt, who is described as, "An entertainment archeologist who started researching vaudeville and theaters over forty years ago". The author was one of Jimmy Murphy's good friends.

Notes at the back of the book read:



Jimmy Murphy was Stan Laurel's valet and close friend.

With meticulous research, miles of travelling tour routes and places from Murphy's childhood, and conversations with the man himself, his life is now finally documented.

Having worked for Morton Downey, Tom Mix, Al Steele (Joan Crawford's husband), Burt Wheeler (of Wheeler and Woolsey) and Stan Laurel, Jimmy's life reads like a Hollywood publicity tale. His friends included President Ronald Reagan and King Edward VIII, and many other politicians, royalty, and stars.

Photos from archives and other private collections, including Jimmy's own, are used throughout the book.

Special attention has been paid to the two American theater tours of Laurel and Hardy. For the first time, all the dates and locations visited are complete. Included are interviews with cast, crew members, and Jimmy Murphy himself, who accompanied the team. Jimmy Murphy considered his relationship with Stan Laurel as the best time of his life.

I met Jimmy Murphy a couple of times, so I can thoroughly understand the author's liking and admiration for him. Irv has perfectly painted a portrait of a very interesting and colourful man, whom we get to know very well indeed through this book. We also get to know a great deal more about Stan and Ollie, and especially their tours, so this is one more book which I consider to be essential reading.

Congratulations, Irv, on a fine achievement. I am sure that Jimmy would have been very pleased.

Willie McIntyre

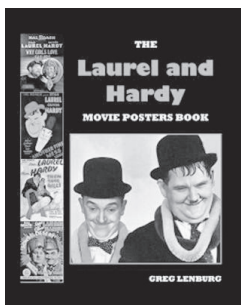
✧ Irv's book on Jimmy Murphy has now been released in an additional large print edition. And as we went to press, Irv's new book about Laurel and Hardy's part in the Hollywood Victory Caravan was imminent for release.

Posters book

It's exciting to see so much activity about new Laurel and Hardy books in recent months. One is called *The Laurel and Hardy Movie Posters Book* by Greg Lenburg. It has 114 pages, 200mm x 250mm in paperback.

Gino Dercola

- ♦ Abby Books, first edition (May 2013), ISBN-13: 9781484173244. Amazon.co.uk has it for £10.85 including p&p.



On time

I was sent a book called *Time Station* by GT Rand. It is about three friends who stop by an old cemetery to work on a school project. They discover a magician (The Great Grazenda) living beneath a fake headstone.

He has the knowledge to travel back in time to 1965, and he introduces the three friends to Stan Laurel. But did Stan Laurel ever visit the 21st century? To find out, you will have to buy this book, which is now available from Amazon.co.uk for £8.50 including p&p.



John Ullah

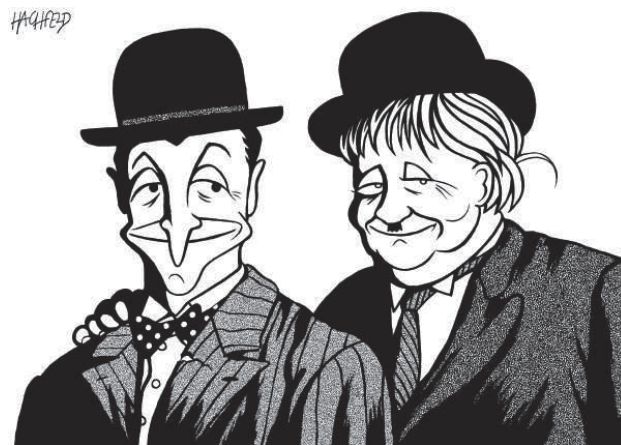


Water Rats

Dave Tomlinson forwarded an article (below) from the Grand Order of Water Rats Annual Ball 1992 programme of 29th November at Grosvenor House, London.

Keith Simmons is an old-school entertainer, comedian, writer and director. He has worked with Arthur Askey, Ken Dodd, Norman Wisdom, Les Dawson and Eric Sykes. He has also written over one hundred pantomimes and has written for other entertainers, who include Brain Conley, Freddie Starr and Bobby Davro. He presently works in pantomime and variety with his son Ben as Simmons and Simmons, a comedy act promoting visual comedy and slapstick. His comedy heroes are Laurel and Hardy. Keith was King Water Rat in 2011.

Dave contacted Keith about the announced forthcoming book *Stan and Ollie My Brother Rats* to see if it ever was published. Unfortunately the book did not come to fruition.



Yet again

We have another great caricature of Stan Sarko and Ollie Merkel (former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel), this time from artist Rainer Hachfeld of Berlin.

STAN and OLLIE

(Keith's book 'STAN and OLLIE My Brother Rats' is to be published in 1993.)




Collecting Rat
KEITH SIMMONS R.O.Y.1990

On Sunday evening 30th March, 1947, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy stood by the Lodge Room door with Chief Trap Guard Bert Weston and Trap Guards Sid Plummer and Ted Ray. Outside, the London streets were thawing out from the severe winter, but here, inside the Eccentric Club, all was warmth, love and conviviality.

The "making" began with King Rat pro tem Will Hay presiding as Robb Wilton was ill and unable to attend. As the ceremony was completed, Preceptor Fred Russell, as Stan's proposer, pinned the emblem onto his lapel and Will Hay, as Ollie's proposer invested him with his emblem too. They wore them with great pride; in fact, the last photograph taken of Stan in 1965 shows him sporting that little gold rat.

It was at a later Lodge meeting, on September 28th, 1947 when they presented the famous wooden egg to the Order. Stan actually stood up and handed it over and Harry Moreyn, the Water Rat who had toured with them working the Drivers Licence sketch, was its first recipient.

After all these years that egg still regularly does the rounds at our Lodge meetings and, even though you win it for the worst joke of the evening, I get the feeling that most of us are secretly pleased to have it hung around our necks!

I remember when Prince Michael was initiated as a Companion how the Country was reeling under the strain of a postal strike. My Brother, Alan, suggested that the new Rat was the first Royal male he had seen for several weeks. Alan was expecting the Jesters medal for that but a chant of "Egg .. Egg .. Egg" went up and I do believe that Prince Michael joined in as well!

If Laurel and Hardy were watching those events then they would have been proud to see their piece of history still in use; just as Alan was proud to wear it and I'm proud to be able to call Stan and Ollie ... my Brother Rats.



A publicity sheet synopsis of *The Midnight Patrol* includes some ideas that were changed in the version of the film which was

released: While on patrol in a suburban section, a call from headquarters informs them that a couple of thieves are stealing their tyres. Babe sends Stan back to look over the situation. The thieves get away and Stan returns to the car. "Who were they?" queries Officer Hardy. "I dunno," shrugs Officer Laurel. "I never met them before!" Another call informs them to hurry to a private home. A prowler is said to be around the premises. But the Boys fail to get the address. Officer Laurel goes to a drug store being robbed by a burglar and asks permission to use the phone. He wants to call up headquarters to find out about the prowler. The burglar gives him the address, explaining that it came over the radio in the store.





STAN LAUREL ... MOVIE MONSTER!

Seen by
Dave Oyston
and Bill Roth,
an article by
Jeffrey S Miller
in Nostalgia Digest
(Winter 2013)
is reprinted here

Comedians have always used scary settings and haunted houses as a backdrop for their funny antics. Many comedy teams shine in vehicles that spoof horror and mystery genres. One immediately thinks of Abbott and Costello and their classic monster “meetings”, Our Gang and the Three Stooges in their many spooky shorts and even the Bowery Boys with their multiple macabre outings. One seldom thinks of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy in terms of horror comedies, for the beloved duo only made sporadic forays into the genre. In the 1928 silent short *Habeas Corpus*, Stan and Ollie deal with a mad scientist and a corpse that appears to come to life in a cemetery.

In 1930, they appeared in *The Laurel-Hardy Murder Case*, the closest they would come to a real horror-comedy. In this three-reeler, Stan discovers he is heir to a fortune and he and Ollie spend a frightful night in a haunted house where murder and mayhem abound. In 1933’s *Dirty Work*, the boys play chimney sweeps who encounter another mad scientist, one who eventually transforms Ollie into a chimp. The next year, the duo starred in *Oliver the Eighth*, a dark comedy about a “black widow” who marries and murders men named Oliver – guess who’s due to be number eight?

In 1934, the pair headlined another short, *The Live Ghost*, in which they are shanghaied on a ship rumored to be haunted. That same year saw the boys starring in one of their most beloved films. *Babes in Toyland* (aka *March of the Wooden Soldiers*) is a *bona fide* Christmas classic and while it is classified mainly as a fantasy, plenty of people have been frightened by the horrible bogey-men who invade Toyland at the command of the evil Barnaby.

In 1940, Laurel and Hardy starred in *A Chump at Oxford*, in which the boys attended the posh British school. After their snooty classmates try to scare them by dressing up as fake ghosts, a fantastic plot element is introduced when Stan hits his head and thinks he is a famous former student.

Ironically, 1942’s *A-Haunting We Will Go* is not a horror comedy. Instead, the boys play assistants to Dante the magician, as a prop coffin is switched for a real one containing a gangster’s body.

None of these films are remembered as classic horror comedies and most of them only briefly touch this cross-genre area. Which makes it all the more interesting that back in 1925, Stan Laurel appeared in an *actual* horror parody – before the start of his partnership with Oliver Hardy.

Dr Pyckle and Mr Pryde directly spoofed John Barrymore’s classic 1920 version of Robert Louis Stevenson’s immortal

novella. For years, it was nearly impossible to see this film; however, the elusive short recently made its way to DVD.

The short begins with a foreword that explains how, if good and evil could be separated, “even saxophone players would be tolerated.” From there, we meet Dr Stanislaus Pyckle (Laurel), a 19th century English scientist. Pyckle experiments with chemicals in an attempt to create a potion that will separate the good and evil sides of his personality, but all he gets for his efforts are burnt pants and a blackened face – each resulting in a classic Stan Laurel facial reaction.

After a vase falls on his head, Stan is inspired to try one more potion (“Dr Pyckle’s 58th Variety”). Reluctant to taste it, Stan uses a towel to force himself to drink (a comical device Lou Costello would copy in *Hold That Ghost*). However, this time the move results in Laurel falling out the window! Returning to the lab, Dr Pyckle transforms into evil Mr Pryde.

Laurel’s resemblance to John Barrymore’s Hyde is simply amazing. If one just had a quick glimpse of Laurel without knowing what film was playing, one might easily assume it was Barrymore himself!

Pryde takes to the streets and starts causing trouble, although his “evil” deeds are actually impish pranks: He steals ice cream from one little boy and shoots his pea-shooter at a group of kids. Even though these childish pranks are rather tame as outrageous behavior goes, they incite a mob to chase Pryde, who returns to his lab and changes back to normal, saving himself and confusing the mob.

When the crowd disperses, Pyckle’s potion spills and gets licked up by his dog Pete (the same Pete who turned up in the *Our Gang* shorts and as Tiger in the *Buster Brown* series). In a very funny sight gag, Pete transforms into an evil canine version of himself and emerges wearing a wig of hair that resembles Mr Pryde’s. Pyckle tries to keep Pete hidden and gets bitten for his trouble. (One can’t help but wonder if this was the inspiration for the final act of Jim Carrey’s film *The Mask*, in which the main character’s dog Milo finds himself wearing the mask and undergoing a transformation similar to Pete’s.)

Later, Pryde is on the loose again causing trouble. He gives a woman the raspberry then tries to play a joke on a cop – although it backfires and Pryde finds himself hit on the head by a brick. Pryde plays some more pranks and once again gets chased by a mob – and once again, he returns to the lab and transforms back to normal.

The mob is turned away but Pyckle’s girlfriend (Julie Leonard, described as a “dainty English miss”) stays behind. Suddenly, Pyckle transforms into Pryde again and advances lecherously on his girl. The short ends abruptly with the girl smashing a vase over Mr Pryde’s head.

Dr Pyckle and Mr Pryde is one of twelve shorts that Laurel did for producer/director Joe Rock. At the time, the story was familiar to movie audiences, as Stevenson’s story had already been adapted multiple times. The film is not frightening in any way – even the transformation scenes occur off-screen. However, Laurel’s Mr Pryde make-up is still amazing today, bearing an amazing resemblance to the frightful visage John Barrymore employed in his version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Laurel also mimics Barrymore’s mannerisms and physical movements, illustrating that the famed comic had a knack for impersonation. Even the lab set is nicely detailed and would fit perfectly in a straight horror or science-fiction film.

Laurel’s scenes as Pryde are the funniest in the film. It’s a hoot to see Laurel committing pranks and harassing people

in the street – almost as if we’re seeing the Mr Hyde side of the Stan Laurel we know and love from his later work with Hardy. The idea to have Pryde shoot peas at passers-by or put someone’s finger into a Chinese trap is brilliant, satirizing Barrymore and Stevenson. (The fact that many of Laurel’s pranks backfire adds to the comedy as well.) As if barely able to contain his excitement, Laurel jumps up and down before he pulls a gag on an unsuspecting Londoner.

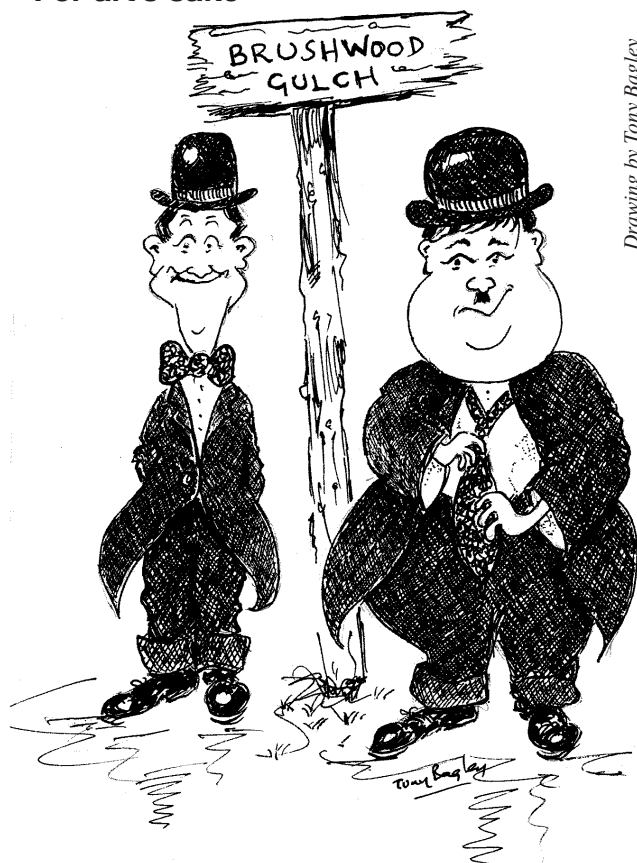
The only problem with the short is the abrupt ending. Perhaps the last few seconds of the film are lost or perhaps it just ends as is but the short just seems to run out of steam, as if no one knew how to bring the flick to a proper conclusion.

Dr Pyckle and Mr Pryde was thought lost for many years. Some poor quality French prints of the film surfaced eventually. Kino restored the film (and its original titles) and released the short as part of a collection of solo Stan Laurel films.

Although the short was considered lost to the ages, it can be credited as a direct inspiration for Carl Reiner’s 1969 film *The Comic*, in which Dick Van Dyke plays fictional silent film comedian Billy Bright, with the help of clips from his past “films”. In one such sequence, Van Dyke spoofs Mr Hyde by taking the potion and transforming into the monster – until his girlfriend enters the room and he immediately reverts back to Dr Jekyll. Whenever she turns her back, he acts like Hyde, returning to Jekyll the moment she turns back to face him.

Dr Pyckle and Mr Pryde is a rare chance to see Stan Laurel at work – before his legacy-inspiring work with Oliver Hardy. It’s also a chance to see him in a *bona fide* parody of the horror genre, which didn’t happen very often. It may not “transform” your life, but it is a fun diversion for fans of classic horror – and classic comedy.

For art’s sake



Drawing by Tony Bagley



Resting

I saw this rather nice image while browsing the internet. Don’t know if this image is well known but I certainly can’t remember seeing it before.

Mark Rodgers

Twenty years of Fraternally Yours Tent November 1992 – November 2012

August 1992: I respond to an *Evening Post* advert of new tent starting in Bristol. 8th November 1992: First tent meeting upstairs in Master’s snooker hall at 1 Gloucester Road. Twenty-three members turn up. Pete Long and myself are the only original tent members there from the beginning. 25th January 1993: Tent moves to the Showboat pub, also on Gloucester Road. We have very large attendances of at least fifty (and seventy on the books). Remember the laughter of Martin and Chris Healy. Martin is sadly no longer with us. Chris lives with his wife in Patchway. September 1993: Steve Gore, Bill Cooper and myself set up a film show at a Westbury-on-Trym festival weekend and pick up new members Ken Harding and Errol Dutton. June 1994: Have outgrown the Showboat venue so move to Bristol Memorial Stadium on Gloucester Road (for fifty-plus meetings). We had to leave when they bumped up the room hire to a whacking £75.00 a night. June 1995: Comedian Ronnie Barker donates signed Laurel and Hardy postcard, which raises £250 for charity. September 1996: New Grand Sheik is announced – Steve Gore hands over reins to Peter Andrews. He’s been sheiking ever since. 28th October 2002: First meeting at new/current venue Bristol Civil Service Sports Club, Filton Avenue. Pete, Bill and Steve head to Kent Laurel and Hardy convention for at least ten conventions over the years, not forgetting trips to Ulverston. 16th November 2004: We sadly lose loyal film projectionist Bill Cooper who had been with us since the start. 11th February 2008: The tent celebrates its hundredth film show. Grand Sheik Peter has missed one meeting (in February 1999). At this special hundredth meeting we are joined by six members of the Saps at Sea Tent, including the then-Grand Sheik Roger Robinson. We are even in tent publications. August 2010: Knowledgeable Professor Richard Brown sadly passes away. November 2010: We’ve had many laughs and drinks over the years and may it continue – all thanks to two gentlemen, Laurel and Hardy. November 2012: We are twenty years in existence as the Fraternally Yours Tent of Bristol. Thanks to all members who have contributed and helped in any way at all.

Peter Andrews

* The tent did not go ahead with its proposed twentieth birthday celebration in November, because of torrential rain and strong winds and advice not to travel. The tent met on 28th February this year and had a birthday cake then.



Stan's Childhood DVD

Stan's Childhood had its premiere at the Empire cinema in Wigan on 17th September 2012 and is now available on DVD.

This tells the story of how Stan was born at his grandparents' home in Ulverston, where he spent much of his childhood. Amateur film maker Brian Worthington, along with his wife Julie, wrote the script after many years' research. With actors from the Wigan Film Academy, they made the film, depicting both modern and past times.



One morning an unexpected school closure results in Edward (a Laurel and Hardy fan) spending the day with his grandparents on a shopping trip to Ulverston. They visit Gillam's coffee shop, where Granddad starts to tell Edward about his ancestral connection with the Metcalfe family. Edward visualises what life was like for young Stan during the late 1800s.

The film is a touch overlong and would benefit from some trimming, but there are some good moments and the film is a credit to all involved in view of their amateur status.

Willie McIntyre

☆ *Stan's Childhood* lasts 77 minutes and is Pal Region 2 coded. Buy from <http://www.stanschildhood.com> for (UK) £8.00 plus £1.50 p&p, or supplied in a plastic clam shell without picture cover (UK only) for £5.00 plus £1.00 p&p. USA and Europe: Pal Region 2, £8.00 plus £3.50 p&p.



Atoll K DVD

Cornerstone Media distribute *Atoll K* on DVD for the first time ever uncut. It is made from the only available film print of the complete US version in a length of approximately 100 minutes. It is the Director's Cut, before it was cut down to the *Utopia* version of round about 80 minutes. The material was digitally remastered to get the best possible picture and sound.

The language of the film is English, with switchable German subtitles.

Thanks to Michael Ehret in Laurel and Hardy Fan Club on Facebook

♦ The introduction by Bart Williams is in English and the introduction by Maddin Schneider is in German. The DVD paper cover is printed on each side, in English and German. The playback is great, with scenes that I have never seen before.

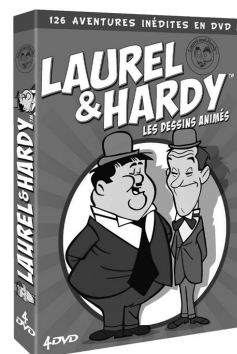
After I watched *Atoll K*, I went to my bookshelf for *The Final Film of Laurel and Hardy* by Norbert Aping. I now have a good feeling about this "Final film of Laurel and Hardy". You will too.

Dennis Moriarty

☆ The price on amazon.co.uk is £10.45 including p&p.



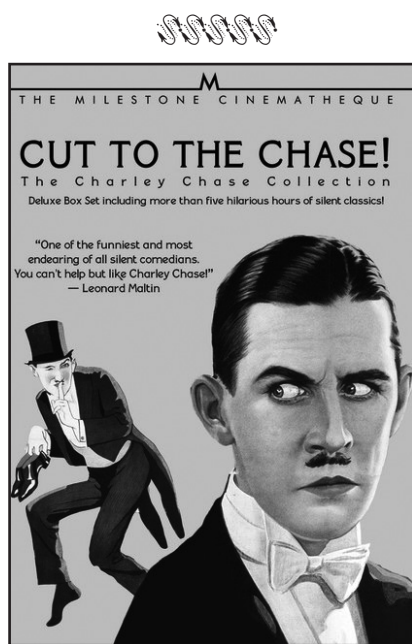
Cartoons on DVD



You can buy the full set of Larry Harmon's Laurel and Hardy cartoons from France. Go to <http://www.amazon.fr>. The set is *Coffret Laurel et Hardy dessins animés* (2012). The price is 14.94 euros.

Antony Mitchell-Waite





DVDs in the USA

◆ The new two-DVD set of Charley Chase silent films *Cut to the Chase!* is now available for \$22.46 (plus \$4.00 shipping) on the Milestone website <http://www.milestonefilms.com>. It includes a few films not previously available on DVD, such as *Charley My Boy*, which isn't gorgeous but very rare.

The music is exceptional and offers a new take on the film experience.

Milestone was working on this since 2004.

Stan Taffel

◆ 103 Edgar Kennedy short subjects (the *Average Man* series) are due for release in instalments via Warner Archives. These shorts were made at RKO Radio Pictures from 1931 till 1948. As usual with the Warner Archive series, these won't be remastered, but always derive from the very best prints available.



(Roger) Robinson Crusoe Land

Mention *Atoll K*, *Utopia* or *Robinson Crusoe Land* to most Sons of the Desert and they will turn their nose up and dismiss Laurel and Hardy's last film as not-to-be-seen. The accepted point of view is that Stan looks so ill and the film is a bit messy due to the protracted time it took to make and language communication problems. If I'm honest, I have fallen into this category having only seen the film once on a poor quality VHS copy many years ago.

But I have changed my viewpoint. Why? Well, on 30th January I went to the National Film Theatre to watch *Laurel and Hardy Rarities*. The show was presented by archive curators, Vic Pratt and William Fowler, together with Laurel and Hardy aficionado Glenn Mitchell. This was a 35mm full-length English version, running for 98 minutes. Previously the only versions that most of us have seen are much shorter versions, which exclude non-Laurel and Hardy sequences which are integral to the storyline. We have been used to seeing fuzzy images perhaps from second- or third- generation copies. In the words of Glenn Mitchell, "This was like seeing the film for the first time," as the quality of the image was superb.



Stan was ill during the making of the film and this was part of the reason for the delays in the production. He doesn't look very well at all in certain scenes and it is hard for Laurel and Hardy fans, so familiar with his facial expression of innocence, to recognise this old and world-weary face as "Stan". The other problem that mars the film is that the sound recordings of Laurel and Hardy and the other cast were made at different times and the dialogue sounds a bit uneven. But this was a brave venture to make a different Laurel and Hardy film after their years away from the glory days at Hal Roach. The storyline is good and portrays the running theme through many of the Boys' films, that despite life disappointing them, kicking them in the pants (or on Atoll K their nearly being hung), they still have one another, the immortal Laurel and Hardy.

The film could have been wonderful; it isn't but it is far from being their worst film. It has much to merit and plenty to enjoy. After the showing of this particular print, this Robinson Crusoe has changed his stance. No, I didn't say pants – stance!

The rarities show also included unseen home footage of Laurel and Hardy officiating at a Gymkhana event in 1947 at Eastwood Park, Giffnock, Scotland and the 1932 Tyneside footage during which Vic and Glenn spoke with authority, sharing some interesting information with the audience.

The Live Ghost and Saps at Sea Tents were well represented and, like the large audience, were very grateful for the British Film Institute in putting together this excellent show.

Roger Robinson

British Isles tent listing

All known British Isles tents, their meetings and Grand Sheiks

Another Fine Mess Tent of

Northern Ireland

Oasis 248, founded November, 2004
Maynard Sinclair Pavilion, Stormont Estate,
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4.
See website or magazine.

Keith Davidson, 4 Barnamaghery Road,
Darragh Cross, Crossgar, Downpatrick,
Co Down, N Ireland, BT30 9NA.

☎ 028 9751 9425

✉ grandsheik@anotherfinesite.com

★ <http://www.anotherfinesite.com>

Any Old Port Tent of Warrington

Oasis 259, founded 2006
Albion pub, 94 Battersby Lane,
Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 7EG.
Monthly, second Wednesday, 7.30pm.

Kevin Yates, at the above address.

☎ 01925 231820

Bacon Grabbers Tent of

St Helens

Oasis 113, founded 18th Oct, 1989
Lecture Theatre, United Reform Church,
King Street, St Helens. Third Thursday
in May, July, September and November,
7pm till 9pm.

Chris Coffey, 37 Holbrook Close, St Helens,
WA9 3XH.

☎ 01744 817130

✉ chrisc Coffey@gmail.com

Beau Hunks Tent of Nottingham

Oasis 236, founded 2000
Jaguar pub, Sandiacre, Nottingham.
Monthly, third Wednesday, 7.30pm.
Dave Scothern, 192 Melton Road, Stanton
on the Wolds, Nottingham, NG12 5BQ.

☎ 0115 937 3196

✉ Dtomlinson@tinyworld.co.uk (Dave
Tomlinson – Grand Vizier)

★ [http://users.tinyworld.co.uk/
dtomlinson/index.htm](http://users.tinyworld.co.uk/dtomlinson/index.htm) (Grand Vizier)

Be Big Tent of Manchester

Oasis 26, founded 25th February, 1977
Ashton-under-Lyne Cricket, Bowling and
Tennis Club, Richmond Street, Off Lord
Sheldon Way, Ashton-under-Lyne,
Tameside. Monthly, third Monday,
8.00pm.

Bob Hickson, 69 Bucklow Drive,
Northenden, Manchester, M22 4WA.

☎ 0161 998 0607

☎ 0161 330 1220

✉ robertfhickson@gmail.com

Berth Marks Tent of Ulverston

Oasis 24, founded 5th October, 1976
Laurel and Hardy Museum, Roxy Building,
Brogden Street, Ulverston, Cumbria.
Open daily, February till December,
10.00am till 4.30pm.

Marion Grave, Crake Valley House,
Greenodd, near Ulverston, Cumbria,
LA12 7RA.

☎ 01229 861 614

☎ 01229 582 292

★ www.laurel-and-hardy-museum.co.uk

The Big Noise Tent

Helps to cater to the needs of housebound
and disabled Sons everywhere.

Chris Coffey, 37 Holbrook Close, St Helens,
WA9 3XH.

☎ 01744 817130

✉ chrisc Coffey@gmail.com

Blockheads Tent of Edinburgh

Oasis 103, founded 1984

Edinburgh City FC Clubrooms, 7 Baxter's
Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3AF. Monthly,
except August, second Sunday, 2.00pm
till 5.00pm.

Charlie Lewis, 70 Silverknowes Gardens,
Edinburgh, EH4 5NG.

☎ 0131 336 3766

☎ 0131 557 3838

✉ lewiscl260@btinternet.com

Blotto Tent of Tameside

Oasis 137, founded 1988

Stalybridge Railway Station Buffet Bar,
Platform One, Ramsbottom Street,
Stalybridge, Tameside. Monthly, second
Wednesday, 8.00pm.

Peter Brodie, 4 Fern Bank, Stalybridge,
Cheshire, SK15 2QY.

☎ 0161 304 7717. ☎ 07702 056 556

✉ peterbrodie@gws.myzen.co.uk

Bonnie Scotland Tent of Paisley

Oasis 21, founded 3rd May, 1976

Tartan Rose, 2 Broomlands Street, Paisley,
Renfrewshire, PA1 2LR. Monthly, last
Wednesday, 7.30pm.

Janice Hawton, 5 Tantallon Avenue,
Gourock, Renfrewshire, PA19 1HA.

☎ ex-directory

✉ chonziecats@yahoo.co.uk

★ [http://bonniescotlandpaisley.blogspot.
com](http://bonniescotlandpaisley.blogspot.com)

Brats Tent of Sheffield

Oasis 80, founded 1988

New Crown Inn, Handsworth Road,
Handsworth, Sheffield. Monthly, second
Monday, 7.30pm.

Kevin Hepplestons, 138 Abbeydale Road,
Sheffield, S7 1FF.

☎ 0114 254 8151 ☎ 0114 258 0063

✉ ollie_varadi@yahoo.co.uk

★ [http://www.handsworth.org.uk/
societies/sons](http://www.handsworth.org.uk/societies/sons)

Busy Bodies Tent of Stourbridge

Oasis 128, founded 1991

Stourbridge Cricket Club, High Street,
Amblecote, Stourbridge. Monthly,
May-Aug last Tuesday; Sept-April last
Wednesday. Approx 7.30/8.00pm.

John Everton, 148 Oak Park Road,
Wordsley, West Midlands, DY8 5YE.

★ [http://www.freewebs.com/busy
bodytent](http://www.freewebs.com/busybodytent)



*There is no guarantee that Grand Sheiks or
Webmasters update information regularly, so
please contact Grand Sheiks if you are in doubt.*

Call of the Cuckoos Tent of

Glasgow

Oasis 166, founded 1993
Britannia Panopticon Music Hall, 113-117
Trongate, Glasgow, G1 5HD. Contact
Grand Sheik for dates.

Willie McIntyre, 39 Bankhouse Avenue,
Largs, Ayrshire, KA30 9PF.

☎ ex-directory

☎ 0141 553 0840

✉ bowler.dessert@talktalk.net

★ <http://www.bowlerdessert.co.uk>

Chickens Come Home Tent of

Lancaster

Oasis 210, founded 1998

Gregson Community Centre, Moorgate,
Lancaster. Bi-monthly, usually last
Saturday.

Cameron Seddon, 33 Princes Crescent,
Bare, Morecambe, LA4 6BY.

✉ cameronseadon@btinternet.com

☎ 01524 415910

Come Clean Tent of Widnes

Oasis 71, founded March, 1987

St Basil's Parochial Club, Hough Green
Road, Widnes, Cheshire. Monthly, third
Tuesday, 8.00 till 11.00pm.

Eric Woods, Laurel House, 102 Hough
Green Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 4PF.

☎ 0151 424 1552

✉ ericwoods@yahoo.co.uk

35 tents

County Hospital Tent of

Bradford

Oasis 36, founded 1979

East Bowling Sports and Social Club,
Leicester Street, Off Wakefield Road,
Bradford. Monthly, first Friday 8.00 till
10.30pm.

Dave Ballard, 18 Ferndene, Bingley, West
Yorkshire, BD16 4PW.

✉ dave.ballard@live.co.uk

Dirty Work Tent of Wigan

Oasis 277, founded 2008

The Honeysuckle Inn, Pool Street, Wigan,
WN3 5BT, second Wednesday.

Gary Winstanley, 19a Keats Ave,
Worsley Mesnes, Wigan, WN3 5TU.

✉ dirtywork@sky.com

★ <http://www.dirtywork.co.nr>

Early to Bed Tent of Chesterfield

Oasis 193, founded 16th June, 1995

Tent resting

Grahame Morris, Appleton Lodge,
87 Shuttlewood Road, Bolsover,
Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S44 6NX.

☎ 01246 824 523 ☎ 07906 267 089

✉ grahamej.morris@gmail.com

Fraternally Yours Tent of Bristol

Oasis 158, founded 8th November, 1992

Bristol Civil Service Sports Club, Filton
Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0AT.
2013: 28th February, 28th March, 25th
April, 26th September, 24th October
and 28th November, 8.00pm.

Peter Andrews, 14 Mackie Avenue, Filton,
Bristol, BS34 7ND.

☎ 0117 979 0205

☎ 01179 514 259

Helpmates Tent of Kent

Oasis 25, founded 1978

See website for meetings.

Rob Lewis, 63 Wollaston Close, Parkwood,
Gillingham, Kent, ME8 9SH.

✉ laurelandhardy@blueyonder.co.uk

✉ oxford0614@aol.com

★ <http://www.laurelandhardy.org>

Key

☎ indicates home phone number

☎ indicates mobile phone number

☎ indicates venue phone number

✉ indicates e-mail address

★ indicates website address

Hog Wild Tent of Bishop

Auckland

Oasis 190, founded September, 1994

Asda, South Church Road, Bishop
Auckland. Monthly (except January, July
and August), first Tuesday, 7.00pm.

Tony Hillman, 160 Park Lane, Darlington,
Co Durham, DL1 5AG.

☎ 01325 354 391.

✉ tonyman@talktalk.net

Jitterbugs Tent of Eire

Oasis 220, founded 1998

Irregular meetings at RTE Social Club,
Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

Liam Muldowney, 17 The Crescent,
Woodpark, Ballinteer, Dublin 16, Eire.

☎ 353 1 2961235

✉ jitterbugs@eircom.net

★ <http://www.laurelandhardy.ie>

Laughing Gravy Tent of

Birmingham

The Forget Me Not Club, 1069 Tyburn
Road, Erdington, Birmingham,
B24 0TH. Monthly, first Thursday,
7.30pm till 11.00pm.

John Ullah, 42 York Road, Erdington,
Birmingham, B23 6TG.

☎ 0121 628 6919

✉ j.ullah@blueyonder.co.uk

★ <http://www.sotd.org>

Laughing Gravy Tent of Tingley

Oasis 47, founded 1981

Tingley Working Men's Club, Bradford Road
(near roundabout), Tingley, Wakefield.
Eight times a year: second Monday,
September till April, 7.30pm.

David Bulmer, 46 Churchfield Grove,
Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0LL.

☎ 0113 282 3632

Leave 'Em Laughing Tent of

Merseyside

Oasis 37, founded October, 1979

Ferndale Lodge, 15 Crosby Road North,
Liverpool L22. First Tuesday, 7.30pm.

Tony Traynor, 539 Southport Road,
Bootle, Merseyside, L20 0DE.

☎ 0151 476 6621

☎ 0151 281 2463

✉ TONYSLANDH@blueyonder.co.uk

*This list was compiled by
Grahame Morris
(Grand Sheik of the
Early to Bed Tent) and Anni.*

The Live Ghost Tent of London

Oasis 179, founded 1994

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road,
London, WC1X 8JR. First Saturday,
February, April, June, August, October
and December, 5.30pm.

Del Kempster, 112 Tudor Drive, Morden,
Surrey, SM4 4PF.

☎ 020 871 54223

✉ delkempster@gmail.com

★ <http://www.liveghost.org>

Men o' War Tent of Colchester

Oasis 70, founded 1987

Manifest Theatre, Oxford Road,
Manningtree, Essex. Irregular, approx
6 per year. Dates in website and
newsletter. Saturday 7.30 till 10.30pm.

Paul Harding, 38 Kingsman Drive, Clacton-
on-Sea, Essex, CO16 8UR.

☎ 01255 429 887

✉ menowartent@hotmail.com

★ [http://sites.google.com/site/
menowartent](http://sites.google.com/site/menowartent)

Midnight Patrol Tent of Potteries

Staffordshire

Oasis 209, founded 1997
New Albert, Albert Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. Monthly, second Tuesday, 8.00pm.
Jo Mitchell-Waite, 100 Reeves Avenue, Upper Milehouse, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs, ST5 9LA.

☎ 01782 661 157 ☎ 07931 437 390
✉ josiebobs@yahoo.co.uk

Midnight Patrol 2 Tent of Wirral

Oasis 110, founded 1989
Stork Hotel, 41 Price Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, Cheshire. Monthly, third Monday, 8.00pm.
Averil Renton, 4 Wyndham Road, Wallasey Village, Wirral, CH45 8NP.

The Music Box Tent of Bolton

Founded 25th November, 2007
Tent resting
Steve Bartley, 22 Wolsey Close, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 3AG.
☎ 0161 723 4997
✉ stpbartley@aol.com

One Good Turn Tent of Huddersfield

Oasis 200, founded 1995
The County Hotel, Princess Street, Huddersfield, HD1. Monthly, second Thursday, 7.30 pm.
David Barker, 52 Tom Lane, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, HD4 5PP.
☎ 01484 462 616
✉ general.langsdorf@gmail.com

Sailors Beware Tent of Hyde

Cheshire Ring pub, Manchester Road, Hyde, Lancashire. Monthly, last Thursday, 8.30pm.
Graeme Green, 18 Corporation Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5LP.
☎ 0161 366 7583
Correspondence: Stuart Green, 184 Victoria Street, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 4DH.
☎ 0161 366 5299
☎ 07719 585840
✉ grand.sheik@sailors-beware.co.uk
✉ grand.vizier@sailors-beware.co.uk
✉ http://www.sailors-beware.co.uk

Saps at Sea Tent of Southend-on-Sea

Oasis 207, founded 1998
Naval & Military Club, 20 Royal Terrace, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 1DU.
Monthly, second Sunday, 5.30 till 9.00pm.
Paul Allen, 6 Blackmoor Avenue, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 0AS.
☎ 01268 683791
✉ www.saps-at-sea.co.uk

Their Purple Moment Tent of Stranraer

Oasis 115, founded 1989
The Grapes, Bridge Street, Stranraer. Monthly, First Tuesday, 8.00pm.
Doggie Brown, Laurel Bank, 13 Greenside, Girvan, KA26 9BH.
☎ 01465 712 180 ☎ 075007 03882
✉ DSB1971@sky.com

Way Out West Tent of West Bromwich

Oasis 284, founded 5th April, 2007
The Wheatsheaf Public House, Carters Green, West Bromwich, B70 9QW. Monthly, last Wednesday.
Phil Ruston, 5 Akrill Close, Black Lake, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9SU.
☎ 0121 553 422 ☎ 07759 670 901
✉ phil.ruston@talktalk.net



Autumn 2013



Up Your Troubles, Grady Sutton (who played Eddie Smith in that film), Henry Brandon (Barnaby in *Babes in Toyland*) and Charlotte Henry (Bo Peep in the same film) and problems with the filming of *Babes in Toyland*.

There is a profile of Gary Russett of the Berth Marks Tent in Harlem, many snippets from the electronic news bulletins from Gino Dercola, and a review of Irv Hyatt's book on Jimmy Murphy. There are regional news roundups from Chris Coffey, Alessandro Santi, Flip Lauer, Dean Edward Cartier and Gary Cohen.

- ◆ For subscription rates to the *Intra-Tent Journal*, contact Del Kempster (address on page 58) or Scott MacGillivray, PO Box 2101, Natick, MA 01760, USA.

Intra-Tent Journal

The latest *Intra-Tent Journal* (issue no 149, Summer 2013) has extensive news about the 19th International Convention, being held in Hollywood in July 2014.

There are articles on the making of *Pack*



Comics inspire new show

Little Britain's Matt Lucas's new television programme, *Pompidou*, was inspired by both Stan Laurel and Rowan Atkinson.

Matt Lucas said Stan Laurel's comedy routines and

Consett-born actor Rowan Atkinson's *Mr Bean* inspired his new show. The show will be called *Pompidou* after its main character and features silent comedy.

Stan, part of the famous Laurel and Hardy double act, was noted for his slapstick routines sometimes without a word being spoken. And Rowan's *Mr Bean* sketches rely on silent humour.

Matt said: "I'm delighted to be back at the BBC with another

show full of new characters – however, unlike *Little Britain* and *Come Fly With Me*, this one has no dialogue at all. I've always been a huge fan of the visual comedy of Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy and, of course, our very own Mr Bean."

Stan Laurel was born in Ulverston, Cumbria, in 1890.
www.chroniclelive.co.uk
(26.03.13.)

Jeff in California Suite

On 25th November four Saps went to see Jeffrey Holland at The Mill at Sonning (near Reading) performing in *California Suite*. Jeff was in his element in this clever and funny quartet of stories written by Neil Simon. After the performance we went to the nearby pub for some liquid refreshment together.

Roger Robinson



The Laurel and Hardy feature *Way Out West* was not the first to bear that title. It was used for an early talkie in 1930 and before that for a silent two-reeler which featured comedian Hank Mann in 1920.

Fine detail

I own a *Sons of the Desert* fez used by an unknown actor from that movie. On the top of my fez there are 160 tiny holes. They are in 4 circular patterns (40 holes per circle). My guess is that this was done by the Western Costume Company in order to keep the actors a bit cooler while filming under the hot studio lights. It is just another feature that is not visible when you watch the film. Certain details like this can only be found while inspecting such memorabilia in person.

Jeffrey Veroff

And finally
Sons of the Desert
p60 ➡

Spotted on Facebook



Laurel Hardy Archive is proud to present the first official portrait of Kate and William's baby boy, the future Prince of Cambridge

(24.07.13.)

Sons of the Desert (1933)

From the film's pressbook

Members of Hollywood's famous American Legion Post, numbering more than one hundred, appear in atmospheric roles. Included in the group are a drum and bugle corps, chanters and a drill team. The Santa Monica, California, Lodge of Elks is also represented in the picture in parade scenes which were photographed during a state convention of the antlered herd in the bay city a few months ago. During the actual filming more than one thousand extra people were given employment as members of the supporting cast.

Shortly after production was started at the Hal Roach studios in Culver City, California, it was decided by company officials that the street scene erected on the lot several years ago was not sufficiently modern to be used in the comedy team's picture. Street sets, representing a cost of thousands of dollars, are not constructed "overnight" and as the company was scheduled to be ready to move into this exterior scene within ten days, the officials were in a quandary. They could either rent some other studio's street scene or construct a new one of their own, providing the job could be rushed to completion within the limited time. When the latter course of action was agreed upon, four crews of workmen, each working six hour shifts, were put to work and within nine days the job was finished. Besides constructing more than 500 feet of modern building fronts, dressing more than a dozen store windows and decorating the buildings appropriately, asphalt paving was applied to the street proper for a length of two city blocks and electrical wiring for illumination purposes was installed.

One of the most humorous sequences in the picture transpires in a sadly-neglected attic. To carry out the illusion of its disuse, it was essential that cobwebs should hang from the eaves and rafters. With the aid of a specially devised power spray gun, which operates on the same principle as candy floss machines, dozens of simulated cobwebs – sufficiently realistic to intrigue the most wary spider – transfigured the newly-constructed garret. A mixture of glue and white lead with one other secret ingredient, shot through the power spray and diffused by means of centrifugal force, was all that was necessary to create the webs. A few days after Laurel and Hardy completed work in the attic sequence, one of the workmen on the stage where the set was still standing noticed that several of the large webs which had been broken during the filming had been completely repaired. Curious, he investigated further, and – believe it or



not – he found two dead spiders in one of the artificial networks, indicating that the reconstruction work had been carried on by these valiant if gullible Arachnida.

For the first time in his career since he attained stardom, Charley Chase, popular Hal Roach comedian, is appearing in the cast of a picture other than his own. Reading the script of *Sons of the Desert*, Chase was intrigued by a "good time Charlie" part in the story and he immediately sought out director William Seiter and suggested that he be given the role. When Seiter recovered from the shock of a star offering to appear in support of others, he immediately secured Charley's signature and then asked the actor to explain himself. "Why, there's no catch to it," explained Chase. "I'm delighted at the opportunity to work with Stan and Oliver and the part, as I see it, is made to order for me." He and Laurel and Hardy have been warm friends since they first met on the Roach lot and each is an admirer of the other's peculiar comedy talents. There has never been any professional jealousy among the three funsters and on many occasions they have exchanged ideas for their respective comedy offerings.

Laurel and Hardy believe the best comedy is spontaneous and that the script should be followed closely only if no better ideas are forthcoming during production. They assert that comedy action that has been rehearsed too thoroughly is caught by the camera in such a manner that it appears mechanical and therefore forced.

To save time and money, most scenes that take place in the same locale are shot at the same time in modern motion picture making. But Laurel and Hardy refuse to follow this procedure. Arguing that their comedy depends considerably on spontaneity and that they find it frequently necessary to change various situations and gags in the script as they progress, this team of funsters insist on producing their film from continuity. That is they make each scene in chronological order. Naturally this is a far more costly process. It means many additional shifts of lights, sound equipment and other paraphernalia; also the carrying of people, until the entire film is completed, who otherwise would be discharged as soon as the various scenes they were registered in had been shot.

Often, upon the completion of one of their pictures, either one or both of the comedians are a mass of black and blue spots, to say nothing of minor lacerations and scratches. They ruin several suits of clothes in their work during the course of the year.

