

Jitterbugs Tent News

The Irish Chapter of The Sons of the Desert
Sons of the Desert

Liam.....must you go on so??????????

Oh don't give me that. Listen you lot, I have just about had enough of your silly little doings and I have decided that enough is enough. I am resigning as Chairman of the Irish Marx Brother's society. And furthermore, I have now decided that in future I will be.....

What do you mean this is the Sons of the Desert publication?

Ohhhhhhhh

Hello all.

I hope September finds you well and that the leaves that are starting to fall off the trees don't hit you on the head. If you do happen to see a leaf heading your way,

just hold on for a second and wait. If it keeps going for you then just sidestep and avoid it.

Enough of that. Stan and Ollie are alive and living in Memphis.

Oh sorry, that's Elvis.

Not a lot of news to report this month (obviously).

Simon Louvish's book "Stan & Ollie" is now available in paperback, which will make it easier on the pocket. If you get a chance to buy it, then do. It's worth the read and goes into a lot of detail.

Please try and attend Comber 2002. A good night is planned and the

official opening of Keith Davidson's den will take place after the show.

Anybody know anyone who wants to join a society dedicated to preserving the work of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy????

If you do, give them my address and tell them there is a free bar at the next Dublin meeting. Everyone gets a Mars Bar upon entering!!!!!!!!!!!!

Take care, and remember, it's only 3 months to Christmas.

Liam

September 2002

Volume 1, Issue 3

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Pianos.....

- If you thought that the "Music Box", was the only Laurel and Hardy film to feature a piano, you'd be wrong. Pianos appeared in 18 Laurel and Hardy films!!!!!!!!!!!!
- A quick think and you'll probably get "Swiss Miss". What about the other 16?

Who was Mae Busch??

Best known as the brashest of Oliver Hardy's wives and her role in Sons of the Desert. Mae was wife to Oliver Hardy on 4 occasions. How many can you name? Her portrayal of Mrs. Hardy in "Sons", will be the most impressive to Laurel and Hardy fans.

Mae Busch was born in Melbourne, Australia on Jan 20, 1891. Her family moved to the US in 1900 and Mae was placed in a convent in New Jersey whilst her parents toured the vaudeville

circuit. Mae told an interviewer in 1923, that her mother was Irish and her father was English. Upon leaving the convent, Mae and her family moved to New York and she did a little modeling and stage work. In 1912, she ended up in California and the Mack Sennett studios. Mabel Normand caught her and Mack having an affair and Mack wanted Mabel, so Mae's tenure came to an end. She made films for MGM but her career was going nowhere

when Hal Roach offered her a part in "Love Em and Weep". She made a few more pictures for Roach and some for Paramount before becoming ill in the early 1940's. She died from cancer on April 20, 1946. Her ashes remained hidden in a shoebox until the Way Out West tent in California had them finally laid to rest.

Silents are Golden.....Gerry Dunne (dunne & dusted)

Silents are Golden

It has been a busy few weeks on the silent movie front. What began as a column to try and inspire the sons to delve into the silents is rapidly becoming a many headed hydra which shows no sign of abating. Hold on to your hat, Stanley.

Full marks to Queen's Film Theatre for "The Score". On one Sunday each month QFT will be screening a silent film complete with accompaniment by the cream of Northern Ireland DJs — the challenge being to see whether modern music makers can interpret the images of a hundred years ago as well as their predecessors did. It promises to be innovative and exciting. For further information see www.qftBelfast.info. If you get to any of the screenings at the newly re-foyered QFT let me know.

During the 1920s my great-uncle Peter played violin in Clonard Picture House, Belfast to accompany silent films — but then my mum used to say that he was always on the fiddle.

As we are entering the festival season just a word about the Belfast film festival which featured "Laurel and Hardy's Laughing 20s" in 2000 and Keaton's "The General" last year. The format is changing this year: there will be a weekend festival commencing on 27 September but it will be for locally produced movies and amateur

filmmakers. The festival proper has been moved to its new slot in March 2003. Hopefully the team at the arcade will come up with something from the golden age of cinema to keep us entertained then.

Did anyone catch the screening of Cecil B deMille's "King of Kings" at Clonard monastery, Belfast a few weeks back? A packed house enjoyed this classic complete with organ accompaniment.

For any of you collecting L&H through internet auctions a word of caution. Several months ago a series of L&H videos came on sale in the US. You will see them advertised in groups of eight videos going for very little money. They are all silent versions of pre-teaming films and the quality is frankly poor. The videos will only play in NTSC format so if your video player does not include this you will not be able to watch them. For those diehard L&H aficionados with NTSC and who wish to proceed, beware of the titles on the boxes because in most cases they bear no resemblance to what you will find on the tapes. The actual films are as follows "Pick and Shovel" (called "The Miner"), "His Day Out", "Just Rambling Along", "Mud and Sand", "Smithy", "Wandering Papas", "Tree in a Test Tube", and "Kill or Cure". Each tape lasts about 25 minutes and may contain more than one film.

Don't forget if you get word of any silent screenings in your area let me know and I will include details in the column. My number is (0044)2890849583.

And now for our feature:

Slipping Wives (1927)

Babe Hardy, Stan Laurel. Herbert Rawlinson, Priscilla Dean, Albert Conti

Made just after "Duck Soup", this movie sees our heroes revert to type, the idea of a team being still less than a faint possibility. The plot involves a scheme to rekindle romance in an inconsiderate husband — sound familiar? — and Stan is the means by which Priscilla Dean aims to make her artist husband (Albert Conti) jealous. Add in Herb Rawlinson as the friend of the family whom Stan mistakes for the husband and Babe as the butler and the mayhem ensues. The highlight is undoubtedly Stan's pantomime of the story of Samson whose hair is cut and whose eyes are poked out by the Philadelphians. In this movie the boys play separate roles and only share two or three scenes at most. Watchable, but nothing to suggest that they would team up in just a few months' time.

And until next time, TTFN and keep watching those silents.

A quote from "The Bohemian Girl"

Ollie's wife..."What are you doing?"

Stan..."I'm making myself a malted milk"

Ollie's wife..."Oh, how long does it take"

Stan..."About 15 minutes to a quarter of an hour"

"Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy decided that they needed a rest.

They had been looking for work since 1921"

The Laurel -Hardy murder case.

Comber Show 2002.

We are back to Comber on Sept 28th to have another evening of fun in the company of Stan & Ollie.

The venue once more is Noel Spence's marvellous cinema, The Tudor. For those of you receiving the RTE channels, you may have seen the documentary on Noel and his brother recently. It showed two men who live for the joy they bring to others with their cinemas. I was proud that we actually avail of this fantastic offer.

Back to our night. We will begin at 6pm sharp. I say sharp this time because it has tended to run over while we wait for stragglers to arrive. This time we are starting on time because the tent is moving on directly after the show. We move on to Member Keith Davidson's house and his new den. The official opening of the den will take place that night and the Jitterbugs tent are guests of honour as well as performing the opening ceremony. Keith and Lana Davidson are hosting us and all are welcome.

There's everything from soup to nuts and a good evening is promised. Lets all make it a night to remember for Jitterbugs. There will be a convoy of cars travelling, so there are plenty of lifts. Those from the south, will find that there are a few of us staying in the Ivanhoe Inn in Carryduff.

So come on and let your hair down, (unless you're Steve O'Connor).

"Saps at Sea" & "Beau Hunks" are the featured movies for the night.

Web Watch..... Stephen O’Crowley (on the move)

Web Watch

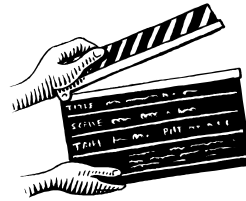
The site that falls under the microscope of scrutiny this week is Laurel and Hardy: Leave ‘Em Laughing. It contains a huge amount of information about the Boy’s but avoids the trap of swamping the surfer with too much info at once, by breaking it down into several distinct sections. The standard biographies of Stan and Ollie are given but their work as a team is divided between silents, talkies and later features. A well-deserved nod of acknowledgement is directed towards the Stock Company, each also receiving a short bio. There isn’t much in the way of downloads – if screensavers or sound bytes is your thing, then look elsewhere. There is, however, a large gal-

lery of pictures, again under distinct headings – Lobby Cards, Silent tills, Candid shots etc.

The best feature of this web-site, and one that separates it from most others about Laurel and Hardy, is that it is very interactive. There is a message board, which contains quizzes, trivia, quotes and articles on every aspect about Stan and Ollie. Got a question about the Boys? – well post it on the message board and chances are that it will be answered for you. You can also reply to other posts, and throw in your own two cent’s worth. If you just want to simply dis-

cuss Laurel and Hardy, you could also try the Chat Room, which can be great fun.

All in all this is a good site and very informative as the owners really seem to know their stuff. This site is updated nearly every day so add it to your favourites list (now that’s a good idea Ollie!).



<http://groups.msn.com/LaurelandHardyLeaveEmLaughing>

Did you know...
Hal Roach's parents
were Irish??

Stan’s White Magic

One of the many elements of a Laurel & Hardy comedy that cropped up from film to film was Stan’s White Magic. This was the ability that Stan had whereby he made the impossible seem to happen.

I personally love these gems of humour and I so look forward to seeing them over and over again. There have been some criticisms however, with one argument being that Stan and Ollie appeared in ordinary, everyday situations (in the majority of their films), and this was one thing that made their comedy so funny. It was the fact that it was believable, it could be anybody in that situation, and it could happen to you. The fact that this white magic appeared suddenly, ruined the situation and all of a sudden it was make-believe and impossible.

So, what examples are there?
The most famous is perhaps the ‘Way Out

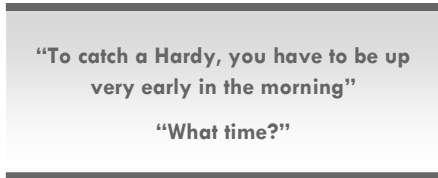
West’ example of Stan lighting his thumb as if it were a cigarette lighter. This example is made even more funny by the fact that Ollie can’t do it and repeatedly tries and tries. Eventually he succeeds and it scares the hell out of him. Also in this film is the example of Stan smoking his pipe and continuing to do so, even when the stem has become separated from the bowl.

In ‘Towed in a Hole’ and ‘Bonnie Scotland’ Stan causes his Derby to rise by blowing into his finger. In ‘Great Guns’ he unscrews a light bulb from it’s socket and it remains lit. Also in ‘Great Guns’ and ‘The

Finishing Touch’ he appears to carry a long ladder from both ends.

My favourite though, has to be ‘Blockheads’. There are a few examples of white magic in this film. Stan smokes his pipe, this entails using his hand as a pipe. He first puts tobacco in his clenched fist, lights it and smokes it via his thumb. Also in ‘Blockheads’ is the example of Stan pulling down the blinds, which are actually a shadow on the wall. But even though they are a shadow, he still succeeds in pulling them down on numerous occasions, once again, much to Ollie’s disgust (as he can’t do it).

There are other “unbelievable” things that Stan does and there are also the things that Stan does which are just unbelievable. But this is just Stan, and if he wasn’t doing these things, we wouldn’t have Laurel & Hardy.



Laurel and Hardy artwork.....

I was recently contacted by Peter Finnigan. Peter is an artist who specialises in Laurel and Hardy. You can view his work at the following website.

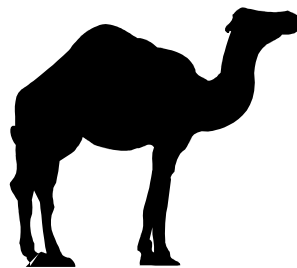
www.artsbar.com

I have to say that I think it is actually very good and the prints are very reasonable. At the moment, Peter has a special offer. Buy two get one free. This offer is not open to the general public

and is only for Sons of the Desert members, so if you want to avail of it let me know here at Jitterbugs headquarters.

Peter has exhibited his work at Laurel and Hardy conventions in the past and has been well received.

The website allows you to



“Excuse me. I’m looking for a
Son of the Desert !”

purchase the prints online.

If anyone has any comments about Peter’s work, do let us know. Likewise if you buy anything.

The Irish Chapter of The Sons of the Desert

Sons of the Desert

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JITTERBUGS TENT
IRELAND

We are the Sons of the Desert,
having the time of our lives.

**Tell me that
again !**

The Driver's License Sketch (1939-1947)...Stan Laurel

Cop...What can I do for you?

Ollie...If you don't mind, I'd like to renew my driver's license.

Cop...Just fill out the application.

Ollie...I'm sorry sir, but due to a slight accident, I can't write.

Cop...Well get your friend to fill it in for you.

Ollie...I'm sorry sir, but you see he can write but he can't read.

Cop...If you can't write and he can't read, how come?

Ollie...Well you see, we both went to different schools together !

(This is just the opening scene of the stage sketch the boys toured the UK with in 1947)

From Soup to Nuts.....Steve O'Connor, (Canadian Tourist)

I Can't Bear It... Just a few words from your intrepid VS as I prepare to head off to the wilds of Canada for a couple of weeks – Bears, Rain, Mosquitoes, NO BARS but yet more Bears... seemed like a good idea at the time. In his book, 'A Walk in the Woods', Bill Bryson relates some of his discoveries reference or cuddly friends: One 'expert' advises that if a black bear attacks you should play dead and it will lose interest. Another 'expert' advises that if a black bear attacks you should not play dead as they are scavengers and will just keep on chewing. Another big idea is that while walking in the woods you should wear a bell. This will alert any bears to your presence and give them time to get out of your way – so avoiding any unpleasantness. This is countered by another theory that suggests that the bell may alert any angry bears in the area to your whereabouts, and they will come a lookin' for ya. What is not in dispute is that they can run fast, swim well and hurtle up trees.

My plan is to cry like Stanley and hope they get the joke.

A Laurel & Hardy Bear Moment

Following the end of communist rule in Poland two budding entrepreneurs came up with a big idea. They would arrange hunting trips in their remote part of the country. They did a bit of advertising and a London banker paid up money to shoot a bear. Our heroes took the money but as the deadline for the trip approached panic set in. There were no bears in the area – not a one.

In desperation they stole a bear from a travelling circus and kept it in a shed. It was a bedraggled old creature with a nervous tic but they decided it might do from a distance.

The banker duly arrived and they set him up in a tree along a forest track. He was told that bears often travelled along this path and was instructed to wait. Thinking they might just get away with this our men returned to the bear and with various treats coaxed it down the track. The bear duly ambled off accom-

panied by the son of one of the men on his bicycle. What none of them knew was that the critter had spent its whole life as a bicycle riding performing bear artiste. It promptly knocked the boy off his bike, got on it and wobbled off down the track. A short distance later he rode into the rifle sights of the banker who, not surprisingly, fell out of the tree and broke his arm. The bear was returned to the circus. This should give us paws for thought..no, no bear with me.

