

- Ollie received mail or a telegram 14 times in their movies
- Stan called his oscar "Mr. Clean".
- Ollie had 37 camera glances in "The Devil's Brother".
- Stan scared Ollie 37 times in 20 films !

## Not that bloke Liam again!!!!!!!

# Jitterbugs news (or something like that)

December already. Who'd have thought it? As the months go by and we all get older and more frail, I am reminded that we have only a short time on this earth. So go out and buy another Laurel and Hardy video and have yourself a good laugh. After reading all this, you will need to!!!!!!!

Sorry about that. Now where were we. Ah yes.

My name is Liam and I'm an alcoho.....sorry, that's the other newsletter.

Stan and Ollie. Not a lot of news once again. Sad news in that someone stole the plaque from the wall of the house where Stan was born. No idea why. Probably a mad fan. I've heard there are a few about. The lady who now lives in the house had a new one made and intends putting it up higher.

I've no inside information this year with regards to the Christmas television schedules, so keep a close eye on those TV guides for any Laurel and Hardy movies or other related films.

I recently saw the coat that Charlie Chaplin wore in "The Gold Rush" for sale on the internet. It was described as



"A very merry Jitterbugs Christmas"

in good condition with one button missing and also having the original sweat stains, in the under-arm!!!! The current bid was \$10,000 but they expected it to reach \$30/40,000. The mind boggles. Sweat stains indeed.

There's just enough time left to tell you that 2 men may possibly be in your area at this very moment. One is quite large and has a very tiny moustache. The other is thin and answers to the name of Stanley. If you see these two, **DO NOT** buy any Christmas cards from them. Apparently, the last time they tried to sell Christmas cards, they got into such a fix that they nearly ended up dead. A duel arose out of a seemingly small occurrence and we don't want this to happen again.....

*Liam*

## "On The Trail Of The Lonesome Pine", 3rd verse.

Alison Stevenson, co-editor of the Intra Tent Journal, had a find in a New Hampshire antique store recently. Original sheet music for "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine".

The song was written by Ballard MacDonald and Harry Carroll and was first published in New York in 1913.

Alison was amazed to find a third verse.....

I can hear the tinkling waterfall,  
far among the hills  
Bluebirds sing each so merrily  
To his mate in rapture thrills  
They seem to say "your June is  
lonesome too"  
Longing fills her eyes  
She is waiting for you patiently  
Where the pine tree sighs.  
Refrain...In the blue ridge mountains of Virginia.....

### Inside this issue:

3rd verse	1
Silent are Golden	2
Arthur Housman	2
DVD review	3
Official Statement	3
Comber report	3
Soup to nuts	4

## Silents are Golden.....Gerry Dunne

I'm taking a respite from reviewing the silents this issue — but only for this issue. Once the new year comes around I will be raring to go again, with lots of new releases to review and plenty of vintage Stan and Ollie moments to relive.

It doesn't seem like a year since I was writing my last festive missive. They say time flies — and when you get to Steve's age it seems like its travelling on Concorde — boom, boom! (or sonic boom,boom) Talking about time; did you watch the recent Channel 4 programme on the reform of the House of Lords, which gave a behind-the-scenes view of the sad demise of the hereditary peers? One poor old duffer was given a classic goodbye card featuring Stan and Ollie. I wonder what Lord Paddington would have made of it all. It was also reported that when Gerry Adams met David Trimble just after the collapse (again) of the NI Assembly, David greeted Gerry with "well, here's an-

other nice mess you've gotten us into". I wonder if either would be interested in membership, Liam?

I hope you have been dropping hints to your spouses, partners, and better halves, about what Stan and Ollie goodies you would like to find in your Christmas stocking. I would quite like to find Jeanie Weanie in mine but as she's travelled all over the world her legs are probably as shapely as Micheal Jackson's nose — what a plonker! Don't forget to snap up any video or DVD silents that you spot during those long "shopping trips" with the wife — you just can't wait until you're elbowing your way through crowds in the rain on Christmas Eve, can you?

With any luck, the good old BBC will be screening a few Stan and Ollie classics during the festive season to get us all up at the crack of dawn each day. I don't know about you but after 10 pints of Guinness, a few vodkas

and the odd couple of Bailey's I find it difficult to get up before 7 in the evening never mind 7 am.

Anyway, if I don't see you before the big day have a very Merry Stanley and a Happy New Babe. (That one's for Liam and Trudi to cringe over — well it's the best I could do on short notice).

As this column aims to please all of the main language groups in the club I will leave you all with the following festive greeting in your preferred language, "Happy Christmas", "Nollaig Shona", "Cantie Yuil" and " - !!!" (the final one, of course, is on behalf of our silent movie stars — our cast of thousands).

## Stan Laurel .....remembered

Stan Laurel was the greatest gagman I've ever known. He could think of unbelievably funny business. He was always moving on to the next project. He was a tomorrow man rather than a yesterday man.

Gordon Douglas.....Director Saps at Sea.

Stan's mind never stopped working when it came to comedy. When

Thelma Todd and I were making our two-reelers, he would just drop by and watch us shoot and just quickly drop a suggestion that would of course, make the whole scene.

Patsy Kelly.....

We had a ball you know. It was a play. It wasn't hard work at all, it was a play.

Babe London.....Ollie's wife in "Our Wife".

These were the greatest, these two fellows. God, they were funny.

George Stevens.....director.

I owe a good part of my success to them. Nothing could have replaced that experience.

## Arthur Housman.....("a good swig o' liquor")

One of the most endearing characters to appear in Laurel and Hardy films was Arthur Housman. We remember him best for his drunken roles.

He was born in New York in 1890 and at an early age, he sought work on stage. In time, this led to him working in films in New York. He often played boy next door roles and in 1915, he appeared in a film called "The Simp and the Sophomores", for Edison. This film also starred another newcomer to New York by the name of Oliver Hardy. In the 1920's he ap-

peared in straight roles with Gloria Swanson, Clara Bow and Wallace Beery. He also starred with Al Jolson in "The Singing Fool". It is unclear as to when he first started to play drunken roles but in the 1920's film "Sunrise", he can be seen playing such a character.

During the 30's he became famous as the premier film drunk but it had all disappeared by 1937 when Jack Norton became more popular in the role.



Film drunks are usually teetotal although Housman was an exception as Stan Laurel recalled.

Pathe tried to star him with Edgar Kennedy in a series of shorts about bickering neighbours but this was dropped after only two films.

"What goes down the chimney?"  
"A good swig o' liquor"

It is uncertain how he died in 1942.

Arthur appeared in 4 of the boy's films. Can you name them?

## DVD review.....Stephen O'Crowley

A recent trip to the local record store enabled me to double my entire Laurel and Hardy DVD collection (i.e. I now own 2!!). Having previously acquired the brilliant Be Big/Laughing Gravy double bill on this format, I eagerly wanted to expand this fledgling collection. However, choice of Laurel and Hardy on DVD is extremely limited – true, you can buy collections of shorts with Stan or Ollie before they were paired, but if you want to buy Laurel & Hardy DVDs, only 3 or 4 have been released (though I have read on the net that more are scheduled for the future). Undaunted by this lack of choice I plumed for what seemed a safe bet – Way Out West (the best ever Laurel & Hardy feature movie – discuss!).

For those of you who aren't familiar with this movie (for shame!), I'll give you a quick run-down. Set in a cowboy town in the west, the boys have to deliver the deeds of a gold-mine deed to the daughter of an old friend. At first, a crooked saloon owner and his devious wife swindle them, but they eventually come up trumps. Throw in a great rendition

of "The Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia", a brilliant soft shoe shuffle, gags a plenty, and great performances by Stan, Ollie and Fin (as the villain of the piece) and you have an all-time masterpiece.

But how does this version compare to previous VHS versions? Well, the print is extremely clean (and this was made in 1937!) and the sound is quite good. Included is an extra saloon dance sequence missing from a lot of earlier VHS issues. Also included is a colourised version of the movie. I'm not a fan of this process – I don't think that it looks real, and for me, adds nothing to the enjoyment of viewing, and can be quite annoying (one possible exception to this could be Babes in Toyland which was always meant to be made in colour). This not with-

standing, a lot of people enjoy seeing Stan and Ollie in colour, and for them, this is a great added bonus. A far better included extra is the classic Big Business. Again, the print is extremely clear (bearing in mind that this was made in 1928) and this is the fullest version of the short that I have seen.

All in all, this is a great DVD and shows the Boys at full strength. I would have preferred another short or two in place of the colourised film, or maybe some other unseen extras (the previously mentioned Be Big/Laughing Gravy DVD had several foreign versions of the films, with different footage). Still, this is well worth a look. Believe you me, DVDs are here to stay!

## Comber report

A fantastic night of fun was had by all who attended our annual trip to Comber. To those who made the effort and travelled, My thanks and a large clap on the back. To those who didn't go, a kick in the daily duties for you.

Attendance was down but the laughter at "Beau Hunks" and "Saps at Sea", more than made up for it. Special mention to Jimmy Creamer from Dublin who had only joined the tent two weeks previously and made the trip.

Usual raffles and toasts and all dealt with capa-

bly by Vice-Sheik Steve O'Connor assisted by his lovely assistant Alison. Members were invited afterwards to Jitterbugs member Keith Davidson's home and the official opening of, "The Two Bowlers" bar. What a fantastic wonderland it is too. Wall to wall adorned with Laurel and Hardy stills and photographs. I tell you, I am more than a little jealous.

Grateful thanks go to Keith and

Lana for hosting our small crowd and special thanks to Lana for the magnificent spread that greeted us on our arrival.

When the official opening ceremony was complete, we were treated to the "Ballad of the Two Bowler's Bar" sung by Gerry Dunne. Penned by our own Official Cocktail Taster, it added that personal touch to the evening's proceedings. Three cheers for Gerry.

## A statement from John McCabe (Exhausted Ruler) Abridged version

I have been away from the sons for professional and personal reasons. Heavy medical expenses have strapped me. I have been forced to take summer lecture work. It has been a stretch of bad years for me. But now is the time to go forward again.

First of all my very good thanks to the good folks on the various

Advisory Committees, who have stood in for me in recent years. At long last I am able to resume my executive duties as Exhausted Ruler, and I look forward to that with high enthusiasm. In de-activating the Advisory Committee I am very mindful of the sacrifices made by it's members. My gratitude.

Let me just say how pleased I

am to be back in the fold.

God Bless

July 11 2002.

For those of you who don't know, John McCabe is the author of 4 books on Laurel and Hardy and their only official biographer. He founded the "Sons of the Desert" in 1965 with Stan Laurel's blessing

**The Sons of the  
Desert shall conduct  
it's duties with a  
half assed dignity!**

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

One was thin, the other fat.

One was a worrier, the other a cheerful extrovert. One was born into a theatrical family in England, the other was born in Georgia USA and sent to a southern military school. It was only in Hollywood that they met—and only in Hollywood could the magic of their art come into being.

Here is the fascinating story of the artistic “marriage” that gave birth to some of the greatest classic comedies ever filmed. It is the drama of how two sharply distinct individuals meshed so perfectly that they have become forever wedded together in the minds of millions of fans.

Here is a book that brilliantly recaptures the golden age of Hollywood comedy—and the two remarkable men who gave it so much of its immortal glow.

**The inside page of “The Laurel and Hardy Book”, by Leonard Maltin. 1973**

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## From Soup to Nuts.....Vice-Shiekh Steve o'Connor

### ‘I Can’t Bear It: Update.... Update... Update...

Regular readers of this column will have been on tenterhooks awaiting my safe return from the Canadian wilderness. Well, I am back, and the present Mrs. O’Connor has regretfully had to put the life insurance policy away for another while. I was accompanied on this adventure by fellow Son of the Desert – Mr. Alistair Steen. Alistair hails from Belfast, but with his Caledonian ancestry he supports the Scottish rugby team. I say, ‘Into every life a little rain must fall.’

I am proud to relate that our trip got off to a satisfactory Laurel and Hardy type start. On arrival at the base camp my first act was to lock us out of the cabin. My second act was to not bother reading the instructions on a can of very potent anti-bear spray- this resulted in negligent discharge of said spray. Fortunately, the spray hit the cabin wall rather than Vice-Sheikh’s face. Alistair, despite holding no office whatsoever in the Sons, decided at this point to announce himself ‘Expedition Leader’. I detected the imperious tones of one Oliver Norvell Hardy and tried to look dumb-No comments required thank you Gerry...

Before setting out on the lakes, I was in the outfitters store, and overheard a conversation between two German women. I did not know what they were saying but they were having a right old laugh so I stood there looking quizzical.. One of them explained to me that while out on the lakes she had come across a lone German camper who was in great physical discomfort. Now, for you to fully appreciate this story, I must return to the above mentioned bear spray. This is a very potent pepper type spray, designed to be fired at a threatening bear’s face as an action of last resort. You do not even want the slightest whiff of this stuff. If it is designed to incapacitate a grizzly, you can imagine the results on a mere camper. The instructions on the spray were only in English and French, and remember we are talking about a German here. This poor individual had assumed that the bear spray worked like an insect repellent. In other words, he was spraying *himself* with it. I am not making this up-you couldn’t make it up. When the German lady found him he was in great pain, suffering from breathing problems and skin blisters. He said to her,

(German accent please), “Is it strictly necessary to spray yourself with this twice a day to be keeping the bears away?” I believe he is still in hospital-possibly for his own protection. Still, you have to admire his Teutonic determination in the face of daily agony. Idiot.

I am proud to say that on completing our camping trip and returning to base, Alistair and myself did our bit for the glory of Ireland-and, yes, Scotland. We dumped off the canoe and immediately tracked down the lodge owner-yet another German, the huge and affable Lothar. “Lothar, we need beer right now”, says myself. Lothar returned with 4 bottles of Warsteiner. “Not enough”, says we. He dived back into his office and appeared with 8 bottles. We shook our heads sadly. “You want more beer??”, shouts Lothar. This time he returned with a keg and plonked it in front of us, a big smile on his face. We smiled back. “Irish”, sighs Lothar.

A Laurel and Hardy moment.....

**‘Crackers’: From the Darwin Awards.**

**Russian Roulette has always been a breeding ground for natural selection, but the men involved in this story deserve extra consideration for their unique approach to this self-destructive game.**

On New Year’s Eve, Antonio and his friend were befogged by a traditional Brazilian liquor called Pinga, when they began playing Russian Roulette with holiday fireworks. Their version of the game consisted of lighting fireworks, and holding them in their mouths to see who could delay longest. The man who discarded the explosive closest to the point of detonation was to be the victor in this battle of wills.

Their blatant disregard for personal safety was matched only by their foolish bravery. Antonio was the winner, holding a firework in his mouth a bit too long, and thereby earning praise for his ‘courage’ at the resulting funeral.

**A BRAVE MAN INDEED.**  
Goodbye...