

March 27, 2019

Bacon Grabbers - Filmed February 18 through 27, 1929. Released October 19, 1929.

By the time this silent comedy was released, Laurel & Hardy had already released five of their talking films.

The exterior of this comedy was filmed at a private residence on Bannockburn Drive in Cheviot Hills, California. The owner of the home at that time was Hal Roach Studios sound engineer Elmer Raguse who lived there with his family.

Edgar Kennedy once again appears with Stan and Ollie, this time trying to avoid having his radio repossessed by attachment officers Laurel & Hardy. His character name in this film is Collis P. Kennedy. The English translation of "Collis" is dark haired coal miner, the exact opposite of Kennedy's bald head.

Edgar Kennedy's wife in this film is Jean Harlow, who was making her final appearance in a Hal Roach comedy. Just after filming completed, Jean (along with her mother and step-father) visited Mr. Roach's office asking to be released from her contract on the grounds that her work was breaking up her marriage. Mr. Roach complied and tore up the contract. Within a few months after this, Jean Harlow was starring the Howard Hughes epic feature, *Hell's Angels*. She went on to star in many others as well.

The toy dog used in this film to frighten Laurel & Hardy was used in *Along Came Auntie*, a Hal Roach comedy with Oliver Hardy, Vivien Oakland and Martha Sleeper from 1926 and also in Our Gang's 1931 comedy *Bargain Day*.

Buddy, the real dog who we saw in *Perfect Day* and *From Soup To Nuts*, provides more frustration for Oliver Hardy here.

Some of the tumbles and falls that Stan and Ollie experience were actually performed by Ham Kinsey for Stan and Cy Slocum for Ollie.

The cost to make this film was just under \$40,000

Towed In A Hole - Filmed October 31 through November 9, 1932.
Released December 31, 1932.

With the exception of about 13 seconds, Laurel & Hardy are the sole performers in this comedy.

As an avid fisherman, Stan Laurel was quite happy to make a film related to fishing.

The title of this film was a tribute to his friends in England. Toad In A Hole is an English dish made of sausages cooked in flour and egg batter. In the 1930's, there was a popular restaurant on Hollywood Blvd. with the same name and spelling.

When looking at the boat, you see the name RUTH printed on the bow. Over the years, many have thought that this was a tribute to the woman that Stan would eventually marry. The truth is that Stan did not even meet Virginia Ruth Rogers until 10 months after this film was released. Since this marriage did not work out well for Stan, the initials NG at the rudder of the boat would seem more appropriate.

This was the third and final Laurel & Hardy film directed by George Marshall. His other two films, where he also made cameo appearances, were their 1932 feature, *Pack Up Your Troubles* and two-reeler *Their First Mistake* from the same year. On November 11, 1932 - two days after shooting for "Towed in a Hole" wrapped - Marshall was fired by Roach Studios general manager Henry Ginsberg over cost cutting concerns. Marshall never worked with Stan and Ollie again, but retained fond memories of them, especially of Stan, whom he claimed made him a better director. Marshall would go on to direct Bob Hope, Martin & Lewis and W. C. Fields. His dramatic directorial credits include *The Blue Dahlia*, *Destry Rides Again* and portions of *How The West Was Won*.

A Chump At Oxford - Filmed in June of 1939. New material was written and then filmed in September of 1939. Released February 16, 1940.

This was the first film Laurel & Hardy had made at the Hal Roach Studios since Stan Laurel's firing after making *Block-Heads* in 1938.

United Artists were now releasing the films from the Hal Roach Studios instead of MGM.

Originally, *A Chump At Oxford* was planned to be a "streamliner" or forty minute long story. After this 40 minute version was completed, Laurel & Hardy left to film *The Flying Deuces* for Boris Morros. Since United Artists did not want to release a short version of *A Chump At Oxford*, Laurel & Hardy returned in September to film additional footage of 15 minutes for the beginning of this comedy to extend the length. **Anita Garvin**, **Vivien Oakland** and **Sam Lufkin** (all making

their final appearances in a Laurel & Hardy film) plus **James Finlayson** were brought back for this additional filming.

Harry Bernard is making his second to last performance in a Laurel & Hardy comedy. He made a total of 26 appearances with Stan & Ollie in their films.

Forrester Harvey - For over 30 years he was a fixture in Hollywood films that were set in England, Ireland or Scotland. During his time in Hollywood, he made some 116 films 14 of which were silents, when sound came his character roles developed with the sound of his voice often being cast as a cockney tradesman, family gardener or a pub inhabitant. His more famous roles came in the 30's when he was cast as Beamish, in the [Johnny Weissmuller](#) film [Tarzan the Ape Man](#) (1932). In 1933, he was cast as Herbert the innkeeper, in the classic [The Invisible Man](#) (1933) opposite [Una O'Connor](#) as his wife. Other roles included Bradshaw in [Frank Capra's Broadway Bill](#) (1934), Twiddle in [The Wolf Man](#) (1941) and Mr. Huggins in [Mrs. Miniver](#) (1942).

A young man performing in only his third film was a 26 year old **Peter Cushing** who played the roles of Drs. Frankenstein and Van Helsing, as well as taking on other horror characters, in Hammer films over 20 years. He also appeared in films for the other major horror producer of the time, Amicus Productions, including Dr. Terror's House of Horrors (1965) and its later horror anthologies, a couple of Dr. Who films (1965, 1966), I, Monster (1971), and others. By the mid-1970s, these companies had stopped production, but Cushing, firmly established as a horror star, continued in the genre for some time thereafter.

Wilfred Lucas - plays the Dean in this film. He became a movie actor after spending 22 years on stage. He joined the Keystone Studios with Mack Sennett in the mid 1920's where he directed Mary Pickford and Marie Dressler among others. He appeared in some 400 films, many

as lead actor, over a 30 year period. He is best remembered by Laurel & Hardy fans as the warden in Pardon Us.

This film was inspired by the 1938 film *A Yank At Oxford* with Robert Taylor where he played a brash American Student alienating fellow students and professors until he joined the rowing team and help beat Cambridge in the annual race.

The former vaudevillian and film's director, **Alf Goulding**, was the man who brought Stan Laurel to the attention of Hal Roach in 1918 after seeing Stan's act on stage.

During this period, Frank Ross was hired by Hal Roach to oversee the running of the studio. Unfortunately, this hiring ended the film career of musical director **T. Marvin Hatley** who had been with Hal Roach since 1930 and had earned three Academy Award nominations. According to Marvin, he was tired of the pressure of composing music for the movies. He spent the next 20 years as a pianist in cocktail lounges earning more money than he did at the studio.

Art Director Charles D. Hall is **NOT** the same Charlie Hall we have seen in several Laurel & Hardy comedies.

The portrait of the dean in his living quarters was a prop that was used again in 1948 in Hal Roach's comedy mystery *Who Killed Doc Robbin?* His eyes were cut out so that someone behind the portrait could spy on people in the room. Charles Gemora who we saw as Ethel the Chimp a few weeks back also appeared in this 1948 film.

Pay particular to Stan Laurel's performance during the last ten minutes of this film. Many have said, that if Laurel & Hardy had never teamed up, Oliver Hardy would have had a successful career as a supporting player in many films. The same thing could be said about Stan Laurel.

REFERENCES

Laurel & Hardy: The Magic Behind The Movies by Randy Skretvedt

Internet Movie Database