

FOR:

✿ some, who may not know the name of a certain town clerk, turned policeman, turned air force pilot, turned POW (whose noisy rehearsals covered the sounds of escapee tunnellers) but who has made you laugh on many an occasion without you realising who masterminded your laughter, unless you avidly read the credits;

✿ a stalwart few, who may vaguely remember one P Such Esquire, supported especially by: Messrs. Charles E Tarbox, John Gilbert, Rodney Marshment, Peter C. Greenhill; and a bevy of others somewhat warily in tow, on the stage of Watford Tech on several extraordinary occasions;

✿ a severely reduced few of family and immediate associates, who may remember the same P Such Esquire, as an early teenager, playing the obnoxious child (Raymond) with one Hazel May Camroux, his aunt in real life and his aunt in the play; with the two latest generations of the one hundred year firm of H H Dickman (The chemists) of Great Berkhamsted;

one Stan Dickens, farmer at Berkhamsted Place, who was once asked by one of the other cast members if there was any reason why a cockerel, in a farmyard, would crow “Cockadoodle DON’T”.

That was the father of three sons, who were at school with me, one H E Todd, the creator of Bobby Brewster. Not being a Bobby Brewster fan I never knew if such a story evolved but it is amazing how much can hang on such passing moments... if only as a very happy childhood memory.

A memory of a theatrically orientated family, especially when great uncle Jim dropped in, jangling silver in his pocket which he was always keen to offload onto me, to save wear on his trousers—probably only to upset my grandmother, who felt it was far too much but not according to me! At that time he was ‘merely’ a director of a chain of cinemas but he was still retaining his friendship with Charles Chaplin and Stan Laurel, with whom he had acted in his time with Fred Karno’s Circus. He was with them on that fateful American tour when Hollywood called Charles and Stan away from theatre work to make films and great uncle Jim to show them.

✿ The play was *Queen Elizabeth Slept Here* by Talbot Rothwell, which was quite a ‘carry on’ with both productions.  
[The American version is *George Washington Slept Here*].

For those unfamiliar with the play, the central character is Uncle Stanley (played by me in the College production *Charles and I* co-produced), who is pandered to by all, as they think he is a millionaire but are unaware he is now bankrupt. His contribution in their lives is to send his nephew a framed photograph of himself on every birthday... and to expect to see them all dotted around the place when he visits. You have been warned should I visit over Christmas!

I regret not managing to complete my round of visits to family and friends during the year and missing several events but I hope no one is suffering insurmountable problems of which I remain unaware. Those, who have faced and continue to face worse problems than those with which I am coping, seem to be coming through with flying colours and are a fine example of coping with heavy travails.

By comparison with some of their problems, mine have remained in the “irritant only” stage, for which I am grateful, so I live a vaguely acceptable life-style, my problems and I tolerating one another in reasonable spirits.

For those so lacking in humour as to have not yet fully caught on, even with the “carry on” quip: Rothwell’s writing was behind most of the *Carry On* films. Voted by over a thousand theatre-people and theatre-lovers as writing the best one-liner in movie history: Rothwell was responsible for Kenneth Williams declaring in *Carry On Cleo* “Infamy! Infamy! They’ve all got it in for me!”, although believed to have been pinched from Frank Muir’s and Dennis Norden’s *Take It From Here* radio series.

Hoping this card will be repeated another year, if not exactly as this, I wish you all:

 **A very Sappy**   
**Christmas & Successful**  
**Achievements in the New**  
**Year**