

Over the decades he showed himself willing to "bet the farm" on more than

appointed chairman and managing director at the age of 33. Within a cou-

of Irish whiskies. The Irish were unwilling to sell to the British group of

brands which had been neglected or badly managed. In 2001 Seagram, once

July 1940, married (three children), died Toulon 17 August 2012.

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Stanley Dent Senior figure in the postwar film industry



Adelpi Films was one of the companies whose feature films and B-movies helped to fill cinemas in the industry's boom years after the Second World War. As business manager, Stanley Dent was responsible for securing distribution deals for pictures showcasing some of the earliest performances by stars such as Peter Sellers and Diana Dors, whose contracts he drew up.

He was an honourable man who received from Spike Milligan a letter about royalties for the 1951 knockabout farce *Penny Points to Paradise* thanking him for "the Lolly" and adding: "It is a pleasant surprise [sic], as I never expected any at all, knowing the film profession to be what it is." *Penny Points to Paradise* and a short, *Let's Go Crazy* (also 1951), were two oddities starring Milligan and Sellers that were lost to film fans for almost half a cen-

tury until the BFI began restoring those in Adelphi's catalogue to issue on DVD.

The pictures distributed by Adelphi and made by its production arm, Advance, and associated companies represented a snapshot from a short but prolific era in British cinema. They ranged from the 1947 Robert Burns biopic *Comin' Thro' the Rye*, with Terence Alexander in his first screen role as the Scottish poet, to the 1956 musical *Stars in Your Eyes*, featuring the singer Dorothy Squires in her only film.

Diana Dors appeared in four Adelphi-distributed films, the comedies *My Wife's Lodger* (1952), *The Great Game* (1953) and *Is Your Honeymoon Really Necessary* (1953), and the crime comedy-drama *Miss Tulip Stays the Night* (1955). Others in Adelphi pictures who later became stars of the screen, big or small, included Thora Hird, Sid James, Brian Rix, Joan Hickson, Stanley Unwin, Cardew Robinson, Alfred Marks, Dora Bryan, Joan Sims, Tommy Trinder, Jimmy

Clitheroe, Ronnie Corbett, Joan Hickson, Miriam Karlin, Max Bygraves, Cicely Courtneidge, Jack Hulbert, Rolf Harris and Molly Weir.

Stanley Dent was born in London in 1917, the son of Arthur Abrahams, who worked as a sales representative for various film companies, and his wife, Hettie. They later changed their family name to Dent and Stanley attended Kingsbury County School, before qualifying as an accountant with Price Waterhouse. During the Second World War he served with the Army as a gunner in Egypt.

After the war, Arthur Dent bought Adelphi Films - formed in 1939 to re-issue previously released material - as a means of handling films made by himself and his son David as producers, with Stanley running the business. The company was among hundreds vying for audiences during the post-war cinema boom, when more than half the population regularly "went to the pictures".

However, no new films were made

for Adelphi following Arthur's death in 1956, although Stanley continued to secure deals for television rights and assigned theatrical distribution to British Lion and Grand National. At the same time, he published the trade magazine *Fashion Forecast*, built stands for the Ideal Home Show and other exhibitions, and managed a carpentry factory and locksmith business.

Adelphi continues to trade, getting DVD releases and screenings on Sky Arts and at the BFI Southbank, and benefits from the deals secured by Dent in the 1990s with writers and their estates, who gave the company rights to their work in perpetuity. Dent is survived by his wife, Margaret, and their two daughters, Jean and Kate, both directors of Adelphi Films.

Anthony Hayward

Stanley Joseph Dent, film executive: born London 19 May 1917; married 1942 Margaret Jacoby (two daughters); died London 24 July 2012.

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