

= Dan Leno =

George Wild Galvin ( 20 December 1860 ? 31 October 1904 ) , better known by the stage name Dan Leno , was a leading English music hall comedian and musical theatre actor during the late Victorian era . He was best known , aside from his music hall act , for his dame roles in the annual pantomimes that were popular at London 's Theatre Royal , Drury Lane , from 1888 to 1904 .

Leno was born in St Pancras , London , and began to entertain as a child . In 1864 , he joined his parents on stage in their music hall act , and he made his first solo appearance , aged nine , at the Britannia Music Hall in Coventry . As a youth , he was famous for his clog dancing , and in his teen years , he became the star of his family 's act . He adopted the stage name Dan Leno and , in 1884 , made his first performance under that name in London . As a solo artist , he became increasingly popular during the late 1880s and 1890s , when he was one of the highest @-@ paid comedians in the world . He developed a music hall act of talking about life 's mundane subjects , mixed with comic songs and surreal observations , and created a host of mostly working @-@ class characters to illustrate his stories . In 1901 , still at the peak of his career , he performed his " Huntsman " sketch for Edward VII at Sandringham . The monarch was so impressed that Leno became publicly known as " the king 's jester " .

Leno also appeared in burlesque and , every year from 1888 to 1904 , in the Drury Lane Theatre 's Christmas pantomime spectacles . He was generous and active in charitable causes , especially to benefit performers in need . Leno continued to appear in musical comedies and his own music hall routines until 1902 , although he suffered increasingly from alcoholism . This , together with his long association with dame and low comedy roles , prevented him from being taken seriously as a dramatic actor , and he was turned down for Shakespearean roles . Leno began to behave in an erratic and furious manner by 1902 , and he suffered a mental breakdown in early 1903 . He was committed to a mental asylum , but was discharged later that year . After one more show , his health declined , and he died aged 43 .

= = Biography = =

= = = Family background and early life = = =

Leno was born in St Pancras , London . He was the youngest of six children , including two elder brothers , John and Henry , and an elder sister , Frances . Two other siblings died in infancy . His parents , John Galvin ( 1826 ? 1864 ) and his wife Louisa ( née Dutton ; 1831 ? 1891 ) , performed together in a music hall double act called " The Singing and Acting Duettists " . They were known professionally as Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Wild . They were not very successful , and the family struggled in poverty .

Having had very little schooling , and being raised by performers , Leno learned to entertain as a child . In 1862 , Leno 's parents and elder brothers appeared at the Surrey Music Hall in Sheffield , then performed in northern cities later in the year . In 1864 , at the age of four , Leno joined his parents on stage for the first time , at the Cosmothea Music Hall in Paddington , under the billing " Little George , the Infant Wonder , Contortionist , and Posturer " .

When Leno was still four , his father , an alcoholic , died at the age of 37 . The family moved to Liverpool a few months later , where his mother married William Grant ( 1837 ? 1896 ) , on 7 March 1866 . Grant was a comedian of Lancastrian and Irish descent , who performed in music halls throughout the British provinces under the stage name of William Leno . He was a seasoned actor and had previously been employed by Charles Kean in his theatre company at the Princess 's Theatre in London . In 1866 , the family home in Marylebone was demolished to make way for St Pancras railway station and , as a result , Leno 's sister Frances was sent to live with an uncle , while his brother John , who performed occasionally with his parents , took full @-@ time employment . Leno , his mother , stepfather and brother Henry moved north and settled in Liverpool , where they performed in various halls and theatres , including the Star Music Hall , but they often

returned to London to perform in the capital 's music halls .

= = = Early career = = =

In 1865 , Leno and his brother Henry , who first taught Leno to dance , formed a clog dancing double act known as " The Great Little Lenos " . This was the first time that Leno used his stepfather 's stage name , " Leno " , which he never registered legally . The same year , Leno also appeared in his first pantomime , in Liverpool , where he had a supporting part as a juvenile clown in *Fortunatus ; or , The Magic Wishing Cap* alongside his parents , who appeared as " Mr and Mrs Leno ? Comic Duettists " . On 18 July 1866 , Leno , Henry and their parents appeared on the opening night of the Cambridge Music Hall in Toxteth , Liverpool , under the billing " Mr. and Mrs. Leno , the Great , Sensational , Dramatic and Comic Duettists and The Brothers Leno , Lancashire Clog , Boot and Pump Dancers " . The following year , the brothers made their first appearance without their parents at the Britannia music hall in Hoxton . Although initially successful , the pair would experience many bouts of unemployment and often busked outside London pubs to make a living . Tired of surviving on little or no money , Henry left the clog dancing act to take up a trade in London , forcing Leno to consider a future as a solo performer . Henry later founded a dance school . Soon , however , Henry was replaced intermittently in the act by the boys ' uncle , Johnny Danvers , who was a week older than Leno . Leno and Danvers were close from an early age .

Leno made his debut as a solo performer in 1869 , returning to the Britannia music hall in Hoxton , where he became known as " The Great Little Leno , the Quintessence of Irish Comedians " . The name was suggested by his stepfather , William , who thought the Irish connection would appeal to audiences on their upcoming visit to Dublin . Arriving in Ireland the same year , the Lenos were struggling financially and stayed with William 's relatives . In addition to his performances as part of the family act , young Leno appeared as a solo act under an Irish @-@ sounding stage name , " Dan Patrick " . This allowed him to earn a separate fee of 23 shillings per performance plus living expenses . The name " Dan " was chosen to honour Dan Lowery , a northern music hall comedian and music hall proprietor whom the Lenos had met a few months earlier . During this tour of Ireland , the Lenos appeared in Dublin in a pantomime written by Leno 's father : *Old King Humpty ; or , Harlequin Emerald Isle and Katty of Killarney* ( 1869 ) , in which Leno received praise from Charles Dickens , who was in the audience and told him : " Good little man , you 'll make headway ! " .

In 1870 , the Lenos appeared in another pantomime by Leno 's father , *Jack the Giant Killer ; or , Harlequin Grim Gosling , or the Good Fairy Queen of the Golden Pine Grove* , in which Leno played the title character and also featured in the variety entertainment that preceded the pantomime . This was his last theatrical role until 1886 . Throughout the 1870s , Leno and his parents performed as " The Comic Trio ( Mr. & Mrs. Leno and Dan Patrick ) In Their Really Funny Entertainments , Songs and Dances " . In the family act with his parents and Danvers , young Leno often took the leading role in such sketches as his stepfather 's *The Wicklow Wedding* . Another of their sketches was *Torpedo Bill* , in which Leno played the title role , an inventor of explosive devices . His parents played a " washerwoman " and a " comic cobbler " . This was followed by another sketch , *Pongo the Monkey* . Opening at Pullan 's Theatre of Varieties in Bradford on 20 May 1878 , this burlesque featured Leno as an escaped monkey ; it became his favourite sketch of the period .

The teenage Leno 's growing popularity led to bookings at , among others , the Varieties Theatre in Sheffield and the Star Music Hall in Manchester . At the same time , Leno 's clog dancing continued to be so good that in 1880 he won the world championship at the Princess 's Music Hall in Leeds , for which he received a gold and silver belt weighing 44 @.@ 5 oz ( 1 @.@ 26 kg ) . His biographer , the pantomime librettist J. Hickory Wood , described his act : " He danced on the stage ; he danced on a pedestal ; he danced on a slab of slate ; he was encored over and over again ; but throughout his performance , he never uttered a word " .

= = = 1880s = = =

In 1878 , Leno and his family moved to Manchester . There , he met Lydia Reynolds , who , in 1883

, joined the Leno family theatre company , which already consisted of his parents , Danvers and Leno . The following year , Leno and Reynolds married ; around this time , he adopted the stage name " Dan Leno " . On 10 March 1884 , the Leno family took over the running of the Grand Varieties Theatre in Sheffield . The Lenos felt comfortable with their working class Sheffield audiences . On their opening night , over 4 @, @ 000 patrons entered the theatre , paying sixpence to see Dan Leno star in Doctor Cut ' Em Up . In October 1884 , facing tough competition , the Lenos gave up the lease on the theatre .

In 1885 , Leno and his wife moved to Clapham Park , London , and Leno gained new success with a solo act that featured comedy patter , dancing and song . On the night of his London debut , he appeared in three music halls : the Foresters ' Music Hall in Mile End , Middlesex Music Hall in Drury Lane and Gatti 's @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Road , where he earned £ 5 a week in total ( £ 487 in 2016 adjusted for inflation ) . Although billed as " The Great Irish Comic Vocalist and Clog Champion " at first , he slowly phased out his dancing in favour of character studies , such as " Going to Buy Milk for the Twins " , " When Rafferty Ruffled his Watch " and " The Railway Guard " . His dancing had earned him popularity in the provinces , but Leno found that his London audiences preferred these sketches and his comic songs . Leno 's other London venues in the late 1880s included the Collins Music Hall in Islington , the Queen 's Theatre in Poplar and the Standard in Pimlico .

Leno was a replacement in the role of Leontes in the 1888 musical burlesque of the ancient Greek character Atalanta at the Strand Theatre , directed by Charles Hawtrey . It was written by Hawtrey 's brother , George P. Hawtrey , and it starred Frank Wyatt , Willie Warde and William Hawtrey . The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News praised Leno 's singing and dancing and reported that : " He brings a good deal of fun and quaintness to the not very important part of Leontes . " Leno accepted the role at short notice , with no opportunity to learn the script . But his improvised comedy helped to extend the life of the show . When Leno and another leading actor left a few months later , the production closed .

= = = Music hall = = =

During the 1890s , Leno was the leading performer on the music hall stage , rivalled only by Albert Chevalier , who moved into music hall from the legitimate theatre . Their styles and appeal were very different : Leno 's characters were gritty working @-@ class realists , while Chevalier 's were overflowing in romanticism , and his act depicted an affluent point of view . The two represented the opposite poles of cockney comedy .

For his music hall acts , Leno created characters that were based on observations about life in London , including shopwalkers , grocer 's assistants , beefeaters , huntsmen , racegoers , firemen , fathers , henpecked husbands , garrulous wives , pantomime dames , a police officer , a Spanish bandit , a fireman and a hairdresser . One such character was Mrs. Kelly , a gossip . Leno would sing a verse of a song , then begin a monologue , often his You know Mrs. Kelly ? routine , which became a well @-@ known catchphrase : " You see we had a row once , and it was all through Mrs. Kelly . You know Mrs. Kelly , of course . ... Oh , you must know Mrs. Kelly ; everybody knows Mrs. Kelly . "

For his London acts , Leno purchased songs from the foremost music hall writers and composers . One such composer was Harry King , who wrote many of Leno 's early successes . Other well @-@ known composers of the day who supplied Leno with numbers included Harry Dacre and Joseph Tabrar . From 1890 , Leno commissioned George Le Brunn to compose the incidental music to many of his songs , including " The Detective " , " My Old Man " , " Chimney on Fire " , " The Fasting Man " , " The Jap " , " All Through A Little Piece of Bacon " and " The Detective Camera " . Le Brunn also provided the incidental music for three of Leno 's best @-@ known songs that depicted life in everyday occupations : " The Railway Guard " ( 1890 ) , " The Shopwalker " and " The Waiter " ( both from 1891 ) . The songs in each piece became instantly distinctive and familiar to Leno 's audiences , but his occasional changes to the characterisations kept the sketches fresh and topical .

" The Railway Guard " featured Leno in a mad characterisation of a railway station guard dressed in

an ill @-@ fitting uniform , with an unkempt beard and a whistle . The character was created by exaggerating the behaviour that Leno saw in a real employee at Brixton station who concerned himself in other people 's business while , at the same time , not doing any work . " The Shopwalker " was full of comic one @-@ liners and was heavily influenced by pantomime . Leno played the part of a shop assistant , again of manic demeanour , enticing imaginary clientele into the shop before launching into a frantic selling technique sung in verse . Leno 's depiction of " The Waiter " , dressed in an oversized dinner jacket and loose @-@ fitting white dicky , which would flap up and hit his face , was of a man consumed in self @-@ pity and indignation . Overworked , overwrought and overwhelmed by the number of his customers , the waiter gave out excuses for the bad service faster than the customers could complain :

Yes , sir ! No , sir ! Yes , sir ! When I first came here these trousers were knee @-@ breeches . Legs worn down by waiting . Sir ! What did you say ? How long would your steak be ? Oh , about four inches I should say , about four inches . No , sir ! sorry sir . Can 't take it back now , sir . You 've stuck your fork in and let the steam out !

= = = Pantomime = = =

Leno 's first London appearance in pantomime was as Dame Durden in Jack and the Beanstalk , which he performed at London 's Surrey Theatre in 1886 , having been spotted singing " Going to Buy Milk " by the Surrey Theatre manager , George Conquest . Conquest also hired Leno 's wife to star in the production . The pantomime was a success , and Leno received rave reviews ; as a result , he was booked to star as Tinpanz the Tinker in the following year 's pantomime , which had the unique title of Sinbad and the Little Old Man of the Sea ; or , The Tinker , the Tailor , the Soldier , the Sailor , Apothecary , Ploughboy , Gentleman Thief .

After these pantomime performances proved popular with audiences , Leno was hired in 1888 by Augustus Harris , manager at the Theatre Royal , Drury Lane , to appear in that year 's Christmas pantomime , Babes in the Wood . Harris 's pantomime productions at the huge theatre were known for their extravagance and splendour . Each one had a cast of over a hundred performers , ballet dancers , acrobats , marionettes and animals , and included an elaborate transformation scene and an energetic harlequinade . Often they were partly written by Harris . Herbert Campbell and Harry Nicholls starred with Leno in the next fifteen Christmas productions at Drury Lane . Campbell had appeared in the theatre 's previous five pantomimes and was a favourite of the writer of those productions , E. L. Blanchard . Blanchard left the theatre when Leno was hired , believing that music hall performers were unsuitable for his Christmas pantomimes . This was not a view shared by audiences or the critics , one of whom wrote :

I am inclined to think " the cake " for frolicsome humour is taken by the dapper new @-@ comer , Mr. Dan Leno , who is sketched as the galvanic baroness in the wonderfully amusing dance which sets the house in a roar . The substantial " babes " , Mr. Herbert Campbell and Mr. Harry Nicholls , would have no excuse if they did not vie in drollery with the light footed Dan Leno .

Babes in the Wood was a triumph : the theatre reported record attendance , and the run was extended until 27 April 1889 . Leno considerably reduced his music @-@ hall engagements as a consequence . Nevertheless , between April and October 1889 , Leno appeared simultaneously at the Empire Theatre and the Oxford Music Hall , performing his one @-@ man show . By this time , Leno was much in demand and had bookings for the next three years . On 9 May 1889 he starred for George P. Hawtrey in a matinee of Penelope , a musical version of a famous farce The Area Belle , to benefit the Holborn Lodge for Shop Girls . In this benefit , he played the role of Pitcher opposite the seasoned Gilbert and Sullivan performer Rutland Barrington . The Times considered that his performance treated the piece " too much in the manner of pantomime " . During Leno 's long association with the Drury Lane pantomimes , he appeared chiefly as the dame . After Harris died in 1896 , Arthur Collins became the manager of the theatre and oversaw ( and often helped to write ) the pantomimes .

In their pantomimes , the diminutive Leno and the massive Campbell were a visually comic duo . They would often deviate from the script , improvising freely . This was met with some scepticism by

producers , who feared that the scenes would not be funny to audiences and observed that , in any event , they were rarely at their best until a few nights after opening . George Bernard Shaw wrote of one appearance : " I hope I never again have to endure anything more dismally futile " , and the English essayist and caricaturist Max Beerbohm stated that " Leno does not do himself justice collaborating with the public " . He noted , however , that Leno " was exceptional in giving each of his dames a personality of her own , from extravagant queen to artless gossip " . In *Sleeping Beauty* , Leno and Campbell caused the audience to laugh even when they could not see them : they would arrive on stage in closed palanquins and exchange the lines , " Have you anything to do this afternoon , my dear ? " ? " No , I have nothing on " , before being carried off again . Leno and Campbell 's pantomimes from 1889 were *Jack and the Beanstalk* ( 1889 and 1899 ) , *Beauty and the Beast* ( 1890 and 1900 ) , *Humpty Dumpty* ( 1891 and 1903 ) , *Little Bo @-@ Peep* ( 1892 ) , *Robinson Crusoe* ( 1893 ) , *Dick Whittington and His Cat* ( 1894 ) , *Cinderella* ( 1895 ) , *Aladdin* ( 1896 ) , *Babes in the Wood* ( 1897 ) and *the Forty Thieves* ( 1898 ) .

Leno considered the dame roles in two of his last pantomimes , *Bluebeard* ( 1901 ) and *Mother Goose* ( 1902 ) , written by J. Hickory Wood , to be his favourites . He was paid £ 200 ( £ 19 @,@ 582 in 2016 adjusted for inflation ) for each of the pantomime seasons . Leno appeared at Drury Lane as Sister Anne in *Bluebeard* , a character described by Wood as " a sprightly , somewhat below middle aged person who was of a coming on disposition and who had not yet abandoned hope " The *Times* drama critic noted : " It is a quite peculiar and original Sister Anne , who dances breakdowns and sings strange ballads to a still stranger harp and plays ping @-@ pong with a frying @-@ pan and potatoes and burlesques Sherlock Holmes and wears the oddest of garments and dresses her hair like Miss Morleena Kenwigs , and speaks in a piping voice ? in short it is none other than Dan Leno whom we all know " . *Mother Goose* provided Leno with one of the most challenging roles of his career , in which he was required to portray the same woman in several different guises . Wood 's idea , that neither fortune nor beauty would bring happiness , was illustrated by a series of magical character transformations . The poor , unkempt and generally ugly *Mother Goose* eventually became a rich and beautiful but tasteless parvenu , searching for a suitor . The production was one of Drury Lane 's most successful pantomimes , running until 28 March 1903 .

= = = Later career = = =

In 1896 , the impresario Milton Bode approached Leno with a proposal for a farcical musical comedy vehicle devised for him called *Orlando Dando* , the *Volunteer* , by Basil Hood with music by Walter Slaughter . Leno 's agent declined the offer , as his client was solidly booked for two years . Bode offered Leno £ 625 ( £ 82 @,@ 880 in 2016 adjusted for inflation ) for a six @-@ week appearance in 1898 . Upon hearing this , the comedian overrode his agent and accepted the offer . Leno toured the provinces in the piece and was an immediate success . So popular was his performance that Bode re @-@ engaged him for a further two shows : the musical farce *In Gay Piccadilly !* ( 1899 ) , by George R. Sims , in which Leno 's uncle , Johnny Danvers appeared ( The *Era* said that Leno was " attracting huge houses " and called him " excruciatingly funny " ) ; and the musical comedy *Mr. Wix of Wickham* ( 1902 ) . Both toured after their original runs . In 1897 , Leno went to America and made his debut on 12 April of that year at Hammerstein 's *Olympia Music Hall* on Broadway , where he was billed as " The Funniest Man on Earth " . Reviews were mixed : one newspaper reported that the house roared its approval , while another complained that Leno 's English humour was out of date . His American engagement came to an end a month later , and Leno said that it was " the crown of my career " . Despite his jubilation , Leno was conscious of the few negative reviews he had received and rejected all later offers to tour the United States and Australia .

The same year , the comedian lent his name and writing talents to *Dan Leno 's Comic Journal* . The paper was primarily aimed at young adults and featured a mythologised version of Leno ? the first comic paper to take its name from , and base a central character on , a living person . Published by C. Arthur Pearson , Issue No. 1 appeared on 26 February 1898 , and the paper sold 350 @,@ 000 copies a year . Leno wrote most of the paper 's comic stories and jokes , and Tom Browne

contributed many of the illustrations . The comedian retained editorial control of the paper , deciding which items to omit . The Journal was known for its slogans , including " One Touch of Leno Makes the Whole World Grin " and " Won 't wash clothes but will mangle melancholy " . The cover always showed a caricature of Leno and his editorial staff at work and play . Inside , the features included " Daniel 's Diary " , " Moans from the Martyr " , two yarns , a couple of dozen cartoons and " Leno 's Latest ? Fresh Jokes and Wheezes Made on the Premises " . After a run of nearly two years the novelty wore off , and Leno lost interest . The paper shut down on 2 December 1899 .

A journalist wrote , in the late 1890s , that Leno was " probably the highest paid funny man in the world " . In 1898 , Leno , Herbert Campbell and Johnny Danvers formed a consortium to build the Granville Theatre in Fulham , which was demolished in 1971 . Leno published an autobiography , *Dan Leno : Hys Booke* , in 1899 , ghostwritten by T. C. Elder . Leno 's biographer J. Hickory Wood commented : " I can honestly say that I never saw him absolutely at rest . He was always doing something , and had something else to do afterwards ; or he had just been somewhere , was going somewhere else , and had several other appointments to follow . " That year , Leno performed the role of " waxi omo " ( a slang expression for a black @-@ face performer ) in the *Doo @-@ da @-@ Day Minstrels* , an act that included Danvers , Campbell , Bransby Williams , Joe Elvin and Eugene Stratton . The troupe 's only performance was at the London Pavilion on 29 May 1899 as part of a benefit . Leno 's song " The Funny Little Nigger " greatly amused the audience . His biographer Barry Anthony considered the performance to be " more or less , the last gasp of black @-@ face minstrelsy in Britain " .

Between 1901 and 1903 , Leno recorded more than twenty @-@ five songs and monologues on the Gramophone and Typewriter Company label . He also made 14 short films towards the end of his life , in which he portrayed a bumbling buffoon who struggles to carry out everyday tasks , such as riding a bicycle or opening a bottle of champagne . On 26 November 1901 , Leno , along with Seymour Hicks and his wife , the actress Ellaline Terriss , was invited to Sandringham House to take part in a Royal Command Performance to entertain King Edward VII , Queen Alexandra , their son George and his wife , Mary , the Prince and Princess of Wales . Leno performed a thirty @-@ five @-@ minute solo act that included two of his best @-@ known songs : " How to Buy a House " and " The Huntsman " . After the performance , Leno reported , " The King , the Queen and the Prince of Wales all very kindly shook hands with me and told me how much they had enjoyed it . The Princess of Wales was just going to shake hands with me , when she looked at my face , and couldn 't do it for some time , because she laughed so much . I wasn 't intending to look funny ? I was really trying to look dignified and courtly ; but I suppose I couldn 't help myself . " As a memento , the king presented Leno with a jewel @-@ encrusted royal tie pin , and thereafter , Leno became known as " the King 's Jester " . Leno was the first music hall performer to give a Royal Command Performance during the king 's reign .

= = Personal life = =

In 1883 , Leno met Sarah Lydia Reynolds ( 1866 ? 1942 ) , a young dancer and comedy singer from Birmingham , while both were appearing at King Ohmy 's Circus of Varieties , Rochdale . The daughter of a stage carpenter , Lydia , as she was known professionally , was already an accomplished actress as a teenager : of her performance in *Sinbad the Sailor* in 1881 , one critic wrote that she " played Zorlida very well for a young artiste . She is well known at this theatre and with proper training will prove a very clever actress . " She and Leno married in 1884 in a discreet ceremony at St. George 's Church , in Hulme , Manchester , soon after the birth of their first daughter , Georgina . A second child died in infancy , and John was born in 1888 . Their three youngest children ? Ernest ( b . 1889 ) , Sidney ( b . 1891 ) and May ( b . 1896 ) ? all followed their father onto the stage . Sidney later performed as Dan Leno , Jr . After Leno 's mother and stepfather retired from performing , Leno supported them financially until their deaths .

Leno owned 2 acres ( 0 @. @ 81 ha ) of land at the back of his house in Clapham Park , and was self @-@ sufficient , producing cabbages , potatoes , poultry , butter and eggs . He would also send these as gifts to friends and family at Christmas . In 1898 , Leno and his family moved to 56

Akerman Road , Lambeth , where they lived for several years . A blue plaque was erected there in 1962 by the London County Council .

= = = Charity and fundraising = = =

The Terriers Association was established in 1890 to help retired artists in need of financial help . Leno was an active fundraiser in this and in the Music Hall Benevolent Fund , of which he became President . He was an early member of the entertainment charity Grand Order of Water Rats , which helps performers who are in financial need , and served as its leader , the King Rat , in 1891 , 1892 and 1897 . Near the end of his life , Leno co @-@ founded The Music Hall Artistes Railway Association , which entered a partnership with the Water Rats to form music hall 's first trade union . Some of Leno 's charity was discreet and unpublicised .

In the late 1890s , Leno formed a cricket team called the " Dainties " , for which he recruited many of the day 's leading comedians and music hall stars . They played for charity against a variety of amateur teams willing to put up with their comedic mayhem , such as London 's Metropolitan Police Force ; Leno 's and his teammates ' tomfoolery on the green amused the large crowds that they drew . From 1898 to 1903 , the Dainties continued to play matches across London . Two films of action from the matches were produced in 1900 for audiences of the new medium of cinema . In September 1901 , at a major charity match , the press noted the carnival atmosphere . The comedians wore silly costumes ? Leno was dressed as an undertaker and later as a schoolgirl riding a camel . Bands played , and clowns circulated through the crowd . The rival team of professional Surrey cricketers were persuaded to wear tall hats during the match . 18 @,@ 000 spectators attended , contributing funds for music hall and cricketers ' charities , among others .

= = = Decline and mental breakdown = = =

Leno began to drink heavily after performances , and , by 1901 , like his father and stepfather before him , he had become an alcoholic . He gradually declined physically and mentally and displayed frequent bouts of erratic behaviour that began to affect his work . By 1902 , Leno 's angry and violent behaviour directed at fellow cast members , friends and family had become frequent . Once composed , he would become remorseful and apologetic . His erratic behaviour was often a result of his diminishing ability to remember his lines and inaudibility in performance . Leno also suffered increasing deafness , which eventually caused problems on and off stage . In 1901 , during a production of Bluebeard , Leno missed his verbal cue and , as a result , was left stuck up a tower for more than twenty minutes . At the end of the run of Mother Goose in 1903 , producer Arthur Collins gave a tribute to Leno and presented him , on behalf of the Drury Lane Theatre 's management , with an expensive silver dinner service . Leno rose to his feet and said : " Governor , it 's a magnificent present ! I congratulate you and you deserve it ! "

Frustrated at not being accepted as a serious actor , Leno became obsessed with the idea of playing Richard III and other great Shakespearean roles , inundating the actor ? manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree with his proposals . After his final run of Mother Goose at the Drury Lane Theatre in early 1903 , Leno 's delusions overwhelmed him . On the closing evening , and again soon afterwards , he travelled to the home of Constance Collier , who was Beerbohm Tree 's leading lady at His Majesty 's Theatre , and also followed her to rehearsal there . He attempted to persuade her to act alongside him in a Shakespearean season that Leno was willing to fund . On the second visit to her home , Leno brought Collier a jewellery box holding a diamond @-@ encrusted plaque . Recognising that Leno was having a mental breakdown , she sadly and gently refused his offer , and Leno left distraught .

Two days later , he was admitted into an asylum for the insane . Leno spent several months in Camberwell House Asylum , London , under the care of Dr. Savage , who treated Leno with " peace and quiet and a little water colouring " . On his second day , Leno told a nurse that the clock was wrong . When she stated that it was right , Leno remarked , " Well if it 's right , then what 's it doing here ? " Leno made several attempts to leave the asylum , twice being successful . He was found

each time and promptly returned .

= = = Last year and death = = =

Upon Leno 's release from the institution in October 1903 , the press offered much welcoming commentary and speculated as to whether he would appear that year in the Drury Lane pantomime , scheduled to be Humpty Dumpty . Concerned that Leno might suffer a relapse , Arthur Collins employed Marie Lloyd to take his place . By the time of rehearsals , however , Leno persuaded Collins that he was well enough to take part , and the cast was reshuffled to accommodate him . Leno appeared with success . Upon hearing his signature song , the audience reportedly gave him a standing ovation that lasted five minutes . He received a telegram from the King congratulating him on his performance . Leno 's stage partner Herbert Campbell died in July 1904 , shortly after the pantomime , following an accident at the age of fifty @-@ seven . The death affected Leno deeply , and he went into a decline . At that time , he was appearing at the London Pavilion , but the show had to be cancelled owing to his inability to remember his lines . So harsh were the critics that Leno wrote a statement , published in The Era , to defend the show 's originality . On 20 October 1904 , Leno gave his last performance in the show . Afterwards , he stopped at the Belgrave Hospital for Children in Kennington to leave a donation of £ 625 ( £ 60 @,@ 527 in 2016 adjusted for inflation ) .

Leno died at his home in London on 31 October 1904 , aged 43 , and was buried at Lambeth Cemetery , Tooting . The cause of death is not known . His death and funeral were national news . The Daily Telegraph wrote in its obituary : " There was only one Dan . His methods were inimitable ; his face was indeed his fortune ... Who has seen him in any of his disguises and has failed to laugh ? " Max Beerbohm later said of Leno 's death : " So little and frail a lantern could not long harbour so big a flame " . His memorial is maintained by the Grand Order of Water Rats , which commissioned the restoration of his grave in 2004 .