

The Mighty McGurk

US : 1946 : dir. John Waters : M-G-M : 85 min
 prod: Nat Perrin : scr: William H Lipman, Grant Garrett & Harry Clork : dir.ph.:
[Dean Stockwell](#)
 Wallace Beery; Dorothy Patrick; Edward Arnold; Aline MacMahon; Cameron Mitchell;
 Aubrey Mather; Morris Ankrum; Clinton Sundberg

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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"Wallace Beery and the boy star of 'THE GREEN YEARS' in a heart-stirring entertainment". Plus a puppy!
 Source: indeterminate website

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"Formula Beery vehicle with the star a punchy prizefighter and Stockwell as the adorable boy he adopts. ***1/2** "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review – identical to above

Halliwel's Film Guide review:

"In the Bowery in the 1890s, a bragging ex-fighter takes in a small boy. Sentimental melodrama which unspools like a joint remake of **"THE CHAMP"** and **"THE BOWERY"**. Scr: William H Lipman, Grant Garrett & Harry Clork "



Official cuteness warning: some scenes may prove hazardous to your stomach

Source: Those Endearing Young Charms

Film Review 1947-48 review:

“Re-make of **"THE CHAMP"**, with Wallace Beery again cast as the ex-boxer with a taste for boasting and the liquor; and the little lad he suddenly finds has crept into his heart.”

Movies on TV (1987) review:

“Contrived and confused drama about an ex-fighter who befriends an orphan boy.
**”

The M-G-M Story still caption:

“Dean Stockwell plus pup too much competition? Wallace Beery dozes off in **"THE MIGHTY MCGURK"**. William Lipman, Grant Garrett and Harry Clark wrote a compendium of several old Beery movies (particularly **"THE CHAMP"**) for this one, set in the Bowery, 1900. Edward Arnold, Aline MacMahon, Cameron Mitchell, Dorothy Patrick, Aubrey Mather, Morris Ankrum and Clinton Sundberg took direction from John Waters; writer Nat Perrin turned producer for the occasion.”

Those Endearing Young Charms note:

“In this later takeoff on **"THE CHAMP"**, Dean stars as an English lad who becomes the ward of a washed-up ex-champion fighter, again played by Wallace Beery. The plot is laid in the Bowery during the 1890s.”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]



If Stockwell were a boy today, somebody would dub him a "cherub with attitude". Those pouting lips and smouldering eyes gave notice he was a wilful child, but too wildly good looking to be anything but a hero in gestation.

*Source:
Star Oasis website*



Above: In all their films together, Jackie Cooper never actually got to **sleep** with Beery, but perhaps street arabs and cabin boys were made of sterner stuff in his day. Beery's persona was not quite suited to a prizefighter. He was more a "hey rube!" kind of circus huckster than a hammerhead, too wily to get seven bells knocked out of him for a living.

Source: The M-G-M Story

Right: Stockwell's not to blame for such emetic studio publicity shots. If he has ever published an autobiography I'm unaware of it, but it would be a hoot to hear his first-hand recollections of films like this. Do it, Dean!

Source: indeterminate



No further information currently available. Surely more a case of a washed-up ex-Hollywood star attempting to retrieve his former lustre by pairing off with yet another of the rising new child stars. M.G.M signed Stockwell up in 1945, and his small role as the sailor-worshipping kid brother in "**ANCHORS AWEIGH**" was an immediate hit. Beery's career was already in terminal decline, and this was an altogether obvious reprise of his successes with Jackie Cooper. Cooper and Beery, neither very accomplished actors, did seem a credible pair, whereas Stockwell (11) was the child of a different generation, his hero worship more plausibly directed at Errol Flynn (in "**KIM**") or Richard Widmark ("**DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS**"). Beery had indeed done a retread of "**THE CHAMP**" already, with Mickey Rooney in "**STABLEMATES**" (38). So often cast in these big-buddy/little-buddy movies, he was never wholly convincing as the bluff roustabout with a soft heart for youngsters, as a closer look at "**TREASURE ISLAND**" (34) will reveal. For good measure, in 1952 M.G.M tried yet another remake of "**THE CHAMP**" in the shape of "**THE CLOWN**", where Red Skelton plays a washed-up comedian, and Tim Considine the son whose belief in him is unshakable.

See subject index under **DOGS, ORPHANS / ADOPTION** and **MARTIAL ARTS / BOXING**.



Wilful boys must be **spanked** – that's the rule. The curious thing about Stockwell's early film career is how often he evaded the hot seat. He was begging for some vigorous handiwork in "**KIM**", in "**THE HAPPY YEARS**", in "**CATTLE DRIVE**" and several other titles, but he always escaped somehow. I suspect after this experience he had a "no spankings" clause written into his contract. (It all gets a bit much after take fifteen...) Source: The Movie and TV Spanking Page website