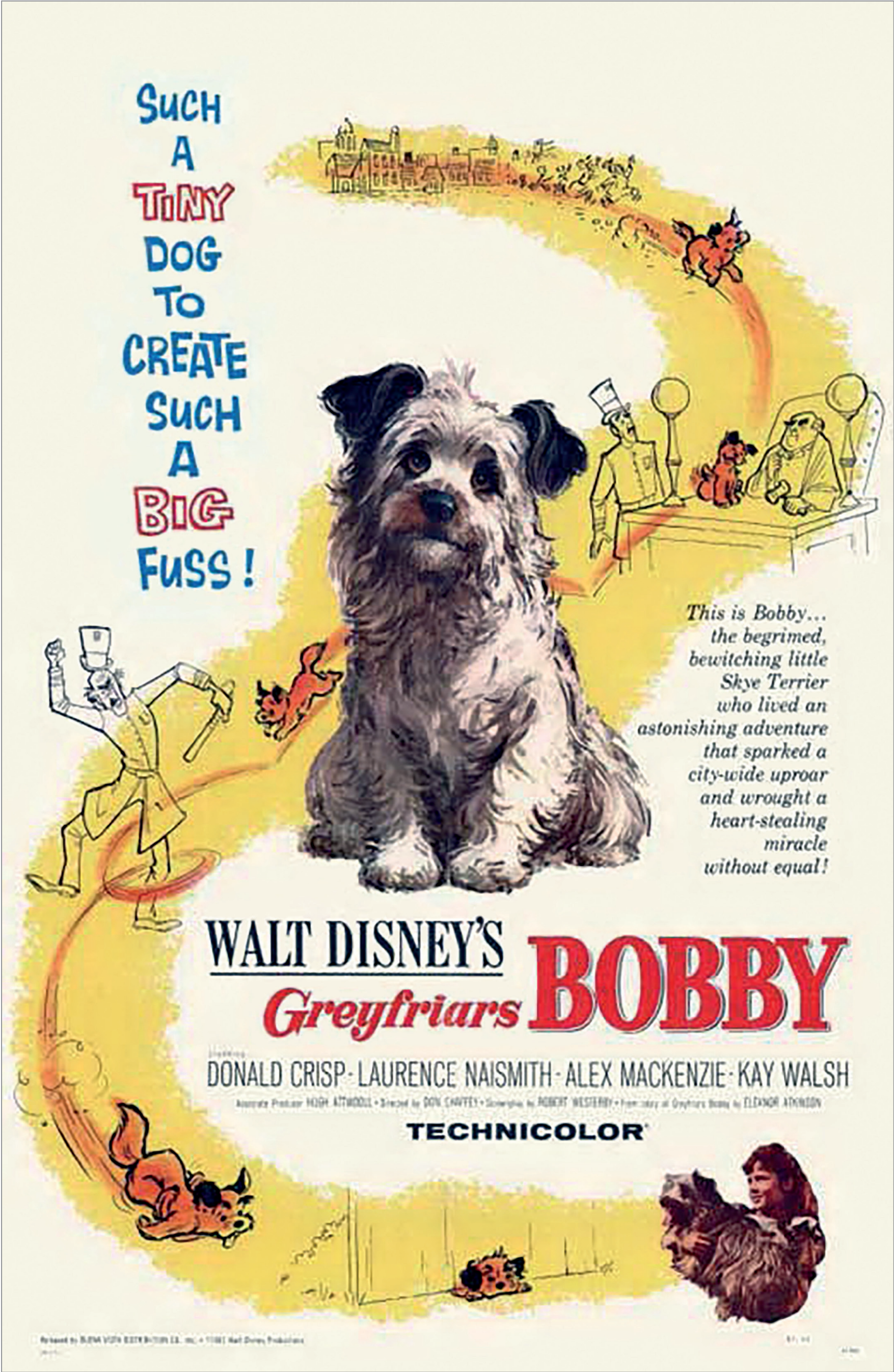
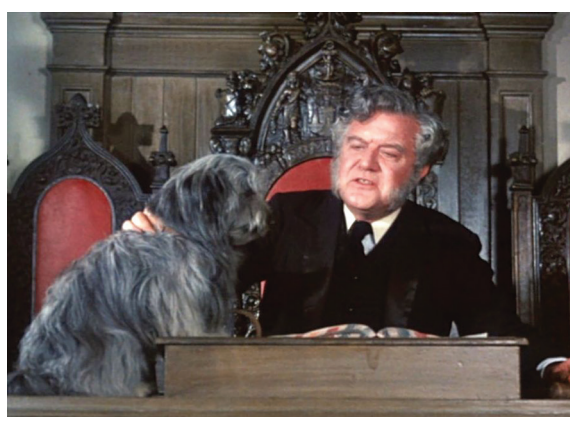




Disney



Stills from Disney's 1961 film Greyfriars Bobby.

THE STORY OF THE 'NEW' BOBBY



Bobby (formerly Tam) putting his paw mark on the film contract with Walt Disney in 1960.



The farmhouse scenes were filmed at West Hopes Farm near Gifford in East Lothian.



Bobby was joint Best Man at Willie Merrilees' wedding in 1968.

FINDING A FILM STAR

In April 1960, Walt Disney visited Edinburgh to scout locations and carry out research for his planned Greyfriars Bobby film.

At the same time, an advertisement was placed in national newspapers inviting owners of Skye Terriers to put their dogs forward to audition for the part of Bobby.

In the north of Scotland, a local police sergeant noticed the advertisement, which was illustrated with a photograph of the Greyfriars Bobby statue. His daughter had recently acquired a terrier called Tam from an animal rescue centre, and he was so struck by Tam's resemblance to the statue that he wrote to Disney offering Tam's services. He received a prompt reply and took him to Shepperton Studios in London. There Walt Disney decided he was perfect for the role.

The film was made successfully, with sets of Greyfriars Kirkyard and other locations being created at Shepperton Studios. The farmhouse scenes were filmed at West Hopes Farm near Gifford in East Lothian.

LIFE AFTER THE FILM

After the film was released, Walt Disney gifted Tam - now Bobby - to his friend, Chief Constable William Merrilees, as a thanks for his assistance in the film's production. Merrilees, however, decided it would be better if Bobby lived with a family, so he relinquished him to one of his officers, Chief Inspector John Turner, and Bobby lived with the Turner family in Morningside, Edinburgh for the rest of his life.

During the 1960s and early 70s, Bobby made regular appearances, helping to raise money for good causes. He made his final public appearance at Greyfriars Kirk in 1972.

BOBBY'S PASSING – LOST AND FOUND AGAIN

Bobby died in 1974 and a funeral was held for him at the holiday home of the Merrilees family at Dolphinton in the Scottish Borders. His grave was marked by a headstone and a replica of the Greyfriars Bobby statue.

By 2008, the site of the grave was lost. In 2020, the new landowner, John Wilson, was granted permission to build houses on the site. When it was brought to his attention that Bobby was still buried there somewhere, he put his development on hold to allow a search for the lost grave.

On 7 January 2023, after 18 months of searching, Bobby's remains were finally found.

THE CASKET AND ASHES

A new casket was commissioned to contain Bobby's ashes. Made from a cherry tree that once stood in our kirkyard, it was designed and carved by craftsmen from The Grassmarket Project.

The casket and ashes were donated to The City of Edinburgh Council in 2023 and now form part of its archaeology collections. They have been loaned to Greyfriars Kirk for this display.