



Dennis with other Beano characters

*I still have a few old copies of both comics and their 60th year edition issues. Ed.*

## The menace called Dennis

*I came upon this story when it came in with my 'merchant navy' Google alerts and I must say it brought back childhood memories of both the BEANO and the DANDY comics. I was an avid reader of all the comics I could lay my hands on but the Beano & Dandy were special as they were delivered by the paperboy early on a Tuesday & Thursday morning, the only days I ever got out of bed in time for school! I used to crouch behind the front door waiting for the comic to drop through the slot, but unfortunately so did my sister and we would fight like cat and dog over the comic often tearing it the process. Our mother of course used to wade in with mighty clouts and when that didn't work she stopped buying them.*

Dennis the Menace 'was inspired by New Zealand mechanic'

The real-life inspiration for Dennis the Menace, the mischievous star of The Beano comic, has been revealed as a mechanic from New Zealand.

*Published: 04 Oct 2009daily telegraph uk*

Robert Fair, who is now 62, was a childhood friend of the daughter of the character's creator David Law, and a frequent visitor to their family home.

Fair emigrated nearly 40 years ago after joining the merchant navy, and has only just found out that his juvenile pranks formed the basis of one of the most popular strips in comic book history. The secret has been revealed by Law's daughter Rosemary Moffat, who was herself the inspiration for Beryl the Peril.

"Robert was a little brat when he was a boy and my father based Dennis's energy, movement and sense of mischief on him when he was doing his drawings," she told the Sunday Times.

"He used to come to visit us and I used to hate it as he was always so wild.

"Every time he left the house my father used to start laughing and say, 'What a menace he is'." Law, who died in 1971, never told Fair that he was the model for Dennis the Menace because he feared upsetting his family. But the grandfather-of-six said that it was a "great honour" to discover the news. "I remember reading Dennis the Menace as a boy and all these years I have never known that was me, that was my character. I think it's fantastic," he told the newspaper.

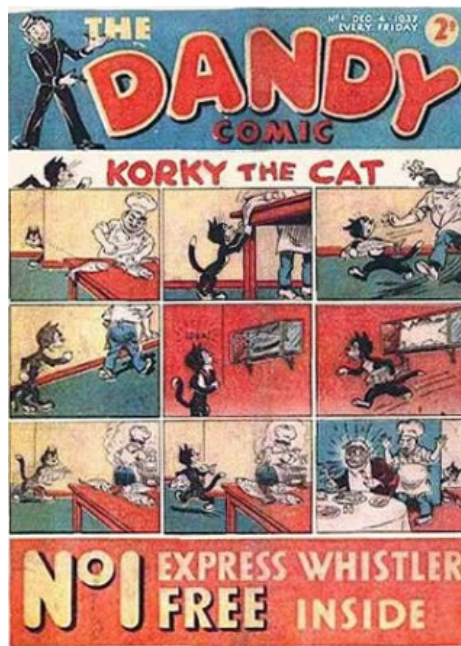
Law worked for DC Thomson, the Dundee-based publisher of The Beano, for more than 30 years.



He created Dennis in 1951. Left the first Beano July 30 1938 Right-the first Dandy Dec 4 1937

**Wikipedia –on Beano;**

The Beano comic is a British children's comic, published by D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd and is possibly their most successful. The comic first appeared on 26 July 1938 and was published weekly. During the Second World War, The Beano and The Dandy were published on alternating weeks due to paper and ink rationing. D.C. Thomson's other publications also suffered with the Oor Wullie and The Broons annuals falling victim to paper and ink shortages. Paper and ink supplies were fully restored shortly after the end of hostilities and weekly publication of The Beano and The Dandy soon followed.



In September 2009, the Beano's

3500th issue was published. The Beano is currently edited by Alan Digby, who replaced Euan Kerr in summer 2006. Its iconic characters such as Dennis the Menace, Minnie the Minx, and The Bash Street Kids have become known to generations of British children. Earlier generations will remember other notable characters which have been phased out, such as Biffo the Bear and Big Eggo. Some old characters have made a return like Lord Snooty. The comics were distributed in some of the British colonies or former colonies as well. Because they were sent by sea mail, they would go on sale some weeks after the date shown on the cover. The comic holds the record for being the world's longest running weekly comic.

**From a Website the forbidden planet is this article about of the 70th anniversary celebrations for the Beano & Dandy at the Cartoon Museum in London in 2006**



A Beano & Dandy jigsaw box cover

As part of our ongoing celebration of British Comics Month today we turn our attention to a publisher who prints not one but the two oldest continuing comics in these islands and two of the most popular; they are, of course, the Beano and the Dandy. Forget the great publishing houses of London, Paris and New York for a moment; in the Scottish city of Dundee is found the home of D.C.

Thomson, publisher of comics, journals, newspapers and more.

From Dundee a river of incredibly popular and long-lived comics characters have poured across the decades, from Minnie the Minx to Korky the Kat, Desperate Dan to Dennis the Menace, the

immortal school pupils The Bash Street Kids and of special note for the publisher's legions of Scottish readers, Oor Wullie and the Broons, who still appear every week in the Sunday Post and sell so many copies of their annuals each Christmas they go into the bestsellers charts north of the border.

More than a few famous comics names learned their craft while at D.C. Thomson's printing presses, not least the great John Wagner.

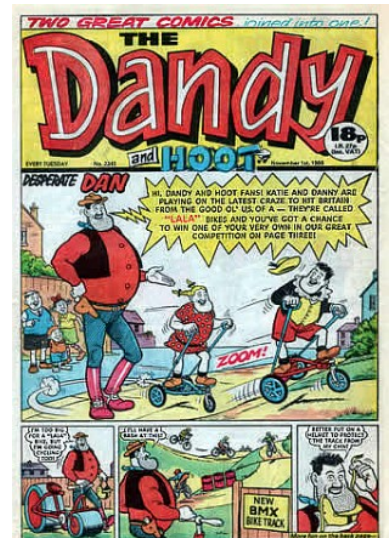
Imagine yourself back to the winter of 1937; as Chamberlain and the appeasers try to quieten the growing demands of Adolf Hitler, Britain settles into her customary long, dark winter. But on December the 4th, 1937 four-colour images would appear to brighten both the winter and gathering war-fearing gloom for British kids: the Dandy had arrived, sporting a mix of prose tales, jokes and cartoon stories in a fresh tabloid-style format instead of the more common, black and white broadsheet. Kids loved it right away. Six months later it would be joined by the Beano, launched on July the 30th, 1938. The comics strip humour was perhaps a little simpler than modern readers expect, but in the wringing of humour from the ridiculous situations these odd characters got themselves into it is possible to see the writers being partly influenced by the silent film comedies many of them would have grown up with and it would have been a style familiar to the eager new readers.

During the grim war years shortages meant the Beano and Dandy could only appear on alternate weeks, but they still not only kept a smile on British kids enduring evacuation, rationing and bombings but even launched themselves into 'doing their bit' by happily lampooning the Nazi leadership, a move which brought smiles to many faces in a dark time (as dear old Spike Milligan put it in one of his war memoirs, the British humour was one of the keys to victory). Considering the consequences for the publishers had the Nazis successfully invaded it was also quite a brave move, but perhaps one in keeping with the style of many of the text stories then common in the comics, where the good guys would always win in the end and the bad would always get their comeuppance.

Over the years writers and artists have created some incredibly popular characters – then editor Albert Barnes came up with Korky the Kat (illustrated by Charlie Grigg) and Desperate Dan among others for instance. Some would run for years, rising and falling in popularity (Korky eventually was usurped by Desperate Dan in 1984 when the cow-pie scoffing cowboy claimed the front page strip – not bad for a character who started as a small, half-page strip). Famously the noted comics artist Dudley Dexter

Watkins who drew Dan modelled his huge chin (which puts even Judge Dredd's to shame) on Albert himself. Dudley D as he was known would also draw Lord Snooty and Biffo the Bear until he passed away in the late 60s, along with a slew of adventure yarns (which no longer feature in the comics). Allan Morley's Keyhole Kate and Hungry Horace had their time and then slipped away into comic book nostalgia, but such is the lasting power of comics read by generations of young Britons their names are still used in our common parlance to this day, years after their last appearance

Early Beano character Big Eggo (illustrated by Erg Carter) was the first Beano cover strip (famously tussling with Hitler during the war, decades before Johnny Alpha would travel through time for Adolf) but again has largely slipped from public consciousness. A character I remember warmly from my own childhood, Biffo the Bear, took over the coveted front page in 1947 until the seemingly unstoppable Dennis the Menace took the front page, drawn by David Law (who would draw Dennis and also Beryl the Peril in the Beezer until his death in 1971).



## Alive & Kicking

The two icons of comic hood are still thriving and being re-born and multiplying rapidly. If albeit somewhat modified by the Political Correctness Police of today as this article reports.

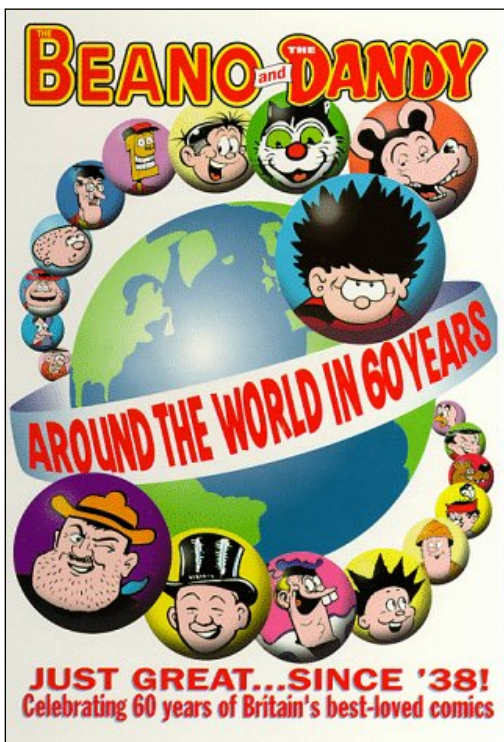
BBC London, Aug 12 (ANI): Comic book character Dennis the Menace has had his trusty catapult, water pistol, and peashooter confiscated by BBC bosses in their new cartoon series. Dennis is also no longer allowed to pick on geeky Walter, and is not slippered by his dad as a punishment.

Even his dog Gnasher has been targeted. He will no longer sink his teeth in people or engage in his trademark wanton destruction.

And he will look less menacing, with his scowl replaced by a charming boyish grin. In the new series, which launches next month on CBBC, Dennis has been “re-imagined” to look less aggressive.

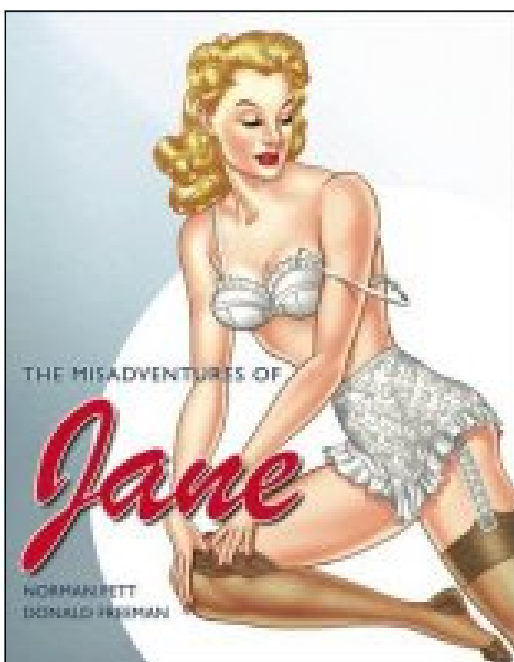
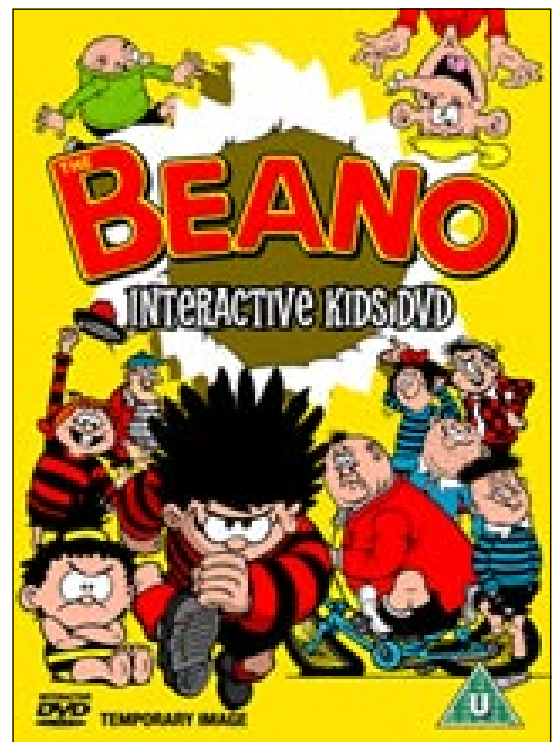
He now gets in scrapes by dreaming up contraptions that end up causing mayhem. In one episode he turns Gnasher into a cleaning device to tidy up after he cooks, but the house ends up covered in filth.

“Dennis can’t be seen to use weapons and giving other kids grief in a BBC cartoon. The BBC doesn’t want to be accused of encouraging children to be violent,” the Sun quoted an insider as saying.



*Left— a book on the history of the two comics and their characters. On sale at Amazon.com*

*Right  
An interactive DVD “get your favourite characters doing what you want them to!”*



*Of course as I grew older my tastes did vary somewhat and ‘Janes Misadventures’ was a sneaky read at the Newsagents.*

*Comics haven’t changed one whit since those days when it comes to portraying women, watching the grandkids playing computer ‘war’ games, the men are always almost smothered in armour that protects them from everything from giant spider bites to atomic radiation and a Thermo Nuclear device exploding in their back pocket! But the poor women have to manage dressed in the skimpiest of outfits that only cover about 10% of their bodily surface area.*

*And yet they manage to be as powerful and tough as all the male heroes and do it all very prettily!*