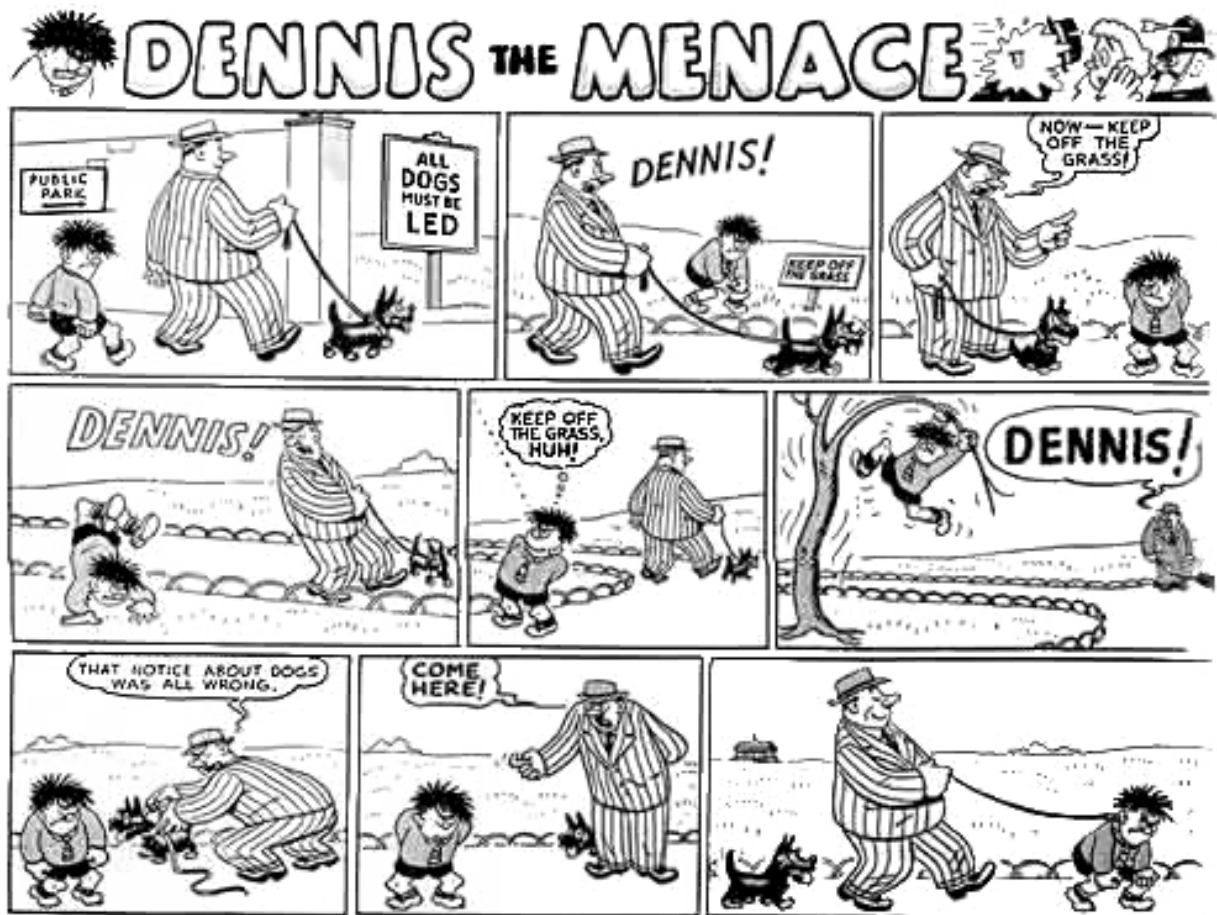


THE STORY OF DENNIS

Designed by	Davy Law
First appearance	in the Beano, March 17 1951
Gets his red stripes	in 1953, when he's upgraded to a two-colour page.
Gnasher arrives	1968
Promoted to cover	in 1974



As you can see in this first ever Dennis the Menace story (above), Dennis started out looking short and squat, and Law's artwork was tidy. Gradually the style loosened up, and over the rest of the decade the characters became gradually taller.

When Law died in 1970, Dennis was taken over by Bash Street artist Dave Sutherland. Four years later, a renewed, improved Dennis finally took over the cover, where he has stayed ever since.

In 1968, Dennis was joined by his faithful dog, Gnasher. Their first meeting (issue 1363, 31st August) is shown to the right. As you can see, Gnasher has also changed a bit over the years, being fairly terrifying at first; by the early seventies he had become the cuddly figure we know today.



In 1974, Dennis was promoted to the front cover, taking over from Biffo the Bear (see right). He's stayed there ever since.

For most of his career, Dennis had operated on his own, but in 1975 that all changed. Dennis introduced us to two of his pals: the mop-topped Curly (who had been his friend back in the early days), and Pie-Face (guess his favourite food!). The threesome became known as The Menaces, and each week pitted themselves against their rivals The Softies - Walter and his two new friends Algernon "Spotty" Perkins and Bertie Blenkinsop. This set-up continued into the eighties.

The 1980s



As the eighties progressed, Sutherland's Dennis began to take on a life of his own. He became taller and stockier, his nose more bulbous and his chin ever broader. As the nineties dawned, Dennis was looking like a thuggish teenager, some way from the cheeky, if surly, youth Law had created and nurtured.

In 1993, editor Euan Kerr asked for a redesign, in preparation for the Dennis animated cartoon. Sutherland gave Dennis a much younger, cuter appearance.

At the same time, Dennis's Dad swapped his striped suit for a more laid-back pullover, and his Mum had her

hair done, started wearing leggings, and seemed to lose about ten years as a result. Dennis's traditionally flat world also began to become more three-dimensional.

Immediately following the 60th anniversary issue of the Beano (right) in 1998, and after 27 years drawing the character, Sutherland went into semi-retirement. David Parkins took over. One of his first developments was the creation of a little sister for Dennis, Bea.

The scripts also became a little less clichéd (less of the 'Ha ha! Look Gnasher! Chortle!') and Dennis gained a sister, Bea.



Dennis's appeal

When Dennis first appeared there were concerns about his behaviour influencing children to be naughty. He is always playing practical jokes, and his victims are represented either as authoritarian adults or goody-two-shoes, snooty children.

Although the basic structure of his strip has changed very little, the content of his stories moves with the times, and Dennis has always incorporated popular fads and contemporary characters and issues. In one recent story, he played football with Brooklyn Beckham!

There is now a great deal of Dennis the Menace merchandise available to extend the audience's involvement with the character. You can download Dennis screensavers, sleep in Dennis pyjamas beneath a Dennis duvet, play Dennis video games at your Menace-themed birthday party, before settling down to a Dennis DVD.

Strange but true

On the *same day* that *our* Dennis first appeared in the Beano, Hank Ketcham introduced this little guy in an American newspaper comic strip for the first time, complete with naughty habits and a stripy jumper. His name? **Dennis the Menace**.

