

Desperate Dan



Statue of Desperate Dan in Dundee

Desperate Dan is a Wild West character in the British comic *The Dandy*. He first appeared in the comic in its first issue, dated 4 December 1937. He is apparently the world's strongest man, able to lift a cow with one hand. Even his beard is so tough he has to shave with a blowtorch.

A statue of him (and his dog Dawg) can be found in his "birthplace", Dundee, Scotland.

Desperate Dan's favourite food was cow pie - a type of enormous meat pie with the horns sticking out, although the term "cow pie" in the American West actually refers to the product of the rear end of the cow, often inconveniently left behind on the trail. Dan ate cow pies until 2005 when they had their last appearance in the Dandy Annual 2005. It was thought at the time that because of mad cow disease and the increase in vegetarianism that the cow pie had become an anachronism but this argument has been questioned

Initially Dan was a desperado on the wrong side of the law, hence the name *Desperate* Dan. Later on, however, he switched sides and became a friendlier character, helping the underdog. The first member of his family to appear in the strip was Aunt Aggie (issue 107, dated 16 December 1939) followed by his nephew, Danny (issue 304, dated 27 October 1945) and niece, Katey in 1957.

The most famous storyline occurred in 1997, when Dan struck oil and became a millionaire. A few issues later, to the shock of his fellow-residents of Cactusville, he left *The Dandy*, running off with the Spice Girls. After a few weeks of trying to find characters to replace him, *The Dandy* had no choice but to close down. The following week, however, in the special 60th birthday edition (2924, dated 6 December 1997) Dan heard of the news and returned to the comic.