

Hero worship

As Spider-Man fever snares the UK in its web, Buzz! takes a look at the original cartoon superhero and chats to his creator, Stan Lee.

One of this summer's big action blockbusters – the record-breaking new Spider-Man movie – arrives in the UK on June 14, but like most superheroes, the crime-fighting webmaster began life as a humble comic-strip character.

Spider-Man creator Stan Lee grew up during an exciting era when the superheroes of today, such as Superman and Batman, were in their comic book prime. Unlike other superheroes, Stan Lee was keen for his creation to live in the real world as it produced more believable and engaging stories.

"I lived in New York and Marvel Comics was also in New York, so it was easy for me to write the stories if I set them in New York too," Stan explains. "Spider-Man had a real address, he lived in Forrest Hills – and there is a Forrest Hills. He didn't live in Smallville or Gotham City."

Stan had already made his name creating the Fantastic Four, and was eager to continue with his comic book inventions. "After I finished the Fantastic Four, I wanted to create a story with just one hero and I thought, what super-power can I give him?" he recalls. "As you can imagine, the super-power is the key to the whole thing." But what attributes would Stan select to make his new hero a superhero?

"I thought to myself, we already have somebody who is very strong, we have characters that can fly, what can I do?" Stan explains. "I saw a fly crawling up the wall and thought: 'Wouldn't it be cool to have somebody who can crawl up a wall?'... except I probably didn't say: 'Wouldn't it be cool' – because that was so many years ago. I said: 'Wouldn't it be groovy!'"