

## J. C. BANCKS

One of Australia's most significant caricaturists, who worked for numerous journals and magazines, including the *Bulletin* and *Green Room*, J. C. Bancks is best remembered for creating the classic Australian comic character Ginger Meggs. In the 1930s he also provided material for a number of musical revues, in addition to writing the libretto for the romantic musical comedy *Blue Mountains Melody* (1934).



*Green Room* Aug. (1920), 17.

Born in the inner Sydney suburb of Enmore in 10 May 1889, James Charles Bancks went on to establish himself as one of Australia's most significant caricaturists. After leaving school he worked as an office boy, a clerk and lift-driver. Hoping to break out of the drudgery of such labours he taught himself to draw, and began his career as a cartoonist in 1911 when *Comic Australia* published some of his work. In 1914, he became a full-time illustrator for the *Bulletin* and later worked for a variety of publications throughout his long career, including *Green Room*, *The Bulletin*, *Sunday Sun*, *Sunday Telegraph*, and *Sun News Pictorial*. It was in 1922, however, that he created *Us Fellers*, the comic strip series for which he is most associated. Featuring the classic Australian comic character Ginger Meggs, the series continued for the next thirty years or more, even found an audience in England by the late 1930s.

In 1934, Bancks and Australian composer Charles Zwar collaborated to create *Blue Mountains Melody*, a romantic musical comedy produced by J. C. Williamson's Ltd in Sydney (6 weeks) and Melbourne (7 weeks). Bancks was assisted in writing the dialogue by his then wife Jessie, daughter of E. J. Tait and a well-known stage and dress designer in her own right. That same year, Bancks also provided sketches for the Young Australian League Company's *Round the World Revue*. Original music was scored by Jack O'Hagan and the show was directed and produced by Ernest C. Rolls. This production, which starred a young Billy Kerr, was said to recall the best days of the Pollard Lilliputian Company. In February 1935, following seasons in Sydney (Dec. 1934) and Melbourne (Jan. 1935), the company left Australia for an overseas tour, beginning in South Africa.



Source: National Library of Australia.

Bancks died suddenly coronary vascular disease at his home in Potts Point, Sydney, on 1 July 1952.

### FURTHER REFERENCE

- Andrews, B. G. "[Bancks, James Charles \(Jim\)](#)." ABD: Vol. 7 (1979), 163-64.  
"[Bancks, J. C.](#)." *AustLit* (2008).  
"[Human Touch of Jim Bancks, The](#)." MA: 5 July (1952), 7.



*Mail* (Adelaide): 5 July (1952), 7.



"The first Ginger Meggs drawing... Ginger, who is bowling, has changed his appearance but he has grown no older."

*Mail (Adelaide): 5 July (1952), 7.*

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