

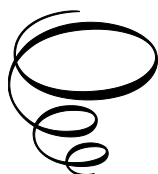
The Life and
Times of Cartoonist
Ron Vivian

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By

Philip A. Norrie

**Cambridge
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This book is dedicated to the late Ron Vivian
(my father-in-law, whom I never met, unfortunately);
arguably Australia's most diverse cartoonist
his devoted wife Valmai and to his daughters -
his eldest child, my lovely wife, Belinda Jill
and the youngest Virginia Kaye.

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Mr. Lindsay Foyle, Australian cartoon historian Mrs. Michelle Catterick, a good friend, for her editorial and computer skills morphing this book into its final form.

Mrs Michelle Catterick, a good friend, for her editorial and computer skills morphing this book into its final form.

FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to be able to introduce this study of the life and work of Ron Vivian. Not only because Ron deserves to be remembered as one of 20th-century Australia's finest comic artists and illustrators, but because of the sincere portrait offered of the man by his son-in-law, Dr Phil Norrie.

As will be apparent from what follows, Phil provides a unique and – by turns – deeply personal, as well as entirely professional account of Vivian. The survival of Ron's archive, together with the fond memories of his daughter, Belinda, have allowed him to come more fully back to life via Phil's pen, and it is to be hoped that this book will be only the first of many future studies to restore Ron to his rightful place amongst the Olympians of cartooning.

To continue the personal and professional theme: I have myself played a small role in the shaping of this work, via Phil's initial *academic* approach to Ron while studying at the University of New England. It became clear that the strictures of academia were less appropriate for memorializing Ron than would be an all-out biography and celebration of his life and work. That Nat Karmichael and the Australian Cartoonists' Association were on-hand to assist in this points to the crucial importance of people like Nat and the ACA in sustaining the history and heritage of Australian comic art at a difficult time in its development. Something that was definitely apparent when Phil, Nat, and I discussed this Foreword at the ACA Stanley Awards Conference in St Kilda in October 2023.

Australia prides itself on its larrikin sense of humour; annual and occasional cartoon collections sell well at Fathers' Day and at Christmas; and we have a number of galleries and museums devoted to the nation's great tradition of comic art – from Coffs to Canberra. And yet, Australians are surprisingly negligent – even ignorant – when it comes to the preservation of original comic artwork, and the living spirit of those great and talented artists that have created so much of our national imaginary.

In these pages, one will find a whole host of characters brought to life by Ron Vivian, and which enlivened the lives of so many Australians over many decades. Herein is the work of a man without whom Ginger Meggs might have been confined to a much more abbreviated lifespan, rather than the century-and-more he has enjoyed since Vivian's colleague and predecessor Jimmy Bancks created him in 1921. Here also are Private Willie, and another "Ginger", who entertained Australians during the dark

days of the Second World War. And here also are post-war *Daily Telegraph* cartoons, advertisements for Kellogg's, and more besides, that form a crucial component of the visual culture of the period, preserved and publicized through the energy of Phil Norrie.

And the next time you are in Canberra, at the Australian War Memorial, seek out "Winnie the War Winner" – the radio set used by 2/2 Commando Squadron in Timor in 1942 to stay in contact with North Force HQ in Darwin. Think of the impact on those men that Ron's work must have had, as they christened their equipment after one of his most important creations (and not "Winnie" Churchill!).

Prof. Richard Scully, BA (Hons), PhD, FRHistS
Head of Department for Archaeology, Classics and History
University of New England

ABSTRACT

Who was Ron Vivian? Why has he been forgotten? Why is he so important in the history of Australian and international cartooning? Why is cartooning so important, especially in time of war? These important questions will be answered by this book.

This book is the first time that the life story of Ron Vivian, arguably one of Australia's most diverse cartoonists, has been told. During his lifetime he was not famous because he drew the *Ginger Meggs* comic strip after Jimmy Bancks died in 1952 and had to live "in the shadow" of Bancks. He was not allowed to sign his name on the strip; but instead he had to sign every strip with "Created by Bancks". Thus, he remained anonymous during the last twenty years of his life and career; hence he was denied the fame he so richly deserved. In 2021 he, along with Lloyd Piper and James Kemsley, the two other deceased cartoonists who drew *Ginger Meggs*, was inducted into the Australian Cartoonist Association's Hall of Fame. But, despite this great honour, we still know very little about him.

Cartoonists usually have an ego and promote themselves. Ron Vivian was the opposite: he was a very kind, gentle, quiet and very humble private man who did not seek fame or promote himself; but his cartooning peers recognized his vast talent. He was the youngest cartoonist to have his own cartoon strip, called *Jimmy Gale*, just before the Second World War. During the early days of the war he drew a comic strip, to help with the morale of the troops and their families, called "Winnie the War Winner", which appeared in the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine. He drew two other wartime cartoon strips - one called "Private Willie" and the other called "Ginger" - which were also published in the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine. This continued until he joined the RAAF on 20 January 1942. After serving two tours of duty consecutively for fifteen months in Papua New Guinea, Ron was transferred to the RAAF HQ in Melbourne where he spent the second half of the Second World War drawing cartoons for the RAAF and their magazine *Wings*. After the Second World War, Ron Vivian was the political cartoonist for the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper in Sydney, he also drew cartoons for the advertising campaigns for brands such as Kelloggs & the Victorian Road Safety Council. Ron took over drawing the *Ginger Meggs* comic strip in 1953, which he continued to do for the next 20 years, until his untimely death

from a heart attack in 1973. No other Australian cartoonist has excelled in five different cartooning genres or drew so many different cartoon characters during the Second World War like Ron Vivian – yet his story is untold. Also his cartoon character “Winnie the War Winner” was the only cartoon character in the Second World War to have a piece of military equipment named after it – the radio used by the brave heroes of the 2/2 Commandos Squadron in Timor in 1942 to contact North Force HQ in Darwin.

The relevance of this book can be divided into several main areas. Firstly, this is the first time Ron Vivian’s story has been told in full. Secondly the significant role played by cartoonists in fighting the war by contributing humour to help raise the morale for the troops and the people back home is discussed; recognising that humour is humanity’s way of coping with stress. Finally, this book documents an aspect of Australia’s contribution to this worldwide movement to help the war effort through humour and boosting morale.

INTRODUCTION

Very little has been written about Ron Vivian – arguably Australia’s most diverse cartoonist - and the depiction of women in humorous cartoons during the Second World War. This story needs to be told because cartoonists played a very significant and unheralded role during the Second World War, helping raise the morale of the troops and on the home front. Humour was the best weapon to counter the stress of the world’s worst war. Ron Vivian was the most diverse cartoonist during the War, drawing three different cartoon characters, as well as his RAAF “WINGS” magazine work. He and Australia’s other Second World War cartoonists made a huge contribution to this world-wide movement to help the war effort with humour.

Vivian’s “Winnie the War Winner” was one of only two Australian cartoon characters of women published in Australia during the Second World War; the other was “Wanda the War Girl” drawn by Australian cartoonist Kathleen O’Brien (1914 – 1991). Winnie became so famous, appearing weekly in the *Australian Women’s Weekly* magazine, that the remnants of Sparrow Force (2/2nd Independent Company of Infantry), who were cut off in Timor fighting a guerilla war against the Japanese in 1942, gave her name to the radio they cobbled together so that they could contact North Force HQ in Darwin for their supplies. This radio was extremely important for Sparrow Force as it was their only form of contact with the outside world and it is significant that they named it after a women cartoon character ⁽¹⁾.

The “Winnie the War Winner” radio kept the 2/2 Commandos Squadron in contact with Darwin so that they could be resupplied so that they could keep fighting the Japanese. The 2/2 Commandos have a unique place in Australia’s military folklore. They were the first Allied force to defeat the Japanese in the field. Their kill ratio was 1:100 – i.e., for every 2/2 Commando who died; 100 Japanese died. Their fighting ratio was the same – the 200 Commandos tied up 20,000 Japanese troops, equal to two Divisions, who could have been fighting elsewhere, such as on the Kokoda Trail. They were also the only Allied fighting force who were in contact

¹ The Australian War Memorial erroneously attributed the name to Winston Churchill

with the enemy for the duration of the whole war against Japan – 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945.

Ron Vivian's career context is crucial for understanding his contribution to comic art in Australia, but a crucial component of that context was the development of comics in America.

This book is the first time Vivian's story has been documented. Based upon the extensive private archive he left behind, it includes not only his family history but also many private family photographs never seen before. It also includes analysis of 46 original "Winnie the War Winner" black ink on white cardboard cartoons - not seen for over 80 years - along with other cartoons drawn by Vivian, many of which have not been seen before. It will also emphasize the five different cartooning genres mastered by Ron Vivian; namely, the action hero "Jimmy Gale"; war cartoons "Winnie the War Winner", "Private Willie" and "Ginger"; plus drawing cartoons for the RAAF *Wings* magazine, long forgotten by cartoon historians; advertising cartooning and political cartooning in the *Daily Telegraph* after the war and finally the humorous comic strip Ginger Meggs.

Because of the nature of this book discussing cartooning, this book will include many examples of all the different types of Ron Vivian cartoons and Second World War humorous cartoons of women. Thus, this book will have an equal emphasis on text and examples of cartoons, not seen since Second World War.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the current literature for any references to Ron Vivian, the portrayal of humour in cartoons during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, especially featuring women, and any other relevant literature on cartoons and comic art or "comic studies".

Introduction

The literature review will start with the section "Comic Art Related Literature – Cartoons as an Historic Source" which discusses the early history of cartooning literature and why historians should take cartooning and cartoons seriously as an historic source by giving historians a "snapshot" of the relevant social issues at the time the cartoon was drawn: in a picture with words.

The next section, “Cartoonist Biography Related Literature” discusses the very few biographies written about cartoonists (including Ron Vivian) which this book hopefully will help. Cartoonists seem to be “invisible” people no one writes about.

The third section “Second World War Humourous Women Cartoon Characters Literature” looks at the limited literature about the portrayal of women in cartoons during the Second World War. Again, the literature is limited and mainly American focused hence the need for this book.

The fourth section “Ron Vivian and Australian Related Literature” discusses the once again limited literature about Ron Vivian and Australian Cartoon related literature, especially related to Australian Cartoonists biographies. Again, this book will help this large deficiency.

The final section “Timor and RAAF literature during the Second World War” looks at the limited literature on these two subjects which this book will help to also address.

Comic Art Related Literature – Cartoons as an Historic Source of Information

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the current literature for any reference to Ron Vivian, the portrayal of humour in cartoons during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, especially featuring women, and any other relevant literature on cartoons and comic art or “comic studies”.

One of the pioneers of the history of Comic Art was the Punch historian M.H. Spielmann who wrote “Cartoons from Punch” in 1906. Edna Hines followed with her article “Cartoons As A Means of Social Control” which appeared in the May – June, 1933 edition of *Sociology and Social Control*. They were making the claim that cartoons should be taken seriously by historians and used as another historic source, besides the usual primary source documents historians use. I feel this concept is axiomatic and self-evident.

Several more books have been written trying to get historians to take cartoon history seriously. Sir Ernst Hans Gombrich was an art historian who left Austria in 1936 to settle in England where he contributed to the history of Comic Art and the politics of caricature with such works as “The Story of Art” in 1950 and “The Visual Image” in 1972 which focused on political cartoons.

Draper Hill was an American cartoonist and cartoon historian who wrote several books about the history of cartooning such as “Cartoon and Caricature from Hogarth to Hoffnug” in 1962. His books then focused on the life of James Gillray (1756 – 1815), often referred to as the father of

political cartooning with his political satire cartoons of George III, Napoleon, various prime ministers and generals appearing mainly between 1792 and 1810. Hill wrote “Mr. Gillray: The Caricaturist, A Biography” in 1965. This was followed immediately with “Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray” in 1966 and later with “The Satirical Etchings of James Gillray” in 1976. Around this time Prof W. A. Coupe was focusing on German cartooning, writing histories such as “The German Illustrated Broadsheet in the seventeenth century: Historical and iconographical studies” in 1966. He also focused on Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm II, the Treaty of Versailles, the Weimer Republic, the Nazi era and finally he wrote “Germany through the looking glass: a cartoon chronicle of the Federal Republic” in 1986.

Lawrence H. Streicher wrote about one of the great modern-day political cartoonists, the New Zealander Sir David Low, who dominated political cartooning in the Nazi era. In 1965 he wrote the article “David Low and the Sociology of Caricature” for the *Comparative Studies in Sociology and History* journal. This was followed by the book “On a Theory of Political Caricature” in 1967; again, describing how the political cartoon is such a powerful weapon and how it can be used as an historic reflection of the times it was written. Another cartoon historian of this time who championed this theme was Assistant Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire, Thomas Milton Kennitz, who wrote the article “The Cartoon as a Historical Source” for the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* in 1973.

More recent cartoon historians include English art historian David Kunzle who wrote “The History of the Comic Strip, Volume I” in 1973 and “The History of the Comic Strip, Volume II” in 1990. He also wrote a biography about the Swiss cartoonist Rodolphe Topffer (1799 – 1846) who invented the new art form – the comic strip. The book was published in 2007 as “Father of the Comic Strip: Rodolphe Topffer”. Another modern era cartoon historian is American cartoonist and cartoon theorist Scott McLeod. Besides being a cartoonist himself, drawing superhero characters such as Zot! McLeod has also written three very relevant and influential books for today. The first book was “Understanding Comics” in 1993 which established his reputation as a comic theorist and historian. This was followed by “Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology Are Revolutionizing an Art Form” in 2000 and then “Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Magma and Graphic Novels” in 2006.

Australian Professor Robert Phiddian from Flinders University has also made contributions to this field of literature history with his book “Drawing the Line: Using cartoons as historical evidence, edited by Richard Scully and Marian Quartly” in 2010.

Second World War Humorous Women Cartoon Characters Literature Books

There are not that many books written about cartoons featuring women during the Second World War, unfortunately; let alone women in humorous situations. The major one is “Babes in Arms – Women in the Comics During the Second World War” by Trina Robbins, which was published in 2017. It features only four female cartoonists who were all white and who worked in America and their female Superhero creations, but it is a crucial addition to the evolution of comic studies because of its promotion of women.

Firstly, there was Barbara Hall in 1941 and her female comic characters *Black Cat*, *Blonde Bomber*, *Pat Parker* and the *Girl Commandos*. In 1943 she stopped being a cartoonist at the request of her fiancé Irving Fiske, who thought that drawing comics was beneath her; so, she became a painter instead. The next cartoonist was Jill Elgin, who took over the *Girl Commandos* strip in 1943, until it ended in 1945 when the Second World War ended, and they were no longer needed to kill Nazis. She also took over drawing *Blonde Bomber*. After the war she illustrated children’s books and eventually became an Art Editor at a children’s magazine.

The third cartoonist was Lily Renee Wilheim, who was a Jewish teenager in Vienna when the Nazis marched into Austria in 1938. She eventually escaped to America, via England. She was a talented artist, so she drew comics for Fiction House including two capable female characters who fought the Nazis – *Jane Martin*, a beautiful nurse who was also a pilot and *Senorita Rio*, a secret service agent who fought Nazis in South America.

The final female cartoonist is Fran Hopper who also drew cartoons for Fiction House. She developed heroine’s jungle girl *Camilla*, girl detective *Glory Forbes*, then *Gale Allen and her Girl Squadron* plus *Mysta of the Moon* – both galaxy Superheroes. At the end of the war she took over *Jane Martin* from Lily Renee who went on to become a textile and jewelry designer.

One other Second World War female comic book available is “Male Call” by Milton Caniff with a Foreword by fellow famous Second World War cartoonist Bill Mauldin. It was published in 1987 as a limited edition of 1,000 hardcover copies. It had every wartime strip from 1942 through to 1946 in it; and featured *Miss Lace* who fought in the Second World War in a sexy tight long slinky black dress that revealed her cleavage to perfection. It appealed to the many American troops who were away from home and wanted to think about sex.

Another book about Second World War female cartoon characters is “The Secret History of Wonder Woman” by Jill Lepore. The book not only examines Wonder Woman in detail but also her unusual creator, the psychologist William Marston who was a polygamist and into bondage involving his wife and mistress. Lepore also examines the history of feminism, which is crucial to the whole subject of female cartoon characters.

At the other end of the feminist spectrum is another book which featured only a female cartoon character called “Up Came a Ripple”, written by US Navy Reservist Dorothea Byerly. The book was published in 1945 and documents her life in the US Navy from recruitment onwards in a comical manner featuring herself drawn as a stick figure – the ‘Ripple’. It is dedicated “to all the Ripples”. The book paints a realistic picture of life in the navy for a recruit with all its humour. This “Ripple” is certainly no superhero being a stick figure with no sexy features, no revealing costume and no supernatural powers; but it is still an important contribution to the female comic genre because of its realism. It does not portray women as glamorous superheroes, but as real, down to earth people trying to make the best out of a bad and sad situation, fighting a war.

One other cartoon book features female cartoonists in general and not just specifically in the Second World War. Trina Robbins’ “Pretty in Ink: North American Women Cartoonists 1896 – 2013” gives an overall history of female cartoonists, but only in America. The Second World War superheroes are covered in the book. Yet again this book makes a significant contribution to comic studies and the female genre because it is so thorough and diverse, embracing so many types of cartooning portraying women.

Other books about women in comics in general include “Women in the Comics” by Maurice Horn which devotes a whole chapter (chapter 5 – “The Fighting Forties 1940 - 1949) to the representation of women during the Second World War. It focuses on female superheroes and sexy women such as Miss Lace. It does not feature humorous cartoons. “Women and the Comics” by Trina Robbins and Catherine Yronwode has a section on women during the Second World War but it also focuses on the superheroes and not humorous female cartoons. It is the only book that I have found that mentions the Australian Second World War character “Wanda the War Girl.”

There are several other books that focus on the female superhero genre and do not discuss humour, especially from during the Second World War. These include two books by Mike Madrid – “Divas Dames and Daredevils” and “The Supergirls – Fashion, feminism, and the history of

comic book heroines”; as well as “Superwomen – gender, power, and representation” by Carolyn Cocca and Varla Ventura’s “Sheroes, Bold Brash and Absolutely Unabashed from Susan B. Anthony to Xena”. All these books make significant contributions to the women’s movement cause by promoting women in comics.

Warren Bernard’s book “Cartoons for Victory” dedicates three chapters to cartoons focusing only on women. Chapter 8 is “Blonde and Little Orphan Annie”, chapter 11 is “Rosie the Riveter” and features cartoons about women working in factories and the final one is chapter 12 called “WACS, WAVES and WASPS” which discusses recruitment cartoons and other service related cartoons featuring women. But again, this book only features American cartoons, the need for expansion, which is what this book will do.

Another American cartoon book - the 1945 book “Tropicorna”, written by John Wiley, only features cartoons of bare breasted Pacific Island native women in various comical situations because “Joe [Joe Zuhlsdorff the cartoonist] and I thought it would be a good idea if we could think up something funny for people to laugh at. This book is dedicated to our fighting men.” (Wiley, 1945, Preface). So it has to be judged by the moral standards of its time and it served its purpose to provide humour and sexual fantasy for lonely male troops serving overseas who had a good chance of dying before they got back home to their wives and girlfriends.

The rest of the books available on comic cartooning in the Second World War seldom feature women, and focus mainly on male combatants and male cartoonists. British books include “World War II in Cartoons” by Mark Bryant, “Propaganda Cartoons of World War II” by Tony Husband and “World War II in Cartoons” by Christopher Tiffney, plus the “Two Types” series of two cartoon books by ‘Jon’. James Chapman’s authoritative work “British Comics – a cultural history” gives a history of British comics throughout the ages; with only a small section devoted to the Second World War – 10 pages out of a book containing 303 pages. Chapman points out that publishers had to reduce their pre-war paper consumption by 60% due to paper rationing. Consequently, many comics were abandoned and others appeared every two weeks, instead of weekly. The comics that remained promoted patriotism and support for the war effort. It is interesting to note that of the ten pages devoted to the Second World War cartoons he devotes seven of those pages to the sex cartoon ‘Jane’, because of her influence. Chapman wrote that:

“Without doubt the most popular comic strip of the war, however, was to be found not in *Beano* or *Dandy* but on the middle pages of the *Daily Mirror*. The *Mirror* was the best-selling newspaper of the war years with a

circulation of two million: it has been seen as the voice of wartime populism. A.J.P. Taylor suggested that the Mirror ‘gave an indication as never before what ordinary people in the most ordinary sense were thinking’, but added that it ‘owed its success as much to its sophisticated columnist Cassandra as to Jane, its strip-tease strip-cartoon’. In fact, the Mirror included more picture strips than any other newspaper: these included ‘Ruggles’, ‘Buck Ryan’, ‘Beezlebub Jones’ and ‘Garth’ as well as ‘Jane’.” (Chapman, 2011, 38).

So, in Great Britain during the Second World War, the most popular comic strip in the most popular newspaper was about the exploits of a naked woman called Jane and her pet dachshund Fritz; which proves that sex can sell the patriotic message and helps the morale of the troops and the people on the home front.

American books include “According to Doyle – a Cartoon History of World War II” by Jerry Doyle and Charles Fisher and “World War II Cartoons of Akron’s Web Brown” by Tim Carroll which features Brown’s strong sense of justice, humour and history when he lampooned Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. There is also “Dr. Seuss and Co. Go To War – the World War II Editorial Cartoons of America’s Leading Comic Artists” by Andre Schiffren, which, as the title implies, only features American cartoonists.

There are also two American Armed Forces cartoon books from the Second World War. The first one is the 1945 “Cartoons for Fighters” edited by Sgt. Frank Brandt which was part of the “Fighting Forces Series” and contains several cartoons featuring females either in a sexual way or in a comical manner. The second book is “The Kit Book for Soldiers, Sailors and Marines” compiled by R.M. Barrows and published in 1943. As the book states in the title page - the book featured “Favorite stories, verse, and cartoons for the entertainment of servicemen everywhere”. Again, the cartoons contained ones featuring women who were portrayed in either a comical or sexual way.

Australian war cartoon books include “Over the Top – a Cartoon History of Australia at War” by Timothy S. Benson, which features only Australian cartoons from all wars fought by Australians, not just the Second World War. In the Introduction to this book Benson writes “Their (the cartoonist) primary job in wartime has been to raise the morale of their respective newspaper’s readers”. This is mainly done with humour; but it can also be done with sex or bold nationalistic propaganda. Benson also lamented the lack of any descent history of Australian cartooning and the ignoring of the use of cartoons as historic primary source material of their time. Another thing Benson pointed out was the lack of biographies

of Australia's political cartoonists. This book will fill this void in relation to Ron Vivian.

The other Australian war cartoon book are the "War Cartoons" by Armstrong of the *Argus* in six volumes. Harold Barry Armstrong was born in Sydney and was the cartoonist for the *Argus* newspaper in Melbourne. His Second World War cartoons were so good and universally appealing that they were reproduced all over the world. Again, these books contain cartoons which feature only males and are drawn only by males.

"The Comic Art of War – a Critical Study of Military Cartoons, 1805 – 2014, with a Guide to Artists" by Christina M. Knopf published in 2015 does feature more female content than the other books mentioned above. On page 63 it has six funny cartoons of the "Hand Salute" by 'The Ripple' and Chapter Six is titled "Sex(es) in Battle – Gender and Sexuality" with an opening quote from Henry Kissinger "Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes. There's just too much fraternizing with the enemy." The chapter covers 'Pin-ups' - women as sex objects, 'The Queer Question' – gays in the military, 'Sexual Teases and Diseases' – STDs and avoiding STDs, 'For Love of Money' – how money wins the girl, not how many decorations the soldier has on his chest and 'G.I. Janes' – female combatants. This is another important work because of its broad content and detail. It makes a significant contribution to the history of cartooning because it focuses on wartime cartoons which tell the story of the war by a different means – cartoons and not official written histories. Another book which does a similar thing is the 2015 book "Comics and the World Wars: A Cultural Record" by Jane Chapman et al. It shows how comics can be another source for the facts and feelings, plus giving an indication of contemporary popular thinking, of a time in history; thus, it makes a great contribution to comic studies and humour studies.

Jose Alaniz's "Komiks – Comic Art in Russia" virtually ignores the Second World War. Only two pages of his 269-page book talk about the Second World War. This is because of the limited amount of Russian cartooning to examine, up until the post-Soviet era. Women are only mentioned as the face of the iconic poster 'The Motherland Calls' – Russia's most famous poster. Another Russian cartoon book is "On the Firing Lines 1941 – 1945" which also does not feature women.

W. A. Coupe's "German Political Satires from the Reformation to the Second World War" features many Second World War cartoons from Germany; but very few of these feature women and when they do it is as a blonde mother figure in a poster. In his Introduction, Coupe talks about the origins of German political cartooning in the 1500s religious' polemics of trying to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity through to the

ensorship and final demise of political cartooning under Hitler. Coupe described political cartooning in his Introduction as “a ‘pictorial chronicle’ of the fortunes of the German people”. Hence Coupe is also promoting the political cartoon as a visual historic record of the times. Another German cartoon book is Paul Webber’s “WW2 original cartoon illustrations of anti-British Imperialism” which contains cartoons of a very dark and realistic nature, with no sexy or funny cartoons involving women.

As can be seen – there are not many books written about female cartoon characters in the Second World War – a void which this book hopes to fill.

Cartoonist Biography Related Literature

There are not as many biographies written about cartoonists as there are about other historical figures such as Royalty, political leaders, military leaders and to a lesser extent scientists and doctors. This is unfortunate because cartoonists can hold a lot of power in their pen, thus their stories should be told, one of the many contributing reasons for this book.

The biography of one of the first cartoon satirists was written by Draper Hill, as mentioned above, with his “Mr. Gillray”. Also mentioned above was David Kunzle’s biography of the pioneer of the comic strip, Rodolphe Topffer, and Lawrence Streicher’s biography of Sir David Low, the great political cartoonist of the Nazi era. David Low himself wrote a general biographical book about cartoonists titled “British Cartoonists Caricaturists and Comic Artists” in 1942.

There have been biographies of famous contemporary cartoonists such as, from America “Schulz and Peanuts – a Biography” by David Michaelis, or from France “Herge – The man who created Tin Tin” by Pierre Assouline. Then there are biographies of lesser known cartoonists such as “Charles Addams – a cartoonists life” by Linda H. Davis or “My Life as a Cartoonist” by Janet Tashjian or a general overview book on the subject “Great Cartoonists and Their Art” by Art Wood.

In Australia, the main focus of many biographies has been Jimmy Bancks, the creator of Australia’s longest running comic strip Ginger Meggs. There have been several biographies written, and most are listed below in the Ron Vivian section of this Literature Review. The Australian comic historian Lindsay Foyle is about to publish yet another one. Some cartoonists have also written autobiographies, such as Larry Pickering with “Larry Pickering, an Autobiography, 1942 – 2018”. Then there are the books which are more a collection of a cartoonist’s work over the years and not so much a biography of the cartoonist such as “Petty’s Australia

Fair” or “The best of Pickering” in 1973, “It’s Pickering’s best” in 1976 and “A decade of Pickering” in 1980. The trend at the moment is to produce books which feature the cartoons drawn by many different cartoonists about the same topic or genre, such as political cartoonists, and not biographies of one specific cartoonist. A good example of this is the book “Behind the Lines” – featuring the best political cartoons from Australia in 2021 or the “Best Australian Political Cartoons” series.

Articles and Internet

Just like with books, most articles on the Internet about cartooning during the Second World War talk about men and not women, with a few exceptions.

One exception is “Women Who Conquered the Comics World” by Lisa Hix. It is a history of female cartoonists, with a focus on American ones though. It features the Second World War Superheroes ‘Miss Fury’, ‘Flying Jenny’ and ‘Girl Commandos’. Another one is “Comics and Human Rights: Taking The Long Way. The Super-Heroine’s Struggle for Respect” by Maria Norris. The opening statement of this article sets the tone for what is to follow; “As in the real-world struggle of women’s rights, many of the steps toward more proper representation for female heroes have been met by resistance.” A good example of this lack of respect and recognition is ‘Sheena Queen of the Jungle’. She appeared in a British comic book called ‘Wags’ in 1937, long before ‘Superman’ appeared in ‘Action Comics’ in June 1938. ‘Superman’ is credited with starting the ‘Golden Age’ of action comics and Superhero comics – but ‘Sheena’ was first. The article features the Second World War female superheroes ‘Miss Fury’ and ‘Wonder Women’ and discusses their role as role models for the Women’s Movement in the future. There is no mention of humour and females during the Second World War. This article also shows the growing interest in women in comics and cartoons by researchers.

Another article about female cartoons in the Second World War is “World War II cartoons show how we bridged racial and gender divides back then.” by Michael Cavna. In the article he states that “a nation at war tends to blur the lines among entertainment, education and propaganda.” In other words entertainment, which would include cartooning, could be used by the government in power at the time of the war to educate its population about things such as serving in the armed forces, not speaking to strangers [“loose lips sink ships” mentality], growing vegetables at home, rationing food and petrol or saving scrap metal and paper. These same entertainment mechanisms could also be used for propaganda

purposes, such as telling the population how superior they are and how ethnically inferior the enemy is.

“Women in Comics” by Share Deckard devotes a large paragraph to the Second World War and this focuses on the superheroes, not humour. “Women in Comics – An Introductory Guide” by Trina Robbins devotes a page to the Second World War and again focuses on the superhero genre with Miss Fury and Wonder Women. Humorous female cartoons are again not featured

The Internet also has innumerable articles about each female Superhero and their female creators – too many to write about here, but they will be listed in the Bibliography.

There is one article about an Australian woman who fought against the Axis Powers during the Second World War. ‘Wanda the War Girl’ was written by Australian female cartoonist Kath O’Brien and she features in an article titled ‘Representation of Female war-time bravery in Australia’s *Wanda the War Girl*’ by Prof. Jane Chapman; the Professor of Communications at Lincoln University in the UK. The cartoon strip ran from 1943 to 1951 and is little known, hence the article. It was one of the first Australian comics to express a female point of view about the war. It showed Wanda to be powerful, productive, brave and attractive – all the usual traits needed for a female hero during the Second World War.

Carmen Moran wrote an article “A “Trace of History”: Cartoons from the Australian War Memorial Christmas Books of the Second World War” which featured humorous cartoons about male soldiers only.

One PhD thesis discusses comics during war – the 2011 “Comics and Conflict: War and Patriotically Themed Comics in American Cultural History from World War I Through the Iraq War” by Cord A. Scott. This thesis only focuses on America and covers the Second World War in Chapter 2 “Fighting for Freedom (1939-1945)”. In this chapter there is a section titled “Female Superheroes”, so women were not forgotten. This PhD again shows the growing interest in comics as an alternative record of an historic event – in this case war. It also shows the growing interest of women in comics.

Jessica Davis is from the School of Literature, Art and Media at the University of Sydney and coordinates the Australian Humour Studies Network. She lectures about humour studies and wrote a very in-depth article titled ‘Taking humour seriously: The multi-disciplinary field of humour studies’ discussing the various types of humour, which was published in the Journal of the Royal Society of New South Wales. Humour, which includes humorous cartoons, is now an art form, and so it should be.

In summary – women do not feature that often in the Second World War cartoon literature and when they do it is usually with a focus on American women. This book will endeavor to expand this lack of knowledge.

Ron Vivian and Australian Related Literature

When it comes to the Australian cartoon scene there is, according to Richard Scully and Robert Phiddan, a “functional neglect of Australia’s cartooning heritage, and the need for significant action and scholarly attention to remedy the situation”. [Scully and Phiddan – *The Australian Political Cartoon – An Historiographical Overview*] That is why there a lack of information about Ron Vivian and hence this book is necessary to fill in this significant void.

There are only seven books which mention Ron Vivian. The first is “*Cartoonists of Australia*” by Richard Rae, published in 1983. Ron features in the photograph of Australian cartoonists taken in 1964, which appears on page 8. He also has a four-page spread on pages 82 to 85. Rae thought so highly of Ron Vivian that he dedicated the book to him. The second book is “*Ginger Meggs Souvenir Book*” by Robert Holden, published in 1986 which devotes one paragraph to Ron. The third book is “*The Most Important Boy in Australia: 75 Years of Ginger Meggs*” by the cartoon historian Lindsay Foyle, from 1996. This book gives Ron a bit more space by devoting one and a half columns to him. The fourth book is “*Bancks’ Ginger Meggs*” by Jimmy Bancks’ grandson, Tristan Bancks and the current cartoonist who is drawing the strip, Jason Chatsfield. It was published for the Ginger Meggs Centenary in 2021. Ron features on page 179. The fifth book is “*The Inked - in Image*” by Vane Lindesay. Ron scores a one-line mention on page 41. The sixth book is Rosemary Johnston’s “*Australian Literature for Young People*”. Ron Vivian is mentioned on page 235 with half a paragraph, again talking about his involvement with Ginger Meggs and also a mention of this war work but not mentioning any of the cartoon characters. The final book is “*Panel by Panel*” by John Ryan where Ron had a paragraph on page 75 and one line on page 105. All these mentions were about Ron’s involvement with Ginger Meggs and none of his other work unfortunately.

No other Australian Comic Art histories mention Ron, including Marguerite Mahood’s “*The Loaded Line – Australian Political Caricature 1788 – 1901*” [wrong time period] and Timothy Benson’s “*Over the Top*”, where the Second World War narrative in Chapter Four is dominated by Alex Gurney’s “*Bluey and Curley*” and Stan Cross’ “*Wally and the*

Major”, with no mention of Ron’s three characters. Jonathan King’s comprehensive history “A Cartoon History of Australia” is no better.

Kings book focused only on Editorial or Political cartoons and nothing else, despite the title making me think it would cover all genres of Australian cartooning. Despite this focus King still does not mention Ron Vivian’s political cartooning work when he was the political cartoonist for the Daily Telegraph in Sydney from 1946 to 1953, when he started drawing Ginger Meggs. So, King’s book is incomplete and it is as if Ron was invisible, yet again.

Even Betty Churcher’s authoritative book about Australian art during wartime called “The Art of War” does not even show or mention one wartime cartoon. This again shows that the “Art World” and art history still does not take cartoons seriously, unfortunately.

How can you write such histories without mentioning Australia’s most diverse cartoonist?

Articles and Internet

There are only four places that feature Ron Vivian in Internet articles. Firstly, a one-page piece in ‘Wikipedia’, secondly a two-page spread in ‘Lambiek Comiclopedia’, thirdly as a one page summary in the National Library of Australia’s website and finally as a similar one page summary in the Design and Art Australia Online database.

These book references and internet references are very superficial and do not study Ron in any depth and only focus on his involvement with Ginger Meggs. They do not mention Jimmy Gale, Winnie the War Winner, Ginger, Private Willie or his RAAF WINGS work. So, not much has been written about Ron Vivian – hence the need for this book, to help rectify this lack of knowledge. The author of this book wrote an article for the Australian Cartoonist Association quarterly magazine Inkspot. An eight-page spread appeared in the Spring 2021 edition (issue number 93) – the biggest article ever to appear in Inkspot. The purpose of the article was to help fill the gap in our knowledge of Ron.

Timor and Raaf Literature During the Second World War

There are four good books which cover Australia’s involvement in Timor during the Second world War and especially the role of the 2/2 Commandos during that campaign. The first, in author alphabetical order, is Bernard Callinan’s Independent Company. Callinan was a major during the campaign and won the DSO and MC; so he knew what was going on.

He mentions Winnie the War Winner with affection because the radio meant that they could now contact Darwin and that they were no longer fighting alone. The Next book is Colin Doig's A History of the 2nd Independent Company and 2/2 Commando Squadron. Doig is an historian who did not serve in Timor but he interviewed many who did and came up with a very thorough history of the campaign. This book gave a very good history of how Winnie the War Winner was made and how it was used and how much it was appreciated. this history ended on page 95 with the words "Thank God for Winnie the War Winner".

The third book is Sparrow – a Chronicle of Defiance written by lawyer Grant McLachlan whose grandfather Charlie McLachlan served in Timor. It is a very detailed history nearly 800 pages long and mentions Winnie the War Winner with a photograph of the radio in the chapter titled "All Alone". The final book is Christopher Wray's Timor 1942. In the middle of the book Winnie the War Winner is mentioned and praised because it allowed the remaining commandos to tell Darwin that they were still intact and fighting on. As Winston Churchill told parliament in London – "They alone did not surrender".

The RAAF Wings magazine was published every fortnight and was distributed to RAAF personnel for free. It was a very comprehensive magazine covering all aspects of the war, to help keep people up to date, with an obvious focus on what the RAAF was doing in the various theatres of the war. It was first published in April, 1943 by the Directorate of Public Relations for Personnel of the RAAF, RAAF HQ in Melbourne. Ron Vivian arrived to do his cartooning artwork for the magazine in time for the First Anniversary Edition which was published on April 11, 1944.

Conclusion

This Literature Review has revealed a large lack of relevant literature at many levels of cartoon history. Firstly, there is a lack of female cartoonists to female cartoons characters especially during the Second World War. Secondly, there are not enough books in general on cartooning but on a more focused note cartoons in the Second World War and cartoonist biographies (including Ron Vivian). Finally, there are not enough books on Australian cartoon history.

This book hopefully will help fill in some of these deficiencies.

Approach

This book will use a multi-method approach using qualitative research methods in order to explore the causes and reasons why something happened by examining in-depth cases and experiences. This is necessary, because in order to cover the full scope of this book's subject, several qualitative methods such as historiography, case study and biographical methods must be used.

Qualitative research is interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary covering the humanities and social and physical sciences. "It is multi-paradigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multi-method approach."² According to Nelson "The choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context."³ and according to Brewer and Hunter "Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus."⁴ reflecting on attempts and desires to find an in-depth understanding of the question.

Historical Method according to Koenig is "the study of events, processes, institutions of past civilisations, for the purpose of finding the origins or antecedents of contemporary social life and thus of understanding its nature of workings."⁵ This book will examine the histories of various entities that influenced the history of cartooning; as well as famous individuals such as Ron Vivian and other cartoonists.

The case study method uses documents and life histories, for example, to gain a profile of the person or event that is being studied. According to Robert Stake, the case is a unique "functioning specific"⁶; while Louis Smith describes it as a "bounded system"⁷ that results in a product that may be called a "case record" more so than a case study according to Lawrence Stenhouse.⁸

Finally, the biographical method involves the "written record of the life of an individual", according to the Oxford English Dictionary.⁹ While

² Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994), 2 - *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, USA Sage Publication,

³ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994), 2 - *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, USA Sage Publication

⁴ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994), 2

⁵ Koenig S., (1957),6 – *Sociology an Introduction to the Science of Society*, Barnes & Noble

⁶ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y., (1994), 236

⁷ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y., (1994), 236

⁸ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y., (1994), 237

⁹ Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y., (1994), 287