

WACKY HISTORY

Our \$50 note



Say hello to David Unaipon, yes you have met him before. You don't remember?

He's the chap wearing a collar folded like a paper aeroplane on the Australian 50 dollar note. So how did David Unaipon become so famous as to get his portrait in such a posh place?

He was born in 1872 on the Point McLeay mission, south of Adelaide. He had eight brothers and sisters so it was a busy and noisy family life.

When he was seven years old, he started school and was bright as a button, soaking up everything the teachers could tell him.

Boys left school early in those days, so at 13 David set off for work for a Mr Charles Burney Young on his farm.

The boss could see how smart and keen he was and so gave him free run of the library after he had finished work for the day. David

soaked up everything he was keen on, about literature, science, philosophy and music.

As he grew older, he kept reading and learning new things, like how to play the organ and how to make boots.

But his real talents lay in inventing things, the more they moved the better he liked his inventions.

He was so good at creating perpetual motion machines, he was called the 'Australian Leonardo da Vinci' for developing the centrifugal motor, a multi-radial wheel and a mechanical propulsion device.

He also helped design the rotors of a helicopter, before World War I, based on the principle of the boomerang and of course, his perpetual motion knowledge.

Not just an inventor, David also wrote books, one about Indigenous legends and storytelling, and went wherever he was asked to talk about his ideas.