

Doctors in the News The Story of the Australian \$20 Note

Hi everyone and welcome to our special lesson on Doctors who have made headlines...

I am Irina... and I'm Dr Peter

Dr Peter I know you love telling stories – I can hardly wait to hear what you're going to tell us about today. What is it?

Irina – do you now what is on the Australian \$20 Dollar note?

\$20 dollar note – you mean pictures?

Yes, what are the pictures on the \$20 dollar note?

I have absolutely no idea – all I do is hand the money over to shopkeepers and it's gone – there's no time to look at it – are they special Dr Peter?

It's really interesting Irina, because the pictures on this note in particular tell an amazing story about the history of Australia.

"this note in particular" means not the \$5,\$10,\$50 or \$100 dollar notes – only the \$20 dollar note – "in particular" means "only on this \$20 dollar note" ok so I'll get one out of my purse and we'll look at it.

Irina – I happen to have one here – look. What pictures do you see?



Well, I see a man's head – let me see – it says ,in very small print under his picture – “John Flynn”

Ok,keep going

Well, there's a camel

With a man riding it, yes and what else

An aeroplane, some machine, and a drawing of a person with squares on his stomach with numbers on them. Dr Peter – I can see this will be a really interesting story – I'm curious though, has this anything to do with medicine?

Irina – you are a real detective I can see. It certainly does.

Before you start however, I think this must be extremely important if it has been put on Australia's currency.

Right again – well this is what it is about -.

In the early 1900's there were very few people in the inland of Australia

I know – in our history books, they said everybody lived on the coastal regions.

Well, quite often people who lived in the inland where the conditions were very dry and arid lived hundreds, if not thousands of miles apart.

“conditions were very dry and arid” – “Dry” I know – “arid” means very little plant life

Camels were often used for transporting goods – brought to Australia from Afghanistan.

Yes – it does seem logical to use camels rather than horses in these conditions. This must be why camels are on the note.

Right. Well, if someone was sick there were no hospitals. Not only that but there was no electricity or any form of communication – no radios even.

“not only that, but there was no...”this is a way of emphasizing what there was not, rather than saying “there were no hospitals, no electricity and no radios.” This is a good sentence Dr Peter

I try Irina. Well, there was a young Minister, John Flynn, who recognized this problem

Minister – means a Christian Minister of religion – ok so he’s on the note.

He asked the question – “What are the people going to do if they get sick? How are they going to get to hospital, and not only that, how are they going to communicate?”

"and not only that" is also a good way of joining important information together . You could say " and what's more" – this has the same meaning.

Yes, in fact " and what's more" as well as " and not only that" are very common ways to emphasise things.

I think " and on top of that " is also a good way to emphasise things too

It's good. Well, John Flynn knew Australia was very spread out, and he had a plan. This plan consisted of 3 steps.

Australia is indeed very spread out – you can place the map of Australia over the map of China and it covers it –

and most of Australia is very sparsely populated, compared to China

That's a good phrase – " sparsely populated" – it means very few people per square kilometer.

So firstly he and his friend Alf Traeger were going to setup radios in every remote farm area.

"setup" – I think this means ,in this case, to make a network of radios across the country.

"remote" is the word for "isolated" or far away from any city or as we say " far away from civilization"

John Flynn said" Everybody is going to be able to communicate, and so they can call for help, talk to each other and children can do their schooling " over the air"

" over the air " means by radio.

Mm The word "Air" is used for this radio transmitting. When people are talking on the radio we say they are " on the air"

– in other words their words are going out into the air to be picked up by someone. The school was called “The school of the air”

Secondly, his friend in Adelaide made a special bicycle.

Ok “secondly”- you are making a list – I know you love talking about how to make lists.

Yep, His friend Alf Traeger said “ This bicycle is going to generate electricity when someone pedals it, to supply the electricity for the radios.”

The bicycle has an electric generator on it?

Yes

And “pedal” means to pedal!

Right – so women learnt the morse code, and as they pedaled, they sent morse code on their radio. These were called “ pedal radios”

I’ve actually seen one of these when I went to Alice Springs “School of the air”

So these radios really “opened up” the inland

Yes it is true – prior to this the inland would have been “closed” – in other words – not really available as a place to live in – being “ opened up” meant people could talk to one another and have a community.

So this machine on the \$20 note is actually, a pedal driven electricity generator?

Yes.

But there's still the plane and the picture of the body..

Ok ok – hold your horses..

“hold your horses?” – what does that mean?

It means “wait a minute” - if you have a horse drawn carriage you have to “ hold your horses” -to stay still. – “ hold your horses” means don't let the horses start running”

mm- well, we only have camels here – “hold your camels” might be more appropriate.

Irina, I think you are a comedienne.

ok,so the third thing John Flynn did was to buy an aeroplane, named “ The Victory”

“ Victory” is to win – that was a good name. So this is the plane on the note.

Yes – and in 1928 he started the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Qantas was the first commercial airline – Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service – To cover such a large area – planes were an obvious answer – they could transport patients over impassable,vast deserts and remote areas quickly.

...and This Royal Flying Doctor Service is still flying today

Now that is interesting. What does “Royal” mean? Is this to do with the Queen or King of England?

Yes – in those days, organizations often asked for Royal patronage- and if approved could use the word “Royal”

..a "patron" is like a supporter right at the top of the organization. I think it might come from the French word "patron" meaning "boss"

It could do.

So farmers' wives pedaled the radio and sent messages to the Flying Doctor Service. They gave each part of the body a number to tell the doctor the problem, and they had a medicine box with all the tablets numbered as well.

So the picture of the body with the numbers which is on the \$20 Dollar note, is the one used to tell the doctor where the pain or problem was.

They said " He has a pain in Number 4" – or whatever area was affected and the doctor would understand.

You're right – and that's it – that's the story behind all the pictures on the \$20 note.

Dr Peter – that is an amazing story and so interesting. I have never looked at this note, but now everytime I look at one I will remember this fantastic story

You know Irina, John Flynn said this" The secret of life is to overcome failure."

"The secret of life is to overcome failure." – that is very profound.

Yes – "profound" is the right word for this. John Flynn's major feat of determination and pioneering spirit, with the radios and the Flying Doctors, opened up the inland of Australia and as a result is commemorated on the \$20 note.

Fantastic Dr Peter – that has been so interesting and I think all our English learners will agree. So I guess that is all for this time – I can hardly wait to see what will be next – any clues Dr Peter

Irina – I love keeping everyone in suspense .

Ok then so we will finish off now, bye everybody until the next time, goodbye from me Irina.... And goodbye from me Peter, bye.