

**Some research into James Gilbert McDougall's Naturalists diary 1886-87 at D6785
by Kerry Durrant, Volunteer at the State Library of South Australia, 2012**

Over the short period of time McDougall lived on Yorke Peninsula he not only completed his legal qualifications but also absorbed himself in the local natural history. This research adds further information to that found in his diary. It lists his donations to the South Australian Museum, his involvement with the Royal Society of South Australia, and also indicates wider contacts such as with ornithologist Archibald James Campbell. Also included are extracts from newspapers sourced from [Trove](#), and from other sources. Researcher's comments are given in square brackets.

Table showing donations to the SA Museum from JG McDougall between 1885 and 1892

Name: Common name

Original scientific name as originally recorded

Current scientific name showing where subsequent revision has occurred

No: the number of specimens donated

AR: The date of the relevant year of the Report from the Museum Committee from the *Report of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery*, between 1885 and 1892 abbreviated to 85-92

Trove: The date of the reference in the newspaper as sourced from the National Library of Australia's newspaper digitisation site Trove (www.nla.gov.au)

Diary: a date is given where referred to in the diary

Name	Original scientific name	Current Scientific name	No	AR	Trove	Diary
Oryctomorphs			8	85-86		
amblypoda	Ogyris amaryllis	Ogyris amaryllis	4	85-86		9 Feb 86
lizard	Gymnodactylus miliusii	Underwoodisaurus miliusii	1	85-86		
rare star fish			1	86-87	10/11/86	
elephant fish	Callorhyncus antarcticus	Callorhincus callorhyncus	1	86-87	10/11/86	19 Aug 86
snakes				86-87		
common shore eels	Chilobranchnus dorsalis	Alabes dorsalis	2	86-87	12/11/86	
butterflies				86-87		
crustaceans				86-87		
corals				86-87		
etc				86-87		
etc				86-87		
Echinodermata	Astrophyton sp.		1	86-87	10/11/86	
hermit crab	Gryllopagurus lithodomus	Cancellus typus	1	86-87	26/05/87	
several marine species	various			87-88		25 Sep 87
several marine species				88-89		
specimens of Turbo Straminea	Turbo straminea			89-90		
black and white moth	Apina angasii	Cremnophera angasii		90-91	20/5/91	
egg cases of shells with embryos				91-92		

Table showing references to specimens collected by JG McDougall in the *South Australian Register* with the date, sourced from Trove

Elephant fish	Callorhynchus antarcticus	Callorhincus callorhyncus Conocladus australis?	1	10/11/86
Starfish - Southern basket star?	Euryale			10/11/86
Eel-like fishes - Common shore eel?	Chilobranchnus dorsalis	Alabes dorsalis	2	12/11/86
Walking Fish	Antennarius		1	12/11/86
snake-like lizard - Common scaly foot	Pygopus squamiceps	Pygopus lepidopodis	1	12/11/86
butterflies	Ogyris otanes Gryllopagarus		2	15/11/86
hermit crab - (Rock) hermit crab	lithodomus	Cancellus typus		26/5/87
	Sygnathus		1	26/9/87
Walking Fish	Antennarius		1	26/9/87
Crustacea	Pinnotherus	Pinnotheres	1	26/9/87
	galathus		1	26/9/87
	Actaeus		1	26/9/87
	Alphaeus villosus	Alpheus villosus	1	26/9/87
	Palinarus		1	26/9/87
	Chaetodon ocellipinnes		1	26/9/87
Weed fish	Olistherops	Olisthops cyanomelas	1	26/9/87
Small shark			1	17/1/88
fish	Scomberi ocidae	Scombridae	1	17/1/88
crustacea			sev	17/1/88
starfish	Ophiotrix		2	17/1/88
coral, fine specimen	Goniastraca Vincentii		1	17/1/88
moth	Alpina angasii	Cremnophora angasii	1	20/5/91

Extracts from newspapers and other sources

[Current names of species have been given in square brackets for as many of the birds and animals mentioned as possible, as there has been much ongoing systemisation over the last century or so. Information on birds was obtained from Simpson & Day's *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*. Supplementary information, especially on fishes, was found, among others, on the Australian Museum site www.australianmuseum.net.au

Enthusiasm for such collecting was no doubt fostered by the South Australian Museum reports in the *South Australian Register* especially those written by 'An Amateur Naturalist'. Further encouragement would have come in the *South Australian Register* Friday 12 November 1886 on page 7:]

'Since I commenced to write these notes, it is very pleasing to state, a great many friends in various parts have begun to take an interest in the Museum, and kindly sent in to the various departments any thing that they find and think may be useful or interesting. Not many birds, or mammals have yet arrived, and amongst the few that have been sent in the greater part have already been noted as coming from previous donors. If notice is not repeated every time it must not be imagined that the gifts are not appreciated. Almost any thing that can be sent in is valuable,

either for the Museum here or for exchange with other Museums, which send us in return many things which we could not obtain except by purchase, sometimes at high prices. Birds and all sorts of native animals are especially desired in Mr. G. Beazley's department, where the skins are stuffed and the skeletons cleaned and set up. This latter operation requires that the bones should be perfect and unbroken—especially the heads. If friends wish their specimens to be of the most use, they will try to remember this—not to batter the poor things to pieces.

[Note that although much of the new plant and animal life (together with identification, classification and related information) had taken place in the 50 years from the *Buffalo's* arrival in South Australia up until the time of McDougall's involvement, some of the comments made by An Amateur Naturalist in his articles still apply today—125 or so years later. These particularly apply to the marine life—even now there are new discoveries being made and still to be made.]

South Australian Register 26 July 1892 page 3

OBITUARY.

The Late Mr. J. G. McDougall. LL.B.— We note with regret the death of Mr. James Gilbert McDougall, LL.B., which took place at his residence, Gawler, on Thursday, July 21. The deceased gentleman, who was only twenty-five years of age at the time of his death, was born at Wigan, Lancashire, England, and was educated at Brookfield College, Cumberland. Arriving in South Australia about nine years ago he entered the Education Department, and was for a time assistant at the Sturt-Street School. Weak health caused him to sever his connection with the department. After an interval he became articled to Mr. E. Gower (now S.M.) at Edithburgh, and was subsequently transferred to Mr. H. V. Uffindell, of Moonta, with whom he finished his articles. He passed his examination and took the degree of LL.B. in December last. The late Mr. McDougall was possessed of considerable ability, and promised to attain high proficiency in his profession. He was also an enthusiastic naturalist. He leaves a young widow, the marriage having taken place only a few months ago.

South Australian Register 7 July 1886 page 7

EDITHBURGH. ROYAL SOCIETY.

A new butterfly for South Australia, *Ogyria Amaryllis* [*Ogyris Amaryllis*], one of the blues, was also exhibited and described. It is ordinarily an inhabitant of Queensland, but last year specimens were captured on Yorke's Peninsula by Mr. J. G. McDougall. The male is different from the female in size and markings, and appears to have been undescribed hitherto.

[For comparison: a current internet entry 'From SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUTTERFLIES Data Sheet *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* (Bethune-Baker) (*Amaryllis Azure*)

O. amaryllis is a more isolated member of the group, and is the only member in which the post-median band on the underside of the forewings is strongly dislocated. In all other members the band is unbroken. The female is also unique in having large bright orange-red basal marks in the cell of the forewing underside. There are three colour forms of the butterfly in South Australia. A coastal form in which the black edges to the blue colouration of the butterfly wing uppersides are extensive; a widespread inland form in which the black edges are narrow; and an unusual very rare form found in northernmost South Australia in which the black edges (in the male at least) are

almost non-existent. The width of the black edge diminishes quickly away from the coast. The coastal and inland forms do not occur together, except near Whyalla on upper Eyre Peninsula.]

South Australian Register 10 November 1886 page 3

NOTES UPON ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM. [BY AN AMATEUR NATURALIST.]

Mr. James G. McDougall, of Edithburgh, sends in an Elephant-fish (*Callorhynchus antarcticus*) [*Callorhincus milii*], making about the fifth specimen of this curious Chimera-like shark that has come in during the past three months. He also sent in a very rare species of starfish, belonging to the Echinozoa, Class Ophiuroidea, Order Astrophytida, Genus Euryale. This is probably a new species, having many branched arms, long, closely jointed, and each joint showing strongly marked rings. No one would think when looking at a starfish that it was an animal — and a voracious animal—but it is so. They feed upon shellfish, crabs, anemones, worms, and all kinds of living and dead animals. They enfold their prey with their arms, protrude the lower portion of their stomach through the mouth and between the valves of the shellfish, or against the body of the crab or other matter upon which the starfish desires to feed, and the stomach folds over till the whole subject is enveloped. In this process the starfish is literally turned inside out. When the oyster cultivators at Ayling and elsewhere found that starfishes destroyed their oysters they dredged for them, tore the 'five-fingers' across, and threw them back into the sea. But they did not know then that they were capable of reproduction from the pieces, so that when they thought they were destroying their enemies they were doubling the number instead. Even a single arm has been known to reproduce the other four parts. The Ophiuroides derive their name from the Greek words ophis, snake; oura, tail; and eidos, form. The body is generally rather small, but they have long snake-like arms, and are rather active in their movements. The viscera in this genus are confined to the disc or body, which is not the case with the 'five fingers'. The great family of Echinodermata has been closely observed by naturalists, and there has been much discovered in respect to their anatomy and life history that is astonishing.

South Australian Register 12 November 1886 page 7

NOTES UPON ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM. BY AN AMATEUR NATURALIST.

Amongst *Mr. J. G. McDougall's* gifts were two eel-like fishes, belonging to the family Symbranchidae, and is probably *Chilobranchnus dorsalis* [Common Shore Eel *Alabes dorsalis*]. The walking fish (*Antennarius*) is one of those extraordinary creations which makes one think that they are not real, but must have been made up by some joker to puzzle the naturalists. (One very similar fish was named by the Count de Castelnau 'Chironectes filamentosus' [*Rhycerus filamentosus* or Tasselled Anglerfish])... The *Antennarius* is a very close relative to the *Malthe Vespertilio*. ... No two fishes of this class are exactly alike, and the genus is very puzzling to the ichthyologist. The *Pygopus squamiceps* [*Pygopus lepidopodis* Common Scaly Foot] a rather rare snake-like lizard -one of the animals which has degenerated from a quadruped, and is not on the progressive evolutionary track ...

[This entry illustrates the confusion particularly in marine identification at this stage. The *Malthe Vespertilio* is quite irrelevant. However there are several anglerfishes native to South Australia including the Tasselled Anglerfish. They are not easily seen as they live in reefs and under jetties and can be well camouflaged..] See Dianne J. Bray, 2012, Frogfishes, ANTENNARIIDAE, in Fishes of Australia, accessed 19 Jan 2016, <http://www.fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/family/343>

South Australian Register 15 November 1886 page 6

NOTES UPON ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM.

[By an Amateur Naturalist.]

From *Mr. J. McDougall*, Edithburgh, came a pair of butterflies. They belong to the division popularly called 'blues,' some of which are widely distributed, and others confined to various localities. This last is characteristic of those received. They belong to the genus *Ogyris*, and probably the species *O. otanes* (Felder), though they greatly resemble *O. idmo* (Hew).

[*O. otanes* Small brown Azure. *O. idmo* Large brown Azure.]

The Express and Telegraph 8 December 1886 page 3

ROYAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The monthly meeting of the Royal Society of South Australia was held at the Public Library on Tuesday evening, Professor Rennie presiding over a large gathering, ... Mr. A. Zietz exhibited a new species of hermit crab with two of its burrows, which were presented to the museum by Mr. J. G. McDougall, of Edithburgh.

South Australian Register 26 May 1887 page 6

NOTES UPON ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM.

[By an Amateur Naturalist.]

PREPARATEUR'S DEPARTMENT.

The donations here have been very numerous, and more than usually interesting. Two or three at least of the specimens are new to science, and some are new to the colony — that is, they may be known as existing elsewhere, but have never before been found here. Mr. James G. McDougall, of Edithburgh, has sent in a very remarkable kind of hermit crab, which makes a tunnel in a piece of hard stone and lives in it. The entrance is closed entirely by the two claws, which present the appearance of an operculum when the hole is closed up. Every one almost has seen a periwinkle in its shell, and has noticed the 'cap' on its head. The closed-up hole of this hermit crab is just as flat and as close as that of the periwinkle. The portions of the claws that are exposed, as well as the surface of the stone in the vicinity of the tunnel, are covered with a short weedy growth, which would completely hide the animal and its burrow. Mr. Zeitz has named this interesting hermit crab *Gryllopagurus lithodomus* [(Rock) Hermit Crab *Cancellus typus*], and he gave a proper scientific description of it before the Royal Society of this colony on May 3.

[Note: A photograph of the Rock Hermit Crab from Edithburgh, South Australia can be seen on www.animalsandearth.com]

South Australian Register 26 September 1887 page 7

DONATIONS TO THE PUBLIC MUSEUM.

The Museum Board acknowledge with thanks the following donations to the Public Museum : — During June — Preparator's Department. ... *J. McDougall*, Edithburgh— 1 *Chaetodon ocellipinnes* [*Tilodon sexfasciatus* Moonlighter], 1 *Sygnathus*, 1 *Olistherops*, 1 *Antennarius* (Walking Fish) [see above], and the following crustacea :— 1 *Pinnotherus*, 1 *Galathus*, 1 *Actaeus*, 1 *Alpheus villosus* [*Alpheus villosus* Hairy Snapping Shrimp], and 1 *Palinurus*. ...

South Australian Register 26 September 1887 page 7

NOTES UPON ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM.

By an Amateur Naturalist.

...

PREPARATEUR'S DEPARTMENT.

Mr. McDougall still continues to send rare specimens of the 'treasures of the deep.' His Chaetodon ocellipinnes [see above] is found also in Port Jackson Harbour. The name Chaetodon is 'vernacular,' because it is applied to several genera of the family Squamipinnes, which is arranged in three divisions. The whole of the family are beautiful both in shape and colour, and some of them would give a handsome design for a pair of 'aesthetic' bellows. This will serve as a hint to the pupils of Mr. H. P. Gill's School of Design who competed last session in the above direction. The Olistherops is one of the "weed fishes" allied to Odax, but it is not possible to find any description in ordinary books of natural history. The descriptions of Australian animals, whether water or land, but especially water animals, are either unwritten or else buried in all sorts of proceedings, transactions, papers, etc which are not obtainable by people of limited means. The Antennarius or Walking-fish is a very curious animal, belonging to the order Batrachidae, or frog-like fishes. It has been found to be impossible to systematize this family, as nearly every specimen secured shows some variation from its fellows. ...

[From the following entries in Wikipedia and the Australian Museum website it is evident that although much progress has been made, McDougall's comments concerning 'descriptions of Australian animals' still have relevance.]

From Wikipedia: Odacidae is a small family of fishes in the order [Perciformes](#), commonly known as butterfish, cales, and weed-whitings. They are related to the much larger families of the [wrasses](#) and [parrotfish](#).^[1] Odacids are found in coastal waters off [Southern Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#). They include species that feed on small invertebrates, as well as herbivorous grazers, some of which are able to feed on chemically unpleasant varieties of [kelp](#) otherwise unpalatable to fish.^[1]

From Australian Museum: As the name implies, the Weed Whitings occur in weedy areas often associated with rocky reefs. These fishes are only known from Australia and New Zealand. 12 species in 4 genera are recognised. [A picture] gallery shows some of them. Weed Whitings are have also been called Rock Whiting. They are currently grouped in the subfamily Odacinae in the family Labridae.]

South Australian Register 16 December 1887 page 6

DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

PREPARATEUR'S DEPARTMENT.

During September the Museum Committee had to acknowledge with thanks donations of interesting and valuable specimens of South Australian Natural History from the following persons:— James McDougall, Edithburgh; ...

South Australian Register 17 Jan 1888 page 7

The Museum Committee acknowledges with thanks donations from the following persons during the months of November and December:— J. McDougall, Edithburgh—1 small shark (undetermined), 1 fish (family Scomberi ocidae), several crustacea, 2 starfish with very long arms (Ophiothrix), 1 coral, fine specimen (Goniastraca Vincentii).

South Australian Register 1 March 1890 page 5

MOONTA INSTITUTE.— The annual meeting of subscribers of the above was held on Wednesday evening, February 26. ... A vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. McDougall for a collection of shells supplied for the museum and arranged by him in cases provided for that purpose. This department the committee hope, as soon as funds permit, to further extend.

South Australian Register 18 Nov 1890 page 5

FIELD NATURALISTS.— At the monthly meeting in the Public Library this evening papers will be read by Messrs. D. B. Adamson and J. G. McDougall.

The Kadina and Wallaroo Times 21 May 1890 page 2

VARIETIES OF SHELLS ON WALLAROO BEACH.
TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,-The leader in your issue of the 17th inst., on the subject of Institute Museums, referred to the fact that 120 to 150 species of shells were to be found on the Moonta and Wallaroo coasts. Perhaps it may interest some of your readers to know that these figures are a long way within the mark. In a little less than two years I have taken 275 different kinds of seashells in the district above mentioned, including seven species unknown before to scientists. There are also five kinds of landshells or snails to be found in this locality.

I am, etc.,

J. G. McDOUGALL

Proceedings of the Field Naturalists Section of the Royal Society of South Australia 1889-90 page 5

Mr. J.G.McDougall (a corresponding member) contributed a paper entitles "Notes on Birds found in the Scrub in the vicinity of Moonta." The paper stated that although to a casual observer bird life seemed to be somewhat sparse in the scrub surrounding Moonta, yet a residence of two years in the district had afforded the writer opportunities of observing several interesting species. After giving a brief description of the nature of the country surrounding Moonta, remarking that the fauna of a district depended in a great measure on its configuration and vegetation, the essayist proceeded to describe the most important of the birds that had come under his notice. His descriptions were accompanied by original observations as to the habits and characteristics of the birds. The paper was well received by the meeting, and the hope was expressed that other corresponding members would deal in a similar manner with the fauna of their respective districts.

South Australian Register 20 May 1891 page 5

FIELD NATURALISTS' MEETING. The monthly meeting of the Field Naturalists' Section of the Royal Society was held at the Public Library on Tuesday evening, ... a rare moth, for the first time obtained by the Museum, viz., *Alpina Angasii*, [*Cremnophora angasii*] sent by Mr. McDougall from near Moonta; and *Papilio Ulysses*, one of the most beautiful butterflies of Northern Queensland.

Annual Report of the Public Library Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia 1890-1891 Report from the Hon Curator of Molluscs for the Year ended June 30th, 1891

In my report to you last year I referred to the systematic record which I had commenced of the distribution of the molluscs of the colony. As contributors I have to thank ... and Mr J.G McDougall, of Moonta, for lists of bivalves which he has found at Tiparra and Wallaroo Bays ...'

Archibald Campbell's *Nests and eggs of Australian birds* 1901 online

Nests and eggs of Australian birds, including the geographical distribution of the species and popular observations thereon by [Archibald James Campbell](#) (1853-1929).

[Although there is no mention of Campbell in the diary, McDougall may well have met him during a visit to South Australia in 1887, given his many mentions in his diary of contact with naturalist [Robert Pulleine](#). At that time a young Pulleine was employed at the Public Library and spent much time in the Museum. His friendship with Pulleine also led to his meeting and getting to know [Professor Ralph Tate](#). Both Pulleine and Tate were able to share McDougall's enthusiasm for, as well as help further develop his knowledge of, the local shells.

Campbell's visit is referred to in the *Annual Report of the Public Library* etc 1886-1887 in the 'Report from the Taxidermist and Articulator for the year ending June 30th, 1887.]

Birds eggs – The Museum possesses a good collection of eggs and a good many nests, which have not hitherto been exhibited. During the past year these have been examined and identified with a view to exhibiting them. In this connection I beg to thank Mr A.J. Campbell, a member of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, for the valuable assistance which he gave to this work during his recent visit to Adelaide, as well as for the further assistance which he has kindly promised.'

[There are seven references in [Campbell's Nests and eggs to Mr James G. McDougall in volume 1](#) on pages 56, 62, 89, 106, 239, 468 and 479 and four references to [Mr James G. McDougall in volume 2](#) on pages 543, 683, 741 and 848, shown below.]

Page 56 On the Yorke Peninsula, S.A., Mr. J. G. McDougall notes that the Ravens [*Little Raven Corvus mellori*] lay as early as July 21st.

Page 62 Writing from Yorke Peninsula, S. Australia, Mr. James G. McDougall states: "The Black Magpie (*S. melanoptera*) [*Black Winged Currawong Streptera Versicolor melanoptera*] builds a nest hardly distinguishable from that of the Magpie, but somewhat larger. Eggs, two ; breeds October. A rather scarce bird with us."

Page 89 With reference to this [harmonious or grey] thrush [Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*] building its nest in or upon deserted nests of other birds, Mr. James G. McDougall, of South Australia, informs me that on Yorke Peninsula old Magpie or Babblers' (Pomatorinus) [White Browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus*] nests are selected, which are neatly re-lined with bark.

Page 106 In South Australia, Mr. James G. McDougall states that the Brown Flycatcher or "Post Sitter," as he calls the bird [Jacky Winter also Stump Bird *Microeca fascinans*], begins to breed September or October, laying a pair of eggs, as it does in Victoria.

Page 239 Mr. Jas. G. McDougall. writing from Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, says, regarding this species, "six eggs are not unusual. " but he did not denote whether he meant a clutch including Cuckoos' eggs. I may here mention, in regard to the Yellow-tailed Tit [Yellow rumped thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*] laying eggs white and sometimes faintly spotted, I never recollect finding both in the same nest. Instances of nests with the spotted eggs are in small proportion to the number of nests with the usual pure white eggs. Mr. James G. McDougall informs me he has taken the eggs of this species in South Australia, where it is in some places called the Kangaroo Bird, early in July. [White Browed Babbler]

Page 468 I quote the following from remarks kindly furnished me by Mr. James McDougall, Yorke Peninsula, South Australia: "Artamus personatus. " The Masked Wood Swallow [dusky wood swallow] appeared in numbers in September, 1885, and nested the following month, the nest being indistinguishable from those of the common Wood Swallow (*A. sordidus*). The males were very few in proportion to the number of females. Absent 1886 and 1887."

Page 479 Mr. James G. McDougall observed on Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, that the Spotted-sided Finch [Diamond Firetail] usually laid six eggs during October and November.

Page 543 A note from Mr. James McDougall, Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, states. "The Owlet Nightjar is a somewhat scarce bird, nesting and living in holes of trees, from which it slips out on the slightest alarm, thus betraying its eggs, which are two, white, and somewhat round. '

Page 683 Writing from Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, Mr. James G. McDougall states he found the Bronze-wing a rare bird there, while its Brush congener was common in the mallee scrub and melaleuca swamps, and further, that the kangaroo hunters rear and sell the young of the latter bird.

Page 741 I possess two notes on the Pectoral Rail [Lewins Rail] from different parts of Australia. One is from Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, written by Mr. James McDougall, who says : " The Pectoral Rail breeds every year on Trowbridge Islands, as I am informed by the lighthouse keepers, who see the young and old feeding at dawn and dusk. I have seen the birds but not the eggs, which number seven or eight. The birds arrive at the end of August, and leave in February. "

Page 848 Mr. Jas. McDougall, writing from Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, says ; "I send you two eggs of *Sternula nereis* [Fairy tern *Sternula nereis*. Now vulnerable.], but not the true clutch. These were got in November, 1886, at a sandy point, about two miles from Edithburgh, laid in a depression in the sand or seaweed, a few yards above high-water mark. There are two broods, one in November and one at the New Year. The birds are very numerous, and hover screeching

above the head of an intruder, darting at him if he approach the nest too closely. The birds, which are seen seldom, and then only singly, are already beginning to assemble." I am inclined to think that the second broods mentioned by Mr. McDougall are merely birds that have laid late in the season. Breeding months, November, December and January.