

# Obituary.

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## **John Donald McDougall.**

Deep regret will be felt by the West of Scotland Branch at the loss of one of their best known and most active members, Mr. John D. McDougall. Joining the Association through that branch in October, 1909, he soon came to take a prominent part in the meetings of the branch, and served for some time as a member of its council. In 1915 he was elected as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, and in this capacity he served for

five years, discharging the duties of the offices with great success, at a time when on account of the national emergency it was particularly difficult to maintain interest in purely scientific matters. In the sessions 1923-24 and 1924-25 he occupied the presidential chair, and proved an exceptionally able and popular president. Both before and after his presidentship, his participation in the affairs of the branch was interrupted at times by the exigencies of his business or by absence from the country, but he always resumed his attendance and interest as soon as circumstances allowed. In 1929 he was again called to office, in the capacity of Vice-President, and this position he continued to occupy throughout the past three sessions.

Mr. McDougall was engaged in the copper trade, and from his practical knowledge of mechanics and metal working was much interested in the mechanism of optical and other astronomical instruments. He was a keen judge of the qualities of telescopes, and was an assiduous and highly-skilled observer. He read papers to the branch on various occasions, observation of the planets and satellites and study of their motions being among the subjects to which he gave particular attention. In addition he was a frequent speaker at the meetings, and his remarks always formed a useful contribution to the discussions. His services were not, however, confined to those rendered at formal meetings. Many members will gratefully recognise the benefit they received from private conversation with him. He was always most willing to aid others with advice as to telescopic observation or with explanations of astronomical problems in which they had found difficulty. His conversation was listened to with pleasure and profit, and such discussion was evidently not a trouble but a pleasure to himself also.

In addition to his astronomical work, Mr. McDougall took an interest in the various branches of nature study, and in outdoor rambles was in the habit of noting and pointing out to others what could be learned in field observation about rocks, trees, animals, birds, and insects. As a result of a visit to the West Indies which he had occasion to make a year or two ago he possessed an interesting collection of preserved specimens of some of the smaller forms of life found in a tropical climate. This side of his activities rendered him specially useful to the Boy Scouts, an organisation in which he took a keen practical interest.

It was a very prominent feature in Mr. McDougall's character that he pursued the quest of scientific knowledge purely for the delight he felt in it himself, and in imparting his information to others, and not for purposes of material advantage. He gave his services voluntarily, not only without grudging, but with sincere pleasure. He was so untiring, enthusiastic, and energetic, that none of his friends had conceived it possible he would be taken away so suddenly, in the midst of his activities, and at so comparatively early an age. The loss of his bright and cheery personality will be deeply regretted, but it must be recognised as in a sense appropriate that his death should have occurred without any premonition, without any preceding period

of lingering illness, and while actively engaged in the work he had so much at heart.

He died suddenly on Saturday, June 18, at the Boy Scouts' Camp at Auchengillan, Stirlingshire. He was buried on Tuesday, June 21, at Craigton Cemetery, Glasgow. Among the large company attending the funeral was a contingent of Boy Scouts. The West of Scotland Branch of our Association was represented by three past-Presidents, Messrs. Henry McEwen, Thomas L. MacDonald, and John J. Ross, and a floral tribute of respect from the branch was laid on the grave. The forenoon of the day had been cloudy, but when the funeral took place the sun was shining brightly, and it seems a fitting accompaniment that just as the ceremony of committing his mortal remains to earth was conducted, the solstitial sun was crossing the meridian (1.19 p.m., summer time), at the highest altitude it attains in the sky during the year.

The deepest sympathy of the branch will be extended to his sorrowing widow, family, and relatives.—J. J. R.