



## Port Augusta – then and now

### Transcript – D4221/1 (L)

#### Journal of Edward Dowsett

Journal of the government schooner 'Yatala' 6 May 1852 - 31 May 1852 by the master Edward Dowsett - refers to the naming of Port Augusta.

D 4221/1(L)

Transcribed by Helen Davies 2007

Journal of the Government Schooner 'Yatala' Port Adelaide – Captain Edward Dowsett

[Shows a drawing in landscape view of a rough map. This could be the top of the Gulf, with dotted lines showing edges of tidal flats. Within an elongated shape, perhaps a channel through the mudflats, appears something resembling: To Yunta 22 ? 2858° E ? Inland is the faint outline of a horse, and possibly a kangaroo and mountains. See also the last page of book with the word Sands near a channel, which could be a continuation of this page]

Government Schooner Yatala

Thursday  
May 6th 1852

This day Reced Flour Potatoes 8 lb ?  
for Archdecon Hale Port Lincoln  
Shippd all my crew 9 in Number and  
Provisions for one month Passengers  
Messrs Elder Grainger Gentlemen One  
Sapper and One Assistant At 4 PM  
Saild from the Buoy, At 7 PM Brough[t]  
the Vessel to anchor at the Light Reach  
Wind South Light this Ends 24 Hours

Friday  
May 7th

At 7 AM Weighd Anchor And  
made Sail Wind Light from  
NE At Noon Calmn At 7PM Brought  
up At Troubridge Shoal Island Bearing  
S by E. in 7 fathoms Calmn all Night



Saturday  
May 8th

At day Light Weighd Anchors  
Wind SE Light With Rain  
at 9 AM Brought the Vessel to  
Anchor Close the Wreck of the Washington  
Went on Board for My Kedge Anchor at  
11AM Weighd Anchor And made Sail

At Noon Abreast of Troubridge hill  
Weather thick And Raining hard.  
At 5 P.M. At Cape Spencer Came through  
the inshore Passage with a strong Breeze  
from the SE at 10 PM Abreast of the Wedg [e]  
Island at Midnight thistle Island Bearng  
West hove the Vessel to for day Light  
Wind S.E. Blowing Strong with Rain  
So this Ends those 24 Hours

Sunday May 9th

At day Light Squared Away  
and Made Sail at at 8 AM Rounded  
Snapper Rock at 9 AM Brought  
up at Port Lincoln Messrs Elder & I ? Grainger  
Went on Shore Wind South Blowing  
fresh all day at 6 PM Gave the Vessel  
more Chain And the Port Anchor and the ?  
Cockbill At Midnight Blowing hard Wind South.

Monday May 10

At 9AM went on Shore had  
Mr. Bishop Boat to discharge the  
Cargo At Noon All discharged at  
One PM Came on Board Messrs Elder  
and Mr Grainger and three more Passengers

and One Aboriginal Native at 4 PM Weighd  
Anchor And made All Possible Sail at  
6 PM Passed Point Bolingbroke Blowing  
strong with a Heavy Sea on at 10 PM took  
in the Square Sail at 11 PM in top Gallt Sail  
At Midnight stowd the top Sail And Single  
Reefd the Mainsail hove the Lead at  
Every half Hour Water Seventeen fathoms.

Tuesday May 11th



At 4 AM hove the Vessel to.at  
5 AM Squard Away Soundings  
Seven Fathoms Run ? All the boat  
down in 2/4 to 4 Fathoms Water at 2 PM  
Brought up on account of not being Certain  
of the Place for the Weather thick And  
Hazy With Light Squalls of Rain Sent the  
Whale Boat on Shore with Mr Elder Stuckey  
Henderson and the Native to see where  
the Place to Land at 3 P.M. Came on  
Board And Said the Place \was/ further up  
Weighd anchor And Made Sail  
At 5 PM Abreast of the Landing Place

And Brought the Vessel to An Anchor in  
3/2 Fathoms of Water Midle Bank Mount  
North End Bearing WNW Mount Young  
Bearing N by E distance Eight Miles  
Blowing fresh All Night Wind South  
With 45 fathom's of Chains. So this Ends 24 Hours

Wednesday May 12.

This day Still Blowing from the  
Southward at 9 AM Mannd the  
Boat Mr Elder Mr Grainger Gentlemen  
Messrs Peters Stucky And Henderson And  
the Black Native Went on Shore at Noon  
the Boat Returnd – At Midnight Wind SE  
Blowing fresh

Thursday May 13

At Noon the Parties Came down  
to the Beach Sent the Boat on  
Shore Messrs Elder & Mr Grainger  
Mr Harris the Sapper and Mr Peters Came off  
Sent the Boat on Shore for Ms Stucky And  
Henderson And the Sappers Assistant  
And Black Native At 3:30 Weighd Anchor

and Made Sail Wind SE fine Stiff  
Breeze: Run Down in ten fathoms Water  
At 9 PM Brought up in 3¼ fathoms  
under Point Lowly fine Clear Star  
Light Night



Friday May 14th.

At 8 AM Made Sail Steering  
N ½ E. At 10 AM Calmn At Noon  
Mannd the Whaleboat With  
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Harris  
Government Surveyor At 4 PM A Light  
Breeze from the Southward At 5:30  
Brought the Vessel to Anchor in 3 Fathoms  
water at 6 PM Whaleboat Returned from  
the Bluff With all the Parties Could  
find No Harbour Bluff Bearing NW  
Distance from two to three miles –

Saturday May 15

This day fine Weather at 9 AM  
Mannd both Boats Mr Elder Mr Grainger  
Mr Peters And Myself and 4 Hands  
in the Whale Boat, Too ? L Right inshore  
Carrying from 2 to 6 fathoms Well  
into the Bay Pulld along Shore towards  
the Noth Bluff fell in the Channel

Carrying from 2/4 to 4 fathoms  
Right up to the Head Caught a fine  
fish calld a Snook: And Plenty of Snappr.  
Lost all Our Hooks in Coming on Board  
Laid a buoy Down on the South Side  
of the Channel in 3 fathoms And  
Pulld Over on to the North Side of the  
Channel in to 3 fathoms And in Crossing  
the Mid channel Depth 7 Fathoms.  
Distance Across About half of A Mile  
At 5 Came on Board With the Whale Boat  
At 6 the Skifs ? Came On Board Wind  
Shifted Round to North With A fresh Breeze –

Sunday May 16th

This day blowing hard from  
the Southward Boat Went On  
Shore And brought Some Snappr  
fish At 4 PM Came On board A  
Smoke Made on the Bluff Sent the  
Boat On Shore. A Man from Mr  
Pattersons Station Sent Some Meat  
On Board At 7 P.M. Gave the Vessel  
More Chain Blowing fresh from South



Al Night. So this Ends those 24 Hours

Monday May 17/52 [presumably 1852]

This day Blowing fresh from  
South. Slung five Breakers  
and Laid them down on the South  
Side of the Channel and the Small  
boat Keg. \For buoy/ G in three fathoms at Low  
Water at One PM Came On Board  
Weigd Anchor And Made Sail  
Stretch Over to the West Shore And  
Put About. Stood in for the Channel  
At 3:30 Brought the Vessel to An Anchor  
in 2½ Fathoms of Water Weighd Anchor  
Made Sail Run Higher up the Harbour  
Brought up in 3 fathoms of Water Went  
on Shore to Some Natives at Sun  
down Came On Board Weather fine  
Wind SE So this Ends those 24 Hours

Tuesday May 18 52

At 7 AM Breakfasted At 8:30 AM  
Messrs Elder And Grainger Went in  
the Skiff And All the Passengers Mr Harris  
and Assistant Also to Survey on Shore  
Myself Mannd the Whaleboat And Surv\yed/  
the Channel took Bearings at Four

Different Possitions from the Buoys on  
the South Side of the Channel to the  
North Side at 12.30 Past Noon Weighd Anchor  
And Came Over the 2 fathoms Bank at  
Low Water up to the Narrow Entrance  
At Dark Brought up in 3 fathoms in the  
Narrow Channel At 7 PM High Water  
Weather fine with Light Rain Wind Light  
from E. So this End those 24 Hours

Wednesday May 19/52 [the number 5 is unclear, could be 7]

This day Commences With  
strong Breezes from the  
Westward.. Crew Employd  
Variously Repairing Mainsail And  
scraping the Vessels binds Mr Elder  
Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Henderson



Mr Harris Went On Shore in the Whale Boat  
At Low Water Run the Kedge Out the  
Whole Length of the Warp. At 6 P.M  
the Whale Boat Came on board the Report  
Was No Landing Place At the Head of the  
Creek the Only Place for Landing At

Flagstaff Hill Wind West blowing  
hard High Water At 8 P.M. This ends 24 Hours

Thursday May 20/52

Those 24 Commences With Strong  
Gales from SW at 7 A.M.  
Run My Large Kedge out to the South  
With My full Length of the Warp this  
Blowing Very hard With heavy Rains  
the Boat Went up the Creek A Snappering  
At 5:30 PM Came On Board With Seven  
Large Snappers at 9PM Weather Modera\ted/  
At 8/30 High Water Windy Still Blowing  
fresh this Ends those 24 Hours

Friday May 21,, 52

This day still Blowing Strong  
from the Southward At 9 AM  
Went On Shore to form A Township  
Also A Place to Build a Wool Shed  
At 2 PM. Came on board took up all  
buoys and flags, Discoverd A Creek –  
Running inland from 3 to four  
Miles – At 8 PM let Go the Port Anchor  
under her fore foot Squalls Very Heavy  
So this Ends those 24 Hours  
High Water 8:30 PM tide Rises 6 feet

Saturday May 22/52

At day Light Commenced  
to Unmoor the Vessel hove  
the Starboard Anchor home  
from the buoy Rope hove the Kedge up  
And Made Sail down to the Buoy  
Brought up in two Fathoms Mistook  
the Buoys On Account of being Drifting  
Men Went to Breakfast At 10 AM Weighd



Anchor And Made Sail beat down to the  
Buoys \and Brought up to her Anchor in 3 fathoms/. x Mannd the Boat and weighd all  
the Buoys. I found All the Buoys drifted  
into one fathom Water And one  
Buoy Lost At 3 PM Weighd Anchor  
And Sailed up the Gulf under the  
topsail and Outer Jib At 4.30 PM  
Brought up at Pelican [Curlew is written above] Point in Rounding  
too the Vessel Stuck on the East Bank  
Run the Kedge out on the Starboard Quarter  
At 5PM Came off, A Strong flood tide  
Setting up Depth of Water in Channel  
5 fathoms the Vessel Completely Land Lock  
At 9.30 PM Vessel tending tide

Wind South afresh Breeze fine Night  
So this Ends those 24 Hours. x

Sunday May 23,, 52

This day fine Weather Wind  
South At 9 AM Mannd the  
Whale Boat And Went On  
Shore to the first high Land through  
a Distance of Mangrove Swamp  
At 3 PM Came On Board Mr Elder Mr Harris ?  
Mr Stucky found a fine Beach Whith  
And Deep Water hard Ground Appear  
ing by from the Range to form a Road  
Down to the Beach fine Clear Night Wind  
South Light. At 9:30 High Water Ends those 24 Hours.

Monday May 24/52 + 1

At day Break Breakfasted. At 7/30  
AM Mannd the Whale Boat Myself  
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Harris Mr Peters  
Sailed up to Port Augusta And Sounded  
the Channel Right to the Landing Place  
Carrying Soundings from 3/2 to 5/2 Fathoms  
of Water Abreast of the Landing Place 5  
fathoms, Within 70 feet of the Beach 2  
Fathoms Went on Shore to Look at A  
Lake to See Whether it Was Salt or fresh

We found it Salt Came Direct to  
the Boat,. Erected On the Beach a  
flagstaff. Gave three Cheers. 3 times three  
And Named it Port Augusta Came down





on Board At Noon Made Sail And beat  
down the Gulf abreast of Where We Wanted  
to Go on Shore at 5 PM Brought up in  
3/2 Fathoms of Water Wind South fine  
Night High Water 10 PM this Ends those 24 Hours

Tuesday May 25. 1852

At day light: Breakfaasted. Mannd  
the Whale Boat Whith 4 Hands  
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Harris  
And Myself Went on the East Shore to  
Search the Bay And to find A Landing  
place Pull all Round the North End of the  
Bay Went On Shore And Walk Round to head  
the Creek found it to be All Mangroves Came  
down to the Boat And Pulld Up a Creek About  
2 Miles from the Entrance up to 4 feet Water  
Carrying from four fathoms to 2 fathoms  
but Could find No Landing Place Came  
on board at 1.30 P.M Crew Went to dinner

At 2 P.M. weighd anchor And Made  
Sail Wind SSW And beat down to  
the dry Spit Carrying Water from Eight  
fathoms in Midchannel to three & Half  
on both Sides of the Channel At 5/30 P.M.  
Brought up in five fathoms With twenty  
two fathoms of Chain Out, Wind SW Light  
So this Ends those twenty four Hours

Wednesday May 26/52

At 7:30 AM Went On Shore  
in the Whaleboat Mr Elder  
Mr Grainger Mr Peters And Mr Harris  
Self Mr Elder Mr Peters Walked up to the  
Hills to See What there Was to be found  
Nothing of Any Importance At Noon  
Came on Board Calmn Weighd Anchor  
and Dropd down With the tide At  
5 P.M. Brought up under A Sandspit ?  
Wind South Little Wind fine Night

Thursday May 27 52

At 8 AM Weighd Anchor Light Air  
from the Eastward Strong flood  
tide Loosing Ground Brought up under  
the Spit Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters





And Myself Mr Anderson [Henderson ?] Went On Shore  
And found a Quantity of Iron Ore  
And Quartz At Noon Came On board  
At 1.30 PM Weighd Anchor Wind South  
And beat down towards Point Lowly  
bearing S by E Dist 8 Miles brought up at  
6PM in five fathoms Water At 9 PM  
a Light Air from NE Weighd Anchor Made  
All Possible Sail At Midnight Rounded  
Point Lowly breeze freshening Wind NW

Friday May 28/52

At 2 AM A Stiff breeze Mount Youn\g/  
bearing West Soundings 8 Fathoms  
At 8AM Off Franklings Harbour With a Eight  
Knot Breeze top Mast And Lower Studding  
Sail Set at 10 AM took in Studding  
Sails And [Square ?] Sail Wind Scant  
At 6.30PM Made the Islands Put About  
And Stood in for the Main at 10:30  
Brought up in 4 Fathoms Tumby Bay  
Weather Squally Wind West Ends 24 Hours.

Saturday 29 May 52

At day Light Weighd Anchor  
Made Sail Wind West at 8  
AM Rounded Point Bolinbroke  
At One PM Brought up in Port Lincoln  
At 2 PM Mr Elder Mr Grainger [written above Stuckey, which has been crossed out] Mr  
Stuckey  
Mr Peters Mr Henderson And the Aborigine  
Went on Shore Wrote a Note to Messrs  
Stucky And Henderson On Account of  
them Going up to Adelaide As Passengers  
At 11.30 PM Came on board Wind NNW  
fine Clear Night this Ends those 24 Hours

Sunday 30th May 52

At 7 AM Weighd Anchor Wind  
NW At 8 AM At Snapper Rock at  
Noon Abreast of Wedge Island At 6 PM  
Came through between the Main And  
Althorps Island At Midnight Troubri\dge/  
Island Bearing NW Wind Nrth ? fine  
Moon Light Night this Ends those 24 Hours



Monday 31st May 52

At 4 A.M. Put About Close in  
to Holdfast Bay Wind NE  
At Noon Passed the Light Ship And Came  
Over the Bar At 4 PM Brought up at

the Yatala Moorings Weather fine  
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Sappers And Miners  
Mr Harris, And Assistant Mr Stuckey Mr  
Henderson All Left in A Watermans  
Boat. So thus Ends those 24 Hours.

[In a different heavy ink handwriting:  
Messrs Elder & Granger  
Sappers & Miners  
Harris  
Henderson]

[In smaller print]

This is a limited edition facsimile of Captain Edward Dowsett's  
log of his historic journey in the discovery of Port Augusta,  
South Australia, 1839, whilst skipper of the government  
schooner 'Yatala'.

This reprint is for the sole intention for distribution to family members of the Dowsett  
Family.

This numbered, bound copy of only twenty, is not for commercial  
resale. One copy of which has been returned to the archives of the  
Mortlock Library In South Australia as a record and for the library's  
use. This ensures the life and preservation of Captain Dowsett's  
original log, as part of South Australia's history is kept in its  
original condition.

My personal thanks to the State Library of South Australia and  
their staff.

[Shows an Indistinct map, possibly of channel, with the word Sand above, possibly a  
continuation of Page 2.]