

RANDELL MEMORIAL

ROTUNDA AT MANNUM

OPENED BY MR. NEWLAND

THE FIRST MURRAY STEAMBOAT.

MANNUM. January 1.
The Randell Memorial Rotunda at Mannum was opened today during the luncheon interval of the New Year sports. The structure is situated on the Recreation Reserve in a central position and on the bank of the river. It is an imposing and ornamental building, and being built of iron throughout will stand the test of time and weather for many years to come. The shape is octagonal, with a domed roof, culminating in a spire. The contractor was Mr. W. Dahl, of Mannum, and the cost of the structure was £250. This amount was subscribed locally, and only a small portion of the sum remains to be paid.

The opening ceremony was performed by Mr. Simpson Newland, who was introduced by the chairman of the Mannum Progress Committee (Mr. S. B. von Doussa). The chairman in outlining the history of the movement to perpetuate the memory of the late Captain Randell stated that in the first place the idea of erecting a rotunda met with little response from outsiders, but the people of Mannum being undaunted in their determination to make some fitting memorial the present structure had been erected. The Government had been approached with regard to financial assistance, which was, however, refused. Great credit was due to the Mannum Progress Committee for bringing about the completion of its object.

Mr. Newland then severed the cord and declared the rotunda open. At the same time he unveiled a tablet bearing the following inscription:—"Memorial to Captain W. R. Randell, first steam navigator of the Rivers Murray, Murrumbidgee, and Darling. Born March 2nd, 1824. Died March 4, 1871."

Mr. Newland said there was no prouder, more honorable name in this State than William R. Randell. He was an old colonist, arriving in the year 1837. He was truly a pioneer in a double sense, since in his early life he helped to develop the land and later took a premier part in developing Australia's great River Murray system, with which his name would be for ever associated in historical, indelible letters. In the latter part of 1852 William Randell came to the determination, probably long thought of, to build a steamer and navigate the Murray, hoping also to promote a con-

of, to build a steamer and navigate the Murray, hoping also to promote a connection with the Snowy River diggings—a bold idea of an enterprising man. The timber for the boat was cut at Gumeracha and carted by teams to Mannum.

On March 25, 1853, the first steamboat that floated on the River Murray, the Mary Ann, with Captain W. R. Randell, owner, his brother Thomas probably mate, and crew, took her departure for the first cruise up the Murray, loaded with about 20 tons of cargo. The water was low, but she made her way as far as Pen's Reach, 20 or 30 miles above the North-West Bend, and stuck. Unable to proceed farther a return was made to Mannum. When the annual rise in the Murray came in August a second start was made and the Mary Ann proceeded in her solitary way, passed her old turning-back point, passed Overland Corner, passed the Darling Junction (now Wentworth), to near the junction of the Murrumbidgee, where the Lady Augusta and barge Eureka, with Captain Cadell, Governor Sir Henry Young, and the vice-regal party, overtook her. After that there were changes in the leading position, but the Lady Augusta was the more powerful boat, and she reached Swan Hill two hours before the Mary Ann. The Lady Augusta proceeded no farther, but the Mary Ann went to somewhere about where Echuca now stood.

William Randell was also the first to navigate the Murrumbidgee as far as Lang Crossing, now the town of Hay. Steamers had made a few trips on the River Darling as far as a point where the town of Wilcannia was now situated. Captain Randell being anxious to know whether the Upper Darling was suitable for navigation started with a small cargo on a voyage of exploration, and reached a part of the river then known as the Native Fisheries, 1800 miles from the sea. Owing to a reef of rock he was unable to proceed farther. Captain Randell was undeniably the first navigator of the River Murray, Murrumbidgee, and Upper Darling. After returning from trading on the rivers Captain Randell entered public life as a member for the district in which he lived. He was a well-known and popular figure in the House of Assembly, but best known as the pioneer navigator of the Murray.

That was an opportune time to make a suggestion. The people of Mannum had honored the man who in doing so much for the country so greatly benefited their town. Would it not be a graceful act for the people of Goolwa to take the initiative in similarly recognizing the services which that other great navigator (Francis Cadell) rendered to the colony and more especially to that district? The names of the boats owned and run successively by Captain Randell were:—Mary Ann, Gemina, Bunyip, Bogan, Nil Desperandum, Ariel, Corowa, Waradgery, Robt. Tyro, and Mannum.

gan, Nil Desperandum, Ariel, Corowa, Waradgery, Ruby, Tyro, and Mannum.

Sir Richard Butler also addressed the gathering.

Mr. David Shearer, on behalf of the progress committee, proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers for their addressees. The motion was carried with acclamation. Sir Richard and Mr. Newland responded.

The rotunda was occupied for the first time by the Murray Bridge and Mannum Brass Bands, which rendered selections.
