

UNVEILING OF PLAQUE

DISCOVERY OF MARANO

In the Town Hall on Tuesday evening last Mr. F. J. Mulhavy, Deputy Mayor, and chairman of the Centenary Celebrations, presided at the unveiling of the Plaque by Mrs. H. Robertson to commemorate the finding of the district by Sir Thomas Mitchell. He apologised for the absence of Mr. Williams (Mayor), Mr. J. R. Taylor, M.L.A., and Mr. Adermann, M.H.R.

The speakers were introduced by Mr. N. Neish.

The chairman welcomed Mrs. Robertson (FRGSA., MBE), president of the Royal Geographical Society, and Mr. D. A. O'Brien, secretary, and thanked them for coming to Roma.

At the conclusion of Mrs. Robertson's address, which was very interesting, Miss Hope Spencer presented her with a bouquet of flowers from the committee.

Mr. O'Brien spoke at length of the activities of the Geographical Society.

Mr. Neish moved a vote of thanks to the speakers, and was supported by Mr. W. G. Mayne.

The National Anthem concluded a very interesting and historical occasion.

Mrs. Robertson and Mr. O'Brien were later the guests of Mr. and Mrs. O'Carroll for supper.

MRS. ROBERTSON'S ADDRESS

"I count it a very high honour to have been invited—as president of the Royal Geographical Society, Australasia (Queensland) to visit Roma on such a historic occasion, and to unveil the plaque commemorating the centenary of Sir Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General and explorer.

As one looks back over the past century, marking the milestones, reviewing the great achievements which have opened up this wonderful land, is to make the discovery that we have some tradition, some history, some great forebears who have trodden the hard road of heroism and desperate endurance. It is also to find romance in building up the picture of the past and weaving its story into the background of our thinking. Those ancestors, the brave hardy pioneers march before us and we realise that their enduring toil built up our great Australian nation, and the remembrance of their adventurous deeds surely inspire and unite us in mind and heart with an intense love for Australia. Into the history of this town of Roma is woven the story of the travels of a very great

history of this town of Roma is woven the story of the travels of a very great explorer, and here we can trace the marks of his footsteps.

The name of Sir Thomas Mitchell will always be cherished and is of imperishable fame. The great value of his expeditions lay in the fact that they made known areas of sheep and cattle country and his explorations in NSW and Port Phillip earned him a knighthood. Sir Thomas Mitchell's explorations in Moreton Bay took place in 1845, before Leichhardt's last journey in 1848. The latter's noted expedition to Port Essington was made in 1844-45, so the histories of the two explorers belong to the same period.

Mitchell started from Sydney, and was thus obliged to travel some hundreds of miles before he reached the confines of Moreton Bay country. His great aim was to find in the north an inland river which flowed into the Carpentaria. It was thought such a river would open up a comparatively easy line of communication between the south and the waters of the Gulf. Australia had established a trade in horses with India, and to avoid the difficult navigation of Torres Strait, an overland route from Sydney was proposed to the Gulf of Carpentaria. On December 15, 1845, Mitchell started and travelled to the furthest homesteads of the pioneers of the Bogan. Mitchell soon located the marked trees of his former expedition to the Bogan. Heat was intense, water very scarce, and travelling to the Macquarie River there was still very little water until a great storm in far off mountains fortunately provided an abundance.

A line of armed warriors was in the vicinity of the Culgoa River, which Mitchell reached in April, 1846. Mitchell made a temporary retreat to avoid hostilities, and more friendly relations were established later, and the party went on to the Balonne river, where Mitchell rested at a natural rocky crossing, which he named St. George's Bridge. Continuing after some days, Mitchell came to another river joining the Balonne, which he named the Marano. Mrs. Robertson gave a brief review of the remainder of Mitchell's expedition.

Mr. Archie Anderson, a member of the centenary committee, presented Mrs. Robertson with a vulgus inkstand, suitably inscribed, as a memento of the occasion.