

Paddle Steamer Mary Ann

First Steamer on the Murray-Darling, 1853



Captain William Randell (1824 - 1911)

William Richard Randell was only 13 when he came to South Australia with his family in 1837. Despite his lack of experience, he soon became one of the best-known river boat captains. Starting with the **Mary Ann**, he built up a fleet of boats, erected the first building in Mannum (the Wool Store), and established a dry dock. The No 1 Weir and Lock at Blanchetown is named after him.

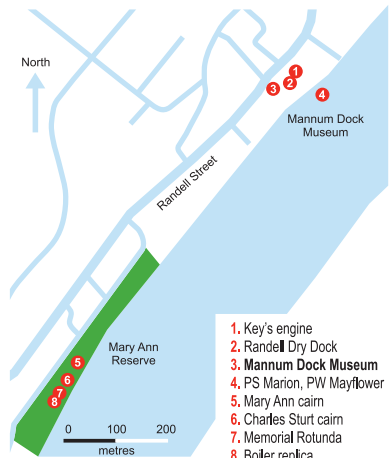


Captain Randell in 1881, aged 57

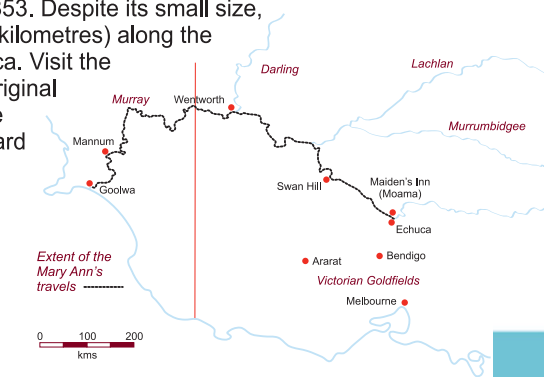
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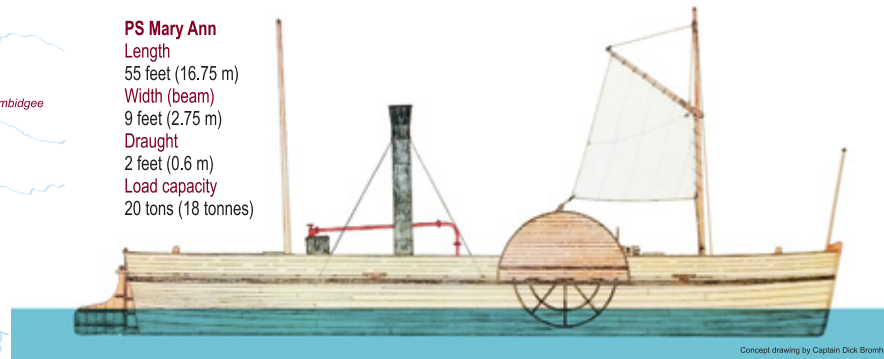
The **PS Mary Ann** was launched in 1853. Despite its small size, it was able to travel 3000 miles (4800 kilometres) along the Murray, from Goolwa to Moama/Echuca. Visit the **Mannum Dock Museum** to see the original boiler of the **Mary Ann** and learn more about the river trade. You can also board the **PS Marion**, launched in 1897. Admission charges apply.



1. Key's engine
2. Randell Dry Dock
3. Mannum Dock Museum
4. PS Marion, PW Mayflower
5. Mary Ann cairn
6. Charles Sturt cairn
7. Memorial Rotunda
8. Boiler replica



PS Mary Ann
 Length
 55 feet (16.75 m)
 Width (beam)
 9 feet (2.75 m)
 Draught
 2 feet (0.6 m)
 Load capacity
 20 tons (18 tonnes)



Concept drawing by Captain Dick Bromhead

Building the Mary Ann

The **Mary Ann** was designed and built by William Randell and his brothers. Incredibly Randell had never built or sailed a boat before. The frame was made at their flour mill in Gumeracha and hauled to the river where it was completed in February 1853. The boiler and engine were made by local engineers in Adelaide.

In 1855 the **Mary Ann** was lengthened and then became half of the twin-hulled **Gemini** which travelled up the Murrumbidgee in 1858.

The Concertina Boiler

The **Mary Ann's** first boiler was square – just about the worst shape for a vessel full of steam under pressure. William Randell had to wrap it with heavy chains to keep it safe but it worked. Under pressure, the sides of the boiler flexed and Randell called it his "concertina" boiler. Towards the end of 1853, Randell replaced the boiler and the old one was dumped.

Nearly 40 years later it was salvaged and put on display in Mannum's main street. In June 1912 it was put on a concrete base under a protective roof and in 1930 it was moved to the Mary Ann Reserve. In 2001, the old boiler was moved to the **Mannum Dock Museum** and a locally-made replica put in its place.



Australian Illustrated News 1881

Paddle steamer towing a wool barge

The River Trade

The **Mary Ann** was the first steamer on the Murray-Darling but was too small to earn a bonus from the Government. This went to Captain Francis Cadell's **Lady Augusta**. But both boats proved that the river was suitable for navigation.

Within 10 years, there were 20 steamers working – delivering stores to stations and towns along the river and returning loaded down with bales of wool. Within 20 years, there were hundreds. Later, passengers were carried, opening the river to tourism.



Engineering Heritage National Marker placed on 30 November 2014
 Engineers Australia
 Mannum Dock Museum
 Mid Murray Council

www.engineeringheritage.com.au