

# Auchananda's – Donald's home in Strathalbyn

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## How to use these notes

- Too much detail?: Read the summary first, to get the essence of what this is all about - rather than getting lost in the details in the body of these notes.
- Research: These notes are not in a narrative style because it is not intended for the general public. This is for serious researchers. There are standardized headings and dot-points which are a framework into which new details can be placed.
- Searching: You can search this PDF document using Control/F, and then relevant key word.
- Our other docs: This is one of a series of research notes which are interconnected. These can be found in the Small Print directory on the left of the homepage. The notes that are most relevant to the Auchananda's are:-
  - C10 – 'Setting the scene':** Essential reading.
  - G55 – 'Donald's life around Adelaide - 1837 to 1842'**
  - E51 – 'Donald's half acre in Hindley Street, Adelaide – 1838 to 1855'**
  - E52 – 'Donald's 80 acre farm in Hilton, near Adelaide – country section 50'**
  - G60 – 'The first wheat crop in South Australia - 1838'**
  - G70 – 'Donald's life around Strathalbyn – 1842 to 1855'**
- Feedback: This is a draft. Your corrections and comments will be welcomed - via 'Contact us' on the homepage.
- Authors: These notes were compiled by Don Gordon, in collaboration with Lorna McLean. Don and Lorna are Donald's and Christina's GGG-grandchildren.

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Barn/stables with loft



Auchananda's homestead

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# Summary

In 1841, Donald's purchased section 2603 – a farm of xxxx acres on the edge of the Strathalbyn township. He built a stylish homestead and several outbuildings, notably a substantial barn/stables. These were among the earliest and best structures in the district.

It was the centre of the eventful life of the large family, with many weddings and gatherings.

The homestead was a two story structure, with a verandah on the second floor. It might have been made of mud bricks. The barn/stables was a large stone structure with a loft.

The house became a ruin after half a century (guessing) whereas the barn/stables has been renovated to become a current residence.

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## The house

- Why was it called Auchananda's ? (or Achanada's)
  - ??
- Where?
  - It no longer exists, but was next to (west) of the existing barn/stables.
  - It was at the back of what is now 17 Langhorne Creek Road - near the banks of the Angas River.
  - It was 1 km from the post office south east along the Angas River
- When?
  - We have yet to confirm the year it was built. There are various possibilities.
  - 1842: It would be expected that they would start building as soon as they arrived in Strathalbyn. Otherwise, where could this large family live? However, it would have taken a considerable time to build such substantial structures. Maybe there was some interim accommodation.
  - It is possible that the barn/stables were built first, and the family initially lived there until the house was ready. Then the barn/stables was used for animals. We have no evidence for this but it might explain why the barn/stables has a fire place – or was the fireplace for blacksmithing .
  - Later years: *"The two storey building he built in later years"* (Southern Argus, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1921, p2 but not on BRB p533). We could discount this as it was stated almost 80 years after the family moved to Strathalbyn.
  - 1859: The State Library has recorded 1859 with photo B10408, but this is certainly wrong - Donald died in 1855.
- What sort of structure?
  - Two stories, second floor verandah, two chimneys, hipped roof
  - The photo indicates that it was not made of stone (as is obvious for the barn/stables).
  - It might have been mud brick, rendered with some kind of white plaster. We do not know.
  - It was one of the most impressive structures in the area. *"The two storey building was, for a long time, the most pretentious structure in the district"* (Southern Argus, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1921, p2 & BRB p533). The use of the word *pretentious* might have been inadvertent as it is unlikely such an implied criticism would have been deliberately placed in this obituary (for Hugh the younger)



Maybe they meant *prestigious*. In any case, the context implies something positive so we can accept that people saw it as rather grand – for many years.

- Early 1840s:
  - *“He took up Section 2603 on the main Strathalbyn-Wellington Road and thereon built a two storied home for his family with a substantial stable and loft”* (BRB p 6).
- 1920’s:
  - 1921: Habitable - Mr JW Allison might have been living in the house.
  - 1923: Standing, but not necessarily habitable - *“The old two storey homestead and out buildings are still standing adjoining the River Angas, near Strathalbyn”* (BRB p 10). This was a quote from text accompanying the sketch of the Hilton house held in the Mortlock Library – presented to the library in 1923, by the Rover (Donald Henry McLean, grandson of Donald & Christina).
- 1930s??:
  - The photo showed that the house *“had commenced to decay. This was plain and square, the typical old Scottish style of two storeys. In the picture the balcony is broken and the roof partly gone”* (BRB p11)
  - It hadn’t just ‘commenced to decay’, the photo shows it as beyond repair.
  - This photo was presented to Town Clerk Harold J Stowe for the Strathalbyn Museum. It was donated by three siblings of the Rover- Edwin, Elizabeth & Florence.
  - What year was it presented? The year can be estimated by finding out when Stowe was collecting memorabilia and the ages in 1930 (for example) – Edwin was 59 yrs, Lizzy 54 yrs & Florrie 53 yrs. It must have been before 1950 because that is when the first of them died, Edwin. **Mr Stowe died in xxxxxx.**
  - When was the house last occupied? We could assume that it takes at least 15 years for a house to deteriorate from being inhabited to being a ruin as depicted in the photo. We can estimate, given that Mr Allison was living in it 1921 (however we are not certain of this), the photo showing such a decline would have been taken after 1936. None of this adds up. More research is needed.
  - What year was the photo taken? When Edwin, Lizzy & Florrie presented the photo, was it a recent photo that they have taken themselves, or (more likely) was it an old photo that they offered to Stowe because he was collecting historical items for the museum.
- Mysteries:
  - Why was it allowed to fall into disrepair and abandonment after a relatively short time? Contrasting with the barn/stables which still stands.
    - Maybe there were structural issues which made it too difficult to restore – perhaps mud bricks exposed to the weather after the roof failed.
    - The house was very close to the banks of the river so it might have been effected by a flood event. However, the photo shows the kind of deterioration not caused by flooding – but maybe a flood finished off the building which was already in a weakened state. This would be some time after the photo was taken.
    - Or maybe none of the family required this place to live.
  - It is odd that the Rover showed more interest in the Hilton property than Auchananda’s .
    - Apparently, he had seen the ruins of both buildings.
    - When discussing Hilton, he indicated that he wanted to *“have an opportunity of securing a portion of it for ‘old times’ sake, an opportunity that will most certainly be availed of”* (Southern Argus on 27th June 1918, p3). Yet we know of no efforts to preserve Auchananda’s – the house he was possibly born in and which was the centre of so much family life.
    - When he was interviewed by the local journalist (JW Elliott, alias ‘Jottings’) he gave more information about Hilton than Strathalbyn.
  - Are there any remnants left?
    - There are no new buildings in the spot where Auchananda’s once stood - just scrub.
    - A heritage survey in 2003 noted that there was *“evidence of other outbuildings which have deteriorated/collapsed”* (p145 & 146 of Strathalbyn Township Heritage Survey, 2003, by McDougall & Vines).

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## The barn, stables & loft

Photo from Strathalbyn Branch of the National Trust “PH77, Stable on Donald McLean’s farm, Langhorne Road, nd [no date] This small barn has been converted to a residence and sits on the banks of the river behind later



new development. There are mature trees along the river’s edge and evidence of other outbuildings which have deteriorated/collapsed. The early nature of the settlement is obvious in the plantings around it, and along the river. It retains an overall barn form and face stonework with pitched roof and skillion behind. This early agricultural structure is located on land which was originally farmed by Donald McLean, and the barn is believed to date from a period of his first settlement on the land (circa 1850)” (p145 & 146, Strathalbyn Township Heritage Survey, 2003, by McDougall & Vines).

- Where?

- In the photo of the house, the barn can be seen, partly out-of-frame on the left. It seems to have been about 20 metres east of the house. (There is another solid farm building on the right of the photo – but we know nothing about that building.)
- It is near the banks of the Angas River, behind 19 Langhorne Creek Road. Its street address is back of lot 1 of 15 Langhorne Creek Road because, although it is behind number 19, it is accessed by a lane-way through the side of number 15.
- It is 1 km from today’s post office south east along the Angas River
- Visiting: As it is now private property, it is not easy to visit.
- Viewing: It is difficult to see from Langhorne Creek Road but can be seen from the other side of the river - by standing in front 22 Fairfield Drive and looking north-east.



- Structure?

- Stone – what sort of stone? Is this blue stone which was common in that area up to the 1880s.
- Two story, chimney, loft, verandah (this might have been added many years later)
- Open gable with skillion at the rear,

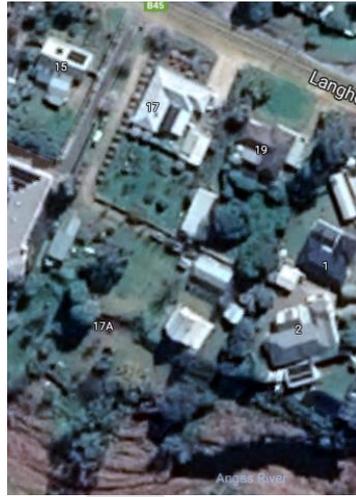
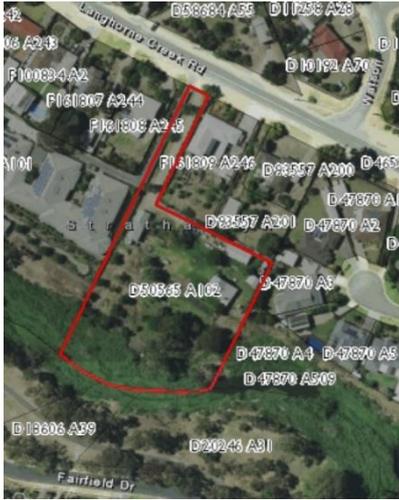
- Photos

- Unfortunately, we have only one photo of the homestead, and we don’t know when that was taken.
- However, we have several photos of the barn/stables. The above photo was in the BRB (p34) so it must have been taken before 1995 – possibly long before that. This photo has a verandah. We have not come across any earlier photos except the one on the left edge of the ruined house photo. This latter photo did not have a verandah, but maybe a porch. Recent photos (right) have a verandah. We need to put a bit of thought into when the various photos were taken – and to consider the significance of any differences. For example, does the presence of a verandah indicate a later photo – or was there an earlier time when there was a verandah, then it was removed, and then some years later, a new one was added?



- Mysteries:

- Why was this structure built so well for early times? How did it last longer than the house?
- When did it become a residence?

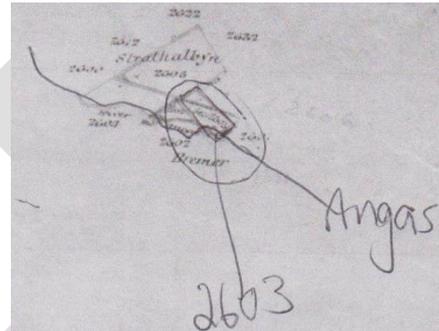


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# Ownership history

- [research: Ask **Mark Richardson**]-
  - Copy of the title deeds to clarify the date Donald purchased, (and how much he paid for it).
  - How many acres
  - Were the house and barn/stables on parts of sections 2603 and/or 2605.
  - When was subdivision D50565A102 arranged?
  - Sequence & date of ownership of the present 17a Langhorne Creek Road – Donald, Christina, Archibald, Hugh (elder or younger), James Gordon Ramsay and present owners.
- 1841 to 1855 - Donald McLean
  - 1841 & 1867: Appendix B is South Australian certificate of title vol CII, folio 232
    - Part of section 2603 of 25 acres and all of section 2605 of 76 acres.
    - Originally granted to Donald McLean in 16<sup>th</sup> November 1841
    - Archibald McLean's purchased it in 16<sup>th</sup> July 1867
    - Straight away, Archibald sold 2605 to James Gordon Ramsay on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1867
    - Archibald retained 2603 but the page of the title deed we have does not indicate when he sold 2603. 1867
    - [research: Donald died in 1855 and it was thought that Christina inherited 2603, but this title deed does not specifically record that Archibald was purchasing it from Christina, who died a couple of years later, in 1869]
    - [research: This title deed is about part of section 2603 and the diagram indicates that it was along the river, so it probably was the part with Auchananda's – but we need to check to make sure.]
    - Maybe the property was not sold between family members – but was some sort of legal transfer.
  - This was amongst the first properties (Angas Special Survey) in 1840??. The other initial purchasers were xxxxxxx.
  - Donald eventually held many farming properties around Strathalbyn and neighbouring Bremer district (see appendix xxx), but 2603 was his first and this is where he lived for at least a few decades.
  - In his Will in 1846, Donald left the property to his wife, Christina.
- 1855 to 1869 – Christina McLean
  - Christina inherited the property after Donald died in 1855.
  - She died in 1869 but the property was not in her Will or probate (check this). Did Christina sell the property?
- 1860s to 1920s (6 decades)- Gap
  - At present there is a large gap in our information about ownership.
  - Possibly over this time, the home was separated from the farm - when and how was 2603 subdivided?
  - 1876: Sale of portions of 2603 & 2601 – about 16 acres with a stone house with 4 rooms in the possession of Hugh McLean (Southern Argus, 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1876, p2)
    - Which part of 2603 was included in this 16 acres? It would be surprise if it included the Auchananda's house and barn/stables because neither of these would normally be described as 'a stone house with 4 rooms'.



**Also, by order of Mr. D. McLean, jun.—**  
**All that Splendid BLOCK of LAND, with**  
**STONE HOUSE of 4 ROOMS erected**  
**thereon, and containing 16 Acres (more or**  
**less), being Portions of Sections 2,601 and**  
**2,603, near the Township of Strathalbyn, now**  
**in possession of Hugh McLean.**  
**For particulars as to Title, apply to J. H. Gordon,**  
**Esq., Strathalbyn, or the Auctioneer.**

- It could make sense if it was Hugh the elder, because he died a few months before this (30<sup>th</sup> May 1876). He had a son Donald (was he Mr D McLean jun?) but he was only 19 years old (born 1857) so why was he handling his father's estate even though he had two older brothers?
- It is a surprise that this Hugh owned at least part 2603 in 1876 because Christina inherited it. Before she died in 1869, she might have sold part (which part?) to Archibald in 1867. So did Hugh buy it from Archibald?
- Or was it Hugh the younger?. If so, who would Mr D McLean jun be? There were several, but none of the children of this Hugh.



Late Donald McLean's Home, Strathalbyn  
Late Donald McLean's Home, Strathalbyn  
ca.1900

- The Mortlock library dated a photo of the house, greatly deteriorated, at ca 1900.

• 1920s

- "The old two storey homestead and out buildings are still standing adjoining the River Angas, near Strathalbyn." (Mortlock Notes, presented to the library in 1923, BRB p 10).
- The obituary for Hugh the younger stated "His father made his home where Mr FW Allison now resides" (p533 & Southern Argus, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1921, p2). There are many references to Mr FW Allison in newspapers:-
  - Treasurer for the Methodist Church (Southern Argus, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1911, p3).
  - Secretary of the Strathalbyn St John's Ambulance (Southern Argus, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1914, p3)
  - Knowledgeable about the cultivation of lucerne (Southern Argus, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1915, p2)
  - Had a milting plant at his homestead (Southern Argus, 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 1918, p3) [Might his homestead have been Auchananda's ?].
  - Secretary of the Agricultural Conference in Strathalbyn (Register, 18<sup>th</sup> Aug 1920).
  - Secretary and treasurer of the Strathalbyn Cricket Club (Southern Argus, 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 1921, p3).
  - Caution 1: Mr Allison might have not been the owner, but just living there.
  - Caution 2: Maybe not Auchananda's , but nearby, because Donald Henry McLean "was born in the old homestead near Mr FW Allison's present residence" (Jottings by JWE in Southern Argus, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1921, p3).

• 1930s to 1990s (6 decades) – Gap

- Possibly, some time in these decades, maybe in the 1930s, the house ceased to be occupied (year?) and then deteriorated, and was finally demolished (year?). Or this might have happened much earlier – in the 1890s.
- Definitely, during these decades, maybe in the 1980s??, the barn was renovated and converted to a residence.
- "After the McLeans sold the farm the house was demolished and the stables and loft later turned into a residence which was occupied until 1969" (BRB pR228)
- [research: Ask the Strath Municipal Council and/or Strath Museum – Is there anything about heritage listing and approvals for renovating the barn? Was there an order to demolish the house or approval to demolish?]
- [research: Ask Strath Municipal Council about who was paying rates over the years.]
- [research: Find electoral rolls, census, phone books etc.]

• 1990s:

- 30<sup>th</sup> June 1994 - Purchased by SLK & JLK (names withheld) – check this date
- Land Services documents registered transfers regarding Birgitt Denker & Phillip Alexander Versteegh on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1998 & 21<sup>st</sup> Aug 2013 - what does this mean?
- [research: Ask present owners whether they are interested in the history of the house and barn. We can share what we have, and do they know anything else?]

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# References

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Appendix xxxxxx

All Donald's properties  
around Strath and Bremer

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