

Glenbarr House in Strathalbyn

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The original Rankine homestead called Glenbarr built in 1842. Later used as stables and a chapel.

William Rankine built his first residence a small stone cottage in 1842. It is still in use and one of the oldest structures in Strathalbyn and in SA. He next built a two storey stone stable and hay left adjacent. Then in the early 1850s he built a grand stone house of purple Mt Lofty sandstone. He called this house Glenbarr. As the family and wealth grew an upper storey was added in 1880 when William was on a trip to England. Much of it remains in an unaltered state.

William Rankine died here in 1882.

The Rankines held the property until 1923 when it was sold to Richard Giles but they vacated the house and leased it out. One of Giles's nieces Miss Daphne Bowman (of the Martindale Hall Bowman family) used and leased the property from 1939. She turned it into a Girl Guide camp facility. In 1945 Daphne Bowman purchased the house and property and extended the camp facilities. The stables and hayloft were converted into a dining hall and chapel respectively; the girls slept upstairs in the main house; and the boys were accommodated in the barn. In 1975 the property was donated to the Glenbarr Bowman Bateman Foundation which still owns and runs the property for functions, girl guides and the public.

The house has been threatened by fire several times including 1873, 1939, 1943 etc.

William's other brother James built a house on the road opposite to the entrance to Glenbarr which he called Braemar. It is an Italianate style villa with bay windows. Behind this villa façade is the original James Rankine dwelling erected in the early 1860s.