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## A Brief History of Allendale East

The Allendale area, including the area known as Kingsley, was surveyed in the early 1860s. Due to swamps in the District the early road went through what is now known as Kingsley, towards the lighthouse area west of Port MacDonnell. It was not until the causeway was built through the swamp north of Port MacDonnell that the town of Allendale East was founded and named after William Allen Crouch, an early landholder in the area. A store and a post office operated for some years along with a Cheese Factory in the vicinity of the Kingsley School.

The Kingsley School was opened in 1867 and closed in 1953 when the current Allendale East Area School opened. A hotel was built in 1862 and was the only hotel in South Australia to sell "beer by the pound". Travellers from Mount Gambier to Port MacDonnell often stopped at this and other hotels in the Allendale area to water the horses, bullocks and the drivers. As the township of Allendale East developed, the need for social and spiritual development led to churches being established and a Community Hall was opened in 1910 where dances, weddings and many social events were held. The Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic Churches were built in 1866, 1876 and 1886 respectively.

Sadly, a devastating fire in 1959 caused the loss of many of the town's records. It is understood that the Soldiers Memorial Park was developed prior to this, as the Allendale East Soldiers Memorial Archway that welcomes all who visit the Park was opened in 1924. The Soldiers Memorial Archway was constructed to perpetuate the memory of those who died in battle. Money for the construction of the archway was raised from local donations, indicative of the community spirit that remains with the people of the township of Allendale East today.



Above: Old Post Office Building



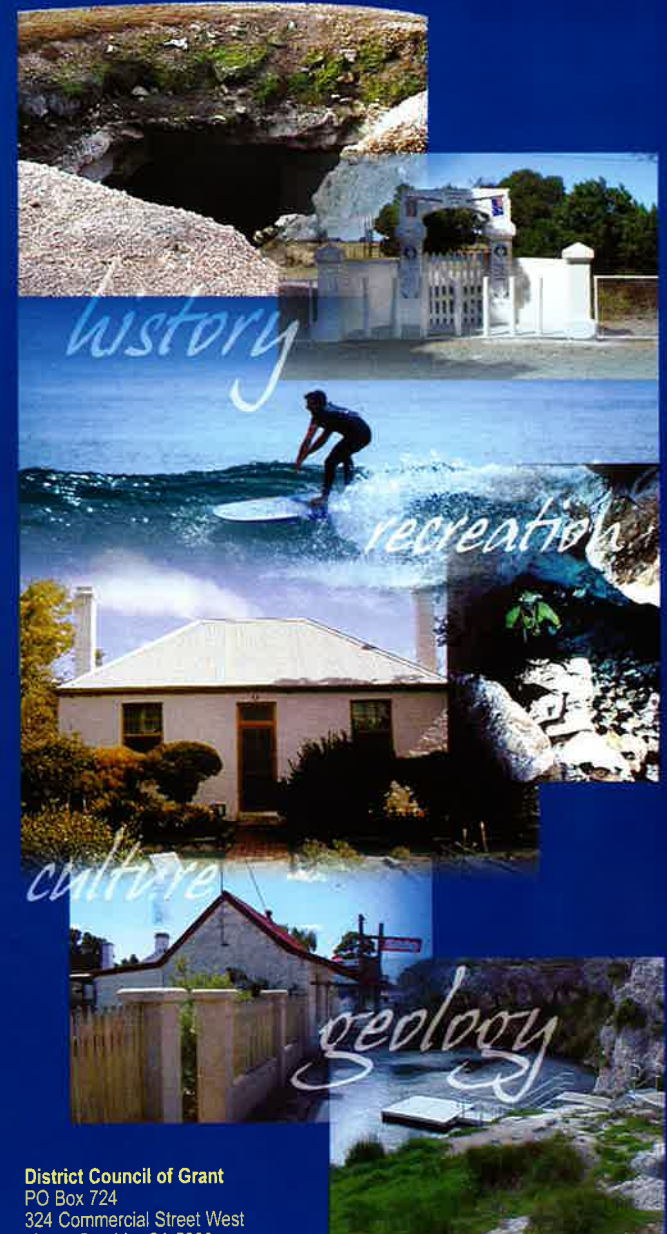
Above: Soldiers Memorial Archway

*Thank you...*

The District Council of Grant acknowledges the support of the following organisations, groups and individuals regarding the development of this brochure :- The Working Towns Program, the Allendale East Progress Advisory Committee, The Mary Lattin Memorial Library (Port MacDonnell), the Allendale East General Store, the Woodpile, Shiralea Dog and Cat Pet Boarding, the Bellum Hotel, the Bay Deli Surf and Dive Shop and cave divers Peter Horne and Dr Richard Harris (Allendale East Sinkhole diving images).

## Allendale East

Limestone Coast, South Australia



**District Council of Grant**  
PO Box 724  
324 Commercial Street West  
Mount Gambier SA 5290  
Phone: 08 8721 0444  
Email: info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au  
www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

## The Caves and Sinkholes

Allendale East has sometimes been referred to amongst the diving fraternity as "Dive Central". It is considered to be "The Centre" of some of the most spectacular cave and sinkhole diving locations in Australia.

The unique Allendale East Sinkhole attracts many national and international cave divers annually and is the focus of many visitors as the Riddoch Highway divides and separates its traffic lanes around the sinkhole entrance. The water in the Allendale East Sinkhole is crystal clear, however because it is shaded from direct sunlight the water can appear dark. Although the sinkhole does not have fish, it is home to a number of common and white yabbies (*Cherax sp.*) as well as the much rarer centipede like crustacean known as a syncarid (*Koonunga sp.*)

When the road was built from Mount Gambier to Port MacDonnell the surveyors designed the road to pass each side of the sinkhole. Originally when horses and carts used the road to transport produce to and from Port MacDonnell, stock would use the sinkhole as a watering place. A wall of stone was built around the sinkhole, a pump and trough set up to provide water for horses and bullocks. Some years ago, the stone wall was removed as it was decided by the State Roads Department to build the road directly over the sinkhole. Thousands of tons of stone were tipped into the sinkhole in an effort to fill it in to provide a solid foundation for the highway to be built upon. The Allendale East Sinkhole simply swallowed all that was placed in it and left a gaping hole at the entrance. To this day, the Riddoch Highway remains divided around the Allendale East Sinkhole entrance.

Cave Diving enthusiasts frequently enjoy exploring the Allendale East Sinkhole with its unique history, along with the other diveable caves and sinkholes in this "cave divers wonderland". Near the township of Allendale East are places such as the world renowned Piccaninnie Ponds, the Little Blue Lake and Ewens Ponds, all of which are accessible to cave divers to view from beneath and passing tourists from above. Cave divers must be appropriately endorsed by the Cave Divers Association of Australia to access caves and sinkholes. Visit [www.cavedivers.com.au](http://www.cavedivers.com.au) to obtain contact details for the Cave Divers Association of Australia or contact the Department of Environment and Heritage, PO Box 1046, Mount Gambier, SA, 5290. Telephone: (08) 8735 1177 for cave diving information.

## Diving the Allendale East Sinkhole

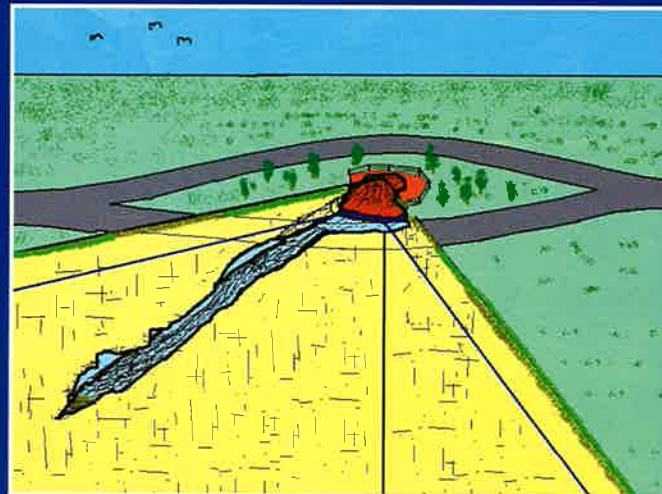


The Allendale East Sinkhole is leased to the Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDA). Access to dive in this sinkhole requires being a current member of the CDA and presentation of your CDA Membership Card to the Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre, Jubilee Highway East, Mount Gambier.

The water of the Allendale East Sinkhole is accessed by descending a short ladder, and most cave divers say that the enjoyment they gain from this dive is definitely worth the effort.



Below: Sketch of the Allendale East Sinkhole



**Always Remember** that Cave Diving is a privilege. Your continued respect regarding access to dive caves and sinkholes in the area is appreciated.

## Nearby

### **Little Blue Lake**

The Little Blue Lake is only minutes by car from Allendale East. It is a popular cave diving location and on warm summer days is used as a local swimming hole with steps and a pontoon. The Little Blue Lake is a smaller cousin of the "Blue Lake" located in Mount Gambier in that it looks superficially similar and changes colour during the year.



### **Dingley Dell**

The home of Australia's famous poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon, is just minutes away from Allendale East, where gardens surround the historical residence named Dingley Dell and where tours can be taken.

### **Port MacDonnell**

Only 5 kilometres south of Allendale East is the Southern Rock Lobster Capital of Australia, Port MacDonnell. Rock Lobster can be purchased fresh during the summer fishing season from outlets in the fishing seaside town. The beaches and foreshore provide a venue for many activities including surf fishing, swimming, wind surfing, playgrounds, snorkeling, deep sea fishing, surfing, a skate park, walking and cycling paths.



### **Mount Schank**

This dormant volcano is located just north of Allendale East and forms part of the Volcanic Discovery Trail. Visitors can experience a grand view of the area by climbing the path on the side of the volcano plus walk inside the grassed volcanic crater.

I was feeling a **little blue** so I went for a dive

and then on to the....

**bellum hotel**

Bay Road, Mount Schank, S.A. 5291 Ph: (08) 8738 5269