

# P.E.R.F.E.C.T. RIDE

## [ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

The P.E.R.F.E.C.T. ride for September 2019 was from Robertstown. Robertstown is a small mid north town located approximately 130k NE of Adelaide.

The Robertstown area was originally a part of the Ngadjuri Aboriginal Tribal area. It was known as "Emu Flats" by the first settlers. The region was firstly part of Anlaby and Koonoona Pastoral stations.

The first township in the area was "Apoinga", set up in 1849, as the site of a smelter for copper ore from the Burra mines. In 1868, the government divided Emu Flats into settlers blocks.

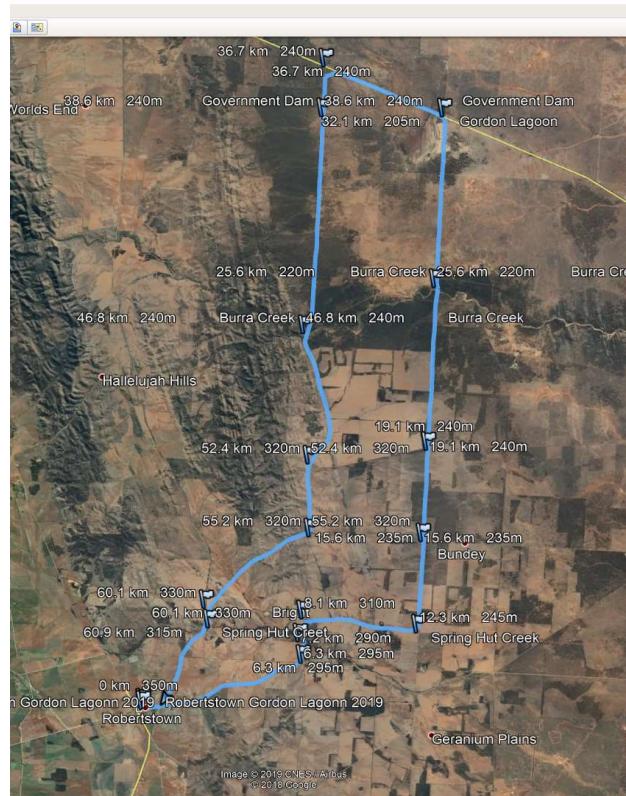
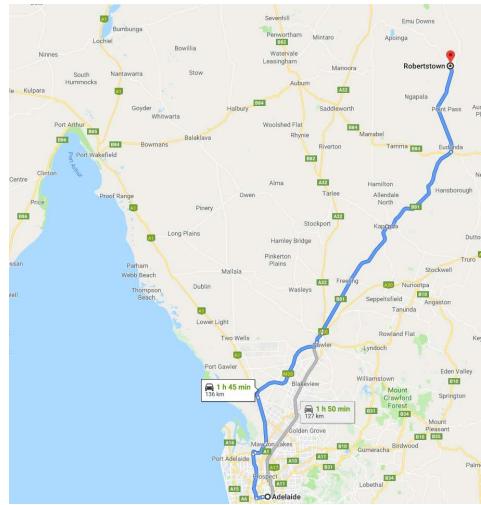
The first building in the town, then known as "Emuville", was O'Dea's Wine Shanty, situated behind the present Community Centre. Set up as a depot for carters bringing supplies to the new settlers, the town quickly grew around this area. English and German settlers arrived to take up new land, one of these was, John Roberts, a storekeeper who built a shop on the crossroads in 1871. In 1874, he applied to open a Post Office, using the stamp "ROBERTS - TOWN", and so the town, which was never gazetted, gained its Official Name".

Following a decision made earlier this year by Viterra to cart grain to and from the Eyre Peninsula by truck rather than train, the drought-affected farmers in the region have been dealt another blow with the closure of the Robertstown's grain silos. The silos are just one of 11 across South Australia that will permanently cease after not being in operation for over a year. An additional six sites, operational during last year's harvest, are also set close. Other sites in the Mid North region set to close included Brinkworth and Orroroo, with bunkers at Eudunda.

For this ride the group consisted of intrepid 3 riders, Peter (ride leader), Kevin and Steve. Several of the regular riders were unavailable on the day due to "commitments" at Adelaide oval.

The weather on the day was a brisk 9° (but feels like 5°) and partly sunny, with a light NW breeze.

Peter completed his pre ride brief, ensuring we all had food / water / spares etc. as there would be no assistance available on the ride.



**Above:** Ride map.

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[ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

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The day's ride was an anticlockwise loop of approximately 65k north of Robertstown.



We headed off at 8:45am in an easterly direction towards Spring Hut Creek. The ride profile was relatively flat, but open and exposed with little tree cover. The road surface was gravel in good condition. With what wind there was on our backs, we made good time.



In an area now facing such dry times it was immediately obvious that water, or the lack of, was a major concern. We passed several early attempts to save any rain water available.

***Left and Below: An old stone well and a small earth dam, but both now dry.***



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## [ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

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Having now travelled approx. 12k we headed north towards Burra Creek.

We came upon on closed gate to "Private Property". This was not going to stop our fearless leader and we were soon back on our way. Problem solved!



On arriving at Burra Creek two things became evident.

1. The terrain had quickly transitioned from cropping / grazing to Mallee.
2. How big Burra Creek has been. Whilst times are dry now, there has been much wetter times.

**Right:** Peter and Kevin arriving at Burra Creek.



**Left:** Burra Creek.

# P.E.R.F.E.C.T. RIDE

[ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

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*Left:* After a quick bite to eat and a brief check of the maps we headed out on the road again.

We travelled another 6k until we almost reached the most northern point of our adventure. Here we came upon a large sand quarry adjacent to Gordon Lagoon.

*Right:* Sand quarry.



*Left:* Gordon Lagoon

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## [ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

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By this time the wind had picked up considerably. It was now 25kph out of the WNW.

This made the next 4.5k a lot more challenging. We were on the bitumen shoulder of the Goyder Highway but needed to resort to riding “turns” until we left the bitumen and headed south.

After riding another 2k we arrived at Government Dam. This was a much larger dam built catch the runoff from the adjacent ranges.

This dam was very similar to the Bower Dam that we looked at on a previous ride. But the concrete spillway again appeared to be too high to allow water to enter the dam. After much discussion we agreed that the area immediately adjacent to the spillway was most likely used as a sediment trap, which could be easily cleaned out, thus preventing the silting up of the main dam.



*Above: Government Dam.*

Shortly after we explored Government Dam we decided lunch was in order. With no other options available we settled for a road side café of sorts.

The air temperature had not gone any higher than 12°, so we only stopped here briefly before heading on.



*Above: Lunch.*

# P.E.R.F.E.C.T. RIDE

## [ SEPTEMBER 2019.]

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We headed south for another 8k until we again crossed the Burra Creek.

We also passed through several conservation areas in this region. However the largest population of wildlife seen on this ride were goats!

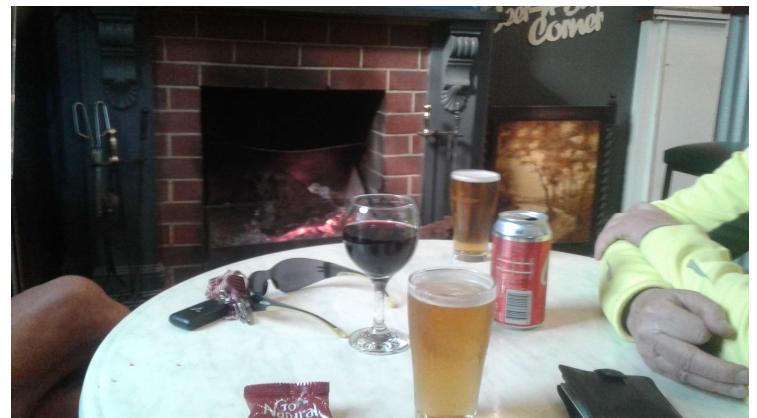


**Right: Old stone building being let go.**

We crossed Spring Hut Creek for the second time and returned to Robertstown shortly after 3pm.

Having now completed another P.E.R.F.E.C.T ride there were only a couple of things yet to do.....

**Right: The ride de-brief and planning re the upcoming tour of the Flinders Ranges were held in the Robertstown Hotel.**



Steve C. 23/09/2019