

SARCC PERFECT ride June 16th 2024 from Balaklava

I should not have had the heater on in the car on the way to Balaklava. It made the inevitable exit from the car into the bracing Balaklava early morning air much more excruciating than necessary.

Five of us managed to brave the cold and early rise. Kevin D leading with Kevin B, Peter B, Sven H and Roger P providing moral support.

Heading north west out of Balaklava on Golf Course Road we made good time into the small hamlet of Whitwarta with it's ten or so residences and went straight through and out the other side to continue our westward journey.

Not far out of the town we crested a small rise (with a total ascent of less than 200 metres on the ride all of the rises were small) to be greeted by an unexpected lake shimmering in the morning sun. It turns out that this was Diamond Lake, a transient salt lake whose banks are still currently mined for gypsum.

The road passed through the lake, although only the north side contained any water, and headed relentlessly westward.



The surprising Diamond Lake.

We took a slight diversion off of Beaufort Road to cross the active main northern rail line in order to explore the site of the Goyder Station. There was no evidence of any station to be seen which a few riders mentioned reminded them of the previous month's PERFECT ride where we visited South Hummocks Station to find a similar absence of any signs of a structure.

Turning on to Beaufort Cemetery Road we came across ... you guessed it ... Beaufort Cemetery. It had been plonked in the middle of a paddock so we braved the intricacies of rural gate latching to go and have a look at what turned out to be a very small cemetery that seemed to have a quite short period of use. This was probably due to the paddock being infested with caltrop (three cornered jacks) which eventually caused a prolonged stoppage to fix a puncture a few kilometres down the road.



Jack Brabham at the 1955 Port Wakefield Grand Prix. We found a similar scene except there was no track, no car and no Jack (except the three cornered variety).

As we headed into Port Wakefield for lunch we passed by the site of the 1955 Australian Grand Prix. As with our recent experience with railway stations there was absolutely no indication of the track's existence. Once again the leader was informed of the developing pattern of notable sites with nothing notable to see.

Lunch was had on the wharf at Port Wakefield amid a lively and irreverent discussion on a wide range of topics.

The return to Balaklava was intended to be a fairly straightforward affair along the Copper Trail. While navigating the rather overgrown, rough and stony trail we were stopped by the furious horn blowing of a car on the adjacent main road (Balaklava Road). One of our group had left their bike toolkit at the lunch stop and they had tracked us down to return it!

This country kindness was repeated when we suffered yet another puncture a few kilometres from the ride finish in

Balaklava. Having elected to push the bike until other riders returned with a car we were astounded to see a car with trailer pull over in front of us offering to transport bike and rider into Balaklava! We declined the gracious offer but these events confirmed our suspicions that country folk really are the kindest people.



Port Wakefield wharf and lunch stop.

The traditional debrief was held at the Royal Hotel in Balaklava.

It was a perfect day for a PERFECT ride. Plenty of sites to see and unseen, plenty of banter and completely devoid of hills!

Hope to see you at the July PERFECT ride.

Kevin D.