



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
April 2018**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 18 March
Above Chauvel Circle***

The March working party was cancelled due to a total fire ban. Remember the winds! So, Linda, Arminel, Doug, Jenny and Alan met at Linda's house to peruse some of the archives that Linda has been sorting through recently. Gosta and Rohan dropped in more material later. It was very interesting to read some of the old newsletters, inspect the old vegetation maps, and admire the old but still accurate paper-mache model of the Ridge made by Bess Sledge's husband in the 1990's. It was also interesting to note that the Group planted *Acacia baileyana* (Cootamundra wattle) in the early 1990's. Now it is consider a woody weed to be dug out! How times change.
Linda Spinaze

Chapman Primary School Nature Trail

The Group realised recently that Parks and Conservation still had in their storeroom a box of pamphlets for the Nature Trail above Guinness Place. They had been printed about 10 years ago, and we had run out of them two years ago. This left the distribution box empty for quite some time. Although they are a bit out of date, most of the information is still relevant. All the markers on the Ridge are still in place except No.11 which has completely gone. However, so has the tree it referred to! No.12 is lying on its side beside the path, waiting to be replaced. So, the next time you are on the Ridge, grab a pamphlet and learn more about the area you are walking or riding through.
Linda Spinaze

Next Meeting

Sunday 15 April

Above Chauvel Circle

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

NOTE: Meeting in the afternoon

Meet: End of Kathner St or at the site

Bring: hat, gloves, secateurs, dabber-dooover, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Skinks on the Ridge

A small family of Cunningham's skinks live in the concrete pump bunker near the square water tank. As it happens, I also bumped into a fellow with a big camera not much further along the track and he was busy taking snaps of a wombat he had found. He reckoned there are 'heaps' of these skinks all over the Ridge, one on every next rock. So keep a look out.



*Cunningham's skink
Brian Black*

Photo by Brian Black

CRPCG Newsletter: archive and boxes

Due to Malcolm and Doug's archives we almost have a full set of the Group's newsletters going back to 1991. Rohan is in the process of posting them on the Group's [website](#) and copies are also held in the Woden Library Heritage section.

Have you noticed the new boxes for the monthly newsletters? There is a box for them at the Kathner St and Namadjira Dr entrances to the Ridge. We hope the other four boxes will be in place very soon.

Linda Spinaze

Gösta Lyngå: a quarter of a century on Cooleman Ridge

In 1992 my wife, Pauline and I moved back to Canberra after over 20 years in Sweden. We bought a house in Duffy. The Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group had just started with Bess Sledge as the driving force. Pauline's sister, Jenny, was already part of a similar group in Sydney and inspired us to join. Cattle grazing was allowed on the Ridge and a dam had even been dug near the Kathner Street entrance to water them.

The Group considered grazing contrary to keeping native flora since cattle will cause the spread of invasive plants.

To support our activity a fence was erected around Fence Post Hill, setting the area aside for conservation. Members selected patches for which they would be responsible for weeding and plant identification.

Each Friday morning Pauline and I worked on our patches. Pauline's was on Fence Post Hill and this is where her ashes were spread after her passing in 2011. My patch is at the bottom of the fenced area and I have continued my weeding there. I think it is a good idea to have your own patch to work on, to watch the flora and to enjoy.

The photo of my patch (right) shows a *Yellow Box* in front of a *Red Box*. To the right is a *Kurrajong* and in front a *Hardenbergia*.

During the 25 years that I have enjoyed "my patch" I believe that I have rid it of *St John's Wort*, *Phalaris*, *Paspalum*, *Verbascum*, *Fleabane*, and several other invasive weeds. Perhaps because of that weeding, *Kangaroo Grass*, native *Geranium*, *Lomandra*, our logo plant *Resurrection Fern* and many other natives are spreading throughout my patch. Pauline and I also worked on establishing a couple of nature trails which have helped raise awareness of the Ridge.

Another of our ventures was the tree survey, started in 1997 and recommenced in 2003 after the fire. Of the seven survey areas, our job was to catalogue data for 144 trees in the Kathner St area. This information is available on the Group's [website](#).

The 2003 fire destroyed our house including a lot of pictures and collections of data from the Ridge. However, once we had a new house built, we got back to our patches. The same challenges seemed to be there.



Gösta and Pauline's patch Photo by Gösta Lyngå

One sad change about the Ridge is the disappearance of animals. I seldom see kangaroos or echidnas. I have seen black snakes, one brown snake and a blue-tongued lizard in my area. They are gone, perhaps because of dogs let loose.

I was once pleased to have a Blue Devil on my patch. It disappeared but came back a few years later. Now it has gone again. I still hope to see it when I check the spot every Friday.



Blue Devil

Photo by Gösta

Gösta Lyngå