

## VINEYARD CREEK BUSHWALK

28 October 2023



Twelve members met at the Robert St entrance to the Vineyard Creek Reserve which follows the Creek from Wesley St Telopea to Kissing Point Road Dundas With the adjacent Oatlands Golf Course and Elizabeth Macarthur Park it forms a significant wildlife corridor.

Vineyard Creek is named for the vineyard which was planted at the confluence of the creek and Parramatta River by Phillip Schaeffer in 1791. Schaeffer was a German national who had fought as a mercenary in the British Army He was sent out to help supervise the farming enterprise in the Sydney Settlement. However, his English was not up to the task so Governor Phillip gave him a grant of land which he farmed very successfully.



The bushland reserve, like many reserves in Sydney, has survived because of the rough terrain which was too steep for farming and later on for suburban development. One of our members, Jeff O'Neill has been active on the Vineyard Creek Catchment Reserve Committee for 50 years which has advocated for the preservation of the reserve, conducted bush care and planted indigenous species. We were fortunate that Jeff was able to come on this walk. Another one of our members, Jim Nash, grew up near Vineyard Creek and had many memories to share of the area.

The walk follows the creek at times along the bank where the challenge of keeping the weeds at bay is continuous but there were still ferns to enjoy. At other times the track is on higher ground through towering Blackbutts and Turpentine with a variety of understory plants. Our route also included a detour to the dam which was formed to provide the water supply for the Oatlands Golf Club. There is

a stand of *Hibiscus heterophyllus* growing on the dam wall. On the edge of this track there was a sandstone outcrop where we found several sandstone species to add to Tony's list.

We are the Parramatta and Hills Group of the Australian Plants Society but this is the first time we have walked in the Parramatta area for a long while. After this very enjoyable walk I am sure we will be scheduling more in this part of Sydney.



Thanks for Jeff for helping to plan the walk, to Jim Nash for his memories and to Tony for preparing the prompt list of plants to look out for. We saw 56 species including a beautiful moss, *Dawsonia polytrichoides*.

JENNIFER FARRER