

**HK NHS REPORT ON DECEMBER 2017 HIKE
HONG KONG ISLAND: CENTRAL TO PEAK GARDENS TO KENNEDY TOWN
aka THE UP AND DOWN CHRISTMAS HIKE
SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2017**



Twenty three members and one guest participated in our Christmas hike which was led by Maureen. She graciously allowed us two options from which to start the hike. Fourteen members, who wanted more of a workout, met outside Princes Building. We then proceeded to wind our way out of Central by walking up the side of the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens and then via



McDonnell Road onto the Green Trail and Chatham Path towards the Peak. We slowly climbed the 400m over 3.5 kms. Of course, we all wore our festive hats and someone even managed creative photography!!

Along the way some members saw a snake skin, and in my group Judy spotted a porcupine quill, something I personally had never seen before.



Much later in the walk, in the Lung Fu Shan/ Pokfulam area, others sighted a boar hiding in the trees, and the beautiful, long-tailed blue magpie (remind me to walk with Jan next time!) We even saw some very healthy Red-bellied squirrels. These are non-indigenous and more commonly known as Pallas's

Squirrel. It is believed they have bred from either escaped or released pets. Impressive sightings considering the area is so very heavily visited.



At the Peak, we met the remaining nine less-tired members who had taken bus 15 from Central, and continued together to walk the short distance up Mt Austin Road to the Peak Gardens. For many of us, this was our first visit to these well-kept beautiful gardens, which were formally attached to Mount Lodge, the Governor of Hong Kong's summer residence. Although that was demolished in 1946, the gate lodge, large lawned garden in traditional British design, and several beautiful pavilions remain. (At this stage of writing, I found myself looking at old photos of the Governor's Residence on gwulo.com. Worth a look as the residence was impressive for its time.)

The image on the left on the next page shows the steps leading to the gate-house from the garden, and on the right is a new pavilion on the former site of Mount Lodge.



We spent some time exploring the gardens, buying ice creams and looking at the view which would have been stunning on a clearer day. In fact, we could have seen an over 300m high angle view of Victoria Harbour. Of course, the poor visibility has given us a perfect excuse to return!!



Finally, it was time to stroll (I've forgotten all the steps already!!) down the Governor's Path to Harlech Road and on to Kennedy Town for our Christmas celebration at Little Creatures. With such a large group, not quite everyone could be in the photo but here's proof everyone enjoyed themselves. Thanks Maureen for such an interesting hike.

