

## Report on HKNHS Hike from Kam Hai to Ma On Shan - 20 November 2016

Our trusty outings organizer was waiting at the remote village when the bus carrying members arrived, making a total of 14 for the day. After a very thorough briefing displaying his military talents and distribution of maps and timelines, we set off up a little-used path climbing up through the rain forest. Little light filtered through the tree cover as we climbed, eventually reaching a stream and



small waterfall. We progressed between the ruins of an ancient village until reaching the Tsang family temple. This temple is well-preserved and cared for although not associated with any present day village. Tsang is a common family name in Ho Chung village which we passed through on the way from Marina Cove to Kam Hai (and the home of Jessey Tsang, the movie director who has worked with Ang Lee). In 2014, Tsang completed *Flowing Stories* (2014), a documentary on the Ho Chung village of the Sai

Kung area. After the climb, this was obviously a good place to regroup and have a coffee.

The stone trail continued to climb gently and we were able to experience being the only hikers in a seemingly unchanged sub-tropical rain forest with a variety of trees, creepers, vines, and lianas. But just when we were wondering had we unwittingly become extras in the latest Blair Witch project film, we emerged onto the relative civilization of Stage 4 of the Maclehorse Trail, to be almost immediately greeted by the clean-up team for the OTW which had passed through the day before.



Now the views became more open and we soon had the expanse of the Sai Kung coast in our sights, as we skirted the base of Buffalo Hill. This hill has an altitude of 606 metres (1,988 ft), 225 m above our path, but no-one was tempted to climb up! The slopes are covered by grass and small shrubs, including Couch grass, Bermuda Grass, Manila Grass and annual bluegrass. We gazed out over Hebe Haven and the outlying Islands from our shrub-lined path. The camellias were in bloom – probably due to our extended warm weather this autumn (likely to be Crapnell's Camellia which is the most common species in this part of Hong Kong).

After a while we reached a crossroads of the Maclehorse trails at Mau Ping where a grassy area provided us with an ideal place for lunch with seats for everyone, even if some were on the tables! This was a little before the originally planned stop but, like the army, the NHS marches on its stomach!

All refreshed we continued on the Maclehose. This part of the trail is one of the very old village paths from the time before the road to Sai Kung was built. Until the 1950s villagers would take this path to reach Kowloon on market days carrying goods over the hill. Eventually we reached the Ngong Ping Plateau – no not the one with the cable car – this is the wide expanse part-way up Ma On Shan providing a playground for all those who love model airplanes, picnicking and hang-gliding.



The plateau is quiet during the week when one can come and enjoy the view around sunset, often accompanied by some of the feral cows, but Sundays are busy (and the cows move elsewhere). There is a campsite on Ngong Ping, but facilities are quite Spartan, especially the toilets as reported by those who visited. They were so unimpressed, they even took pictures.

We then climbed to the trig point for a good view of Sai Kung but having admired the skills of the hang-gliders and witnessed a less experienced young lady land in the trees,

it was time to move on. Pyramid Hill beckoned but there were no brave souls to undertake the ascent.

We moved on to our final regrouping point at the pavilion where the Maclehose turns left to ascend Ma On Shan. It was a pity that a few messy individuals had thrown around their orange peels, as most people had heeded the appeals (sorry) to “take your litter home” – there are no longer any litter bins



on this trail.

The group now carefully descended



the steps down to the clearing which is the remains of the former iron mine, which operated for 70 years from 1906 to 1976 and was the largest mine in HK -average annual

production exceeded 200,000 tons and sometimes reached 400,000 tons. The iron was exported to Japan to be refined. At the time of closure the mine employed 400 men. Some of these former workers live in Ma On Shan Tsuen, the small village we passed on the way down to the BBQ site after leaving the mine area.

The mine area enjoyed another moment of glory during the 1970's and 80's when the HK film industry was blossoming. It was the site of several feature films and television series involving sword



fighters and kung fu, and visitors to the area could be surprised to come across actors in ancient Chinese costumes, sometimes jumping (from tables) clashing swords!



The Kung Fu  
Instructor (1979)



Drunken Master  
starring Jackie  
Chan (1978)

The last part of the route down was very crowded and the bus had to struggle past many departing cars to reach us at the BBQ site car park, but all ended well. Thanks to Malcolm for a really well organized hike.



Cows on the plateau on  
a quieter day.

*Report by  
Maureen  
Boost*

*Photos from  
Members,  
except the following -*

**Picture source refs:**

Movie pics from:

[hongkongmovietours.blogspot.com](http://hongkongmovietours.blogspot.com)

Camellia from:

[herbarium.gov.hk/DocFile/Special/201310181819596922.pdf](http://herbarium.gov.hk/DocFile/Special/201310181819596922.pdf)

Trig point on Ngang Ping and Pyramid Hill from:

[http://hiking.gov.hk/eng/trail list/country trail/MaOnShan Country Trail](http://hiking.gov.hk/eng/trail%20list/country%20trail/MaOnShan%20Country%20Trail)

Happy Cows from:

<http://www.itishk.com/tag/tai-mo-shan/>