

Maurice's Gorge and Pat Sin Leng

NHS Outing 16 March 2014

Members enjoyed the beautiful scenery on the drive to the commencement of the walk, culminating in a view of nesting cormorants and egrets on the small islands in Starling Inlet.

We then set off to the beginning of the Nam Chang Trail which stretched up to the clouds. Quite soon we arrived at Maurice's Gorge – named after one of our former members, Maurice Atherton who shared



his geological knowledge with us at many of the interesting rock formations we visit on our outings. We admired the rock lining of the gorge, which are made of sandstone containing smooth pebbles (sort of a compressed beach), and noted the faults in the rocks which

contributed to the formation of

the gorge. However, no-one spotted the 5cm wide seam of quartz. We continued to climb until we found the turn off leading to the Pat Sin Leng. This was a steep path which separated the sheep from the goats as we huffed and puffed our way up. But the views from the ridge were worth the effort as we sat and enjoyed our well earned lunch. All too soon we were under

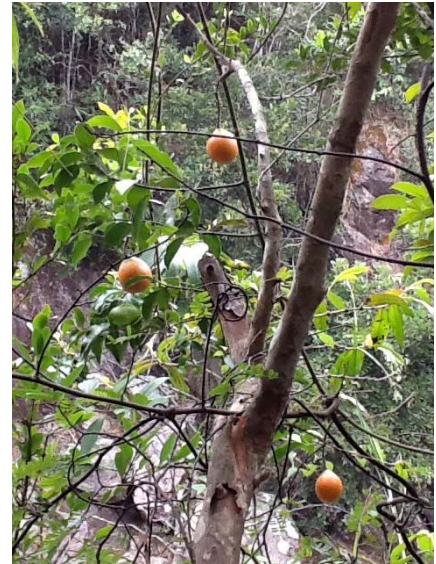


way again, seeing quite a lot of evidence of recent hill fires before beginning our descent to the Hok Tau Reservoir. This began gently but soon we reached the top of the knee-cracker's hill (named as such by a former outings organizer). After successful negotiation of the steep steps we reached the reservoir for a rest at the edge where we admired the flowering trees and listened to bird song.



Our last stop was at the deserted Hakka village of Sha Lo Tung which happily still has one very inhabited area where members could enjoy a well-earned beer or home-made green tea and honey whilst admiring the orange trees in blossom, borage, morning glory and organic vegetables and wonder about the identity of a strange

orange fruit. Pictures of the said fruit were identified by Dr Laurence as the mountain orange (*Melodinus suaveolens*) which grows on a liana and is used in Chinese Traditional Medicine.



Sha Lo Tung is a special place with high ecological

value, especially in terms of the dragonfly species. -70% of Hong Kong's dragonfly species are found here including some of the world's rarest species. However, they were not much in evidence during our visit.

Soon we were off again for the last few kilometers down the hill to meet the bus on Ting Kok Road near Tai Po. A tired but happy group after a thoroughly enjoyable day. Cheers Frank!



Report by Maureen Boost.

Photos by Members.