

January HKNH Outing – Trainspotting



What the views should have looked like!

Well, it certainly was a grey and misty day on Sunday 21st January when 23 hardy souls joined to travel to Kau Lung Hang and were then unceremoniously dumped by the side of the KCRC tracks. Some of the group, knowing my love of all things to do with railways, queried whether we were going to spend the day trainspotting? They need not have worried – I had far worse plans for them!

After crossing the railway, we took an old military road up a fairly steep incline to the start of the Lau Shui Heung Country Trail. Although this road is restricted to motor vehicles, the group were passed by three cars driving along this road – as one of them contained the MTR Project Director, and I still wanted my job on Monday, I thought I had better not mention about the restriction. The country trail is a delightful wooded path that leads to the wonderfully tranquil Lau Shui Heung Reservoir, a real hidden gem of Hong Kong. After a short break, the group ascended the first set of steps of the day to Shek Au Shan (278m), at the top of which was a breathtaking view of, err, mist. We continued down to Hok Tau reservoir and enjoyed our lunch amongst the swirling mists.

After lunch, the real climbing started as we ascended the many steep steps up to the ridge of Ping Fung Shan – maybe it was just as well the ridge was shrouded in mist because it was impossible to see how many steps remained to be climbed! – following Stage 9 of the Wilson Trail. The views from this ridge on a clear day are fabulous and I would recommend them to all without reservation. However on this day it was difficult to see more than 10 metres! We continued along the ridge, steadily ascending via a more gradual incline until the summit of Wong Leng (639m) was reached. The only splash of colour to be seen along the ridge were the occasional red azalea and the more prolific fragrant litsea (*litsea cubeba*) whose pretty yellow flowers always coincide with the time around Chinese New Year and was in danger of extinction before becoming a protected species within Hong Kong.



Litsea Cubeba provided the only splash of colour along Ping Fung Shan

From Wong Leng, we took a path heading northwards toward Nam Chung and Luk Keng – this path should have offered the wonderful views seen in the photo at the start of this report – but unfortunately the swirling mist prevailed as if we were all trapped on a film set for ‘Wuthering Heights’. Eventually this path rejoins the Wilson Trail and follows the ancient trail down towards the coastal villages. Some wandered off the main path to the Edward Youde pavilion which, even in these murky circumstances, did offer a limited view over the fishponds and Starling Inlet. We soon reached the village of Luk Keng where many of our group tried the delicious rice confections offered by a Hakka lady sitting outside her house.



We all regrouped for a welcome beverage – some opting for the noodles-of-the-day – at a small roadside cafe conveniently situated at the end of our walk. Although the visibility had been poor, I hope that all enjoyed this new route and will re-visit during clearer weather.

Dave England