

**Hong Kong Natural History Society**  
**February 2009 Outing Report – Sai Kung West Country Park**

The day was misty, with some light breeze. Not a bad day for walking with the group of 25 members and their guests.

The bus came punctually at 9.30 and we started off well and good. After picking up two more members at Kowloon Tong Station, we had a smooth journey to Pak Tam Chung and arrived at about 10.20. We had to wait for three more members to join the group, although two decided not to come and informed us at 10:30. The walk started at about 10.40.

Ming was under doctor's orders to stay home, so Chung valiantly took up the role of a Leader on the day. Jacqui was always so helpful and agreed to be the last one to bring up the rear.

The walk started off at a brisk pace, but the different walking pace of various members soon put the walking file over quite a distance. To exacerbate the situation we soon caught up with two other walkers who had Radio Peking on at quite a volume. As many of us found radio noises in such a natural environment jarring, and as one of the members said, 'she had no wish to learn Mandarin on such a day', the pace quickened in the effort to by-pass them.

By the time of the first coffee break, it was impossible to co-ordinate with everybody as we were already so far apart from each other. Chung tried to catch up with the head of the line to inform members that we should have a coffee break at some big rocks just before the sharp and more difficult ascent up Wa Mei Shan. But some members were already so far ahead that it was impossible to co-ordinate with them.

Near before the ascent to Wa Mei Shan, two members decided not to carry on with the group as they gathered the climb might be too much of a strain for them. One of them had recently had an operation. They decided to take a short cut and agreed to join us at Yung Shue O. Michel and his wife were good enough to turn back and join the group then.

By lunch one group had already arrived much a head of time. Another group, who knew the area well, had gone off to have some Chinese to-fu at the next village store. The third group arrived, and started to have lunch, but Chung had to go to the next village to round up the to-fu gourmets before he could sit down and have his.

After lunch we started the beautiful and spectacular descent down the famous Jacob's ladder, but not before we tried to put the message across that we must keep together as a group and not be too far apart from each other.

At Yung Shu O Chung put forward the possibility of two routes back to the pick up point. One is straightforward; the other by the coast would be more interesting, but the path is less clear, parts are overgrown, and there are unclear junctions so it is easy to get lost. After the morning's experience Chung was of course hesitant to take the

second route. However, some members feel that it would be more interesting to take the coastal route, and Jacqui spoke up for everybody that on 'scouts' honour' we would wait for each other and keep together as a group. This time Dave took the lead and down the coastal route we went.

And it was well worth it! The route took us round the coast of great scenic beauty, of interesting vegetation, mangrove marshes, and beautiful view of the sea. On such a misty day it was sheer magic, and occasionally we could catch sight of egrets by the shore.

The two members who were to join us phoned Jacki to say they have had a nice walk but had decided to go on home by themselves.

As we were approaching Kei Ling Ha Lo Wai spirits were getting high. The prospect of some cold beer waiting put many members in a jovial mood. The road is easy, and we were just swinging along. We were to go to the village to have a sit-down but when Chung tried to talk to the driver it seemed too complicated to change the pick-up location. Maureen came to the rescue and phoned her husband for courier service to deliver ice-cold beer, sangria, fruit juice and water to our pick-up point.

So cheers and cheers... say cheese and yat...yi... sam... for the group photos.

It was a lovely outing. Thank you everybody, especially Chung!

(Reported by Yee Fun Lord for Ming's absence)

