

HKNHS Outing Report

October 2009 Fan Lau Peninsula, SW Lantau

Nineteen members and guests met bright and early at Tung Chung MTR station on this beautiful October morning, and took the bus to the starting point of Shek Pik reservoir, where four more joined the group. The first hour or so was an easy march along the catchwater that is Lantau Trail section 8, enjoying the varied views of the Sha Tsui Detention Centre, Tai Long Wan (beach) and Tsuen (village), the Soko Islands offshore, and the denuded hills ahead of us with both fire and landslide damage from previous years still evident. After a morning coffee stop at the picnic tables in the shade of the trees just before the turnoff to Kau Ling Chung campsite, we continued along the main path until finally the concrete ends and the attractive stone steps begin the descent to the Fan Lau peninsula. This path really does afford the most stunning sea views.



After descending to Fan Lau Tung Wan, which was unfortunately littered with rather a lot of rubbish, we climbed gently up again to the “stalagmite”, really just a misnomer for a lone rock, and on to the Fort. The remains of this fort, built of semi-dressed stone and green bricks, have been well preserved since initial restoration work in 1985, followed by larger scale repair and clearance of the area in 1990. The oldest redoubt in Hong Kong, it dates back to 1729 when it was the first fort built by order of the Governor of Canton as coastal defence against pirates and opium smugglers, both of which were rife in the Pearl River estuary at the time. It is believed the fort was abandoned around 1898 after the lease of the New Territories to the British.



Very close to the fort are a couple of comfortable and picturesque picnic sites where we had our lunch, and a communal snooze! A single kestrel circling overhead was the only wildlife sighting of the day, with the expected raptors that usually frequent the coastline from there to Tai O in the autumn being regrettably absent.

Continuing along the Fan Lau trail, the group took a short detour to visit the late Neolithic stone circle. This circular arrangement of unhewn stones is thought to have had some ritualistic purpose, although quite what that was, is unknown. Lack of proof otherwise led your fellow NHS members to insist it was no more than an ancient barbecue pit, or, some even ventured, a privvy.



A little further along the path, about half the group took a second detour to visit the attractive Tin Hau temple, snuggled into the cove below, and the other half continued to Fan Lau Sai Wan, where they enjoyed a rest in the shade and a drink. On the return leg of the hike, members again had a choice: that of keeping to the high path back to the concrete, or dropping steeply down to the beautiful beach at Kau Ling Chung and enjoying a most refreshing swim. Arriving back at the main road, there was thankfully no problem boarding public buses, and most went back to Mui Wo and had a snack and a drink together at the Bahce Turkish restaurant.



Lion's Ball



Triffid plant ?



possibly Negundo
Chaste Tree



Pink lantern ?

Can anyone help to identify the beautiful lantern shaped flower? Or indeed, the triffid?

Report by Jan Campbell

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