

REPORT OF THE APRIL 2011 OUTING TO NORTH LANTAU

Twenty of us, including one guest from Australia, arrived at Tung Chung station ready to start our Easter walk from Tung Chung to Tai O taking a coastal track that is shared by pedestrians and bikers alike.

Our first stop was the Tung Chung Fort where we had a ten to fifteen minute break to wander around. According to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, who give the date of the fort as 1832, it was the naval headquarters of the Right Battalion of Dapeng during the Qing Dynasty. When the British first took over, it became a police station, followed by a college, then the Rural Committee Office, and finally the Tung Chung Public Primary School. Most of us walked along the circuit of steps around the perimeter



of the fort, stopping first of all to look at the canons which were facing the harbour. Yes, we were a long way away from the sea but perhaps it is mostly reclaimed land in front of us.

We then made our way to Hau Wong Temple where we had a quick look around before making our way along the track. This very small temple was built during the Qing Dynasty, around 1765. From the temple, we took the concrete track to Tai O along a coastal path. There are stretches where we are walking alongside the coast and others where we walk a little inland, skirting hills. Although the weather forecast was for thundershowers, the weather was promising and many of us were putting on sunscreen before we began our journey. We set off with the sun poking through the clouds, thinking how fortunate we were that the weather was holding off. Perhaps the thunderstorms will come during the night. Wishful thinking!

The first part, we were walking alongside the airport, and had a clear view from time to time. The concrete path had a slight contour but mainly it was fairly flat. We walked under the Nong Ping cable car and finally reached our first stop, where some of us had refreshments. Many of us viewed the aircraft taking off into the clouds. From there we walked to our next stop, skirting a small hill and then turning right making our way to Sha Lu Wan Chung Hau which is beside the beach. After a short stop, we then made our way along a sidetrack through the village to Sha Lu Wan Tan Tsuen where we met the main track again.



Unfortunately, by this time the weather had deteriorated. The sky darkened and rain was threatening. Our goal was to go on another sidetrack to a beach by a pier where we would have our lunch. By this time it was starting to drizzle, so it was negotiated with a local man who had a large sheltered area in front of his house that we

could stop there and eat our lunch. For this we were truly grateful, as we were able to eat our lunch at leisure and enjoy it. The man kindly provided us all with seating. His dog, although threatening at first, settled down and guarded us well. In line with our Easter theme, one member of the group kindly provided us with small Easter eggs, which we enjoyed throughout the day.



The skies then cleared for a short time as we made our way to the village of Sham Wat where there are a few 'restaurants' where one can stop for a drink or food. Originally it was planned to have a refreshment stop, but it was decided that it was better to move on and try to get to Tai O before the rain came. However, we were soon caught in a deluge of rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. We had to walk a short way along the road up to Ngong Ping then turn along the last stretch of coastal track. It was amazing to see how quickly the water gushed



down the road forming a torrent. With head down and umbrella close to one's head, how easy it was for one of us to miss the turn off. However, it was soon sorted out and we all made our way towards Tai O. This is a beautiful stretch of the journey as we were now walking along a rocky path. What a shame the rain spoilt the opportunity to enjoy at leisure the beauty of the track.

Finally, we reached our destination, saturated, but having enjoyed the day. We walked through the village making our way to the main bridge we were we were met by two members of the group who waited until the last had arrived. There, some of us, wet through and bedraggled, had a most welcome drink and rest. Most of the group decided to make their way home, but five us took a bus to Tung Chung where we finished the outing at an Indian restaurant in front of the Tung Chung fort where we had started our day. After a most enjoyable dinner and conversation we also made our way home to our respective homes.



Christine Mills

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TUNG CHUNG – TAI O, LANTAU ISLAND