

NHS Beach Clean Up Day, Sunday 5 October 2014

Eleven Members turned up to do their bit toward the ongoing battle to keep Hong Kong's beaches free of the debris that gets washed up onto them, or sometimes, left on them by beach go-ers. It was a hot day so we were already panting and sweaty by the time we had found the bus and squeezed onto it, travelled from one part of Tuen Mun to another [goodness-knows-where?!] and walked over half a kilometer to the beach itself, lugging our clean-up equipment.

Imagine our disappointment then when the beach came into view and it was – (almost) pristine!

It turns out that Butterfly Beach is a gazetted beach with cleaners employed by government to keep it clean and tidy. Why it was included on the Ecozine list of beaches for clean-up is therefore a mystery. The beach was certainly being enjoyed by the local residents, as were the quite pleasant grassy play areas behind it, and several sitting-out (or singing!) pavilions.

After taking a few minutes to re-adjust our thinking (as NHSers we shouldn't *want* a beach to be



dirty), we decided to do what we came to do anyway. Members collected whatever rubbish they could find on the beach, and although the overall amount was small, it was noticeable that the majority of it was plastic of one kind or another. Also disturbing was the amount of broken glass, although many children were managing to run around barefoot and unscathed.

As required, we recorded our findings. Nothing hugely weird or wonderful, but we could not help

wondering why toothbrushes should be dropped on a beach? There was one complete ceramic Chinese wine bottle that was rather nice!

A small number of locals watched us with some amusement throughout the day. One chappie could not seem to understand what we were doing, so dropped some of his orange peel nearby just to test out his theory. We rose above it, and picked up said orange peel!

Good try Maureen, thank you for your initiative and providing the equipment, and thanks to all who turned up to help. It was in any case interesting to see this area of Hong Kong that we are otherwise unlikely to have visited, and we congratulate the town planners who included a



small beer stall in those facilities behind the beach – a pleasant way to end the afternoon.

Undaunted, we have heard that the Clean-up HK campaign organizes the cleaning of walking trails

Report by Jan Campbell