

REPORT ON HKNHS HIKE IN PLOVER COVE COUNTRY PARK - SUNDAY 21 MARCH 2018

A week before our hike in Plover Cove, 11 members and one guest had accompanied Chris Bailey in her hunt for the annual blooming of the flowering vine *Mucuna birdwoodiana* on the hillside down from Ngong Ping to Tung Chung, Lantau. Although Chris had spotted a couple of promising buds on her earlier recce, she had already noted that there seemed to be far less of the vine in this location this year, possible due to typhoon damage last autumn. Anxious to show the group something, especially those who had not joined us on this “vine walk” in March 2015, Chris was delighted – as were we all - when we found one strong, very long vertical stem absolutely full of flowers. Our walk had not been in vain, and although we didn’t see any more, the hillside was beautiful anyway and it was a lovely, easy downhill walk on a beautifully sunny day. Some of us even managed a beer back in Tung Chung, once we had *finally* managed to re-orientate ourselves and find our way through the maze of housing estates (what IS it with men’s, including Chairmen’s, refusal to ask for directions....?!)



stream, draping itself around the other trees. Members spent quite some time enjoying this sight, in fact, so much so that Maureen had to hurry us along for the rest of the day due to the time spent admiring the vine!

This route from Wu Kau Tang to Luk Keng is an old favourite of the Society, dubbed “The Lost Villages Hike” by a previous Outing Organiser, passing through as it does several long-deserted small hamlets, eg Sam A Cheng. Those of us that

So imagine our double delight when, having just begun our hike at Wu Kau Tang the following week, our group of 18 walked unsuspectingly into a fecund valley grove full of the stuff!! To see this vine in such abundance really was a treat; many other walkers were enjoying it too. As is the norm, it was growing alongside a nearby





have been hiking these trails for 20 odd years (gulp!) commented that some of the tumble-down old buildings we used to see (and poke around inside) have disappeared completely now.

Still, the lush growth of the countryside here and the oft-present stream at the side of the trail mean this remains a delightful walk, especially since it is largely flat! Coffee break was taken sitting on some rocks by this “dream stream” and then on we pushed to more open farmland scenery as we neared the coast and the mangroves. Several sections of new path had been built around here since I had last visited. Lunch was taken next to “Jenny’s pink rocks” rather than as planned in Lai Chi Wo itself, as

there were quite a lot of hikers on the path that day and we preferred to avoid the crowds. However, the tide was in so we couldn’t sit on the rocks but perched instead on the side of the path.

Passing through Lai Chi Wo we then began the climbing part of the hike - there was noticeably less conversation during this part! - but everyone managed well and we descended to join the coast at Starling Inlet for the longish but easy walk back to Luk Keng. Although we’d often had to drag ourselves away from the more scenic spots



and the local tofu and other goodies on offer a little sooner than we would have wished, it paid off as it meant we had time for a beer at the end before calling in the bus.

So once again the Mucuna and the Miguel made a good pairing!

Jan Campbell. Photos by Members