



A Riot of Colour on Our Doorstep!

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

- June 2012 -

A good part of May was devoted to recovering from the thunderbolt of early April and I think it can now be said that we are back to 100%! However, May has also proven to be an un-seasonally dry month. We've so far missed the traditional cool-weather break of the South West Monsoon! However, the good news is that we have one of the biggest Mangosteen crops we have ever seen on our trees. There has been some "button-shedding" due, we are told, to the dry heat that has consumed most of May. However, it looks like we are going to have a fine crop of this most delectable of tropical fruits, after a few years of crop failures. We look forward to sharing this bounty with our visitors! The variety of fruit at HPH is considerable, and the mango and durian trees give promise of stimulating the palates of visitors as well. Of course, we will, as usual, be competing with the Giant and Flying Squirrels and the Macaque Monkeys for the harvest of these trees!



Mangosteen buttons

June brings to Sri Lanka the second-most important Buddhist Festival – Poson – which celebrates the arrival of that most peaceful of philosophies from India so many centuries ago. Perhaps in slightly less dramatic fashion than Wesak, Poson seeks to celebrate all that is so important to those seeking salvation in the Buddhist faith. Visitors can observe all of this

in and around HPH and in a day-trip to Mihintale, where the first Buddhist sermon on the island was preached.

Visitors have been fascinated by the reading material at HPH. Our library includes collectors' items such as Vincent Legge's *A History of the Birds of Ceylon* and a volume of Kelaart's *Prodromus Zeylanica* (which bears the signature of Lady Wilmot Horton, the spouse of a Governor of Colonial Ceylon), books from contemporary authors such as Michael Ondaatje's *Cat's Table* and a valuable collection of art books. Suffice it to say that we will entertain requests for access to any of this material that guests might be interested in.



Brown-fronted and Black-capped babblers (from Legge's Birds)

The artistic works of Arlene's daughter, son and daughter-in-law - Druvinka (Bodh), and Shehan and Pinky Madawela - adorn our walls. They are all professional artists who reside in India but exhibit the world over. A few of their modestly priced paintings are available for sale.

For information or to book your accommodation, contact us at:

Home phone: 94-81-380-8007; Mobile: 94-72-284-9770 or by email at emil@halgollaplantationhome.com

Incidentally, Royston Ellis who did one of the early reviews of HPH (http://sundaytimes.lk/110522/Plus/plus_16.html) has authored what is probably the best guide book on Sri Lanka. Anyone interested should check his website: www.roystonellis.com. A bit of trivia: Royston is reputed to have been responsible for those famous Liverpoolians calling themselves “The Beatles”. He belonged to the same Beat Generation as they did and was one of the original Beat Poets, to boot!



Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal - 2002

To end on a nostalgic note, ten years ago Elizabeth II celebrated her Golden Jubilee and the author of this newsletter was the recipient of a Golden Jubilee Medal for services to the community of Edmonton, Canada. On the left is a picture of that medal in which even someone who is not a particular supporter of the monarchy may take some pride in a year when the 60th Anniversary of Elizabeth's ascent to the throne is being

celebrated with such pomp and pageantry!

Warm wishes,
Emil & Arlene

P.S. The Kandy Perahera starts on July 19th.

This perahera dates to the reign of King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe (1747-1781). At that time, the Tooth Relic was the private property of the king and the public was not allowed to see it. King Rajasinghe, however, decreed that the Relic be taken in procession so that the people could see and worship it.

The procession that traverses the streets of Sri Lanka's Hill Capital and second most important city for ten nights is truly without equal anywhere in the world. The route grows in length as the nights progress, as do the numbers of brightly-caparisoned elephants (peaking at over one hundred), hundreds of drummers, dancers and other entertainers in traditional garb, all attending on Kandyan Chiefs in their traditional regalia escorting the Tooth Relic through Kandy, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This procession, lit entirely by *copra*-fuelled torches, is truly something to behold.

And the good news is that Kandy is little more than half an hour's drive from HPH! Bookings are still available for the perahera dates.



Upcoming events in Sri Lanka

June 2012

Cricket—Pakistan in Sri Lanka continues to July 13th at various venues

July 2012

July: The Gathering of Elephants at Minneriya National Park begins – a comfortable daytrip from HPH

July 19: Kandy Perahera runs through to Aug 2.

July 19: Kataragama Esala Festival runs through to Aug 2

Jul 22/24 & 28/31: Cricket—India tour of Sri Lanka begins. 1st & 2nd ODI at Hambantota; 3rd & 4th ODI at Colombo.

August 2012

Aug 4 & 7: Cricket—India tour of Sri Lanka, 5th ODI & 1st T20 at Kandy.

Aug 20–Sep 2: ASP Men's Longboard World Surfing Championships at Arugam Bay

* for those who must...most cricket matches can be watched on TV at HPH

Did you know? Sri Lanka has been rated as a top tourist destination for 2011 and 2012.

Condé Nast Traveller

www.cntraveller.com/news/2011/december/destinations-to-watch-in-2012/sri-lanka

The New York Times

www.nytimes.com/2010/01/10/travel/10places.html

National Geographic

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/best-trips-2012/sri-lanka-photos/>

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