



Combretum latifolium by the soaking pool

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

- September 2012 -

The worst drought in living memory in this part of Sri Lanka continues but with the odd false-alarm—heavily overcast skies followed by what can only be described as a ‘sprinkle’, keeping absolute catastrophe at bay. However, by effecting some basic economies in the use of our spring water supply and by having got some of the “spring augmentation” hooked up, we’ve managed without too much hardship. This can hardly be said, however, for the villagers in the neighbourhood or for the farmers in the dry zone who suffer daily. Climate change seems largely to blame, exacerbated by poor soil management practices and even poorer land utilization and settlement policies.

The dry weather, though, has given us the opportunity to establish the minimal physical infrastructure required for our water storage, both in the springs that we have located and in the main stream which contains the soaking pool.

Our fruit crops appear to be petering out though there are still some mangosteens and ambarella (*Spondias dulcis*) which, because of the paucity of fruit generally, has been a magnet attraction to flying squirrels, palm squirrels and various birds, not to mention the ever-present hordes of macaque monkeys!

For the first time ever I saw an Indian Shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*) as I was returning, at dusk from my evening constitutional. As well as being a handsome bird, the Shama is a beautiful singer as well. As I type this, an *Ulama* (Devil Bird/Forest Eagle Owl) is calling from one of the large trees in the garden at an unusually early (7:45 p.m.) hour. Apart from the migratory birds that arrive with the north-east monsoon and depart with the south-west monsoon, the varieties that comprise the “old faithful” stay around the garden all year round and are a source of unending pleasure to us and our visitors.



The Indian Shama. Photo courtesy Gary Thoburn+

Arlene continues to display her affinity for the “country life” and her stock of jams, jellies and preserves has reached Olympian heights this year. Visitors are assured of quite a selection of these delicacies when they visit HPH. I continue to scribble every week as The Renaissance Man in The Sunday Leader which is acknowledged as Sri Lanka’s last independent English-language weekly and is available on the web.

We’ve decided to display another piece of HPH history by putting a cadjan (woven coconut fronds) roof over the old road rollers which were drawn by elephants to compact the aggregate (“road metal”) prior to bitumen and sand being applied. It is not likely that they’ll ever be used in the manner in which they were in a time past and will serve as a nostalgic reminder of another era!

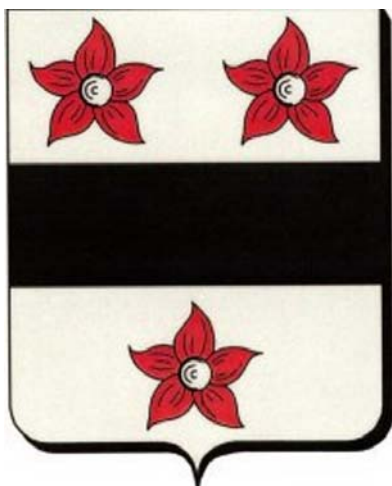
For information or to book your accommodation, contact us at:

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Road rollers with cadjan roof

A Belgian cousin, several times removed, has sent me the Armorial Crest/Coat of Arms of the van der Poorten family and I am taking the liberty of sticking it in this newsletter, though I can assure you that it is unlikely to be a permanent fixture on future ones!



Armorial Crest of the van der Poorten family from Belgium

The rains are due soon and the wonderful flora and fauna will blossom, making HPH one of the most attractive places to be in Sri Lanka!

Warm wishes, Arlene and Emil

For the month of September we will continue to provide each visiting group with a complimentary "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies!"



TripAdvisor Mobile and Tablet Apps

Did you know that HPH is on Trip Advisor?

www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g304138-d2057765-Reviews-Halgolla_Plantation_Home-_Kandy_District_Central_Province.html

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/>

Upcoming events in the country

Aug 30 – Sept 2: Kandy Spice Food Festival at Kandy City Centre

Sept. 2 - 3: The Colombo Fringe Festival presents music of all styles in various venues

Sept. 18 - Oct 7: Cricket - ICC World Twenty20*, 12 countries participating

Sept. 18 – 26: Colombo International Book Fair at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall

October: The migrant birds begin to arrive; about 150 species come to spend the winter months in Sri Lanka, many of which can be seen at HPH

Oct 6 - 7: National Kite Festival, Galle Face Colombo

Oct 7: Colombo marathon

October 17 - 19: Sri Lankan Airlines Golf Classic, Colombo

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

+ Thanks to Gary Thoburn for permission to use this photograph. You can see more of his photos from Sri Lanka at: <http://garytsphotos.zenfolio.com/p11857582>

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