



A splash of colour in our front yard despite the drought!

HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME – ONE OF A KIND!

- MARCH 2017 -

February has lived up to its reputation of being probably the driest month in the year. However, the circumstances leading up to what we hope is the finale have been the unusually dry years that have preceded it. The cumulative effect of what can only be described as climate change is that, with each succeeding long, dry spell the soil has lost a significant amount of its moisture absorption capacity. Increasingly, rains following extended dry weather appear to result in erosion of a scarce-enough topsoil with little penetration of it. As much as the foregoing might come across as a commercial for “climate change alleviation advocates” I’m telling it as I see it without philosophical blinkers of any kind.

Among the steps we’ve taken to protect our scarce water resources is covering our PVC pipe with split giant bamboo from which the inter-nodes have been removed. “Old tech.?” Perhaps, but, so far, effective in dealing with the twin menaces of wild pigs and monkeys and anyone inclined to senseless vandalism.

As I write this, we’ve had a few light showers followed by a deluge, though whether this is the precursor of any substantial rainfall is anyone’s guess.

After that “railing against the fates,” let me take you back to a location about which we spoke in the last newsletter – *Nelligala Saama Chaitiya*.

We are going to try out a wider-than-usual three-wheeler (Piaggio) to take visitors to this landmark on the plain of

the North Western Province in time to watch the sun rise from its isolated grandeur. We plan on obtaining the services of the son of an old “retainer” and those of an informal guide, a pleasant young man who not only hails from the area but is knowledgeable about its history and local legend, inclusive of *Ridi Vihare* where he spends most of his time.

From there it is a short jog to the world’s largest (65+ feet) granite *Samadhi Buddha* statue, at Moneragala, which is one of the not-to-be-missed sites in Sri Lanka both as an embodiment of its predominant religion and culture but also as a supreme example of the stone-carvers’ art which transcends national and communal barriers – every one of the artists engaged in this monumental task being from Southern India. Then comes a leisurely visit to the lovely and peaceful *Ridi* (Silver) *Vihare*, the fascinating fame and legend of which hark back to pre-Christian times and which has an ambience of its own. Guests will then return to a typical HPH lunch. A long morning, perhaps, but one that will, we bet, be one of the highlights of any sojourn in Sri Lanka.



Giant bamboo protective shield
for PVC water supply pipes

March has seen a further decimation of our established staff with Mallika moving to a location that better fits the needs of her partner, his children and herself. We will miss her sorely but life has to go on and one has to choose one’s priorities.

Using the labels we displayed in a previous newsletter, we have delivered our first batches of jams and spices to the Royal Garden Mall in Kandy and await feedback both on quality as well as packaging of

our first efforts. The entirety of the contents in the polythene sleeves (for the spices) and the glass bottles (for the jams) has been produced at HPH. Apart from the new experience it has, we hope, provided some new skills to our limited staff in engaging in what we hope will be a cottage industry with the promise of better earnings for them.

We are hoping, also, to have a responsible person providing ongoing supervision of our vanilla patch, with which will go further training for an additional "pollinator" or two. However, before then, we are faced with an upcoming harvest of the beans that were mere flowers about ten months ago and which will, unlike the last lot of vanilla, have to be very carefully cured if one is to produce an acceptable product, particularly since the price of this spice has skyrocketed recently. Never a dull moment!



Looking north from our verandah

HPH is highly recommended on Trip Advisor. See what our previous [guests](#) have had to say!



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You can now book directly with us from our website at: www.halgollaplantationhome.com. Look for the booking widget:

If you don't see it, refresh your browser and make sure that your browser is set to "allow blocked content". We are also on [Facebook](#). Bookings can be made on [Trip Advisor](#), [freetobook](#), [Airbnb](#), [Booking.com](#) and [Agoda](#) or, **preferably**, by contacting us directly.

For regular updates of what is happening at Halgolla Plantation Home, please like us on [Facebook](#).

For March, as in month's past, we'll continue our very popular "Sampler pack" of HPH-grown and -roasted coffee and a "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies" that appears to delight visitors as they take their leave of us and HPH!

- Certificate of Excellence 2015 from Trip Advisor
- rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka 2013
- recommended by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#)
5th edition, 2014



Ridee (Silver) Vihare: one of the gems in proximity to HPH