

**HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME**  
**- THE *UNIQUE* SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE -**  
**SEPTEMBER 2018**

Beginning this month, we will focus on one piece of HPH that has a history that is unique to it and which we expect would be of interest to those who receive this Newsletter each month.



**Stained-glass window from the van der Poorten studios in Brussels, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.**

The picture above is probably what constitutes the “trademark” of our home – the large stained-glass window that lets the light stream into our dining room.

This is not of recent origin, having been designed by A. J. van der Poorten and crafted by his father and brother in the van der Poorten studios in Brussels in the nineteenth century, prior to my father’s birth. My father told me the story (that he’d been told) of the window arriving in several wooden crates, cushioned against the vicissitudes of travel across the oceans by sawdust on, under and around each panel. Each piece was then unpacked and assembled. It was set up in its present form only after 1946 when Ben and Nellie van der Poorten, my parents, took up residence here with their progeny. My eldest brother, Tony, an architecture student at Edward, Reid and Begg (in Colombo) at the time, gathered the parts that now comprise the entirety from various locations in what was then “the Greenwood Group Bungalow” and assembled them in a sturdy wooden frame constructed by the highly skilled carpenters then engaged in extensive renovation of what

is now HPH. Thus, four generations of the van der Poorten family have been involved in the creation and preservation of this family artefact.

The rains were continuous in August and we were in the position of hoping for an abatement of precipitation after years of praying **for** rain!

Our experiment with using waste from the local hairdressers to deter the depredations of wild pigs in our vanilla patch has failed at HPH (assuming it ever worked anywhere else!), because, no sooner it rained, the hair was damped down and



**Bird's-nest fern**  
(*Asplenium nidus avis*)

For September, as in past months, we'll continue our “Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies,” which appears to delight our guests as they take their leave of us!

Some Recognition of HPH

- Certificate of Excellence 2015 from Trip Advisor
- Rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka
- Recommended by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#)

ceased to be a deterrent to our porcine pals’ snuffling around and supposedly getting it down their nasal passages. Anyone who knows of another deterrent is entreated to tell us what it is!

The challenge of violent theft in the capital of world vanilla producti

on - Madagascar - is chillingly documented in a BBC piece: ([https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/ids/madagascar\\_vanilla](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/ids/madagascar_vanilla) )

The end of the *Durian* season was greeted with some relief because the seemingly never-ending stream of *tuk-tuks*, motorbikes and other vehicles operated by those who believed that durians picked off the ground, rather than off the tree, are infinitely tastier has ceased.



**The first cashews on our solitary tree!**

All our *Uguressa* (*Flacourtia inermis*) trees carried larger-than-usual crops and we were faced with the perennial challenge: monkeys and giant squirrels, though we let the Grey Hornbills, announcing their presence with their raucous squawks, help themselves!

One of the more exciting developments here has been the revamping of our website by Suresh Perera who is more friend than computer-consultant to HPH. No sooner the new version is up and running you will have a special note informing you of the fact!



One of the mushroom varieties that the rains bring out at HPH

We've had a few health challenges since our last newsletter: Arlene with some fairly serious respiratory problems and

yours truly with age-related issues with his back, complicated by packing too

much weight around! Oh, well, nobody said old age was going to be a bed of roses!

A-collaboration-in-the making is one between HPH and Fahid Ajmal, a neighbour, who has embarked on a personalised business, guiding guests around Sri Lanka in his Honda Fit Shuttle 5-passenger vehicle. Those interested in the services of a very pleasant, sober young man may get in touch with him at [fahidajmal@gmail.com](mailto:fahidajmal@gmail.com) (or with us) indicating what your requirements are and we'll get back to you in short order making your time in the Land Like No Other the pleasantest possible.

With all good wishes,

Arlene & Emil



HPH Cinnamon quills and powder

**REMEMBER, WE CAN BE REACHED AT +94 (0) 77 347 0702 and +94 (0) 72 284 9770.**

**OUR WEBSITE IS [www.halgollaplantationhome.com](http://www.halgollaplantationhome.com)**

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**We've decided to leave this image on all our Newsletters because it is so much a "Trademark" of HPH now!**