

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



The starting point of Boulder Path, one of HPH's particular attractions

The “hot news” in the tourist trade was the announcement in November, by the Lonely Planet travel guide that Sri Lanka was the world’s No. 1 tourist destination. For, more information check:

<http://www.traveller.com.au/sri-lanka-why-this-is-lonely-planets-top-destination-for-2019-h1783b>.

While it does come across as a bit of a “puff-piece,” promoting one particular entrepreneur, there is no gainsaying the unique nature and charms of our island home. What strikes us, though, is the fact that HPH is a unique destination and that we can say, in all honesty, that there is no other facility that can offer the combination of delights that our hideaway in the hills does. We started our B & B operation some years ago, mostly to break the monotony of our increasingly secluded lives by encouraging

interesting people, particularly from other parts of the world, to spend time with us in a large house which we found ourselves “rattling

around in” as we reached the twilight of our lives. Over the years, while its operation has become significantly more complex with changing political and economic circumstances in Sri Lanka, the new challenges have energized two older fogies who have now been convinced of the truth of the old dictum about “use it or lose it” in the matter of their faculties! Also, in the case of one who’d spent a significant part of his life in

For December, 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 from Trip Advisor
- Rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka
- Recommended by [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#)

community development work in “less-developed” communities the realization dawned that it provided an opportunity to return to work with social value with the seriously-disadvantaged residents of HPH’s neighbourhood, without having to cope with the intrusive behaviour of local politicians. That said, attempts at economic and social empowerment in our neighbourhood have presented a different set of significant challenges!



Stone sculptors from Tamil Nadu continue to work on granite in Moneragala

More about all of that at another time!
 A recent trip to the incredible Samadhi Buddha Statue at Moneragala provided evidence of yet another unique endeavour on the site. On the path leading up from the temple to the statue, some of the stone sculptors have begun carving out images of two of the most important gods in the Hindu pantheon, Shiva (the god of fertility?) and Ganesh, colloquially known as the "Elephant God." This was wholly unexpected and we weren't able to ascertain what provoked this new initiative. When we do, the readers of this newsletter will be the first to know! A footnote to my conversation with the sculptors: they spoke fluent Sinhala, thanks to the length of time they'd been in this



Preliminary sketches for the granite Ganesh and Siva sculptures

country! On the same journey, the quite arduous trip to the summit of

Nelligala Saama Chaitiya proved well

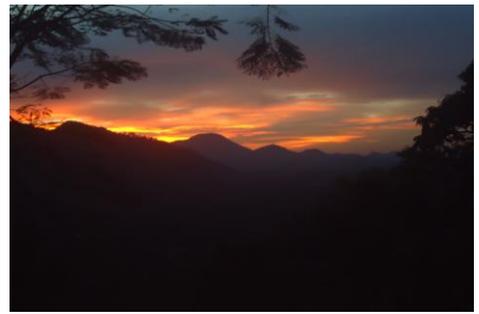
worth the effort thanks to the unmatched view of the North Western plain.

After years of complaining about consecutive droughts, each seemingly more severe than the one that preceded it, we have had a surfeit of rain that has presented a different set of challenges. Among these has been keeping our (already-rough) road accessible to wheeled traffic. Primarily through the exercise of hitherto-unsuspected ingenuity, we've succeeded though we would ask that you continue to keep your fingers crossed for us!

We are still in the process of mopping up some of the debris from the unprecedented tornado that did so much damage around our home recently,



though the Cannonball/*Sal (Couroupita guianense)* tree which produced an unmatched mass of blossoms several times a year is irreplaceable. We do have another of these delightful trees near our Ironwood (*Messua ferrea*) tree by the King Coconut grove and we are seeking ways to encourage its growth and blossoming.



Down the Weuda valley from the HPH verandah

Our vanilla crop is ready for harvest. There are certainly more beans than in the past thanks, primarily, to Biso's increasing expertise in pollinating the flowers. However, the "downside" is that the beans are smaller than before and we will not realise anything approaching the astronomical prices on the world market because of local marketing constraints.

Our pepper crop is certainly not as large as it usually is and, here again, I suspect the very dry conditions we've experienced have taken their toll.

We had a guest who continued on his travels through the northern part of the Sri Lanka at the end of November. He was making his third visit to HPH, an indication, if such is needed, that we do provide service of a more than acceptable standard, even though we say so ourselves!

**With all good wishes,
 Arlene & Emil**