



A very diverse group of visitors!
HALGOLLA PLANTATION HOME
- THE *UNIQUE* SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE -
FEBRUARY 2019

We are beginning this month's Newsletter on a very personal note with a reference to someone Emil had shared a classroom with beginning in 1947 when most of those reading this little anecdote

The picture appearing at the top of this page has in it two winners of the Gratiaen Prize for The Best Fiction Written in English in Sri Lanka, one of them a "cousin-once-removed" of Emil who thoroughly enjoyed basking in her reflected glory! The others were her husband, a litterateur of similar eminence and achievement, Emil's Australian relations and a couple of mixed heritage sharing devotion to spreading the light of the Buddha Dhamma. Diversity, anyone?! We continue with our work with the spice crops at HPH having brought in a quite decent crop of cloves, the tail end of which is being harvested well into January.

For February, 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](#)



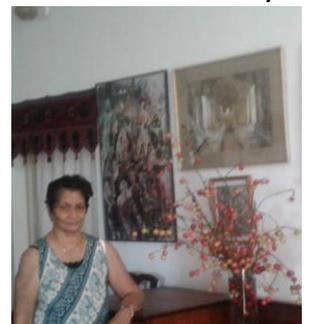
An unusually long raceme of "Thiththa-vel" (*Anamirta cocculus*) flowers near Meditation Flat

hadn't even arrived on the planet! It would take more than a HPH Newsletter

to recount the anecdotes shared on HPH's front verandah. Suffice it to say that John Errol Mervyn Fernando's too-brief

sojourn is going to be one of the highlights of this old man's final years. In addition, we had guests who were "coattail" relations, grandchildren of Emil's maternal grandfather's eldest brother who immigrated to Australia in about 1930. In a "it's-a-small-world" context, the husband of one of them was had another connection to Emil as a twenty-year collaborator of Emil's brothers when they were "awaiting the arrival of the World Revolution" in the 1970's in London, England!

The pepper is also being brought in, a smallish crop further reduced by the depredations of the barbets, otherwise, fruit-eating birds, who are well known for relishing this (hot) spice! Soon we will



Arlene with her display of Lovi (*Flacourtia inermis*)

begin selectively picking the nutmegs, at least those that the monkeys, giant squirrels and Grey Hornbills leave us!
The “Walkabout and Planter’s Lunch at HPH” has been gently increasing in popularity and we are going to fly a trial balloon in this edition of our Newsletter by attaching a description of that unique event. Let us know what you think of this and, if you choose to disseminate it more widely, we’d be more than pleased!

On the weather front, we’ve had unusually cold spells at night, resulting in a man who spent 30+ plus years in the North-West of Canada looking for a blanket to cover his feet!
And people still insist that there is no such thing as “climate change!”
Our “workforce,” such as it is, continues as before with the occasional augmentation of Selvarajah’s and Rajamani’s son, Daniel, when he is not pumping gas at a local petrol station and when his light weight is essential to reach cloves or fruit at the end of brittle and weak tree limbs! His father’s “imbibing habits” continue to present sporadic interruptions to his very valuable contributions to the day-to-day operation of HPH, though!
Senevi awaits a hip replacement later this year,

though the lens implantation to deal with his cataracts is due early next month. This, we are certain, will result in a restoration of sight that will be little short of miraculous given the almost total blindness he has hitherto concealed so well!

Biso has been checking the vanilla vines for signs of emerging flower buds and is not pleased by what she sees as the inordinate delay in our “vine maintenance program,” the result of our labour resources being forced to deal with more urgent needs as they arise. Our newest effort at crop protection is the installation of a solar-powered electric fence to keep the pigs from damaging our vanilla vines by digging them up in pursuit of grubs in the leaf-mould and debris that we heap around the base of the *Gliricidias* on which they are trained. We hope that this will also dissuade the porcupines from doing as much damage in their quest for the roots and bark of the said *Gliricidias*!

Even though we seem to end on a bit of a whiny note, you may rest assured that the operation of HPH brings a significant sense of achievement to those engaged in the task!

With all good wishes!

Arlene & Emil



Mobiles: +94 (0) 77 347 0702, +94 (0) 76 975 2176

E-mail: emil@halgollaplantationhome.com;

WEBSITE: www.halgollaplantationhome.com