



## SLNHS TRIP REPORT

Chilaw Sandspit, Anavilandawa, Navadamkulam – 25th January 2014

*There is a pleasure in the pathless wood, rapture on the lonely shore . . . . . Byron*



Participants : Docs Malik Fernando and Asoka Thenabadu, Rohan and Kamini de Soysa, Kamalika, Ninel Fernando, Arjun Goonewardena, Nandalal Ranasinghe, WP Somasunderam, Vasantha Dias, Enoka and Chris Corea. The above NHS members set off northwards from Hyde Park Residencies (the residence of our energetic VP Dr Asoka Thenabadu). We were to leave at 5:30am but the actual departure time was at 5:45am due to a late arrival.

The first sighting was the expressway! This was new to some of us and cut down the travel time upto Katunayake. We admired the beautiful views on the way and wondered how much environmental damage had been caused to the flora and fauna. The first stop was at a P&S when repeated pleas of hunger were finally heeded. Thus fortified (and relieved at the adjoining toilet) we proceeded to Chilaw Rest House. Here we also met up with Romesh de Silva and his delightful little son (who was armed with his fishing rod and quite disappointed that he was not able to make use of it !)

After ordering lunch we proceeded down the sand spit. The road seemed to have grown longer and narrower since my last visit. However, running the gauntlet of pedestrians and bridal cars was worth it as the end of the sand spit was really lovely. Burly Vasantha even had to exercise his charm on one of the drivers who stopped plumb in our path. We were greeted by the sander lings that were running up and down the beach ahead of the wavelets. This was exactly as they used to when Enoka and I were first shown these birds by Rex de Silva at the same spot many years ago. There were all the usual waders, terns, egrets, herons etc. The fishing boats were unloading their catch and the birds were having a field day.

As the sun and temperature were both rising, we left for Annavilandawa. The water level was low and in fact there was no water at all south of the access road. We did the usual walk along the bund and was treated to a beautiful vista – a picture book pastoral scene. In fact the scene was so beautiful that I decided to simply lie down on the tank bund and drink it in while the others went on looking for more birds. No, there was no comb duck to be seen but the grebes, teal, herons, serpent eagle and all the rest of them were quite enough. In fact I presently dozed off! Having admired this beautiful tank for a while longer we went on to Navadamkulam.

Again a beautiful tank with lots of kumbuk and other trees growing beside it. However it was more of the same as the previous one really. Sitting by this tank I could well understand why rural Sri Lankans have a reputation for being self satisfied and not bitten by the hunger to get out of their comfort zones” and “achieve more”. They know perfection when they see it.

From here we returned to the Chilaw Rest House for the long awaited lunch. And what a lunch it was – crabs, prawns, fish, all manner of vegetables etc etc. In fact it was discussed that the society is now on the road to becoming a gastronomic society!! We apologise once again to those who did not partake of the goodies but kindly shared in the cost. The drive back to Colombo was uneventful. We do look forward to the next trip - and perhaps we need to leave even earlier in the morning next time .....

With many thanks to Doc Malik for all the coordination, collection of funds etc and to Asoka Siriwardena for helping with booking the vehicle.

Chris

PS Romesh, many thanks for the wonderful photographs!!

