



PUAAN NEWS

PUAAN Inaugural Newsletter

The objective of the newsletter is to keep members informed of the activities of the New South Wales Chapter and matters of general interest. It is our intention to publish it twice a year and make it available to members on our joint website with the Victoria Chapter.

This inaugural edition will be mailed to all financial members. It covers in brief our activities since inauguration.

PUAAN Initial Launch

The enthusiasm of a group of alumni and a few follow up discussions resulted in the formation of the Peradeniya University Alumni Association - NSW Chapter. The Inaugural General Meeting was held at Thornleigh Community Centre on 30 May 2007. It was followed by a social attended by members, their families and well wishers totaling over 300 people.

The inaugural committee elected unanimously at this meeting was as follows:

- President - Janaka Seneviratne
- Vice President - Don Sandanayake
- Secretary - Palitha Siriwardena
- Assistant Secretary - Padma Kumarasinghe
- Treasurer - Upali Aranwela
- Assistant Treasurer - Shelton Peiris
- Public Officer - Lal Rankothge
- Assistant Public Officer - Raja Yogan
- Committee members: Wasantha Wickremanayake, Earlson Forbes, Srikantha Nadarajah, Earnest MacIntyre, Lakshmi Waniganayake

At this meeting the Constitution was approved. Subsequently the Association was incorporated with the Department of Fair Trading under Associations Incorporation Act 1984.



Activities in 2007/08

Weekend excursion - The first activity after inauguration was a weekend retreat at the Hunter Valley Resort, about 150 kilometers north of Sydney, from Friday 7 December to Sunday 9 December '07.

This event was organized with the intention of giving Alumni members and their families and well-wishers an opportunity to get to know each other over a weekend and capture the spirit of living together as we had done at the Peradeniya Campus. It was a fun filled event with indoor and outdoor sporting activities, music, laughter and interesting anecdotes. A 'WUS' canteen offered favourite finger food and drinks for sale at very reasonable prices. Recollecting the good old days in the Campus that launched us into a new life in the adult world was high on the agenda of many who were present. The main event was the Saturday night social with interesting speeches and entertainment amongst other items through video clips of Peradeniya stylized plays of Prof. Sarathchandra. This was followed by a delicious buffet dinner and music with dancing.



One Day International Cricket Match - The NSW Alumni group helped to organize tickets for the match on 8 February '08 between Sri Lanka and Australia at the SCG. Our alumni were well represented.

Bus trip to Canberra - A day trip to Canberra was organized in May '08. Although the response was less than anticipated, we had almost 50 people joining us on this bus tour reminiscent of our numerous one day bus trips organized by the various societies at Peradeniya. Janaka Seneviratne kindly undertook to drive the bus to Canberra in order to keep costs at a minimum. Needless to say this was a unique achievement for a leader of any social group. Mrs Soma Athukorala from the Canberra group of Pera. Alumni was instrumental in organizing a suitable venue for meeting our Canberra Alumni and arranging lunch. It was a very enjoyable event both in terms of a short day trip, giving opportunity to meet with our colleagues in Canberra as well as socializing and hearty singing (supported by liquid refreshments) on the trip to and from Canberra.

Another out door activity such as a family outing for a day, possibly a softball cricket match plus barbecue or a bus trip in April/ May ' 09 is being planned by the Committee.

The Next AGM is scheduled for 29th August '09. Details will be announced later.

AGM and Social in August 2008

The first AGM was held on 30 August '08, again, at the Thornleigh Community Centre. It was decided to restrict the numbers of attendees to 250 to allow for more space at the function. The AGM commenced with the reading and approval of the minutes of the inaugural meeting. This was followed by the Presidents annual report and the Treasurer's statement of accounts which was approved by the members. Thereafter the same office bearers were elected unopposed to the respective positions previously held by them. It was also resolved at the meeting to appoint an Editor for the Newsletter to be decided by the Committee at a subsequent date. Accordingly, the Committee has appointed Mr Srikantha Nadarajah as Editor. (While it also created a vacancy for a Committee member, the Committee, at the next committee meeting, decided not to increase numbers of office bearers until the next AGM).

The Social that followed the AGM was another great success. Here is an extract of an article on the event published in Oz Lanka website:-

The business of the agenda and the election of office bearers being quickly and smoothly completed, we had an entertaining word picture of "*The lighter side of Peradeniya in the fifties*" delivered by an alumnus of about half a century ago, still, unsurprisingly, brimming with wit and energy. Sinhala and English music items followed and then a light dramatic skit about the "*How you going today, mate!*" encounter of a Peradeniya external degree graduate, just arrived in Sydney, relating it to a Peradeniya internal/residential graduate also just arrived. It concluded with a curious analogy of a residential degree to natural childbirth with all the travails and pleasures of emerging from a womb. An

external degree was likened to a Caesarean, where you go to the post office, slit open a package from the Peradeniya Administration and extract your degree!

It was indeed Peradeniya that was the first large valley of integration that brought in all the communities from the remotest parts of the island, to get to know each other through thick and thin. At the very beginning of the evening, the gathering was moved when the President reminded that this was a sometimes forgotten crucial role that Peradeniya has played, and will still fulfill when difficult times are over.

Reggie Dissanayake, a well known and talented friend of the alumni, rendered some Sinhala songs that were truly captivating.

During a sumptuous dinner with all "the Flavour(s) of Ceylon" more songs were provided by our own alumni artists. As well, significant clips from the movie "Hantane Kathawa" filmed mostly on the Peradeniya University campus created dramatic moods of return to a much loved location.

"Ethnic Bonding" – a discussion

As part of its program to promote open discussion of current issues of importance, NSW Chapter held a meeting at the Blue Elephant Restaurant, on Friday the 24th October 2008. The subject for discussion was, 'Aspects of Ethnic Bonding in Sri Lanka,' as presented by Dr. Tom Silva.

Dr Silva submitted that during the Anuradhapura period in Sri Lankan history, there was little or no difference in people living in most parts of the country. In fact he referred to this period as largely one of ethnic uniformity. This however changed after about 950 A D. when North- South diversity began to show. The movement away from Anuradhapura, Polannaruwa and the North Central part of the country to the Central and Southern regions, accentuated the divide. With the spread of Buddhism ethnicity came to be clouded by religion rather than identifying differences, he said.

Following on Dr Silva's interesting and entertaining presentation, the panel comprising of Dr. Dulcy Windsor, Mr. Palitha Manchanayake, Mr. Srikantha Nadarajah, Mr. Maithri Panagoda, Dr. Don Wikrama and Mr. Chalice Moldrich, kept the audience intellectually stimulated with their individual take on the subject under discussion. The discussion was ably moderated by our own alumni, Mrs. Gothami Indikadahena, the Actg Consul General for Sri Lanka in Sydney.

WEEK END RETREAT AT HUNTER VALLEY 13th to 15th FEB '09

The second week end excursion was also arranged at Hunter Valley Retreat due to its proximity to Sydney and the facilities offered. There were over 110 participants. On Friday 13th evening we had an informal get-together with good music and entertainment provided by Cecil Fonseka, supported by musical items by Lal Rankothge and Raja Yogan in Sinhala and Tamil, together with some impromptu performances in all three languages from members of the audience. A simple Sri Lankan buffet dinner was organized at a price providing good value for money. The WUS Canteen was open from about 5.00pm. Sri Lankan favourites supplied voluntarily by some of the participants were sold at nominal prices. On Saturday 14th morning, due to unfavorable weather, planned outdoor activities had to be abandoned. However, it gave participants the opportunity to congregate in the main hall and interact with each other, make new friends and play indoor games.



The main event for the week-end was the function on Saturday evening for which a sumptuous buffet dinner was supplied by Flavor of Ceylon. The Hall was decorated simply and attractively in Peradeniya University colours by Sunethra Nadarajah and her team of Committee members and well wishers. Pre-dinner entertainment comprised of two thought provoking presentations, light hearted anecdotes and enjoyable music provided by Bonnie Fernando and his band together with songs by Lal and Raja. Earnest MacIntyre presented in brief, Prof Paranavitarana's findings of interlinear inscriptions reflecting influences of South East Asian countries on Ceylon in ancient times and views of the school of thought that challenges these findings. Tom Silva spoke of the contributions made by Sir P Ramanathan, Sir Marcus Fernando and Sir P Arunachalam in progress towards self government in the British colonial period. After dinner, Raffle and Door Prize draws took place. These were followed by music and dancing into the early hours of the morning.

Pera Medicos ReUnion

Peradeniya Medical School Alumni Association (PeMSAA) held a reunion of members worldwide, including from USA, UK, NZ and interstate from 26 September to 28 September '08. It was the first time

there was a change of venue to Australia from USA. Program included a hopper night in Strathfield, NSW on 26th, Clinical Seminar and Dinner Dance at Sieble Pier Hotel, Walsh Bay, Sydney on 27th and brunch at the same hotel on 28th.

Clinical sessions on 27th were opened by Prof. Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW. Guest speakers were Prof. Rajah Bandaranayake on Peradeniya Medical School, Prof. Brian Seneviratne on Depression, Dr Logan Kanagaratnam on Cardiology, Prof. Siri Kannangara on Sports Medicine and Dr Sumathi Perampalam on Diabetic Management. The speakers were highly commended for quality and simplicity of presentations. Dinner Dance was also a resounding success and the organizing committee under the leadership of Dr Nithi Sivathondan was complimented for the excellent arrangements and for making the reunion a great success.

PUAAN has obtained 100 custom made T shirts from Sri Lanka with the Peradeniya colours and logo. These are available to members at a cost of \$15.00 each until sold out.

From the Editor

Any constructive suggestions to improve the layout and quality of the newsletter will be appreciated.

Please keep the Secretary informed of change of contact details, in particular the email address. All correspondence for this purpose may be directed to puaan07@yahoo.com.au.

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Our University