

I am very pleased to report another 12 months of sustained progress!

APSL has contributed to the reconciliation effort and building bridges within the multi ethnic Sri Lankan community here in the UK. How? By reaching out to the three communities and by continuing the much celebrated "We Sri Lanka" annual event and by opening direct links with the Sri Lanka Muslim Cultural Centre in Harrow early this year. As we all know, reconciliation is not just 'one event', but a continuing process and "We Sri Lanka" has completed its third year under Gihantha Jayasinghe's leadership. Gihantha will be taking a back seat after the AGM, but I am confident that another Member of APSL will lead "We Sri Lanka" in the next 12 months. My sincere thanks to Gihantha for his commitment and determination to make "We Sri Lanka", the success it has, so far been.

The Research Symposium ("APSL-RS") under the leadership of Dr. Mahesh de Silva has now matured into a 'Main Event' for those Sri Lankan Doctors and Scientists to present their Papers before a live and intellectual audience.

Thushara Madurasinghe continues to lead APSL's "Living in the UK" Series, with further interactive sessions in the last 12 months with first and second generation Sri Lankans resident mainly in the Midlands. I thank not only Thushara but also our speakers Shiranee Joseph de Saram, Dr. Marc Dissanayake, Ranjan Perera & Gayani Senaratne.

APSL's "Ask the Expert" Series recommenced under the leadership of Dr. Andrew Nayagam in January this year with "Ask the Lawyer" and in March with "Ask the Medical Doctor", both of which were held at the Sri Lankan High

Commission Auditorium under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Chris Nonis. I thank Dr. Nonis for his continued patronage, and for his active participation at all our events. My thanks also go out to the Speakers Daksheenie Abeywardene and Ruki Pinidiya (both Solicitors) and to Marc Dissanayake, Geethika Bandaranayake, Shevanthi Nayagam, Asanga Fernando (all Medical Doctors). There will be further presentations on other disciplines under the "Ask the Expert" Series this year.

On the Sri Lanka front, under Prof. I.M. Dharmadasa's leadership APSL successfully concluded the Essay Competition and launched the "Green Energy Ideas into commercial uses" Project. The final winners have been selected. The winners will not only receive cash awards but also have the opportunity to commercialise their ideas

through the private sector in Sri Lanka. In addition, the solar power is making significant in-roads within the Sri Lankan economy, and we are proud to note Prof. Dharmadasa's contribution to the solar energy Policy of Sri Lanka. We have formed Memoranda of Understanding with the National Science Foundation ("NSF") and the Institute of Fundamental Studies ("IFS") in Sri Lanka and we (APSL) will continue to act as an 'knowledge-hub' based in the UK for the benefit of Sri Lanka.

I conclude my term of office as President of APSL at the AGM (27 April 2013) and I wish the new President and his executive committee continued success and satisfaction in APSL's tenth year and beyond. I thank my executive committee of the two previous years and in particular Ranjan Perera (previous General Secretary) and Leslie Dep (the current General Secretary) for their co-operation and understanding in steering APSL forward with me. I also thank the Members of APSL for placing their confidence in me during the last two years. Thank you and best wishes.



Rohan de Alwis.

Contributing to nation building through expatriates

This latest issue of the APSL Newsletter is published in conjunction with the APSL Annual General Meeting held on 27th April 2013. Established in 2004 by a small group of Sri Lankan professionals in the UK, APSL has grown from strength to strength as a pioneering organization that contributes to various developmental, capacity building and assistance programmes in Sri Lanka. The success of APSL UK has been a key motivational factor in establishing similar APSL chapters in various countries around the globe.

Professional Sri Lankan expatriates, especially in the UK, are working in multitude of sectors including services, industry and academia. Many of them are considered as global experts in their respective fields. APSL model

has been to harness and channel their expertise and knowledge to develop various social, economical, professional and technological sectors in Sri Lanka, contributing to national development, especially in the post-conflict era.

Members of APSL with a background in the academia has an important role to play in our activities of nation building, especially through initiating research & capacity-building collaborations with Sri Lankan universities and institutions. As a low and middle income country (LAMIC), Sri Lanka has an evident lack of an overarching research culture, research infra-structure, research funding resources and above all, a trained force of motivated researchers in almost all areas. As established

academics in the highly research-oriented university system of UK and Europe, we have the opportunity to extend a helping hand to Sri Lankan academics and researchers in their quest to develop new knowledge, vital to the development of our nation. We can build collaborations, bring in much needed research funding and use our expertise to train a new generation of capable researchers in Sri Lanka.



The opportunities are endless, and we seek motivated expatriates with the resolve to contribute to the nation building of Sri Lanka together with the APSL.

*Dr. Chesmal Siriwardhana
Editor - APSL Newsletter*

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"Ask the Medical Doctor"

APSL's "Ask the Medical Doctor" under the overall continuing theme of "Ask the Expert" took place at the Sri Lanka High Commission on 16th March 2013

President of APSL, Mr Rohan de Alwis delivered the welcome address and referred to the continuing series which was re-launched this year in January initially with "Ask the Lawyer" event. Mr de Alwis made the point that the Sri Lankan community had not only access to professionals within the framework of UK institutions such as the NHS, but now through APSL it has secured access to its own professionals to ask questions and concerns they have within their own comfort zone.



The High Commissioner, Dr. Chris Nonis in his Address to the audience congratulated

APSL for having the capability, capacity and the determination to have as many events to interact with the Sri Lankan community on a broad and pluralistic basis and wished his total support to APSL going forward. Dr. Andrew Nayagam, Leader/Chair of APSL's "Ask the Expert" Series introduced the panel of Speakers.

Dr. Marc Dissanayake, General Practitioner & Dermatologist, Enfield, Middlesex, a well known Sri Lankan and medical professional gave an overview of skin problems and then discussed the common skin problems such as eczema, itch, psoriasis, urticaria. Dr. Asanga Fernando, Specialist Registrar in Adult Psychiatry and Clinical Fellow in Medical Education, Maudsley Hospital, London made a very interesting overview of psychiatric problems and spoke of the myths and social exclusions and fears surrounding mental issues. Dr. Shevanthi Nayagam, Specialist Registrar in Gastroenterology, Imperial College, London gave an overview of gastroenterological problems and her experiences both in the UK and overseas as a medical doctor. Dr. Geethika Bandaranayake, Specialist Registrar in Paediatrics, Worthing Hospital presented an overview of childhood problems, and the problems

faced by children and adults here in the UK as well as those in Sri Lanka.

The floor was thereafter open to the audience for questions to the Panel and a general discussion took place thereafter. Overall, the guests/attendees were very



impressed with the interaction which was followed through over refreshments. The vote of thanks was delivered by Mr. Leslie Dep – General Secretary APSL whereby he thanked the High Commissioner, the Panel of Speakers, Mr. Herath, Minister Cultural at the Sri Lanka High Commission for his co-ordination and support extended to APSL in having the auditorium. Mr. Dep thanked the audience not only for their presence but also for engaging with the Panel and making it an interesting evening.



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Q & A Session with Prof. I M Dharmadasa

President of APSL UK (2009-2011)

Q. Personal background

I am a Physicist trained and worked at University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and currently working in Electronic Engineering as a Professor of electronic materials and devices. My current efforts focus on Research and Development of solar energy and their applications. I have been living in the United Kingdom over the past 32 years, and I am a dual citizen working between the two countries United Kingdom and Sri Lanka as an academic, active researcher and promoter of clean energy applications, aiming for reduction of poverty.

Q. Historical background in establishing/ joining APSL UK

In 2004, a small group of Sri Lankans decided to form a professional association in order to combine efforts carried out by individuals and small groups towards development of Sri Lanka. I got involved because of my on-going Higher Education Link programme with Sri Lanka, and I had the honour of delivering the inaugural lecture on "Green Energy for Sustainable Development" to a small gathering of about 25 people in London. The Sri Lankan High Commissioner, Mr Faiz Mustapha was present as the Patron, Leslie Gunaratne and Rohan de Alwis were elected as the first President and the General Secretary of APSL respectively. I was one of the three Vice-Presidents elected to represent the Science, Engineering & Technology sector.

Q. Motivations (personal and group) for the initiative of APSL

There are Sri Lankan professionals in UK serving at all fields and all levels. One of our main aims was for all professionals to sharpen their activities by learning from each other and contributing effectively at the work place. As a result a professional body like APSL could introduce and implement new development projects in Sri Lanka, by collaborating with local professionals to achieve our common goal of rapid development of Sri Lanka in every sector. The final aim is to provide opportunities for young people to develop fast, taking this as a training programme for all. The key positions of APSL are regularly renewed in order to provide a stage for young and experienced professionals to perform, contribute and develop.

Q. Details on office as a past president of APSL UK

After serving APSL for 5 yrs as one of the vice presidents, I had the honour of serving APSL as the President during 2009-2011. As described in business education, I personally experienced the four discrete stages of any organisation; forming, storming, norming and performing within APSL. This has been an exciting experience away from my main career path, and gave me a tremendous opportunity to introduce new projects for APSL to perform. We Sri Lanka for reconciliation, APSL Awards for stimulating development, Living in the UK and APSL Research Symposium for education and Employment opportunities for helping job-seekers were some of the projects introduced during my period in office. In addition to the above, the on-going projects supporting disaster affected communities, promotion and application of green energy, motivation certificates, speech therapy for children and many more lead by our APSL members continued at an enhanced pace. Also APSL-UK was formally introduced to the government authorities and Sri Lankan community through various projects. By attending the Global Forum organised by the NSF (National Science Foundation) in Dec. 2011, the APSL-model was introduced to a global community.

Q. Views on current APSL activities

The current President, Mr Rohan de Alwis contributed immensely to consolidate existing projects and activities. APSL has grown from ~25 members in 2004 to ~500 members today. MoUs have been signed with IFS and in the process of signing with NSF in order to enhance our work in Sri Lanka. APSL has now very well known as a credible organisation in Sri Lanka through our various activities and projects. Solar Village project is maturing by going through design, piloting and monitoring stages and now entering into the replication stage within and outside Sri Lanka. APSL is gaining steady momentum, becoming a charitable organisation, enhancing its current activities and introducing new projects as we progress forward. APSL-UAE chapter was born in 2012 and similar chapters will appear in the future from various regions like US, Canada and Australia.



Q. Views on the future of APSL

APSL has a huge potential to contribute by acting as a Knowledge Pool and a Think Tank for solving various issues in the future. Sri Lanka is developing fast and there are so many areas like reconciliation, sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and corruption to tackle and improve. All these challenging issues can be solved through education, soft-diplomacy and shaking-off those extremist ideas, by assisting professionals living in Sri Lanka and outside, by working together for the ultimate benefit of the people of Sri Lanka. APSL is a gathering of moderate and well balanced thinkers, and it is certainly moving in the right direction.

Q. Message to APSL members and non-members

Past nine years with APSL gave me tremendous happiness by associating professionals from every sector, away from my main stream of activities. APSL is growing steadily as one family to achieve its common goals. Although it was a tedious journey for me to travel from Sheffield to attend APSL meetings and activities spending weekends in London, I am happy to see that I was part of the APSL development process creating opportunities for our younger generation. I wish I had this opportunity 40 years ago, when I was a young lecturer. APSL highly values every profession and their contributions to the society, and my message therefore is for all Sri Lankan professionals and especially the young professionals in the United Kingdom to join the APSL and learn to grow professionally while contributing to your employer and also to our beloved motherland. Sri Lanka deserves real and positive contributions from all of us, professionals.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

on

27 APRIL 2013

at

CITY GRANGE HOTEL

4.00 pm

PROGRAMME

1. Welcome address;
Mr Rohan de Alwis (President APSL)
2. Reading of the Minutes of the 8th Annual
general meeting held on 12th May 2012;
Mr Leslie Dep (General Secretary)
3. Adoption of the 8th AGM minutes
4. Annual Report for year 2012 to 2013;
Mr Leslie Dep (General Secretary)
5. Annual Statement of Accounts;
Mr Thushara Madhurasinghe
(Treasurer)
6. Election of Office Bearers for year 2013
to 2014
7. Address by New President
8. Vote of Thanks
9. Close of AGM



APSL DINNER DANCE

on

27 APRIL 2013

at

CITY GRANGE HOTEL

7.30 pm

PROGRAMME

1. Welcome address and a short
presentation of APSL projects;
Mr Mervyn Silva (Incoming APSL
President 2013 -2014) (15 minutes)
2. APSL Award Scheme 2 Competition;
Announcement of Winners and
Summary of winning proposals;
Prof I.M. Dharmadasa (Project leader)
(15 minutes)
3. Keynote Address; by H.E Dr Chris Nonis,
High Commissioner for Sri Lanka
in the United Kingdom (30 minutes)
4. Dinner at 8.30 pm.
5. Raffle Draw at 9.30 pm.
6. 12.00 Midnight – Close of Event



4th APSL Convention - Research Symposium (APSL-RS 2012)

Second APSL Research Symposium (APSL-RS 2012) was held on Saturday 17th November 2012 at DoubleTree by Hilton Sheffield Park Hotel in Sheffield. APSL-RS 2012 provided a platform for UK based young Sri Lankan and international researchers to come together, share knowledge and start effective collaborations. It was also an exciting opportunity for the delegates to learn about cutting-edge research and technologies.

Since its launch, APSL-RS 2012 attracted significant interest from Sri Lankan researchers around the UK. Following a comprehensive review process 19 papers were selected for oral presentations and posters giving attention to social and commercial benefits of the research projects.

APSL-RS 2012 host Prof. I. M. Dharmadasa welcomed the guests at the start of the proceedings, while APSL President, Mr. Rohan de Alwis introduced numerous projects in the UK and Sri Lanka and the events organised by APSL for the Sri Lankan professional community in the UK.

The symposium consisted of three sessions. Prof. Dharmadasa and Dr. Mahesh de Silva co-chaired session one on engineering and built environment research. Prof. Dilanthi Amaratunga, Head of the Centre for Disaster Resilience at University of Salford, delivered a keynote speech titled 'Rebuilding for Resilience: Reconstructing Infrastructure in the North and East of Sri Lanka', commencing session one.

Session one presentation topics included 'Electroplating of semiconductor materials for photovoltaic and optoelectronic device applications', 'Innovations in lightweight structures & electric propulsion in aviation', 'Process capability maturity modelling in the construction industry' and 'Satellite link availability enhancement by integration of time diversity in the 2nd generation Digital Video Broadcasting system for Satellite (DVB-S2)'.

Session one was followed by the coffee break and the poster session (session two) which included posters titled 'Challenges faced by steel industry', 'Development of ZnTe layers using electrochemical technique for applications in thin film solar cells',

'Solar villages for sustainable development', 'Reducing the scarcity in mental health research from low and middle income countries: A success story from Sri Lanka' and 'Reforming higher education to contribute to lifelong learning in the built environment'.



Dr. Andrew Nayagam, Consultant in Genitourinary Medicine at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust and Dr. Mahesh Nirmalan, Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Anaesthesia and Critical Care Medicine at University of Manchester co-chaired session three on medical, biological sciences and chemistry research.

Dr. Mahesh Nirmalan delivered a keynote speech commencing session three. Session three presentation topics included 'Assessment of Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing of left behind family members of international labour migrants: a national comparative study in Sri Lanka', 'Structural Insights into the Initiation of DNA Synthesis in Eukaryotic Replication', 'Evolution of human conserved non-coding elements (CNEs)' and 'Enhancement in Photoelectrochemical Properties of Microwave Treated $\text{Zn}(\text{OH})_2$, TiO_2 and Fe_2O_3 Electrodes'. At the end of each presentation delegates had the opportunity to ask questions and share their knowledge with the researchers.

Following conclusion of session three Prof. Dharmadasa launched his latest book 'Advances in thin film solar cells' and the attendees had an opportunity to win a copy of the book.

APSL President, Mr. Rohan de Alwis presented certificates to presenters appreciating their contribution to APSL-RS 2012. Symposium Chair, Dr. Mahesh de Silva thanked the special guests, keynote speakers, presenters and delegates for their presence and contributions during his closing remarks and invited the delegates to join APSL to strengthen the association and expand its activities.

The Social event started around 7pm with a welcome address by APSL-RS 2012 host

Prof. Dharmadasa followed by an address by the APSL President Mr. Rohan de Alwis. A message from His Excellency, Dr. Chris Nonis, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to the UK was also read by the APSL President. Dr. Nonis, a professional himself was unable to attend the event due to a Pirith Ceremony and alms-giving at the High Commission in London. Delegates and the many new guests then went on to enjoy a sumptuous Sri Lankan dinner provided by East and West Restaurant, Sheffield.

Dr. Ruwan de Soyza conducted an interactive Sri Lankan musical experience following the dinner which was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. The presence of Mr. Bill Forbes, a veteran UK based Sri Lankan singer, was the surprise guest and highlight of the night. A raffle draw was held organized by APSL executive committee member Mrs. Gayani Senaratne. Proceeds from the raffle will be channeled to APSL projects in Sri Lanka.

Delegates and guests finally had the opportunity to dance to Baila music until midnight. Mr. Mohan Siriwardane, APSL Membership Secretary, delivered the vote of thanks, with special thanks to APSL members Lal and Mangalika Jayawardane for their support in organizing the event, followed by the national anthems of Sri Lanka and UK to end a highly successful event by APSL.



"Ask the Lawyer"

"Ask the Lawyer" Event at Sri Lanka High Commission organised by Association of Professional Sri Lankans, ("APSL") in association with the Sri Lankan Solicitors Network in the UK ("SLSN")

After a very successful "Ask the Expert" Series held two years ago, APSL re-launched the Series this year with "Ask the Lawyer" on 26th January 2013 at the Sri Lanka High Commission under the patronage of the Sri Lanka High Commissioner, His Excellency Dr. Chris Nonis. Mr. Neville De Silva, the Deputy High Commissioner, Members of the APSL and Members of the Sri Lankan community attended this event.

Mr. Rohan de Alwis, President of APSL in his welcome Address explained the purpose of the "Ask the Expert" Series, which was to reach out to the Sri Lankan Community and talk about topics they wanted to know about and to have an open discussion and stated that in the past APSL has conducted several events under the series such as "Ask the Doctor", "Ask the Lawyer", "Ask the Accountant", "Ask the Academics", "Ask the IT Guru", "Ask the Ayurvedic Physician" and even "Ask the Diplomat". He said that the current event "Ask the Lawyer" was being presented in association with Sri Lankan Solicitors Network (www.slsnuk.com), was the first among many "Ask the Expert" Series to follow this year.

Dr. Chris Nonis, the High Commissioner, in his Address expressed his admiration of the work carried out by APSL over the years in many areas including "We Sri Lanka Reconciliation Events" (to help promote harmony and integration within the UK based SL Community), the Young Researchers Symposium (to provide a forum for young Professionals of Sri Lankan origin to present their Papers before an audience of experienced professionals), "Living in the UK" Series (which addresses the issues of young second generation Sri Lankans, as well as that of the first generation parents), all for the benefit of the Sri Lankan community in the UK. He noted that by holding events of this nature and by engaging with people across the community without narrow boundaries, APSL was a significant contributor towards achieving a pluralistic community.

Following on, three topics relevant to the community were made by three Solicitors practising in the United Kingdom. APSL President, Mr. Rohan de Alwis, who is a Solicitor started the event with his presentation on "How to start a business in the UK". He explained the various ways of setting up a business; on your own (sole proprietor), with others as owners (Partnership) and with others as shareholders (Limited Liability Company). He stressed the importance of writing a

business plan and also getting the right funding to start the business, the difference between entrepreneurs and businessmen and much more.



He was followed by a detailed Presentation given by Mrs. Daksheenie Abeyewardene, also a Solicitor on "Wills and Probates and Inheritance Tax". In her presentation, Daksheenie highlighted the importance of writing a will when you are in a good state of mind so that your loved ones will be able to fully benefit with what you have left for them without unnecessary problems and heavy costs. She also mentioned what should be included in a will and the consequences of not writing a will, and also of using the services of a Solicitor.

The final presentation was made by Miss. Ruki Pinidiya, a Solicitor, on "Living and working in the United Kingdom" in relation to the current immigration and nationality laws with an overview of the rules applicable for students, business people and skilled workers. Ruki clearly clarified the five tiers of immigration under the current law and gave a detailed analysis of these categories. During the Question and Answer session it was noted that the majority of the questions were related to the presentation "Wills and Probate" and how to minimise exposure to Inheritance Tax in the UK.

The event concluded with the vote of thanks by Mr. Leslie Dep, the General Secretary of APSL. Whilst thanking the presenters for their very informative presentations and also the members and guests for attending the event, he especially thanked His Excellency Dr. Chris Nonis for allowing APSL to use the High Commission premises for this event and also Mr. H.M.K. Herath, Minister Cultural at the High Commission for making all the necessary arrangements.



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APSL Awards - Stage II

Green Energy Ideas into Green Energy Products

APSL initiated the "APSL Awards" project in 2010 in order to stimulate sustainable development of Sri Lanka. Stage - I was an island wide essay competition for 16-19 year old school children to think, debate and write about development of their own districts. The competition was widely publicised by Sunday Times, Lankadeepa and Veerakesari papers, and the response was overwhelming with a large number submitting from 19 districts. Ten winners were awarded each with a cash prize of Rs10,000, APSL Trophy and a motivation certificate in the presence of an international audience during the "Solar Asia" conference held at the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS) in Kandy. Ten runner-ups were also awarded with a small cash prize and a certificate.



Moving another step further, the APSL Awards Stage-II was launched in 2012, to convert green energy ideas into green

energy products. The competition was widely published by the same local papers, and submissions were closed on 31 December 2012. The applications were assessed by a panel of experts, and the best four projects were selected from this competition. Selection criteria were based on the high impact for social development in order to support rapid progress in the Sri Lankan community. The followings are the winners of this competition.

Winners:

1. Ranrasa Products: Food drying and packaging centres around the country
2. Hemp (Pan) Industry Centres: at more commercial level around the country
3. Duru-Maduru: Mosquito repellent from betle leaves and solar energy
4. Giridisia project: for liquid manure from leaves and sticks for power generation

Runner-ups:

1. Cottage industry using vetakolu fibres
2. Sustainable City Development; Bio-gas project
3. Milk production centres; for food & manure production and job creation round the country.

Each winner will receive a cash prize of Rs25,000, a trophy and a certificate from APSL, during an award ceremony to be arranged during the first two weeks of August 2013, in Colombo. These projects will also be recommended to local industry, private investors and the Government Ministries to help, support, nurture and replicate round the country for social development. Three runner-up projects will also be considered for further improvement, help and support in the future.



Prof. I M Dharmadasa and Dr. Athula Sumathipala for APSL-UK.

Dr. Kumari Tilakaratne for IFS - Sri Lanka.



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Oxonian Heart Project

Oxonian Heart Foundation

A trust fund set up to develop cardiac surgery in the North and North Central regions of Sri Lanka

The non-profit Oxonian Heart Foundation is seeking contributions from civic stakeholders in Sri Lanka to assist its raising of the Rupee equivalent of US\$ 2 million to establish a sustainable cardiac surgery facility including provision of cardiac services at no cost for the poor in the Northern region.

Oxonian Heart Foundation (OHF) and the Northern Central Hospital (NCH)

The involvement of the OHF in this venture is as follows:

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4. Provide funds for overseas specialists (from India, Singapore who have already indicated their availability) who will help support the programme until it is established.
5. Establish a fund and mechanism for treating the destitute.

time frame is envisaged to be twelve months.

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