



Wednesday 21st November 2018 from
7pm – 9.30pm

Surviving & Thriving in Paradise
An evening with
Michael Roc Thomas

£18 Members/£21 Non-Members
Tickets include Refreshments, Wine and
Sri Lankan Canapés
St Mary Abbots Centre, Vicarage Gate,
Kensington, London W8 4HN



Michael Roc Thomas is the only son of British movie stars, Patricia Roc and Anthony Steel whose careers blossomed during the Golden Era of British Film in the 1940's and 1950's.

After many years living and working around the world as a photographer, in 2000 Michael and his girlfriend, Alison, visited Sri Lanka for 'his' first time with a view to possibly opening a hotel, and later moved from London to the Deep South where they spent the next ten years. This part of the country was then little visited, let alone lived in by non-Sri Lankans as the war, though not directly affecting the area, was in full flow elsewhere.

In 2002, Alison and Michael married in the small Anglican Church in Tangalla, and over the following years, whilst living the tropical dream, they survived the Tsunami, the murder of a close neighbour, a destructive raid on their home by twelve armed military deserters, and the very premature birth of their only daughter Steele.

Soon after her birth, Steele was diagnosed with retinopathy of prematurity, a disease that invariably leads to complete blindness. In defiance of the odds, over the next nine months they flew from Sri Lanka to England to Canada in an attempt to save some of Steele's sight, and it was this that almost serendipitously led Michael to begin to write: at first just simple stories and nursery rhymes in the hope of stimulating Steele's other senses but this progressed until in January 2018, he launched his book *Seeing Better Now* at the Galle Literary Festival. *Seeing Better Now* comprises 56 tropical and topical tales told in verse. Each is beautifully illustrated by two of Sri Lanka's finest female artists. The book has received fantastic press reviews this year and has already been nominated for an **Outstanding Achievement in the Arts** award!

"Verses that make an unseen world jump out of the page, an amazing book." ~ *Sunday Times*

"The magic in Seeing Better Now, the book brushes your heart in the gentlest of ways." ~ *Daily Mirror*

"A Tour de Force of Magical Verse. Poetry? No, much more fun!" ~ *Sunday Island*

Steele (now 12), has severely restricted sight yet is doing exceptionally well; excels at music and was even admitted to Mensa last year. Join us on Wednesday 21st November to hear Michael talk about surviving and thriving in paradise. Signed copies of Michael's book will be available on the night for cash purchase. With Steele's condition in mind, Michael is donating part of book sale proceeds to **Nest**, an island wide registered charity that cares for children with severe disabilities across Sri Lanka, where public funding is minimal or non-existent. Michael describes Nest as "*a wonderful cause managed by magnificent volunteers.*" This stunningly illustrated book overflowing with wit and charm would make the ideal and amusing Christmas gift.



ONLINE PAYMENTS must be accompanied by an email to Chamali.fosla@gmail.com. A/c Name: Friends of Sri Lanka Association, Payment Ref Code MRT2111, Sort Code 40 01 13, A/c No 82307022

or **CHEQUES** made payable to **Friends of Sri Lanka Association** can be posted with this slip to Miss Chamali Fernando, Apt #1403, Jackson Tower, 1 Lincoln Plaza, (Off Millharbour), London E14 9BD. I enclose a cheque in the sum of _____ (i.e. £18 per member/£21 per non member) for the following names:

1. _____
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To receive confirmation of my booking made by cheque or made online:

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