

Quarterly Tours



National Trust – Sri Lanka

25th February 2006

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Quarterly Tours – 25th February 2006 (7.00 am to 7.00 pm)
commencing and ending at PGIAR.

Visit Programme:-

Varana Rajamaha Vihara – (08.30 am – 09.30 am)
Botale Rajamaha Vihara – (10.00 am – 10.30 am)
D.S. Senanayake Walawwa at Botale –
(10.30 am – 11.30 am)
Ambepussa Railway Station - (11.30 am - 12.30 pm)
Ambepussa Rest House - (01.00 pm - 02.00 pm)
Kotavehera and Museum at Dedigama - (02.30 pm - 03.30 pm)
Portuguese Fort at Manikkadawara - (03.30 pm - 04.00 pm)
Horagolla Walawwa - (04.30 pm - 05.30 pm)

Brief Descriptions of Places

Varana Rajamaha Vihara

Warana is a majestic, rocky mountain close to Veyangoda, off the Colombo-Kandy road at the Thihariya junction. From Thihariya junction off Nittambuwa, this winding mountain road leads to Kalagedihena where it runs through sprawling rice fields interlaced with coconut plantations. Looming over this is a prominent mountain called Warana in the shape of an elephant's head with its wrinkles carved in the rock. It is said that "Warana" is another name for the elephant.

The Meda Vihara, according to local traditions, was said to have been built by King Valagamba of the first century A.D.



According to the temple chronicles preserved, its ancient construction works are attributed to the reigns of the following kings:-

- i. Devanampiyatissa - 2nd -3rd century BC.
- ii. Valagamba - 1st century A.D.
- iii. Nissankamalla - 12th century A.D.
- iv. Parakrama Bahu VI - 15th century A.D. (Kotte Period)
- v. Kirti Sri Rajasinha - 18th century A.D. (Kandyan period.)

This is perhaps the finest example of the dripped ledge caves attributed to the period of King Valagamba. The early Brahmi inscription states that;

“Bata Maj himas batikabata Tissadatta dne”. In English: “The gift of Lord Tissadatta, brother of Lord Magji hima”. It appears that Tissadatta, a Rahatanvahanse (an Arahat) who had gifted the lina is a brother of Ven. Mahinda Maha Thera who brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century B.C.”.

Splendid collection of cave paintings probably from the Kotte period is seen on the ceiling of the dripped ledge cave.

The Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology is carrying out examinations in the caves at the upper level and material belongs to First Century AD have been unearthed.

Ambepussa Railway Station.

The Railway, then known as Ceylon Government Railways, was conceived in the 1850's as an instrument to develop and unify the country. Service began in 1864, with the construction of the Main Line from Colombo to Ambepussa, 54 kilometers to the east. The first train ran on 27 December 1864 and the line was officially opened for traffic on 02 October 1865. The Main Line was extended in stages, with service to Kandy in 1867, to Nawalapitiya in 1874, to Nanu-Oya in 1885, to Bandarawela in 1894, and to Badulla in 1924.



DS Senanayake Walawwa at Botale

Stephen Senanayake's father, Don Spater Senanayake, came of a land-owning family. The prefix 'Don' had been used, since Portuguese times, by the low country gentry, as it had been a practice in the Iberian Peninsula. Don Spater's father, Don Bartholomew, was born in Botale in 1847 where the ancestral house still stands. It was for Don Stephen a hideaway to rest from the burdens of office or think out a solution to some knotty problem. It was here that he mixed freely with the country folk and shared his thoughts and aspirations with them. They brought their problems as well as their disputes to him and it is said that an aggrieved party in the village rarely resorted to a court of law, for Senanayake was judge and arbitrator in all causes which they referred to him.



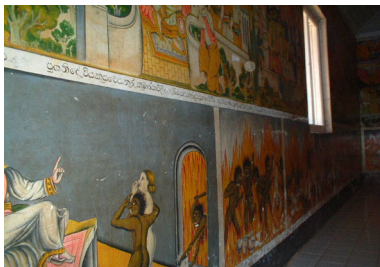
D. S. Senanayake was the first member of the Senanayake family of Botale to enter the Legislative Council though his older brother, 'F. R.', could have at any time won a seat by election and was always a powerful influence behind the scenes until his premature death.

Mr. Devinda Senanayake is occupying the wallawwa and he is renovating it keeping the character. Mr. Devinda Denanayake has

some valuable documents pertaining to the family and promised to leave it with his caretaker for us to go through.

Botale Rajamaha Viharaya

Botale Rajamaha Vihara situated in Gampaha District consists of paintings depicting the hell scenes. These paintings belong to a very special character and to the painting style of 1920 s. Prof. Senake Bandaranayake’s personal view is they reflect the style of the Dutch Painter, “Boseh”.



Ambepussa Rest House

Ambepussa was a coaching station built by Edward Barnes along the Colombo - Kandy road.

The coaching stations were located at every 15 miles, starting from Mahara, Ambepussa, Kegalle, Kadugannawa and Peradeniya. The tradition was that the travelers change their horses of the coach, rested for a while and then proceeded.

It is said to be one of the first Rest Houses built during the English period. The old building has now been added with some very recent modifications. But the original character of the building is still traceable to some extent with careful examination.

Kotavehera and Museum at Dedigama



Kotavehera is known to have been the birth place of King Parakramabahu the Great [A.D. 1153 – 1186] and is located in Dedigama in Kegalle District. After becoming a great king, Parakramabahu built this stupa which is also known as “Suthighara chaitya” to mark the place of his birth. Up to the end of the Sinhalese Kingdom in 1815, Dedigama was a “Gabadagama” of the Kandyan Kingdom. The paddy fields of the village has been set apart for the benefit of the sovereign.

This is one of the finest examples of how relics were deposited in a stupa. Excavations were carried out in 1947 and 1951 to determine the formations of the Relic chambers. Consecutive excavations during the period followed have been able to give light to many theories and unearthed large number of artefacts including the famous Eth Pahana.

Most of the objects, relics and findings and scale 3D models to explain the relic chambers of the stupa etc. are exhibited in the Museum located close by.

Portuguese Fort at Manikkadavara

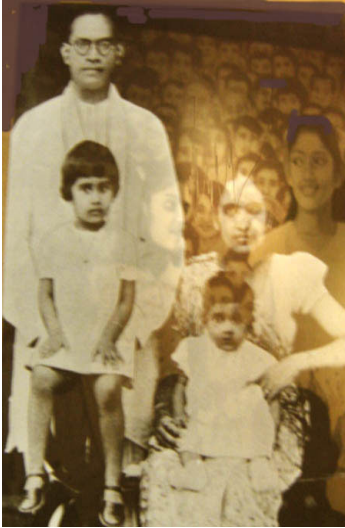


Portugese built forts in Kalutara, Trincomalie, Batticaloa, Galle, Manikkadawara, and re-strengthen the fort of Colombo in A.D. 1621. The formation of the Portuguese Fort at Menikkadawara is still intact, but buried in the earth. Plan form is square with four arrow-head shape bastions projecting outwards.

Horagolla Walawwa



This is the residence of late Prime Ministers SWRD Bandaranaike and Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Set in a sprawling landscaped garden, this manor house is still regarded as a bastion, which witnessed many political battles of post independent Sri Lanka.



The house boasts of intricate wooden carvings, and plaster mouldings. Stable had been separated from the main houses and outer houses.

After the tragic death of Prime Minister Bandaranaike, his tomb, designed according to the principles of Buddhism, was a major attraction to the visitors.

The End