

Quarterly Tours



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NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

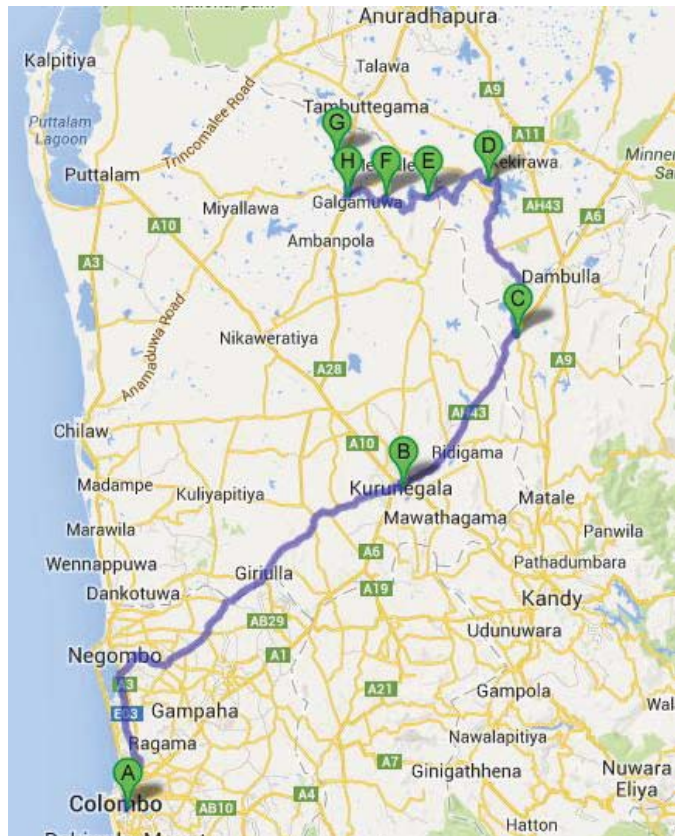
23rd February 2014

Route:

Commencing from
PGIAR
Borella Junction and along
New Expressway to Katunayake
to
Kurunegala
Galewela
Avukana Statue
Kala weva
Kalawewa Rest
Sasseruva
Nillakgama
Galgamuwa
Haththikuchchi
Vihare

back
via Galgamuwa

*Please refer last
page for tentative
time table and detail
map of the places to
be visited*



AVUKANA

The Avukana Buddha statue is a magnificent work of art, finely carved out of natural pink granite rock to a height of approximately 12 meters [38' 10"']. Although its date and creator is unknown, it believes to date back to 5th century A.D to the reign of King Dhatusena. This statue is one of best examples of a standing statue depicting a varied form of the Abhaya Mudra known as Asisa Mudra (Blessing Pose) and also positioned facing the famous tank of King Dhatusena the Kalawewa.



The portion of the pedestal which depicts a huge lotus flower on which the Buddha statue stands is carved separately and positioned under the statue with a relic chamber within.

It is evident that originally the statue was not modeled to be kept in the open and exposed to the weather as today. The remains of the shrine room provides evidence for the existence of walls surrounding it with probably a shelter for the statue in the form of an image house made out of brick and stone.

Some believes that the statue is the work done on orders of the King Dhatusena and the others believe that it was carried out by an individual named Barana on his own initiative.



Quite similar to Avukana, there is another statue located close to this statue at Sasseruva. According to legend, these two statues are the products of a competition between a master sculptor and his pupil. The agreement was to ring a bell by the one who completes the work first to notify the completion to the other. The master is said to have completed the statue at Auvkana first and as a result the pupil had to stop his work incomplete.



The Avukana statue is the more refined of the two statues and is treated as the work of the master. The similarities in the two works have led historians to accept the story of the competition as true.

In addition to the statue at Avukana, there are many more caves around bearing ancient inscriptions which provide evidence for the existence of a monastery in this location since second century AD.

THE KALAWEWA

“This is my wealth collected through the years.. it is all yours now..” thus retorted King Dhatusena showing Kalaweve when his patricide son Kassapa asked for wealth.

Kalaweve was built by King Dhatusena [A.D. 455 – 473], who is revered by



people for uniting the country and for developing agriculture by building vast irrigation systems in Anuradhapura kingdom.

The reservoir covers a total area of 18 square kilo meters at its full capacity. Yodha Ela [Jaya ganga], another great hydraulic engineering feat of the King, carries water of Kalaweveva to Tissaweveva with a very gentle gradient.

THE YODHA ELA

This is the 57 mile long channel that takes the water from Kalaweveva to Tissaweveva at Anuradhapura. The gradient drop in the flow of water is 5 inches in every mile. This channel and tank is dated to King Datusena of the fifth century.



THE CIRCUIT BUNGLOW AT KALAWEWA

This is the site where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh were hosted to lunch when she visited Avukana in 1982. The lawn at the back of the bungalow that has two important Inscriptions of Queen Victoria and another of King George

V was the venue for this hosting and hopefully it will be where the tour group too will lunch.

SASSERUVA [Res Vehera]

Sasseruva is the twin statue to the famous Avukana Buddha. As mentioned earlier, this is believed to be the work of the pupil which was left unfinished as he could not compete with his master. This statue which is in Abhaya Mudra stands at 11 meters [39 feet] and had an enclosure as well. The holes and cut marks for beams on the rock together with recently unearthed tall stone pillars provide the evidence to the existence of an image house, which had been destroyed by later invaders or with the span of time.

The statue is seen to be unfinished at various points from the pedestal to head. For example the pedestal is left as a block of stone and in another instance, one of the ears does not seem to have been completed. The final finishes to the robe too does not seem to have been attended to.

In contradiction to what was said earlier, there is another legend connecting Sasseruva to Avukana which says that the sculptor had abandoned the Sasseruva work when he noticed the cracks on the torso during its creation and so moved



to Avukana to carve a new figure. And another is that the sculptor used Sasseruva as the dummy for the creation of his masterpiece at Avukana.

The Bo-tree shrine at the Sasseruva complex is believed to be a sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi that was planted by King Devanampiyatissa during 250 - 210 BC.



BODHIGHARA AT NILLAKGAMA

The Bodhighara at Nillakgama is an exquisite example of a stone bodhighara in the island, which dates back to the late Anuradhapura period. It had a Bodhi planted at the centre and the stone bodhighara built around it. The main attraction is its stone doorway which is so finely carved and is one of the few examples still retaining in the original state.

The Bodhighara is located close to Galgamuva and sited near a water reservoir and it is about 11 meters by 11 meters in extent. The entrance is about 2 meters wide and the outer wall is more than 2 meters in height. The stone slabs of the outer wall are about 200 mm thick.



HATHTHIKUCHCHI VIHARA

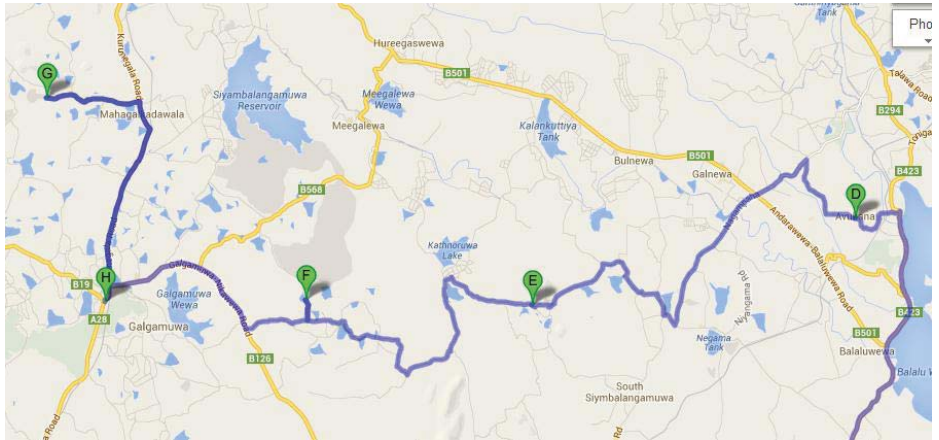
It is believed that the history of Haththikuchchi Vihara [Ethkus Vihare] runs back to 2nd Century A.D. This particular place is famous among the Sri Lankans as the place where King Sirisangabo offered his head to a poor traveler for which he will be gifted with gold by the ruling King Gotabhaya. Since he was in constant fear that Sirisanghabo will come up from his hiding and grab the throne, the king had issued an order that whoever brings the head of Sirisanghabo will be rewarded with gold. The ruins lie amongst a picturesque setting with differently shaped boulders and if one could go around the biggest boulder to climb up he can savour the magnificent view over the ruins and the forests beyond.

There is a large rock resembling a kneeling elephant that looks like an elephant's belly which is believed to be the reason for acquiring the name Haththikuchchi.

The complex consists of many rock caves used as dwellings of monks, ponds, a chapter house, remains of a Stupa and a Vatadage, Image house and many more architectural decorations carved out of stones, a Bodhighara and an Uposathaghara etc. According to Ven. Buddhagoshala, the cave among the overhanging rock



Places to be visited



Tentative Time Table

A -	PGIAR	06.30 am
	Kurunegala	
	Galewela	10.00 am
D -	Avukana Statue	11.00 am
	leave Avukana	12.00 noon
	Kala weva	12.15 pm
	Kalawewa Rest	12.30 pm
	leave Kalawewa Rest	01.30 pm
E -	Sasseruva	02.30 pm
	Leave Sasseruva	03.30 pm
F -	Nillakgama	04.00 pm
	Leave Nillakgama	04.30 pm
H -	Galgamuwa	
G -	Haththikuchchi Vihare	05.30 pm
	leave Haththikuchchi	07.00 pm
	arrive Colombo	10.30 pm

*Credits:
Maps and plans
GoogleMaps and World Wide Web*