

# Quarterly Tours



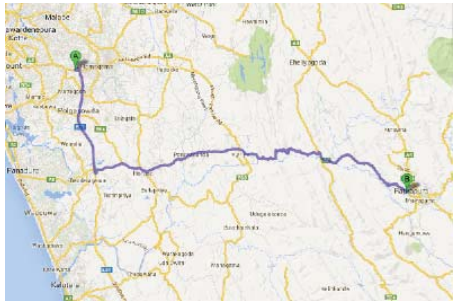
Jayatissa Herath

National Trust – Sri Lanka

31st August 2013

Add (distance) and [time] for PGIAR to Expressway Entrance

Makumbura/ Expressway to Maha Saman Devale  
(distance 69 km) - [time 1:46]



**Saman Devale  
Premises**  
[time 1:17]

Saman Devale to Silver Ray Restaurant  
(distance 15 km) - [time 0:28]



**Lunch at Silver Ray** [time 0.44]

Lellopitiya Silver Ray Restarurent to Uggalaluthnuwara Devale

( distance 41 km) - [time 1:00]

### Uggalaluthnuwara Devale

[time 1:40]

Uggalaluthnuwara Devale to Soragune Devale

(distance 20 km) - [time 0:51]



### Soragune Devale

[time 0:50]

Soragune Devale to Haldummulla Fort

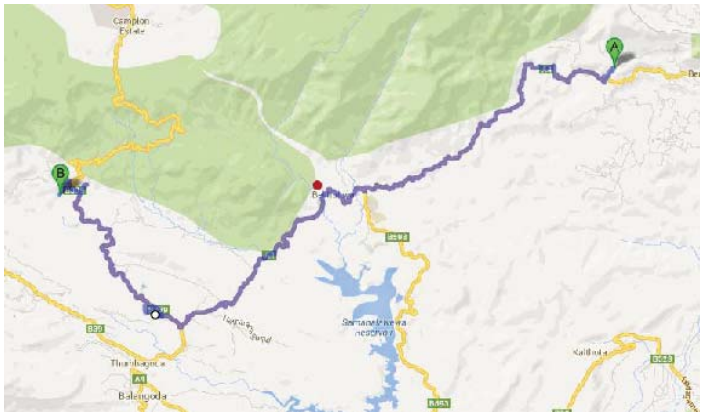
(distance 10 km) - [time 0:36]



### Haldummulla Fort

[time 0:38] {time includes foot walk up to the Fort from the Factory premises}

Haldummulla Fort to Belihuloya Rest House  
(distance 21.5 km) - [0:38]



**Belihuloya Rest House**  
Tea Break - [0:30]

Belihuloya Rest House to Boltumbe Devale  
(distance 22 km) - [time 0:53]

**Boltumbe Devale** - [time 0:30]

Boltumbe Devale to Ratnapura Town – [time 2:33]

Add (distance) and [time] for Ratnapura to PGIAR  
via Eheliyagoda, Avissavella, Hanwella, Homagama  
etc...

## Visit to Devales

Present tour is on the theme of shrine centered village Devales dedicated to Hindu / Buddhist Gods.

They are good examples to understand the architecture has made to the peaceful co-existence of two religions. It presents the wisdom of the rulers and of the religious leaders of old days in providing for harmonious living. In all of these establishments the Buddhist and the Hindu shrines were given even status. Worship at both shrines continued to enjoy equal patronage which clearly expresses religious harmony and mutual understanding.

## Maha Saman Devale Ratnapura

The Devale is located on a high ground along Horana - Ratnapura main road. The Maha Saman Devale attracts many devotees being the foremost devale in the island dedicated to God Saman. Its popularity has increased due to the annual pageant which is similar to those of Kandy and Kataragama.



Maha Saman Devale is very important place of worship among the Buddhists. Sumana is believed to have been a strong and privileged leader of the Deva clan, who was blessed to have had close access to Lord Buddha during his three visits to Sri Lanka. After his demise Saman became an icon of worship and was acclaimed as God Sumana Saman. His saintly appearance remained a symbol of peace and Compassion due mainly to his strong leanings towards non violence and tranquility. He is generally depicted holding a lotus bloom symbolizing calm, peace and serenity. Makara Thoranas in association with the Shanti mandapa are, indeed, fine example to see godliness of God Sumana Saman.



Present complex with a unique architecture successfully amalgamates Buddhist and Hindu built forms. Legend states that the history of the place goes back to Anuradhapura Period. It continues to state that on a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak, a Buddhist monk found a statue of God Saman and brought it to this shrine. During the Dambadeniya Period, a Hindu chieftain built the original devale to fulfill a vow. This building is said to be built to Dravidian architectural style as the legends relate to paintings in a Hindu shrine. The Portuguese destroyed it and constructed a church in its place and again during the Kandyan period the devale was rebuilt after dismantling the church.

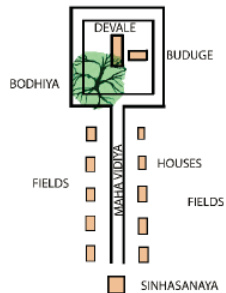
This sacred site is said to have been renovated by King Parakramabahu VI of Kotte as well. The village was dedicated for the four requisites of Bhikhus residing therein and the village lands were donated for the continuous sustenance of the Devale.

There are four devales dedicated to God Saman which are located close to the four main rivers that flow commencing from Adam's Peak. Maha Saman Devalaya is on



the banks of Kalu Ganga.

This is a good example of medieval village planning. The shrine and processional street is the focal point of the village where the houses of staff and the serfs are located on either side of the processional path or the Main street or the Mahavidiya, which extends up to the depository or the Sinhasanaya. The main building at the head of the Mahavidiya consists of an anteroom and digge. Beyond is the Maligawa or the sanctum containing the image of God Saman and the insignia of the deity.



The extended appendages of the Devale Village constitute several streets to meet the requirements of the settlement and these include the Sanhinda Vidiya, Hunuwala Vidiya, Kuruwita-Gampaha vidiya, Uda vidiya, Kumbal Vidiya.

Architectural compositions and pleasing decorations, sculptures and Makara thoranas, Kandyan period wall paintings are the other attractions beside the religious activities that are performed at regular hours of the day.



The Hindu shrine, the Buddha Image house, the Bo-tree and the Stupa, are all located at the highest level of the complex. The other ancillary buildings, like the mandapas, open halls, etc. are all at the lower terrace. At the lowest level is the processional path or the main street and where the houses of the serfs are located on either side of the street which extends up to Sinhasana.

A recent Museum is located at a renovated old building in the lower terrace of the devale which is meant to educate the visitors on history of the shrine and its development. The museum has a good display of the various edifices and on the historical aspects of the shrine and a well-equipped auditorium. A good collection of artifacts and re-productions of various documents and paintings are attractively displayed.

## Uggal Aluthnuwara Devale

This ancient shrine is dedicated to God Kataragama and is known as the Aluthnuwara Kuda Katharagama Devale. God Dadimunda is also a deity venerated in this shrine. History goes back to the era of the Kandyan King Senerath Yapa of 1304 A.D. It still has a fine moonstone, old stone pillars, a 600 year old wooden arch but the stone arch is ruined.



The Main Shrine consists of the Hindu deity, the Buddha Image House and a stupa in the uppermost terrace retained by a beautifully laid out rubble wall.

This rural complex is a good example of a Shrine centered medieval village. The Hindu Shrine, the Buddha Image House, the Bo tree shrine and other ancillary buildings of the complex all constitutes the centre of the village. The Mahavidiya or main street extends to the depository which is in two separate buildings.

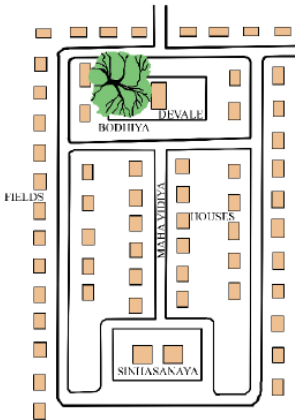


Uggalaluthnuwara provides an additional phase of development. The Devale and the depository



are both surrounded by another circumambulation street with houses facing the circular street on either side. The fields were beyond this outer street.

This shrine complex consists of Uda Vidiya, Kota vidiya, Sinhasana Vidiya and Dik Vidiya along which the annual pagent cum processions takes place. The residential units of the people who performed serviced the shrine had their residences on these streets of the devale village.



## Soragune Devale

The shrine situated in the middle of the village called Medagama is dedicated to God Kataragama and presently known as Soragune Kuda Kathragama Devale. It is believed that the origin of the Devale dates back to King Walagamba. But the present complex had been established by King Mayadunne between A.D. 1527 – 1581.



Origin of the shrine is based on a golden weapon being discovered by a saint at a location close by and when the news reached the king he ordered a Shrine to be erected at a suitable place in order to deposit the miraculous weapon. King Mayadunne later developed the place to fulfill the vow on the victory of a war which he was nearly forgetting to accomplish until he was reminded by means of an ailment in his throat.



The two Devales at Soragune and Uggalaluthnuwara are almost similar in the layout of the plan. The Buddhist and Hindu shrines are given equal status and equal patronage for worship.

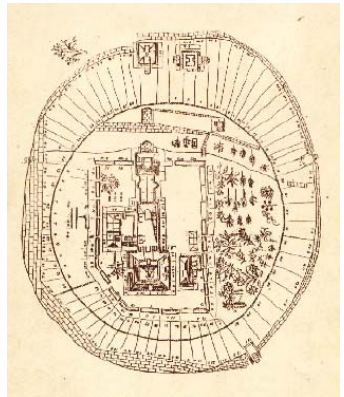
This Devale complex comprised the Sinhasana and the Processional Street meeting the



ancient planning and functional requirements along with the rituals and the many processions. The architecture of the buildings shows more decorations and features of the Kandyan style. All the traditional components that a shrine of this nature should have, are very much in place in the Devale Complex together with the practices and duties performed by villagers at these Hindu-Buddhist devale shrines



The layout of the houses were located along the surrounding processional path unlike the other places. There are no houses along the main axis extending to the Sinhasanaya. The medieval site plan of the village of Soragune devale is available to view the various building layout and to note other special features of this village complex. It is fascinating to note the manner of the distribution of the plots around the devale which were the trade stalls for the festive perahera season.



## Haldumulla Ancient Fort

This is said to be a Fort built by the Portuguese. The shape is almost rectangular and only remnant of four walls erected out of small boulders with mud mortar can be seen today. It was built on the ridge of the Haldumulla hill which provided a very good view over the surrounding area at this highly strategic point but now covered by a Pine Tree Forest outside the tea plantation of Needwood Estate.



## Bolthumbe Devale

The Shrine is dedicated to King Ravana, whose official flag is said to be still in the possession of the devale. Legend has it that, it rains when the flag is taken out.



The shrine complex comprised of all the features that a village centered devale should retain for the performance of all the rituals and ceremonies related to the veneration of the deity. These are examples of good evidence of a highly developed tradition of erecting shrines dedicated to Gods with simultaneous veneration of the Buddha.



The Shrines and all the buildings were decorated glamorously for the annual functions comprising the Procession as seen on the day the place was visited. The chariot was being decorated by the villagers before the circumambulatory procession commenced for this season.



## National Trust – Sri Lanka

*Quarterly Tours – Saturday 31<sup>st</sup>  
August 2013.*

### Programme

0630 hrs.	Leave PGIAR
0900 - 1015 hrs.	Mahasaman Devale, Ratnapura
1130 - 1230 hrs.	Lunch at Silver Ray Restaurant at Lellopitiya
1400 - 1430 hrs.	Uggal-alutnuvara Devale
1530 - 1545 hrs.	Soragune Devale
1645 - 1715 hrs.	Bolthumbe Devale
1745 - 1815 hrs.	Comfort stop at Silver Ray Restaurant
2130 hrs.	Arrive at the PGIAR

### *References;*

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K,  
MEDIEVAL SINHALESE ART

Conservation of Historic Villages  
and Rural Areas  
ICOMOS – 1990

Silva, Roland, ENVIRONMENT,  
TOWN, VILLAGE AND MONASTIC  
PLANING

Silva Roland, ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORY, ANCIENT CEYLON.