

Quarterly Tours



Jayatissa Herath

NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

06 th October 2018

THIRD QUARTERLY TOUR 2018

Sitawaka wet zone Botanical Garden, Palace Site, Barandi Kovila and Tomb of Rajasinghe-I

Tour Leader

Archd. Ashley de Vos - Trustee, The senior vice President of the National Trust Sri Lanka.

Route

By Bus: PGIAR COLOMBO 7 – Nugegoda – Kottawa – Homagama
Godagama –Watareka - Padukka – Bope - Labugama -
Botanical Garden Sitawaka -Puwakpitiya-Avissawella

Itinerary

7.00 am	Meet at PGIAR and leave at 7.30 am
8.30 – 8.45 am	Breakfast/Tea/Coffee break and comfort stop
9.30 – 12.30 pm	Sitawaka Wet Zone Botanical Garden
12.45 – 1.30 pm	Lunch at Kolonna Riverside Hotel (Avissawella)
1.45 – 3.30 pm	Palace and Fort site
3.45 – 4.30 pm	Barandi Kovila
5.00 – 5.30 pm	Tomb of King Rajasinghe -I
5.30 pm	Leave for Colombo with one stop en route back
8.00 pm	back in PGIAR

*The itinerary planned is subject change due to factors such as availability of time and weather. Strict compliance to time schedule is highly expected.
Please refer last page for more instructions.*



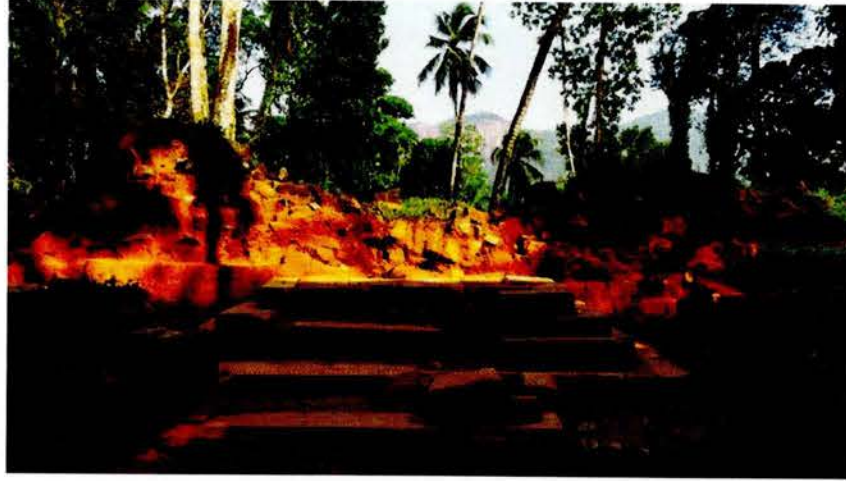
Sitawaka Wet Zone Botanical Garden

Sitawaka / Seethawaka Wet Zone Park located in Illukowita between Puwakpitiya and Labugama, occupying around 106 Acres, was initiated in 2008, but open to the public only in 2014. The primary purpose of establishing this park was to research and conservation ground for threatened and vulnerable endemic plant species belong to wet low land forests. Bamboo cultivation has also given a prominent place.

There are many lesser known trees and plants belong to wet zone of Sri Lanka in this park. The trees and plants in the park carry name tags giving their identity educating the visitor on the species while experiencing them.

The nicely paved path directs the visitor to the area called Summit Garden which gives the visitor unique and unforgettable calm environmental experience.

There are three lakes which have been built using natural water streams in the park enhancing its beauty providing boat riding facilities.



Sitawaka Fort and the Palace of Rajasinghe-I

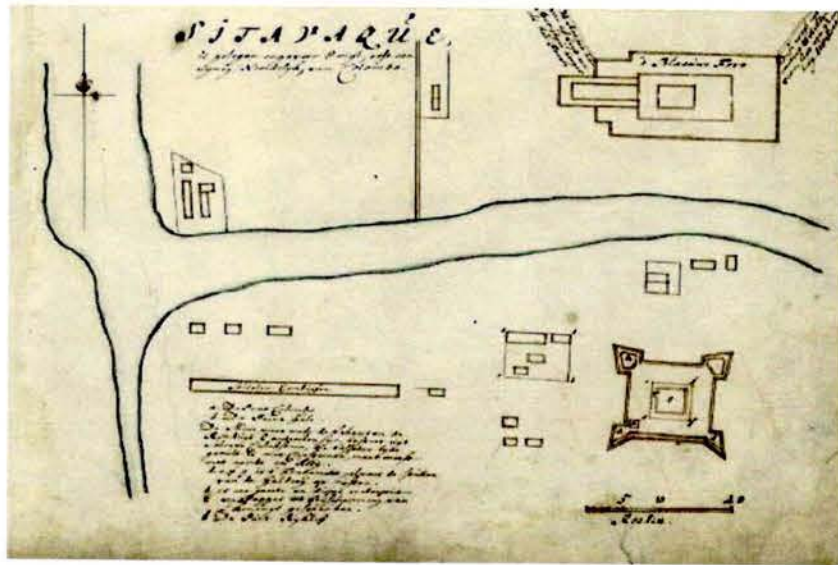
Sitawaka kingdom was initiated by King Mayadunne (1521-1581) after the assignation of his father King Vijayabahu-VI (1513-1521) of Kotte together with his two brothers. Thereafter, three brothers divided the area into three kingdoms. Thus, Buwanekabahu took Kotte kingdom, Pararajasinghe took Raigama Kingdom and the said Mayadunne took Sitawaka kingdom.

The palace of the Sitawaka kingdom was believed to be located near the Sitawaka river. It is said that the palace was completely destroyed by the Portuguese and a small fortress was built thereon.

The fort built by the Portuguese was also later destroyed by the British and its materials were taken away to build the Rest House at Sitawaka.

John Davy in his book on "An account of the interiors of Ceylon and its inhabitants" published in 1821 describes the ruins of the fortress as follows;

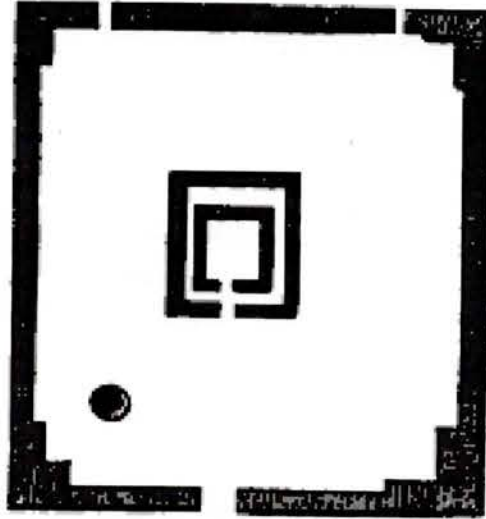
"Sittawakka, once a royal residence, and a place of considerable consequence is now merely a name. No traces of what is once was traces of what it once was are now to be seen by the traveller passing along the road; and for a considerable time none were supposed to exist. Lately some remains of a building has been discovered. In June 1819, when travelling this way the third time, I was conducted by the natives to an old fort concealed by wood situated on the tongue of elevated ground, formed by the confluence of a small



deep stream with the river. I went in a boat, and ascended from the river by a short flight of hewn-stone steps, and after walking about 100 yards, came to the building which I found to be nearly square, formed of three walls, one within the other thus

The walls were of Kabook as the stone is called by the natives; and in this instance, as in most others appeared to be clay strongly impregnated with red oxide of iron, to which, probably it owes its property of hardening by exposure to the atmosphere. The outer wall was between eight and ten feet high and six and eight wide. It was widest at its angles, where it communicated with the enclosure by steps. Between this wall and the next, the distance might be twenty four or thirty feet; the space was overgrown with

bushes. Here I observed a deep well carefully made, and its sides lined with masonry. The inner enclosure was probably roofed, and was the donjon-keep of the fortress. There were no marks of its having been divided in to different compartments, and indeed it was hardly enough to admit of it. Natives who call this ruins Kotuwa (a fort), have a tradition, which probably correct, that it was built and occupied by the Portuguese when the neighbourhood was the arena of bloody contention between these bold invaders and the princes of Sittawakka. The nature of the building, the circumstances of there being a good well within its walls, its situation of the Columbo side of the river and nearly opposite to the spot on which there is reason to believe the palace and the town of Sittawakka formerly stood, seem to



be proof of the correctness of the tradition. Be this as it may, the ruin was not uninteresting, and might have been worth preserving; I say might, – knowing that the work of destruction has commenced, and that the walls which two centuries, at least, had spared, have been pulled down either in part or entirely,

and their stones removed to build a new rest-house. The curious traveller may complain of this measure; whilst the indolent one will bless hi stars for being saved the trouble of forcing his way through the thickets to see an old ruin, the material of which, newly arranged, afford him a comfortable shelter.”



Berandi Kovila

Berandi Kovila is a square structure with stone pillars surrounded by a stone railing. Those stone pillars are enriched with stone carvings and mouldings of intricate motifs of leaf and floral designs together with Bahirava faces perfectly carved out. The water spout located there is another attractive and elegant piece of art.

Although the common belief is that the origin of Berandi Kovila dates back to Rajasinghe-I, some are of the view that it must have been there even before that period.

According to chronicles, King Rajasinghe-I had an advisor named Aritta Ki-vendu, a Brahmin of the

Hindu faith. It further says that this Aritta Ki-vendu was later awarded the title Manapperuma Mohottala and also got the opportunity to marry the daughter of the King and became the second in command in the Kingdom.

When the King consulted him when he wanted to do appeasement to get rid of the sin which was committed by killing his father, the King was directed to erect a kovil according to Hindu rituals by diverting Sitawaka Oya.

The Kovil also later destroyed by the Portuguese during their invasions.



Tomb of King Sitawaka Rajasinghe-I

King Rajasinghe-I of Sitawaka was born as Tikiri Bandara to his father King Mayadunne of Sitawaka. When he was twelve years of age, he led the first battle against Veediya Bandara making him flee to Deundara. Veediya Bandara was defeated again by Tikiri Bandara at a battle took place at Aluthnuwara, after which battle made him known as Rajasinghe.

Rajasinghe led the battle of Mulleriyawa against the Portuguese army who were equipped with more powerful weapons than the Sinhalese army. This was said to be the greatest defeat an European army ever had in an Asian land.

The advisor of the King was Aritta Ki-venu of the Hindu faith who also became the son in-law of the King.

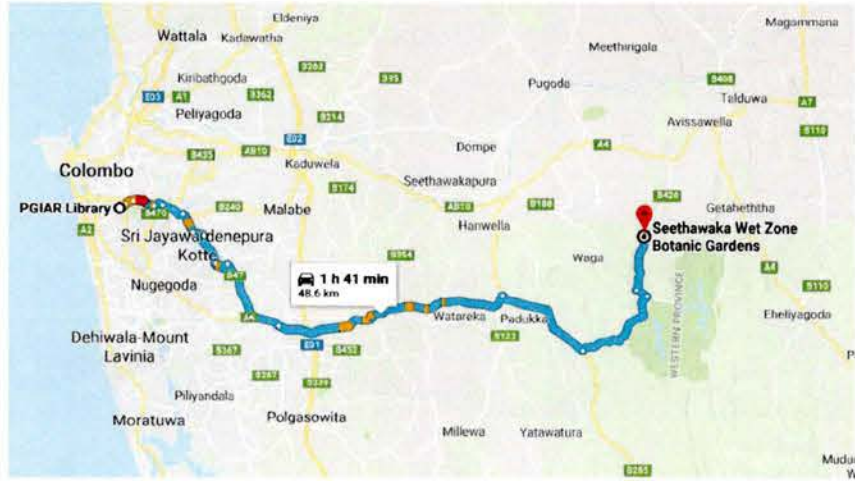
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On his advises, King Rajasinghe had acted against Buddhists and Sanga which were the political strengths of his father Mayadunne. This discontent was the major reason for his downfall and the kingdom of Sitawaka.

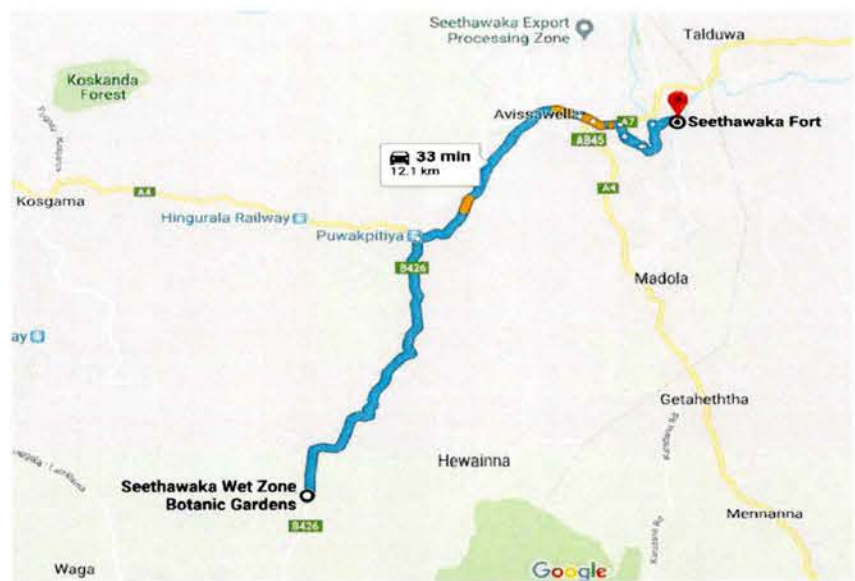
His last battle was with Konappu Bandara at Balana. Konappu Bandara led the battle to free Kandyan kingdom from King Rajasinghe-I of Sitawaka and ascended the throne as King Vimaladharmasuriya-I. The defeated troops of Rajasinghe retreated to Royal Park at Pethangoda where Rajasinghe was struck by a fatal bamboo splinter in the foot.

It is said that the body of Rajasinghe-I was brought back to Sitawaka and buried at this location.

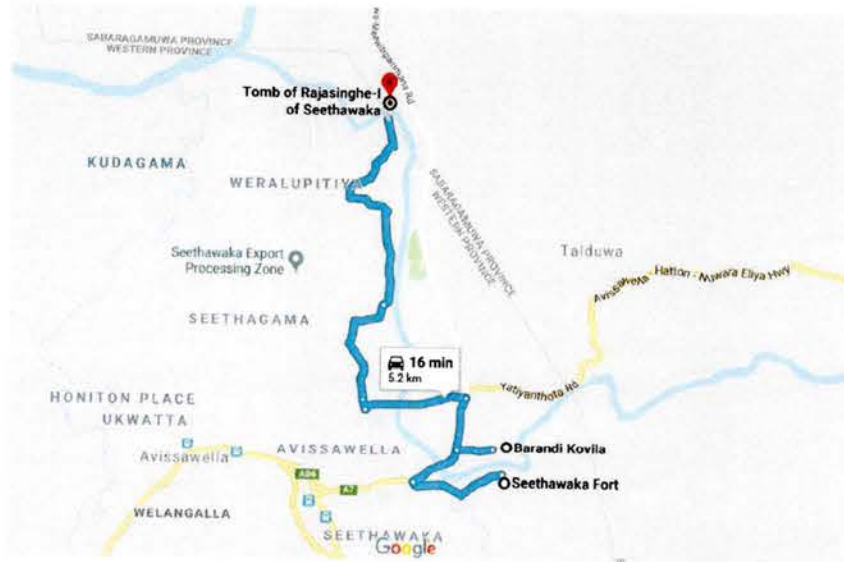
Proposed Route



from PGIAR to Botanical garden



Botanical Garden to Palace and Fort site



from Palace site to Barandi Kovila and Tomb of King Rajasinghe-I

Meals

Each participant is requested to bring their own breakfast or have self paid breakfast during comfort stop. Tea and a buffet lunch has been organised to accommodate both veg and non veg meal preference.

A pack of fruit juice will be provided and bottles of water will be available on board.

Acknowledgements and credits for text, information, maps and Photographs:

www.srilankatravelnotes.com

www.lanka.com

<http://amazinglanka.com/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

<https://www.google.lk/maps>