

BATALAGALA *OR* BIBLE ROCK

A popular landmark for thousands of travellers as they made their way through the Kadugannawa Pass. Over the past years not many have made it to the top of this landmark . However, it is fast becoming a popular trek for many young Sri Lankans. The British named it Bible Rock as it apparently looked like an open book or a lectern.

TO THE TOP OF BATALA GALA

BY

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Also on this climb were three of my close friends Ananda, Shiyana and Fritz.

*The climb was guided Danushka from **Little Adventures Sri Lanka** <http://www.littleadventuressrilanka.com/>.*

Without expert knowledge we would not have found the trail to the top.





ON THE WAY TO THE TOP

Batalagala or Bible Rock is 798 metres in height and can be accessed through Mawanella town and the smaller township of Aranayake. This particular trek took us through the Ambadeniya rubber estate and the second half of the climb was steep. The dense 'steaming' vegetation was damp and slippery after the recent rains. Coming down was more challenging due to the slippery ground cover.

This cute kid was either laughing at our madness to climb the rock in her back garden or was welcoming us with one of those brilliant smiles the rural folk in the area display to visitors



A very welcome cool water spout. Great for 'dunking' the head – very refreshing.



A kid does her home work in the garden. A family member keeps her company spreading cloves to dry. Not a bad environment to absorb knowledge!





Above: Drying cloves on mats – making the best use of the bright sunshine in this lush area.



Right: A local with tools upon his shoulder walks up to work on the road upgrade. We all wished we would be as physically fit as this man when we got to his age!



The first glimpse. From the roadway through Ambadeniya Estate



Getting closer.



Closer to the top. A first view of *Ala Gala*



ON THE TOP! The Knuckles Range seen from the north face and a 360 degree view of breathtaking landscape.



Ananda and daughter take in the view from the south face. The *Dolosbage` Range* is to their left. *Ura Kandha* is to their right- the infamous hill that claimed the life of Minister Ashraff in a helicopter crash in 2000. To the front, in the distance is *Asupini Ella* falls – the source of the Maha Oya river (as we were informed)

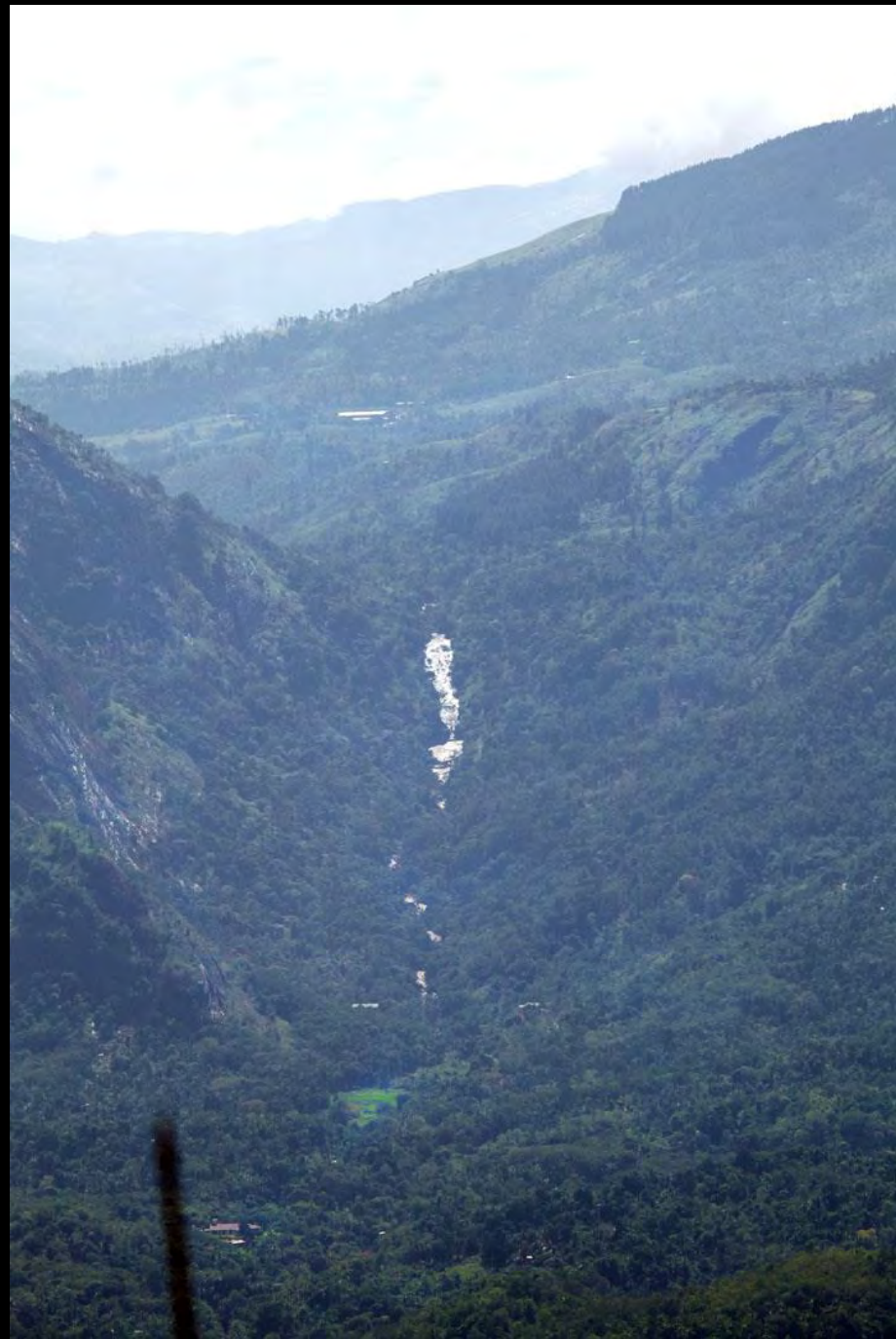


Ala Gala seen from the north face. Nestling below *Ala Gala* is the town of Mawanella.

According to our well informed guide, the sheer rock face of *Ala Gala* is ideal for abseiling. The climb/trek to the top is tougher than the Bible Rock Climb



A closer look at *Ala Gala* and *Asupini Ella Falls*





View from the north face



From the north face- A temple nestled in a sea of green below



From the north face – looking east. Terraced paddy fields and a small temple. Symbols of Sri Lankan life going back to the earliest times



A rock cave much like other ancient monastic caves in Lanka. Below the overhang was a small fresh water pool of clear cold water. Interesting to note water retention at that elevation.





A temple built into the rock face and a more recent bell structure. I just could not resist giving the bell a *small ring – just once!*not a good thing to do and likely to attract the attention of the local police !



A colourful local resident checks us out at the top



A magnificent Black Eagle soared above us and came to rest on the tree to the left. The shadows and the colour of the bird itself made it impossible to get a clear photograph. After much scrambling to get a good photograph we did see the nest of sticks. The tree was on a very steep slope of the rock restricting any attempts to get close. The photograph on the right is about as close as we could get.





On the way down – on the estate road



‘The Rock’ seen from Aranayake. The clouds rolled in after we descended and rain followed. The rock is known to attract an unusual amount of lightning and it is not advisable to climb to the top in stormy weather.

THE END