

Heritage Series

Srirangapatna



Department of Archaeology, Museums & Heritage



Heritage Series

SRIRANGAPATNA

E ditors K.R. Ramakrishna Dr. J.V. Gayathri

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General Information

rirangapatna, a small municipal town with a population of 18,148 as per the census of 2001 is well known for its rich history and heritage. This erstwhile capital of the Mysore kingdom is situated at a distance of 125 kms. from Bangalore.

Srirangapatna is also a taluk headquarters in Mandya district, on the Mysore Bangalore highway. It is well connected by rail and road and a large number of tourists visit this place for its historic and religious significance.

The presiding deity of this templetown is Lord Ranganathaswamy, also known as Adiranga. Adiranga is the first of the famous trio, the other two being Madhyaranga (the middle) of Shivanasumudram, also in Mandya district, and Antyaranga (the final end) located in Sriranga of Tamilnadu. As per legend Lord Vishnu appeared here to Rishi Gauthama in the form of Ranganatha and established himself on this island attended by the consort, river goddess Cauvery seated at his feet holding a lotus in her hand. Gauthama rishi's cave is supposed to be hidden beneath two large boulders on the north side of a small island to the west of Srirangapatna is called Gauthama kshethta.

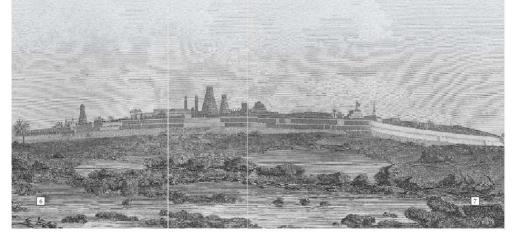
Brief History

History of Srirangapatna may be briefly summed up as follows:

Large number of inscriptions and monuments found in Srirangapatna, trace the influence of the rule of Hoysala, Vijayanagara Kings, the Mysore Wadiyars, Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan.

Hoysala kings

In 1120 A.D., Udayaditya, brother of Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana appears to have built the original town of Srirangapatna. An inscription of the great Hoysala King Veeraballala II found on the inner wall of the Ranganatha temple, mentions the grant of endowments for the worship of the God. The Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana conferred on Sri Ramanujacharya and his followers, the tract of the country on each side of the river Cauvery at Srirangapatna, known by the name of astagrama or eight villages, over which he appointed officers generally know as Prabhus and Hebbars.



Vijayanagara Viceroys

Srirangapatna became the seat of the local viceroy of the Vijayanagara empire during 15th century.

In 1454, Thimmanna, a chief of Nagamangala, obtained the title of Dannayaka by the Vijayanagara rulers and with their permission built the fort at Srirangapatna. Some improvements to the temple of Sri Ranganatha were also under taken during this period. His descendants goverened the place until 1495, when Srirangapatna passed into the direct possession of the Vijayanagara kings. The place was probably considered as too important to remain in the hands of a feudatory. It was eventually administered in the name of Vijayanagara Sovereigns, by a Viceroy named Srirangaraya. The last Viceroy Thirumalaraya was a relative of the royal family.

Mysore Wadiyars

Early in the 17th century differences arose between the viceroy Tirumalaraya, and his emperor and cousin Venkatapatiraya. On behalf of the emperor Raja Wadiyar, the enterprising ruler of Mysore took over Srirangapatna in 1610



Raja Wadiyar

A.D. and it became the capital of the Rajas of Mysore and continued to be the seat of government under Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan until its seizure by the British during the last Anglo-Mysore war in 1799.



Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan

In the 18th century Marathas often approached Srirangapatna and forced heavy payments. During this period the capital had been besieged several times by the Marathas and it was during 1760-61, the period of Krishnaraja Wadiyar II, that Hyder Ali drove back the Marathas and expanded the territories.

Gradually, Hyder expanded the State so far that it extended from Dindigal in the south to Belgaum and river Krishna in the north. The Raja was a nominal king,



Hyder Ali Drawing by J. Leister of Madras, 1776

while Hyder was the powerful military dictator, supported by the patriotic elements in the State, both Hindu and Muslim.

After the death of Hyder Ali in 1782, his son Tippu, who was only in his early thirties, succeeded to his position. The combined armies of the British, the Nizam and the Marathas overran the territories in 1791 and Lord Cornwallis crossed over to the island by the Ganjam ford and bombarded the eastern walls of the fort.



Tippu Sultan

Tippu was forced to sign the treaty of Srirangapatna and surrender his two sons as hostages for the payment of a heavy indemnity.

After this, Tippu became even more hostile to the British and continued to gain the sustained support of the French. Tippu died on 4th May, 1799 when the British army with the allied forces of the Nizam and the Marathas marched upon Srirangapatna and attacked the island. General Baird, led the British attack of the fort; Major Allan, the Deputy Quarter Master General of the British forces gained entry into the palace and delivered an ultimatum to the Mysore forces to surrender.

Tippus sons being taken as hostages



Srirangapatna after the fall of Tippu

With the death of Tippu, the British became the masters of the country by the right of conquest. Colonel Wellesley who had led the allied forces against Tippu, prevailed on the authorities to effect a restoration in favour of the old princely family of the Wadiyars, Krishnaraja Wadiyar III, then a young boy of 5 years came to be placed on the throne (30° June, 1799) of Mysore with Purnaiah, who was an able revenue minister of Tippu, as the Dewan.



Tippu's dead body

A British garrison was stationed at Srirangapatna, under the command of General Wellesley, (who later became the Duke of Wellington) and the Raja's capital was shifted to Mysore. Later on the British Cantonment was removed from Srirangapatna to Bangalore.

With these changes, Srirangapatna began to decline. The population of the island, which was about 1,50,000 during the rule of Tippu Sultan, had reduced to 32,000 within a year. The population continued to decline still further showing the figures as 12,551 in 1891, 11,423 in 1961 and 18,148 in 2001 respectively.





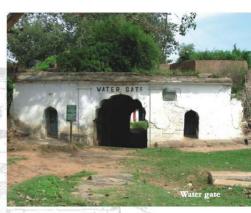
rirangapatna was a flourishing place during Chikkadevaraya's time. Descriptions available in the inscriptions and the writings of British officers corroborate this view. An inscription dated 1685 A.D. gives a vivid description of the place. Major Dirom, who was a staff officer in the British army during 1792, while besieging of Srirangapatna describes the place in the following words. "..... this insulated metropolis must have been the richest, most convenient and beautiful spot possessed in the present age by any native prince in India."

Fort:

The fort, constructed on the western end of the island, is triangular in shape. It was originally built by Thimmanna, chieftain of Nagamangala who got permission from the Vijayanagara emperor Devaraya II to build a mud fort here in 1454 A.D. Later Kanteerava Narasaraja Wadiyar and the succeeding rulers strengthened the fort.



The principal entrance to the fort is through the Elephant gate on the south side. This gateway bears an inscription in Persian which mentions the year of foundation of the fort as 1219 of Tippu sultan's Mauludi era.



The other important gates are Water gate near the Gangadhareswara temple, Jibi or Krishna gate near the Krishna temple and the Bangalore gate in the eastern wall. It was one of the most formidable forts in India.



Lal-Mahal;

for it.

Towards the north east of Sri Ranganathaswamy temple at a distance of about 150 mts. are the remains of the palace of Tippu, known as Lal-Mahal. The British demolished the greater part of this palace after its capture in 1799 and they used it for sometime as a military post.

It was a very elegant structure with decorative ponds, groves and evergreen trees. The beauty and splendour of the place has been praised by many English historians, who visited it. They have stated that even the magnificent palace of the Vijayanagata viceroy at Striangapatha was no match

In its heyday the palace must have been a magnificent structure. Francis Buchanan who visited Srirangapattana in 1800 AD has left a glowing account of the remains of the palace. The structure contains huge halls including the apartments of the 'Zenana'. He describes that the walls were painted with the Tiger Stripes design much favoured by Tippu Sultan and bands of verses from holy Koran painted in gold.

Remains of the Tippu palace



Model of Tippu palace

The excavation at the palace site has revealed a huge audience hall measuring 40x20 mts, which at one time was open to the sky, flanked on all the sides by upper floors. Ruins of staircases leading to the upper floors can be seen on the three sides of this hall. Remains of rooms and walls built in burnt brick and lime mortar have been found. Underground drains and earthen pipes concealed in the walls have been discovered. The remanents of war weapons like cannon balls, musket balls of iron and stone were also found during excavations.

The Breach:

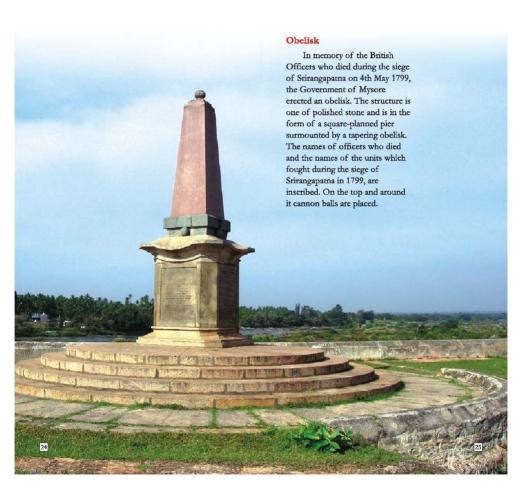
To the north-west of the island, the river Cauvery divides itself into the eastern and western branches. The old defence here consisted of a stone wall of about 8' high with a brick wall above it totalling more than 10' high. It was poorly supported with bastions and was mainly in the shape of two rather straight lines meeting at a corner. At this corner, a large bastion had been erected and provided with a heavy battery facing north and west. Outside this wall were a wide moat and another lower wall which protected it from the enemies cannon. To these Hyder added outer defence works close to the river and Tippu put up a third and innermost wall with an earthen top and a high cavalier

overlooking and protecting the north-west battery. Between the second and third walls was rock-cut moat.

General Baird, as prisoner, had noted the weakness of the brick wall directed the British to attack this portion of the fort. The battery of Bombay army firing at a short range leveled down the outer defences, seriously damaged outer wall and battered the brick structure of the second wall so that they could easily climb on it.

For a long time the breach and the walls were left in their original battered condition. At the suggestion of Lord Curzon, the Government of Mysore put up a parapet across the breach and set up an obelisk in memory of the British assault.





Delhi gate and bridge

About a hundred yards to the east of the breach is a small gateway protected by two round bastions which led pedestrians out of the fort by another small gate in the outer defences to a bridge across the river known as the Delhi bridge.

This bridge was pulled down by Tipu Sultan just before the fall of Srirangapatana. On a bastion near the south end of the bridge are engraved the images of Hanuman and Ganesha.



Dungeon

About a hundred and fifty meters to the east of Delhi Gate, there is large oblong bastion in the fort wall, locally called as Sultan Bateri. On the top of which was formally placed a heavy cannon. Under it is a dungeon hidden from the view of the passers-by. It is about 100' x 40' and has a low vaulted brick roof. Dungeon

Around the walls are stone slabs, the holes of which were meant to pass the chains of prisoners. It is said that many English prisoners were confined here.

During the seige of Srirangapatna one of the cannon rolled back, pierced the ceiling and fell into the vault. It is lying there still. It is more than 10' long and its mouth is 6" wide.





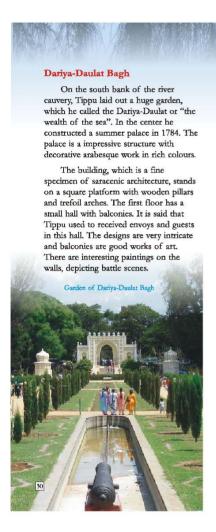
At the north-east corner of the fort, a dungeon measuring about 45'x32' is called as Thomas Inman's dungeon who discovered this in 1895. It is said that Tippu Sultan, had kept Dhondia wagh, a Maratha warrior, in this dungeon.



The Jibi Gate or Krishna Gate

It is a small passage in the fort wall leading from the temple area to the river. Just outside the gate is a small shrine of Hanuman, which perhaps stands there from the pre-Hyder times.





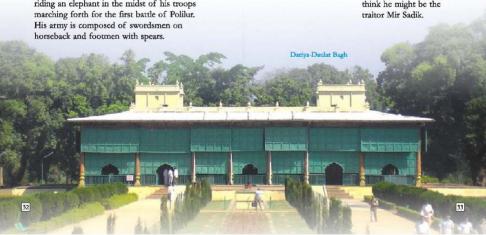




On the west wall are painted four large battle scenes. The first shows Hyder Ali riding an elephant in the midst of his troops marching forth for the first battle of Polilur. His army is composed of swordsmen on horseback and footmen with spears.

The former wear cloth helmets, long coats, breeches and slippers, while the latter wear jackets, breeches, sandals and turbans, held in position with handkerchiefs.

In the second panel. Tippu is riding on horseback and simultaneously proceeding to the battle. His favourite tiger stripes are conspicuous on his banners and elsewhere. His secretary, who is reporting to him (his face is disfigured), since some think he might be the



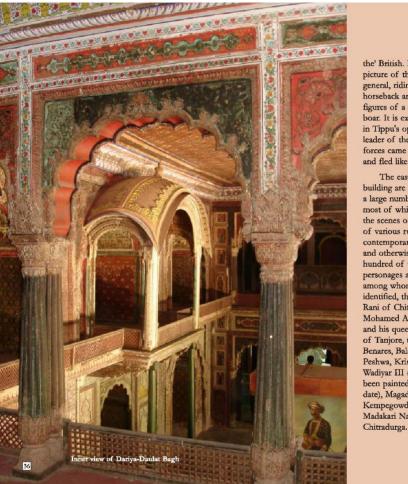


French swordsmen led by an officer who is supposed to be Mons Lally. The third panel shows the victory of Mysore at the battle of Polilur. Hyder and Tippu guide their troops from their elephants and the Mysore cavalry charges the British, both in front and from behind. The French gunners and the 61st command: of the Mysore forces play their part in the battle. The English soldiers in red-coat have formed a phalanx to protect their ammunition and their leader

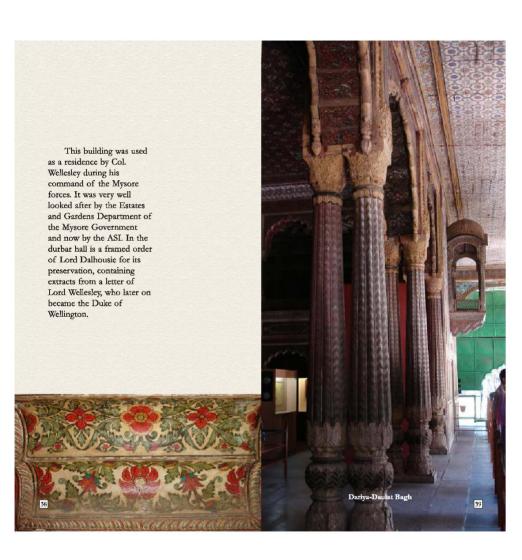
Among the cavalry can be seen a company of

Col. Bailey. The latter who is carried in a palanquin sits with his finger on his lips in dismay. A ball from the French gunners explodes the ammunition. The defeat of the British is certain. Tippu appears to have loved to contemplate this brilliant victory which resulted in the capture of Col. Bailey and the flight of Sir Hector Munroe to Madras.

The fourth panel shows the Nizam's army with his horsemen and elephants arriving near the battle field, too late to be of any help to their allies,



the' British. Below the picture of the Nizam's general, riding on horseback are painted the figures of a cow and a boar. It is explained that, in Tippu's opinion, the leader of the Deccan forces came like a cow and fled like a boar. The east walls of the building are covered with a large number of panels. most of which contain the scenes of the durbars of various rulers. contemporary with Tippu and otherwise. About a hundred of these. personages are painted among whom may be identified, the Hindu Rani of Chittore, Mohamed Ali Walajah and his queen, the Raja of Tanjore, the Raja of Benares, Balaji Rao II Peshwa, Krishnaraja Wadiyar III (said to have been painted at a later date), Magadi Kempegowda (?) and Madakari Nayaka of





Gumbaz

At the eastern end of the island towards the south is the Gunbaz or mausoleum, which was built by Tippu for his father and in which Tippu, and his mother are also buried.

Hyder loved the eastern end of the Island and that is why Tippu got a beautiful tomb erected for their family.







Gumbaz is an impressive square structure surmounted by a dome, with minarets at the angles, and surrounded by a cortidor. It is somewhat in the fashion of the famous Taj at Agra, but less profusely ornamented. The interior

is painted in lacquer with the tiger stripe adopted by Tippu for military uniforms. The basalt doorways and their ivory inlay doors, the carved stone windows and Persian inscription are of fine workmanship. Francis Buchanan who visited Sritangapatna in 1800 said

of it as follows:

"Though built of mud,
it possesses a considerable
degree of elegance and is the
handsome native building
that I have ever seen".



Jumma Masjid

The Jumma Masjid is a grand structure with two lofty minarets noted for their majesty and grace. The hall of the mosque has a number of trefoil arches and a minrab (a hallow vertical niche) in the west wall symbolizing the light. On the walls of the hall are found stone inscriptions with quotations from the Quran etc,. The shafts

of the minarates are ornamented with cornices and floral bands while near the top are two narrow terraces with ornamental parapets. A winding flight of more than 200 steps lead to the top of each minaret from where the visitor can get a panoramic view of the surroundings. At the top of the minaret are large masonry dome with ornamentations. Above this are small metallic kalashas adding to the elegance of the minarets.



European tomb-stones:

European civil and military officers lie buried in and around Srirangapatna. There are a number of tombstones, which are witness to the position of the town as a military post. In the Lal Bagh, to the east of the entrance to the Gumbaz, is a monument to the memory of Col. William Bailey (who died in this fortress on 13th November,

Lieutenant Col. John Bailey, Resident at

1782), erected by his nephew,

the Court of Lucknow, in 1816.



William Bailey Tomb

In the Gumbaz enclosure, the oldest tombstones bear the date 1799. In the Garrison Cemetery, a tomb of some interest is that of Caroline Isabella Scott, who died on the 19th March, 1817 (with her child). She was wife of Lieut. Col L.G. Scott, Commandant, Srirangapatna. The Scott bungalow is associated with his name.

The tombstones in the Garrison Cemetery range from





Krishnamurti's Bungalow

Krishnamurti's Bungalow

Krishnamurti's Bangalow

was also known as the Doctor's Bungalow or Lord Harris house or Purnaiah's Bungalow. General Harris occupied it for short time after the siege of Srirangapatna. A wall tablet records the connection of Lord Harris and Dewan Purnaiah with the house.

Purnaiah continued his administration till 1811, says the Gazetteer when he declined further he returned

to this house at Srirangapatna. He died on 28th March, 1812.

Ganjam or Shahar Ganjam

which is situated at the east end of the island of Srirangapatna, is a suburb of Srirangapatna town. It was established by Tippu Sultan who, in order to provide it with an industrial populaton, is said to have transported there twelve thousand families from Sira (Tumkur district), which had been the seat of a Mughal Government. The place was dismantled by Tippu Sultan in 1799, under the impression that the armed forces of the East India Company would make use of it as they did in 1792. After 1799, the village was laid out afresh and it rapidly regained its prosperity. The place was once famous for manufacture of clothes. Paper manufacture was also once a thriving home industry here. There is a smithy and carpentry co-operative society engaged in the manufacture of carts, furniture and agricultural

implements. There is also a fig farm.

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Ganjam or Shahar Ganjam,

Hanging Bridge (Swinging Arch)

About a hundred meters to the south of the Sri Ranganatha temple and on the other side of the station road, stood a masonry arch about 112 feet in span and 3 feet in width. It has been standing for more than hundred years. When visitors stood on its key-stone

and jerked, the arch swung to the extent of about 2 or 3 inches. It was a great attraction to the young and the old alike. Legend says that it was designed and constructed for Tippu Sultan by a French engineer by name

De Haviland as a sample of what the latter proposed to do by way of a single arch bridge for the Cauvery river. The story goes that De Haviland was executed by Tippu during his Bellary campaign. But in reality, this engineer

Government House at Mysore in about 1807-08. It must have been during this period that the arch was constructed.

The hanging bridge collapsed in 2nd July.

was in British service and designed the new

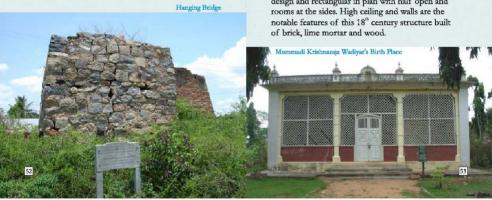
The hanging bridge collapsed in 2rd July 1936, only the abutments of the bridge are intact.



Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's Birth Place

About 50 yards to the southeast of the Ranganatha temple, there is a pavilion to commemorate the place where Krishnaraja Wadiyar III was born. It is stated that there was at this place, a palace of the Vijayanagara viceroys and the Wadiyar rulers.

This structure situated near Sri Ranganatha temple, is facing north. The building is simple in design and rectangular in plan with half open and rooms at the sides. High ceiling and walls are the notable features of this 18th century structure built



Bastions (Bateri)

The Bastions or Bateris are built with heavy blocks of stones, rammed with mud and pebble or rubble stones. The bastions are square or rectangular in shape built at the corners of the fort to suit the defence planning. The projection walls are built all around the top of bastions. The space above had long range cannons moveable sideways. The two bateris built during $18^{\rm th}$ century are known as Sultan bateri and Kalegowdara bateri.



Armoury:

There are eight armouries, situated in different places of the fort to store and enable easy supply of ammunition during the war. They are near

- 1. Old Mosque
- 2. Elephant gate
- 3. Somalinga gate
- 4-5 Railway station
- 6. Gangadhareshwara temple
- 7. Mosque
- 8. Thomas Inman's Dungeon.

These structures built of brick, stone and mortar are shallow roofed, rectangular in plan with thick walls and a small entrance. There is sufficient space inside to

store the arms and ammunitions.

Moat around fort

Srirangapatna fort has natural and artificial moat. The fort is surrounded by natural river water on one side and an artificial moat of 20-25 ft. depth on the south and eastern side, was formed erected with water filled in it.

Two rounds of fortification

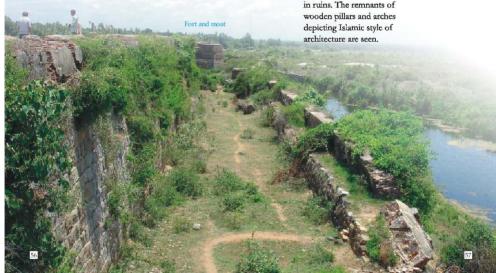
and moat's may be seen at

Srirangapatna.



Ruined Palace of Mir Sadik

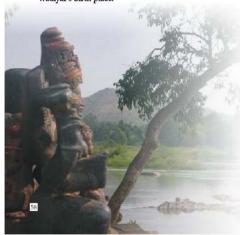
Situated near the railway station, this structure is now in ruins. The remnants of wooden pillars and arches depicting Islamic style of architecture are seen.



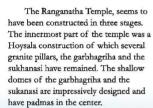


Tuppada Kola

It is a small water pavilion of granite built during the Vijayanagara period. The design resembles the small water pavilion at Hampi. It is said that there existed once the palace of Vijayanagara Viceroy. However, today it is a part of municipal garden and is situated adjacent to Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's birth place.







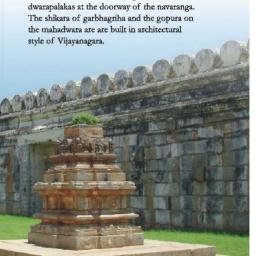
The navaranga which has round beilshaped pillars, was built during the Vijayanagara period. Available material of Hoysala period where utilized in the extended large pillared courtyard.

Courtyard Sri Ranganatha Temple

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Sri Ranganatha swamy



There are two colossal figures of



Some images of gods and saints kept in the shrines show excellent workmanship and they are of both Hoysala and Vijayanagara periods.

The stone sculpture of lord Ranganatha is a

colossal one reclining on Adishesha, the great serpent, which shades the lord's head with its seven-headed hood. Ranganatha has a tall Kirita and a number of ornaments. Figures of goddess Cauvery and sage Gautama are also kept in the sanctum sanctorum. Two pillars in front of the inner entrance of temple, known as chaturvimshati pillars, have sculptured on them 24 forms of Vishnu with

their names inscribed below. Inscriptions found on some silver vessels in the possession of the temple gives interesting information that the vessels were gifts from Tipu Sultan.



Sri Gangadhareshwara temple

Sri Gangadhareshwara temple is a large structure built in about 16th century during Vijayanagara days. The main shrine and the mahadwara are well ornamented. The walls have cornices and turreted pilasters.

A figure of Subramanya kept in the navaranga has twelve hands and six faces. In a mantapa are kept 15 well-executed figures of Shaiva saints. They appear to have been sculptured during the 18th century.



A handsome copper image of Dakshinamurti in the temple bears an inscription stating that it was a gift from Dalavayi Nanjaraja (18th century).

Sri Narasimha Temple

Sri Narasimha Temple was built by the king Kanthirava Narasaraja Wadiyar (1638-1659). It has a large garbhagriha, a broad and oblong sukhanasi and a many pillared navaranga. The image of Lakshminarasimha installed in the temple is of Hoysala period and is of excellent workmanship.

There is a beautiful figure of Ambegalu-Krishna or child Krishna crawling on hands and knees. In the temple, there is also a portrait statue of Kanthirava Narasaraja Wadiyar made in the 17th century which is of considerable sculptural value. It is a magnificent and life-like figure.



Model of the Fort of Srirangapatna in Karnataka Government Museum, Bangalore

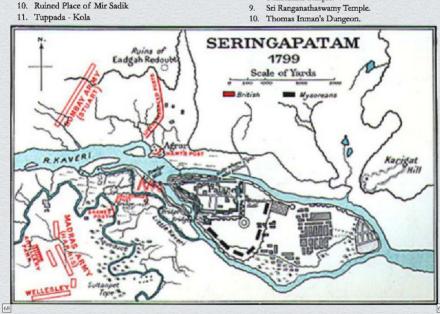


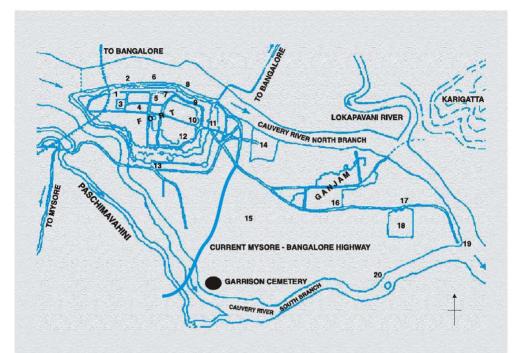
Courtesy: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums in Karnataka

MONUMENTS PROTECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCH AE OLOGY AND MUSEUMS IN KARNATAKA

- 1. Krishnamurti's Bungalow
- Mumudi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's Birth place
 Srirangapatna Fort
- 4. Bastion (Bateri) (2 Nos.)
- 5. Dungeon
- 6. Armoury (8 Nos.)
- 7. Hanging Bridge (Swinging Arch) Moat around Fort
- 9. Obelisk (Ranagambha) (2 Nos.)
- 10. Ruined Place of Mir Sadik

- MONUMENTS PROTECTED BY THE
- ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
- 1. Remains of Tippu's Palace
- Colonel Bailey's Dungeon. 2.
- 3. Daria Daulat Bagh.
- 4. Gumbaz containg Tomb of Tippu Sultan.
- 5. Jumma Masjid. 6. Obelisk Mount Obelisk Mounments and Fort walls near the
- breach. Spot where Tippu's body was found.
- Sri Kantirava Narasaraja Wadiyar's Statue in Sri
- Narasimha Temple.





- Dungeon 2. Jibi Gate
- 3. Ranganatha Temple
- 4. Narasimha Temple
- 5. Remains of Tippu's Palace Bathing Ghat 6.
- 7.
- Gangadhareswara Temple Water Gate 8.
- Place of Tippu's Death 9. 10. Masjid-e-ala

- 14. Daria Daulat Bagh 15. Obelisk

11.

12.

13.

16. Abbe Dubois church

Mysore Gate

Bangalore Gate

Flag staff Cavalier

- 17. Bailey's Tomb
- 18. Gumbaz
- Sangama Gosai Ghat 19.
- 20.





Department of Archaeology, Museums & Heritage Bangalore