

A MEMORABLE TRIP TO SKANDA-VALE TEMPLE IN SOUTH WALES

This trip was organised by our new chair Mrs Priya Lohendran.

DAY: 1

26 JUNE 2018

Assembled at Norbiton in the morning.

Started at 11.00 am.

Mr. Ravinathan, who has been to Wales before acted as our guide throughout this trip.

Stopped-over for lunch around 1.00 pm at a service station on M4.



CROSSING THE SEVERN BRIDGE TO ENTER WALES ALONG M4

Arrived at 3.30 pm at Vijay Gardens Mansion, a detached holiday home in Glanaman, South Wales, on the edge of the Brecon Beacons National park. It is set beside a small river.



**VIJAY GARDENS MANSION—20 Miles
North of Swansea**
Tabernacle Road, Ammanford, SA18 2YB



IN FRONT OF VIJAY GARDENS MANSION

DAY: 2
27 JUNE 2018

VISIT TO THE SKANDA-VALE TEMPLE COMPLEX

Left residence at 8.00 am
1 hour drive to Carmarthen

The temple complex and Ashram are near Carmarthen in South Wales.

The temple complex consists of

1. Skanda Vale Lord Murugan temple
2. Lord Ranganatha temple and
3. Maha Shakthi temple, set in the hills amidst beautiful and natural surroundings.

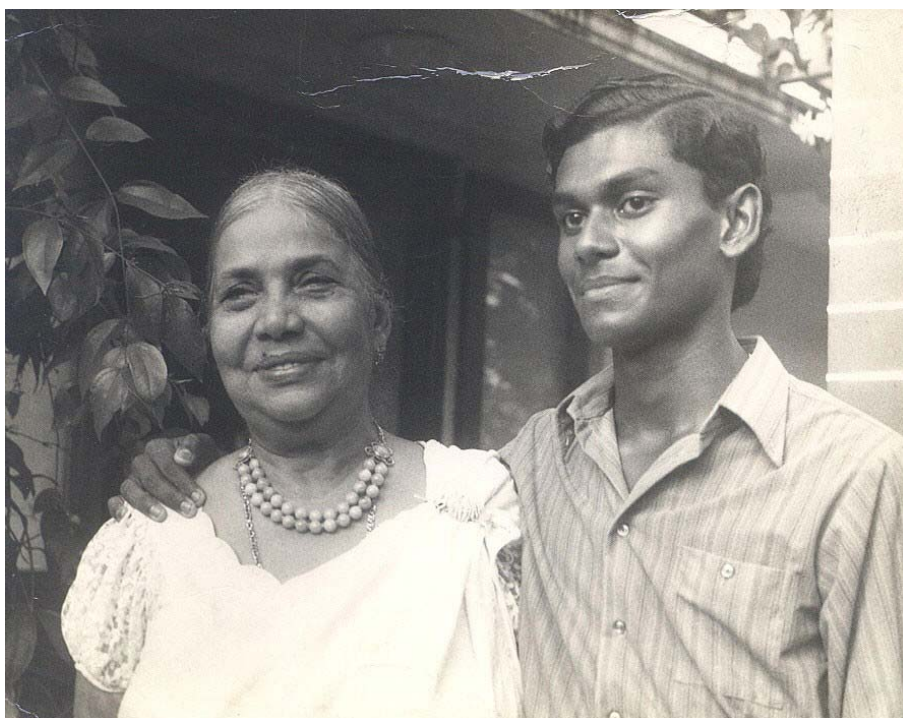
The Ashram provide residence for about 20 people priests+helpers belonging to different faiths

The temple was founded about 25 years ago by a Sinhalese man from Sri Lanka who changed his name to Subramaniam after the God Murugan.

HISTORY OF SKANDA-VALE TEMPLE

Skanda Vale began in the summer of 1973 when our founder, Guru Sri Subramaniam, moved his small multi-faith temple from London to Wales. Yet our origins can be traced much further back – back to the temples of Badulla and Kataragama in Sri Lanka, because it was in these ancient places of worship that Guruji was given the power and authority from the Lord, to help establish Sanathana Dharma (the timeless consciousness of God) in Britain.

Guru Sri Subramaniam was born in Sri Lanka in 1929. His father was the highest-ranking medical officer in Sri Lanka, and his mother was an accepted seer and mystic, who embraced all religions in her devotions. When he was only seven years old, Guruji realized his own spiritual lineage, and was instructed by the Lord to lose the family name, in favour of His Name – ‘Subramaniam’.



Soon after the end of WWII, Guruji came to Europe, and settled in Britain, where he began working round the clock so that he could teach meditation, chanting and yoga (free of charge) to anyone who came to his door. This became the pattern of his life for many years – uplifting, feeding and caring for his friends and acquaintances.

The Authority of Lord Murugan

In 1962, Guruji took a small group to Sri Lanka on pilgrimage. Whilst meditating in the Murugan temple at Badulla, the Lord appeared before him and offered to give Guru anything he wanted. Guruji replied he wished for no gifts or boons – his desire was to establish a place of worship in the West, completely free from commercialism.

Later, the temple priest asked Guruji what had happened. He replied, “Go and find out for yourself!” The priest went into the sanctuary, and was prompted by the Lord to present Guruji with a sacred Vel (a spear-like weapon of Lord Subramanium). When he returned home, Guru was surprised to discover that someone had been waiting for hours to give him a sacred murthi (statue) of the Lord.

These sacred artifacts became like a reservoir of spiritual power in the temple he established a year later. They would enable Guru to fulfill his ambition to establish a place of worship, and gave him absolute conviction that the Lord had given the mission His blessing.

LORD RANGANATHA TEMPLE

We visited **Lord Ranganatha temple** around 9.15 am



There is a large statue of Lord Ranganatha reclining on the coils of the snake *Aathissha* set in the middle of an artificial pond fed by a waterfall. The five-headed hood of the snake covered his head, and he was accompanied by his consort *Alamelu Mangai* or *Ranganayaki* (another name for Lakshmi). The priests who conducted the pooja are all white, who conducted the pooja and proceedings in Sanskrit, using the traditional rites.

The bhajan sessions which followed the pooja to the accompaniment of music had songs in Sanskrit, Hindi and Tamil.



GODDESS DURGA



After attending pooja at the Ranganatha Temple we headed towards the **Maha Shakti Temple** which is situated on the hills. This was a foot-path leading up a steep hill, with a deep chasm on one side and had to be tread carefully. The walk took about 25 minutes.



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Once we reached level grounds there was a deer park where is kept a statue of the founder Mr Subramaniam.

MAHA SAKTHI TEMPLE



After praying to Mahasakthi we sat down in the hall and sang devotional songs.



ON OUR WAY BACK FROM THE CLIMB

LORD MURUGAN TEMPLE





We attended the lunchtime pooja which commenced at 1:00pm (Pooja duration 1 hour) at the **Lord Murugan Temple**.

After attending this pooja we helped ourselves to the wonderful lunch provided by the Swamis of the Temple. It was free of charge, hence we were requested not to not to waste any food or drink.

VISIT TO TENBY BEACH

During the afternoon we went to the picturesque beach in the village of Tenby and had a round of Ice-creams



THE PICTURESQUE TENBY HARBOUR AND BEACH

Tenby Beach where the ladies walked to the water on a hot sunny day



Henrhyd waterfall 20 miles north of Neath on the edge of Brecon Beacons National Park. This is the Tallest waterfall in South Wales at about 95 feet.

There are two walks from the car park at Henrhyd. To just visit the waterfall, we followed the path from the car park down the well-made path to the junction at the bottom. From here turn left and cross the bridge over the *Nant Llech* and walk up the wooden staircase to join the path. The path is quite steep and we have to huff and puff to reach the top.



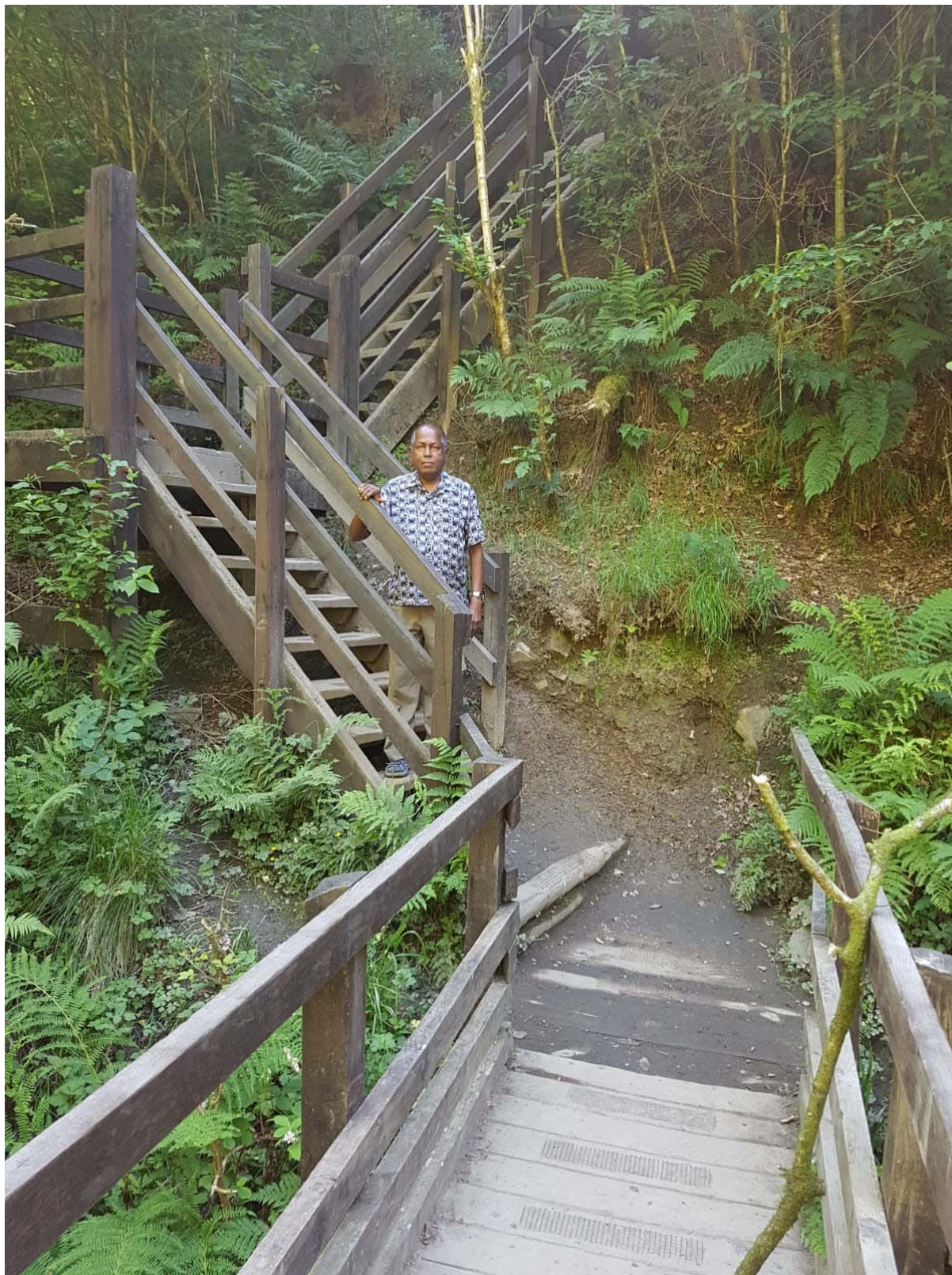
HENRHYD FALLS IN FULL FLOW



THE STEPS

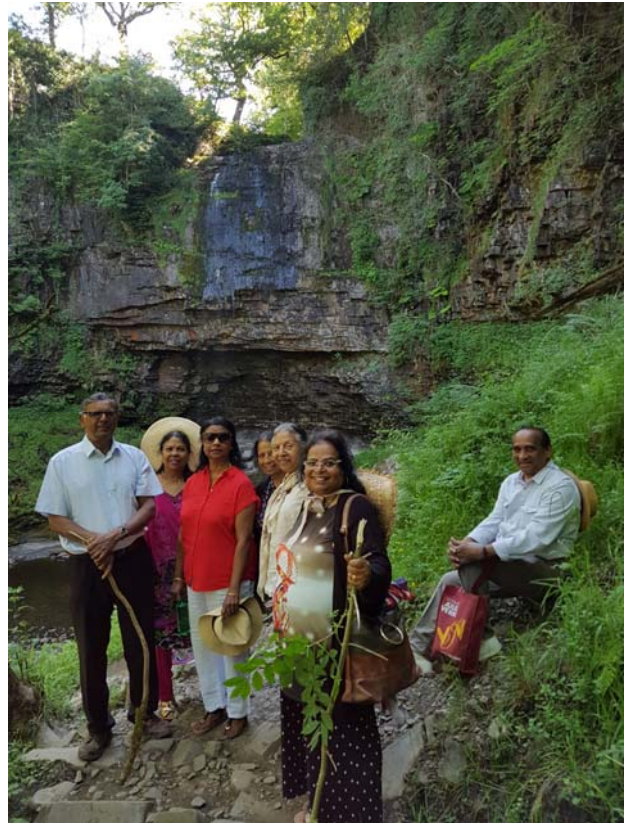


THE STAIRS



THE STAIRS CROSSING THE NANT LLECH STREAM

ARRIVED AT THE TOP



ON OUR WAY BACK FROM HENRHYD FALLS



WAITING AT THE HENRHYD FALLS CAR PARK

VISIT TO SWANSEA



SWANSEA MARKET



MUMBLES BEACH, SWANSEA.



DINNER AT THAI BACH RESTAURANT IN SWANSEA



DAY: 4
29 JUNE 2018



GOOD-BYE TO VIJAY GARDENS MANSION

Photographs by Ravinathan & Parames Skanthan
Report by Siva Thiagarajah

The End