

## Adam and Eve's Graves

After taking off your footwear, you enter through the low hanging door to see the small, open-air, Islamic shrine located at the Northern tip of Mannar Island, near Adam's Bridge. There, you will find yourself standing in front of two long cylindrical structures. Apparently, the 40ft long one is Adam's grave, while the 38ft long grave belongs to Eve, both being 4ft wide. It is said that the graves have to be this big to show that those buried were of high caste. Next to these 'graves' is a replica of the sailboat that supposedly brought these two to Talaimannar. It is believed that their bodies were brought in around the 8th century B.C.E.

Adam and Eve are believed to be the father and mother of all humans, according to Christians, Jews and Muslims. In the local Muslim tradition, Adam and Eve were on their death beds, they requested their two children to put them in the same coffin, and wrote on it "Two dead bodies have been kept in. Do not open the coffin. A place to bury will be revealed in a dream;" before putting it out to sea. The coffins were said to have been spotted a 100km off the coast of Urumalai, Talaimannar, by a Christian village who prayed to God for it, but it didn't wash ashore. The Christians then went to the Muslims in Erukkalampiddy village who also prayed and this time the coffin washed up onto their shore. After reading the words written in Arabic telling them not to open the coffin and to bury it in a place revealed in a dream, they left it alone till someone dreamt of a place with 3 limes on the floor. They looked around and eventually found the place.



## Adam's Bridge

---

Also known as Rama Bridge, Rama Setu and the Frames, Adam's Bridge is a series of 16 sand banks that span the Gulf of Mannar between Mannar Island off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka and Rameswaram (Pamban) Island on the south-eastern coast of Tamil Nadu, India. Its current name was bestowed by British cartographers in the early 19th century, evidently after the Moorish legend that states that Adam, the first man on Earth, used it as a bridge to reach Adam's Peak. Approximately 30km (18 miles) long and roughly 100m (300 ft.) wide, it separates the Gulf of Mannar in the south-west from the Palk Strait in the north-east.<sup>10</sup> Mannar Island is considered to be part of the Bridge, as both the island and the Bridge lie on a shallow continental shelf. The story behind one of its names, the Rama Bridge, is referred to in the Legends section under 'History'.

The islets are believed to be the remnants of a former terrestrial connection between Sri Lanka and the Indian mainland. It is thought that during the Pleistocene ice age, when sea levels fell, many migrating animals used the bridge to travel to and from the island, resulting in Sri Lanka's rich diversity in wildlife. Half of these 16 islets are in the territory of Sri Lanka and patrolled by the Navy, while the other eight are the property of India. The currents move in an anticlockwise direction in the north (closer to India) and clockwise to the south (closer to Sri Lanka). Formed as sea levels rose centuries (if not millenia) ago, the islets are impossible to accurately map, since their shape and size are determined by the tides and ocean currents, hence the reason for their other name, The Dancing Isles. The currents created by the temperature differences of the water on either side of the shoals help bring nutrients from the ocean bed to the surface, thus supplementing the waters with a rich diversity of fauna.

Adam's Bridge is an excellent place for kite surfing, sea kayaking, and bird watching. Also, the water depth averages around 12 ft (4m), with a variation of 3-30ft (1-10m). It is possible to hire a local fisherman to take you out to the islets on a boat; however, these fishermen mainly operate during the daylight hours, and when the weather is decent and the water is calm. Once amongst the islets, you may discover dugongs, though rare, which feed on the seagrass species found near the sand shoals.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/130519/plus/adams-bridgestepping-stone-to-untapped-adventure-44918.html> on 22/05/15.