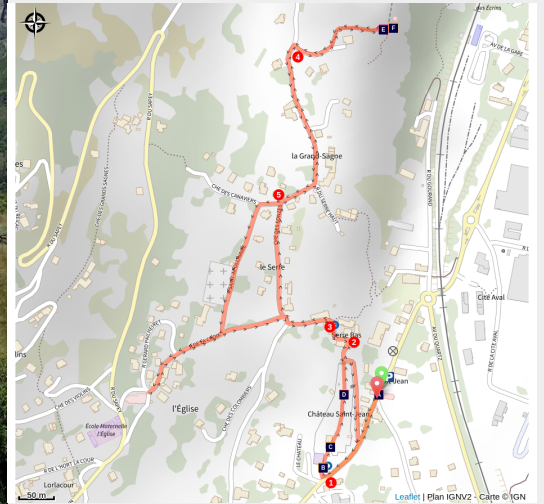


# RANDOLAND: L'Argentière-la-Bessée

Parc national des Ecrins - L'Argentière-la-Bessée



Chemin d'accès à la tour des Hermès (Pays des Écrins - Pierre Nossereau)



*Follow in the footsteps of the miners and labourers of L'Argentière-la-Bessée!*

Roam the streets of L'Argentière-la-Bessée to discover the many faces of this town. Along the way, you will see how its mining and industrial past have co-existed. A question sheet is available to download, to assist you with your heritage discoveries.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 2 h

Length : 2.6 km

Trek ascent : 79 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Loop

Themes : History and architecture

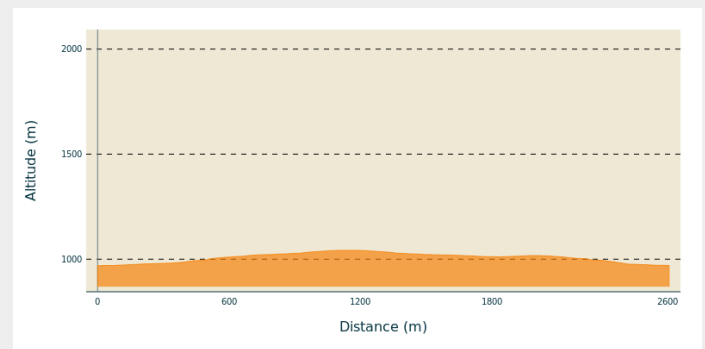
Accessibility : Family

**Departure** : Chapel of Saint-Jean,  
L'Argentière-la-Bessée

**Arrival** : Chapel of Saint-Jean,  
L'Argentière-la-Bessée

**Cities** : 1. L'Argentière-la-Bessée

## Altimetric profile

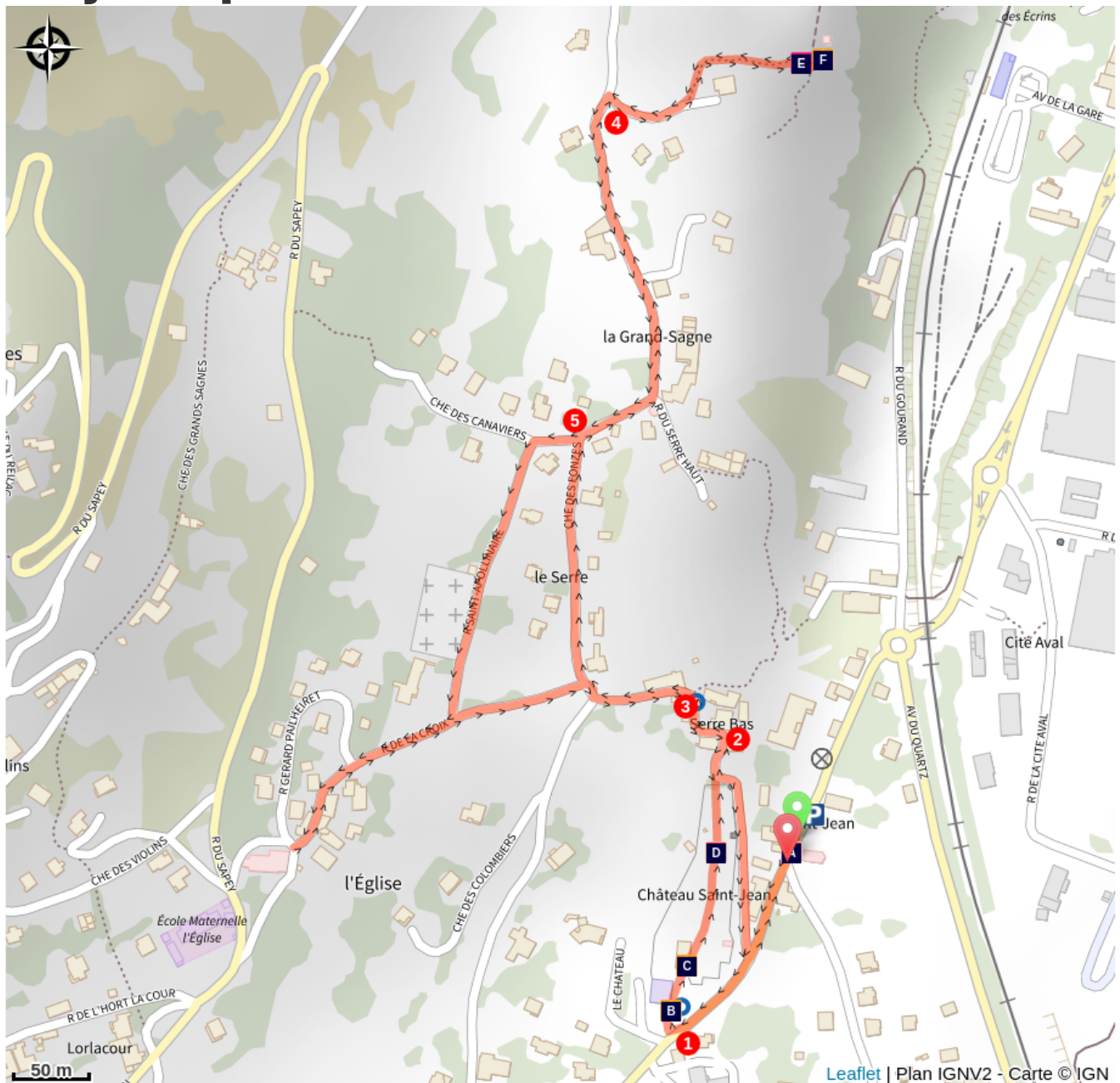





Min elevation 970 m    Max elevation 1043 m




The trail starts at the chapel of Saint-Jean. Start by looking closely at the chapel, to answer the first riddle.

1. Take the Rue du Château which leads uphill behind the church, and carry on until you come to the museum. Go right and look closely at the garden with the vines. Go past the water fountain and carry on until you come to the bust of Gilbert Planche. Pass in front of the former seigneurial château (a media library today) and then between the boxwoods to go and look at the sundial on a tower in the park. Carry on along the same track, pass in front of the pigeon tower and go through the gateway. Carry straight on.
2. When you come to house numbers 4, 6 and 8 turn left and carry on until you reach the water fountain.
3. Continue left, go past the guest house ("Maison d'hôte") and then turn right onto the Chemin des Fouzes. Go past the bric-à-brac shop on the left and carry on until you come to the private burial chapel in the Rue du Serre Haut. Opposite the entrance to the chapel, continue right towards the Pic du Montbrison and the clock tower.
4. Take the second right and, further on, take the path leading off to the left, bringing you to the foot of the Tour des Hermes clock tower. Retrace your steps back to the road and turn left.
5. Turn right into the Chemin des Canaviers and then left again. Go past the cemetery and then turn right to the church. Retrace your steps and go down the Rue de la Croix which is edged with walnut trees. Continue straight ahead to go past the guest house again. At the house number 4,6 and 8, turn right and then continue left until you come to the Rue Saint-Jean. Turn left to return to the chapel car park.

# On your path...



-  The chapel of Saint-Jean (A)
-  Gilbert Planche (C)
-  The view over the Durance valley (E)

-  The mines of L'Argentière (B)
-  The sundial (D)
-  The clock of Hermes (F)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

To download the Randoland clue sheets, visit the Office de Tourisme Intercommunal du Pays des Écrins website.

Check weather conditions before setting off.

Rescue services contact details: Secours Montagne (Mountain Rescue): +33 (0)4 92 22 22 22 or 112

Show consideration for the work of farmers, livestock keepers and owners

Close all gates behind you

Take your litter home

Do not take shortcuts across pastureland

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Public transport >> [www.pacamobilite.fr](http://www.pacamobilite.fr)

Consider car-sharing >> [www.blablacar.fr](http://www.blablacar.fr)

For more information, ask at the Tourist Information Office nearest to the trail starting point.

### Access

16 km from Briançon, take the N94.

### Advised parking

Chapel of Saint-Jean car park, L'Argentière-la-Bessée

## **Accessibility**

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### Family

## **Information desks**

### **Vallouise Park house**

vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 92 23 58 08

<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



### **Bureau d'Information Touristique de L'Argentière-La Bessée**

23 Avenue de la République, 05120

L'Argentière-La Bessée

contact@paysdesecrins.com

Tel : +33(0)4 92 23 03 11

<https://www.paysdesecrins.com/>



## **Source**



Pays des Ecrins

<https://www.paysdesecrins.com>

# On your path...

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## The chapel of Saint-Jean (A)

Built in the twelfth century and listed as a Historical Monument, the chapel of Saint-Jean is of Romanesque style. Tombs cut into the rock were discovered in recent archaeological excavations.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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## The mines of L'Argentière (B)

The municipality of L'Argentière owes its name to the silver mines exploited here. They were first worked in the early Medieval period and later abandoned before exploitation resumed again in the nineteenth century. They were finally closed in 1908. Since 1992, the site has been the subject of archaeological excavations, with major work to clear materials carried by the Fournel when in flood. They can be visited with a guide (by appointment), leaving the visitor in awe: how much ingenuity has been involved in extracting the silver-bearing galena!

Attribution : Thibault Blais Photographie

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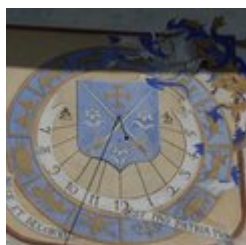


## Gilbert Planche (C)

In 1910, a 22-year-old engineer, Gilbert Planche arrived in L'Argentière-La Bessée to take advantage of the water here and open a large aluminium factory. Many workers were employed and workers' housing estates were built (now demolished). As the result of financial problems, the factories closed its doors in 1985 and the area gradually emptied. Today, derelict sites bear testimony to the town's industrial past.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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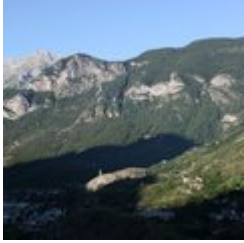
## The sundial (D)

The sundial is an eighteenth-century tradition widespread across the Southern Alps where the sun is ever-present. Artisan sundial makers produced these sundials, which were added as a decoration to house fronts, religious buildings or, as here, a tower. The sayings inscribed on them make some of these artistic works philosophical as well as decorative.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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## The view over the Durance valley (E)

Protected from Atlantic influences by the Pelvoux massif, the upper Durance valley is subject to a very dry climate, with wide seasonal temperature fluctuations. It features grasslands very similar to the steppes of Central Europe, and which are rare in France. It is part of the Natura 2000 site, “Steppique durancien et queyrassien”.

Attribution : Thierry Maillat - Parc national des Écrins

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## The clock of Hermes (F)

The Tour des Hermes is a clock tower built in 1922 by the Gilbert Planche company which used to run the aluminium factory in L'Argentière. It would chime to remind the factory workers of the time, and to make sure they arrived for work on time!

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins