

La "Roche aux Fées" The Legend of the Little Page

Take a moment to read the story of Diane, the knight and the little page. This happened a long time ago, during a time of rivalries between lords...

Exit

Return to the car park by once again following the «vertiginous» footbridges.

After the exit turnstile, discover a room presenting - in chronological order, from 1860 to the present day - the events that have left their mark on our region, as well as photos of the most memorable high waters.

Afterwards, you can also take advantage of the terrace, to rest or enjoy a drink. This spot offers a lovely panoramic view of the two limestone pillars forming the «Portail» of the Gorges.

Thank you for your visit !



Ouverture : 15 mars - 15 octobre

GORGES DU FIER

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Lovagny à 10 km d'Annecy

The Fier River has its source at the foot of the Mont Charvin, 2,019 metres above sea level.

Its total elevation loss is 1,760 metres over a length of 70 kilometres. It finally empties into the Rhône at Châteaufort, downstream from Seyssel. It runs through the valleys of Manigod and Thônes, crosses the narrow pass of Dingy-Saint-Clair, then the plain of Annecy and, after a little more than 37 kilometres, reaches the foot of Montrottier Castle where it has carved the famous "Gorges du Fier", one of the most grandiose examples of erosion by running water.

Creation of the Gorges

Some 20,000 years ago, the glacier that would become Lake Annecy extended over 30 kilometres, from La Balme de Sillingy until Faverges. When the ice melted, the volume of water was considerable. Indeed, the lake was 15 metres higher than it is today. Its waters emptied out north of Montrottier Castle. The softer rocks between Montrottier and Pontverre altered the course of the river. And so, over a period of thousands of years, the erosion - accentuated by the formation of numerous «Giants Kettles» - would slowly carve the "Gorges du Fier".

Les Gorges du Fier sont classées depuis 1943

Building the footbridges

Construction began in October of 1868. The labourers, working from within barrels that were moved about via a system of pulleys, fixed solid metallic consoles into the rock walls. Stretching 252 metres and overhanging the Fier by some twenty to thirty metres, the footbridges were completed in July of 1869.

Getting to the site

After leaving your vehicle at the main car park, cross the "Pont des Liasses" bridge to access the left bank of the Fier. From the bridge, you can admire two magnificent GIANTS KETTLES. A shady path crossing the "BOIS DU POÈTE" will lead you to the kiosk that sells the entry tickets.

Visiting the site

The footbridge is firmly fixed to the immense rock wall. After a few steps, one discovers an uninterrupted view of the **"Saut du Fier"** waterfall. Turning left between the two gigantic limestone pillars forming the **"Portail" [A]**, one enters the narrow Gorges where, during heavy rain, the water can rise 26 metres in a matter of hours. The defile then narrows further. A verdant canopy dims the light and lends unexpected aspects to the rocks, while the Fier flows peacefully or violently through piles of multiform boulders. Some of these massive rocks

resemble the bones of antediluvian animals, while others are in the form of superb faces.

To the left, set against the rock wall, a scale indicates the height reached by the river during high waters. At low water, the Fier's rate of flow is around 3 cubic metres per second; at high water, the flow rate increases considerably, to 30-500 cubic square metres per second.

Further on, one can see the arch of a road bridge **[B]**. Further still, the arch of a railway bridge **[C]**. Finally, one arrives at the exit. After the gate, a few steps lead to a footpath. Information panels provide visitors with :

- A general presentation of the site (location of the Fier and the Gorges, geology).
- Explanations for all site curiosities (Giants Kettles, boulders, joints of stratification, tufa, etc.).

"La Mer des Rochers"

Continuing on, the trail leads you to the "Mer des Rochers", a vast "lapies" or labyrinth of fissured limestone through whose many canals the Fier discretely flows. After "catching its breath" within this rock maze, the river continues on its way.

