

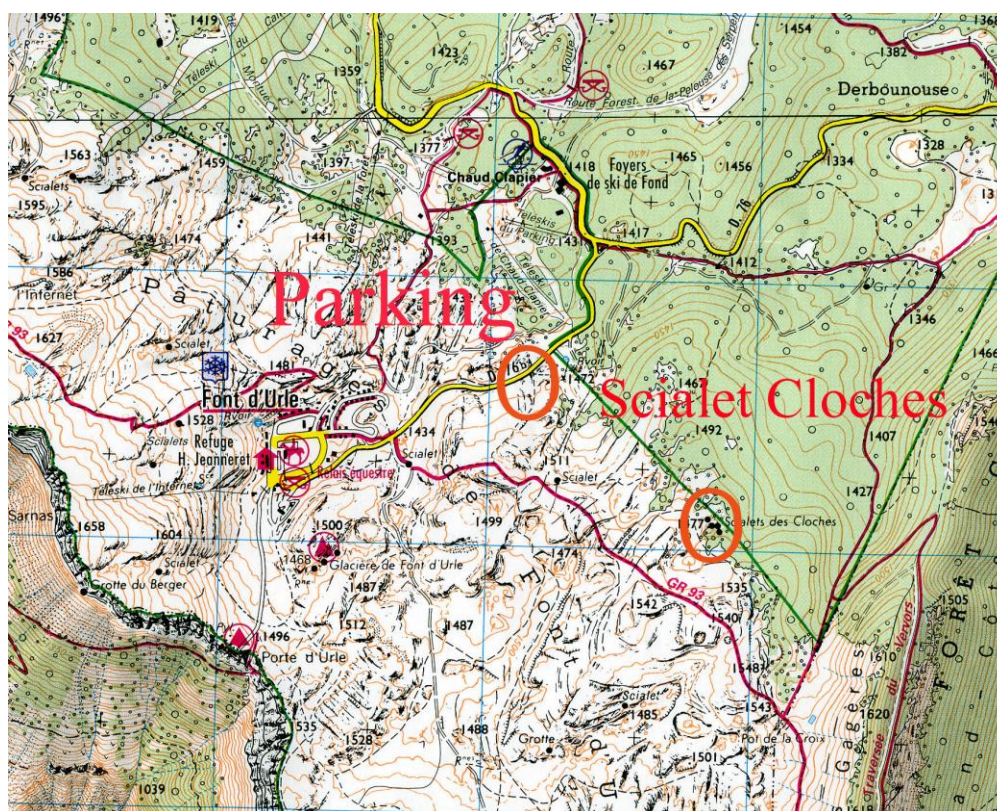


Scialet Cloches

Description and rigging guide

Location	Font d'Urle	Map	TOP25 3136ET
Lambert & GPS co-ordinates	837.24, 3292.81 x 1477 GPS: 684.819 x 4974.099	Date of last visit	16 th August 2005
Depth	-64m	Length	

Access: Take the D76 (from just before Vassieux) and just before the ski station of Chaud Clapier take the left turn to Font d'Urle. After about 500m there is a small parking area (on the left) just beyond an obvious picnic spot (trees and a covered source) with an obvious track heading south. Follow this track to the GR93 and continue east along the GR until you reach the "Cairns" near spot height 1542. Descend (northish) into the distant trees to locate the large and obvious surface shaft. (**Warning:** this cave is not always in the same place twice!)



DESCRIPTION: (From 2005 report). Scialet Cloches has two surface shafts. To descend the

easterly shaft use the existing Spits (care!) or slings and descend through surface "eye hole", followed by a rebelay down onto a gully and ramp (further rebelay from a natural) to the base of the shaft (100ft rope). The base of this shaft is a huge ice plug. To the east is a low slot, whilst to the south is a further opening. To descend the slot, back up rope to two Spits near the southern opening and use two Spits over slot for Y hang. A rebelay can be found low down on the right hand side of the slot. There are no further Spits! A fine arched roof over the ice flow (very slippery, care needed) raises up like a Gothic cathedral after 50ft or so, whilst the ice flow goes vertical - no Spits! On the right are some fine ice pillars.

At the bottom of the good sized ice chamber is an amazing nest of ice crystals.

The southern opening (the "Bell" pitch) descends much more steeply than the slot (use the two Spits as back up) and corkscrews most of the way down. At about -30ft is another rebelay, the bottom of the shaft being about 70ft lower down. (A slot between the ice floor and the walls indicates a continuation, although there are no Spits to be found, and no naturals). The main feature of the chamber is the wall of stratified ice, swelling out like a huge bell (cloche is French for bell).

EQUIPMENT: 100ft rope for surface shaft, 150ft will be enough for the other shafts. Take hangers and slings as existing Spits are old and few.



Rigging the entrance "eyehole"



The top of the snow plug



Rigging the "slot"



Descending the "Bell" pitch



Ice formations in the “main chamber”



“The Bell”



Descending into the “main chamber”



Scialet Cloches is a good afternoon trip and given a previously hard winter, has some impressive ice formations.