

# Ice climbing in Lapland



A guide by Rick McGregor

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*Cover photo:*

*Henrik Lindgren climbing on Kaisepakte (photo: Rick McGregor)*

# **Ice climbing in Lapland**

**A guide to ice climbs  
in the Kiruna area,  
Northern Scandinavia**

**by Rick McGregor**

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# Introduction

During northern Sweden's long winter there is a keen group of climbers from K3 (Kiruna klätterklubb—Kiruna Climbing Club) who devote themselves to ice climbing in the parts of Sweden and Norway that are within about three hours' drive of Kiruna, Lapland. This guide primarily covers routes with approach marches of up to 90 minutes from the road. There are more routes to be done by those prepared to do longer approaches (by ski or snowmobile).

The main areas are:

- \* Beside the E10 highway between Torneträsk (50 km west of Kiruna) and its junction with the E6 highway in Norway (about 150 km west of Kiruna): generally 1-2 pitches but with some longer routes.

- \* At Stora Sjöfallet (south of Gällivare and about 250 km or three hours from Kiruna): routes of up to 7 or more pitches.

- \* In the Spansdalen valley, Lavangen, Norway (about an hour north of Narvik and three hours from Kiruna): routes of up to 7 pitches.

## Season:

Usually early November to mid-April, often half a month longer at each end at the higher areas, a month or two shorter near the coast in Norway and for areas where the routes are exposed to the sun. Note: (1) the days are very short in mid-winter (in Kiruna the sun doesn't rise above the horizon from about 8 December-8 January and it is only light from about 10am to 2 pm) and (2) the temperatures can be very cold in December and January (down to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  or occasionally even colder).

## Accommodation:

A number of campgrounds are closed during the winter months, but accommodation is available in the main towns and resorts (Kiruna, Abisko, Björkliden, Riksgränsen, Narvik) as well as in Spansdalen and Stora Sjöfallet. Search on the internet or ring one of the local tourist offices.

## Approaches:

Snowshoes or skis are usually necessary for all



except the very shortest approach marches after the first couple of months of the season.

## Descents:

It is often safest and most convenient to descend back down the route. Learn to make and use Abalakov (V-thread) anchors (but make sure you back them up for all except the last person down).

## Maps:

For most of the routes west of Kiruna along the E10 highway and many of the routes near Narvik, see sheet BD6 in the Swedish map series *Lantmäteriets fjällkarta* (scale 1:100,000). For routes at Stora Sjöfallet see sheet BD8 or BD10 (the relevant area is on both).

## Avalanche danger:

Many of the climbs in this guide can be threatened by avalanche from above, on snowfields on the climbs or in particular on the approach slopes. Try to find out what the weather has been like in the area prior to your climb, ask local advice and use sound judgement.

## Grades:

Grades where given are very approximate, and will vary from season to season or even during the course of the season.

## Route names and first ascents:

If you know of earlier route names and first ascents than those recorded here, please let me know so that I can update the guide (via e-mail to [rmcgregor@hotmail.com](mailto:rmcgregor@hotmail.com)). Other corrections and details of new routes are also welcomed.

# KIRUNA

## REKTORN:

Ice climbing opportunities in Kiruna itself are very limited, but there are several dry-tooling and mixed (rock and snow!) routes in the disused quarry Rektorn on the side of Luossavaara (the hill the local ski-field is located on). Follow Hjalmar Lundbohmsgatan to its end (follow the signs towards the ski-field) and park near the last houses on the left. Walk along the road towards the ski-field and turn right opposite the car club (a brick building). After c. 200m the road turns to the right. Straight ahead is a gate - climb under or over it and continue diagonally in towards the hillside c. 100m. At the far end of a flat area a

tunnel leads through into the quarry. A number of the rock routes on the left (as you go in) have been dry-tooled. The one named winter route is:

\* *Surfing Safari* M4, 2 short pitches. A mixed route on the high, back wall of Rektorn, with lots of dry-tooling. The crux corner is situated on the second pitch. One (old) fixed piton. Descent: the first ascent party continued up to the top. First ascent: Dick Johansson and Kevin Edwards, 20 April 1996.

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## WEST OF KIRUNA

### TORNETRÄSK:

The Torneträsk railway station lies 50 kilometres north of Kiruna above the E10 highway, where the road meets the lake of the same name.

*Falska blondiner* (Peroxide Blondes) WI2, 120m. Looks better from a distance... This route forms in the early winter below a radio mast west of the station. (Park a couple of kilometres past the turn-off.) It provides a very enjoyable, easy 3-pitch route with a short steep start, a long easy-angled middle section, and about 30 metres of 75 degree ice at the top. Later in the winter the climb is usually out of condition, because much of the lower part of the waterfall is buried in snow and a large cornice forms at the top.

Descent: The usual descent is to the left (north) from the top of the climb. There are also bolted belays/abseil anchors: one on a slab/block (often snowed over) straight up 10-15 metres from the usual top-out, and two just left of the usual line climbed.

Approach: c. 45 mins.



*Falska blondiner/Peroxide Blondes, Torneträsk*  
(photo: Rick McGregor)

## KAISEPAKTE/GAISEBAKTI:

The formidable cliff-line of Kaisepakte (*Gaisebakti*) is 70 kilometres north of Kiruna above the E10 highway and overlooks the large lake of Torneträsk. The best approach to the waterfalls in the area from the *Main Wall* to *Looking for Lasse* starts at a short access road straight below the main waterfall. The road leads up to the railway line where there is a crossing point (a bridge sometimes allows one to cross underneath the railway line). Through the remaining birch forest one can follow either side of the stream and above the forest one can follow the slight ridge on either side. The approach usually takes 60-90 minutes depending on the amount of snow. This approach is even recommended for routes further left on the cliff-line—there is a good traverse ledge at the base of the cliff, while talus slopes and slabs made a more direct approach difficult and time-consuming.

\* *Arete la Niehku* (The Dream Arete) WI5/M6, 4 pitches. The east arete or face of the main wall of Kaisepakte. Take 3-6 ice screws, 3-4 mid-size pitons and a small set of stoppers. First ascent: Krister Jonsson, Ola Ilebrand, c. March 2013. More information: <http://mountainpassion.blogspot.se/2013/03>

\* *Lindgrens hörna* (Lindgren's Corner) WI2-3/M5, 2 pitches. The route goes up a break in the main cliff halfway between the eastern arete and the Main Wall. It starts with some 50 metres of grade 2-3 ice climbing diagonally up to the



*Kaisepakte Main Wall* (photo: Rick McGregor)



*The lines to the right of The Main Wall on Kaisepakte: A. Gula faran/The Yellow Peril, B. Icicle Line/Istappslinjen and C. Baby Blue* (photo: Rick McGregor)

left. It may also be possible to go straight up for 6-8 metres on steep and narrow ice. Belay on a small snowfield on the right. From the snowfield continue up a slightly overhanging corner for c. 6 metres followed by awkward moves to the left round a bulge (M5) up to a short wall and belay. Descend by abseil (an old stopper from 2007 may still be there, but should be backed up) or top out and walk down. First ascent: Henrik Lindgren, Rafael Jensen, late 2007.

\* *Huvudväggen* (The Main Wall) WI4-5, 90m. A broad waterfall forms in the middle of the cliff early in the winter, and stays there until late in the spring. It provides two pitches of steep ice climbing, with some vertical sections and usually a semi-hanging belay. There are many variations including an enjoyable route (*Green Dragon*) which follows the lefthand edge of the waterfall and a line on the righthand side which starts in a narrow rock gully and ends under an overhanging rockwall at the top. To descend, either abseil (preferable) or traverse along the edge of the escarpment to the right (west) until it is possible to descend towards the Kaisepakte railway station.

\* *Gula faran* (The Yellow Peril) WI3+, 80m. To the right of the main waterfall there is often a narrower yellow-coloured waterfall (c. 15 metres wide) which provides two pitches of generally 70-80-degree ice. Descend by abseil. First recorded ascent: Peter Engström, Lars Jakobsson, Rick McGregor and Håkan Samuelsson, 8 November 2003.



\* *Istappslinjen* (Icicle Line) WI4, 80m. Further right still is a steeper waterfall which also provides two pitches of 75-85-degree ice, sometimes with an awkward start. Descend by abseil or walk off to the right (west). First recorded ascent: Lars Jakobsson and Rick McGregor, 26 April 2003.

\* *Baby Blue* WI4, 75m. A couple of hundred metres to the right of the main waterfall is another broad waterfall which starts a short distance up a prominent gully. It provides about 55 metres of 80-90 degree ice up to where the angle eases. Descend by abseil, or continue more easily to the top and descend to the right (west). First recorded ascent: Rick McGregor, Anders Hedefalk, 26 November 2000.

\* *Letar efter Lasse* (Looking for Lasse) WI4, 110m. This line doesn't always form. Start up the righthand of two parallel lines (20m apart) about 100m right of the gully leading to *Baby Blue*. The first pitch (50m) climbs a ice-filled corner and 70-degree ice above to a belay where the main righthand ice flow runs out into stepped cliffs. A short (25m) pitch traverses left to reach the base of the prominent ice pillar on the top half of the as-yet-unclimbed lefthand line. The third pitch (35m) climbs the pillar (sections of 85-degree ice) for 20m and a final short steep wall after a snow slope. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, Torbjörn Eld, 13 November 2004 (1st two pitches); Rick McGregor, Peter Engström, 14 November 2004 (last pitch).



*Looking for Lasse/Letar efter Lasse, Kaisepakte right side (photo: Rick McGregor)*

\* *Edwards-Öhman Route* WI5-6/M?, ca 70m. Near the righthand end of the escarpment is a smaller waterfall (above the railway station). This provides a steep pitch of ice climbing and a short pitch of rock to finish (it may also be possible to traverse off to the left). Descend to the right (west). This waterfall does not form every winter. First ascent: Peter Öhman, Kevin Edwards, c. 2000.

## GÖMDA DALEN (THE HIDDEN VALLEY):

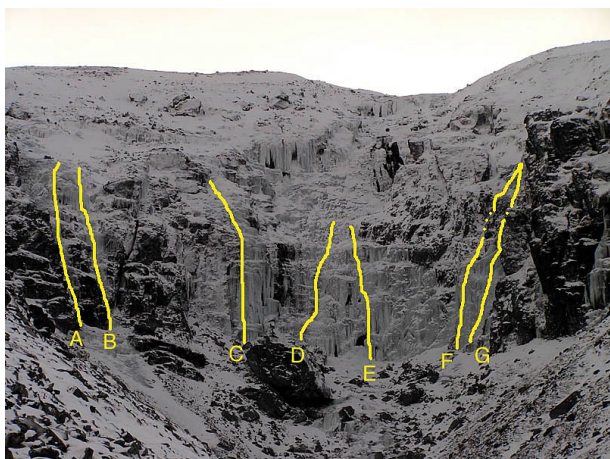
The Hidden Valley is an ice climbing Shangri-La about an hour's walk from Kaisepakte Station. Follow the signposted track towards Pessijaure for a few hundred metres and then head straight up hill to the treeline. The narrow entrance to the valley should then be apparent at the righthand end of the Kaisepakte escarpment. The routes are mostly 40-60 metres, and generally not too steep. The best climbing here is early in the season (usually before Christmas); later the lower-angled parts of the waterfalls get snowed over.

From the left:

\* *Cairngorm Corner* WI3, 45m. Follows an iced-up rocky corner for 25m and 70-degree ice for another 20m. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 7 November 2004. (Route A in the photo)

\* *La belle lune* (Den vackra månen/The Beautiful Moon) WI3, 45m. A superb route with good thick ice in the back of a dihedral (15m of 80-degree ice) then two bulges of 85-degree ice. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, Christer Bjuhr, Anders Stålnacke, 7 November 2004. (Route B in the photo)

\* *Stålis led* (Stålis's Route) WI3, 40m. To the left of *Les triplettes de Belleville*. 75-80-degree ice with a short steeper section at the top of the first ramp. Continue up lower-angled slopes above to belay at a short cliff and ice bulge. Descent by



*Gömda dalen/The Hidden Valley* (photo: Rick McGregor)



*Christer Bjuhr on La glace du cinéma, Gömda dalen/Hidden Valley* (photo: Rick McGregor)

abseil off a block. First ascent: Anders (Stålis) Stålnacke, Rick McGregor, 4 November 2006.

\* *Les triplettes de Belleville* (The Belleville Trio) WI4+, 55m. To the left of the main ice wall at the head of the valley is a separate, narrower ice wall with a steep start. 15m of 85-degree ice lead to easier-angled ice slopes and a belay on a bulge of ice beside a small cliff. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, Christer Bjuhr, 31 October 2004. (Route C in the photo)

\* *Caoutchouc* WI4+, 55m. Start up a 10-15m pillar of 85-90-degree ice between *Triplettes* and *Rendezvous*. Continue up lower-angled ice with occasional bulges to the same belay as the former route. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Antti Stålnacke, 5 December 2004. (Between Routes C and D in the photo)

\* *Rendezvous* WI2, 100m. Starts on the lefthand side of the broad main wall and angles right with one short steep step to a belay where the angle eases off. A second pitch (added 19 November 2004) continues diagonally up 65-degree ice to



finish just right of the top wall of *Goya*. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor (solo), 31 October 2004. (Route D in the photo)

\* *Le sacré de l'automne* (Höstoffer/Autumn Sacrifice) WI4, 45m. Just right of centre on the main wall is a steep wall (10m of 85-degree ice) leading to lower-angled ice with steeper bulges. Belay where the angle eases off. Descend by abseil or climb the second pitch of *Goya* up the steep upper headwall. First ascent: Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, Christer Bjuhr, 31 October 2004. (Route E in the photo)

\* *Goya* WI3-4, 90m. Climb the righthand side of the main wall 10m right of *Le sacré...* for 20m (75-degree ice) to a short overhanging rock wall. Continue leftwards along the base of the wall and belay at the base of a lower-angled slope. The second pitch continues up 65-degree ice for c. 30m and climbs the final headwall (15m of 80-85-degree ice). Descend by abseil. First ascent: Anders Hedefalk and Rick McGregor, 19 November 2004. (Between Routes E and F in the photo)

\* *Colonne de Sorbonne* (Sorbonne Column) WI5, 45m. There is sometimes a lefthand start to *La glace du cinéma* up the steep wall on its left, with 3-4m of vertical ice near the top of the pitch. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Peter Öhman, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, 24 November 2005.

\* *La glace du cinéma* (Fantastisk is/Amazing Ice) WI3, 55m. At the head of the valley, just to the right of the main wall is an obvious broad waterfall. This route climbs the lefthand side of the initial 20m fall of 75-80-degree ice and continues up the upper gully above past two more steeper bulges. Descend by abseil. First



*Rick McGregor on Les triplettes de Belleville, Gömda dalen/Hidden Valley (photo: Christer Bjuhr)*

ascent: Christer Bjuhr, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, Rick McGregor, 31 October 2004. (Route F in the photo)

\* *La farce du cinéma* (Cinematic Farce) WI3, 55m. A righthand variant on *La glace du cinéma*, this route takes the righthand side of the initial waterfall and then the narrower righthand gully above, rejoining the original route near the top of its upper gully. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor and Peter Engström, 7 November 2004. (Route G in the photo)

## LILLPAKTE:

Lillpakte is the local climbers' unofficial name for the smaller cliff above the E10 some 5 kilometres beyond Kaisepakte, so named because it looks like a miniature version of the latter. From a parking area beside the road the approach up through birch forest and block terrain (best avoided by going up either left or right of the waterfall) takes 45-60 minutes. The waterfall is clearly visible from below, dividing into two main columns on either side of a roof draped with icicles (if these haven't fallen off take great care when crossing below them).

Descent is by abseil from one of the bolted belay station or by walking down to either side from the top.

\* There is sometimes a steep line up ice-plastered rock on the very far left (WI5, 55m) to a bolted belay on a block over the top of the cliff. First recorded ascent: Christian Edelstam, Peter Engström, October 2007.

\* The left hand column (WI4, 55m) can be done in one long pitch, or two shorter ones to the bolted belay on a block over the top of the cliff.

\* Very infrequently (once every 10 years or so) the main icicle doesn't break off and instead forms a free-hanging column. This is reputed to have been climbed by Krister Jonsson and Christian Edelstam (early-mid 2000s).

\* There is usually a steep line up the corner just right of the central overhangs (WI5, 30m to a bolted belay on the ramp).

\* The right hand column (WI3) provides more than 25 metres of steep climbing and then a ramp (protected with 2 bolts) to a bolted belay, and then, if one chooses to continue, a short pitch of easy ice or snow climbing to a second bolted belay at the top of the ramp.



*Lillpakte with the two main lines (photo: Rick McGregor)*

\* Far right waterfalls (WI3-4, 10-20m). Further right (ca 150m) are some shorter climbs on either side of what is the main waterfall in summer. These are a thin cone round the waterfall early in the season and tend to snow over later in the season, but two short routes have been climbed here. Descent: abseil or walk down. First recorded ascent: Lars Jakobsson, Rick McGregor, 25 November 2006.





## STORDALEN:

There are long, low-angled ice slopes and steeper, shorter routes at Stordalen, about 80 km west of Kiruna or 10 km east of Abisko. The steeper routes are at the righthand end of a 25 m high cliff-line, and do not always form.

*Peter Engström on the righthand section of Stordalen (photo: Rick McGregor)*

## ABISKO:

Abisko is a tourist resort 90 km (about an hour) west of Kiruna beside the E10 highway which leads to Narvik in Norway.

Climbs near Abisko:

- \* A long, rather alpine route (*Rihtanjira*)
- \* Short routes in the Abisko canyon below the main road bridge (*Jokken*)
- \* Routes up to 10 metres on a roadside cutting (*Kurvan*) a few kilometres towards Björkliden

## RIHTANJIRA:

This is a long, mostly low-angle route that climbs the steep stream just left of the chairlift above the resort hotel at Abisko Turist (a few kilometres west of Abisko). Early in the winter it makes for a long alpine climb with a short, steep pitch early on and a longer one at the top (WI4). There are other short steps which can usually be avoided. Later in the season the stream-bed fills with snow and can be very avalanche-prone, so use your discretion.

Approach: drive or walk to the lift station and then contour to the left across to the stream.



*Approaching the top section of Rihtanjira (photo: Rick McGregor)*

Descent: follow the chairlift down, with a detour to the west to avoid a cliff near the top.

## **ABISKO CANYON (JOKKEN):**

To find the ice climbing in the canyon, drive to the bridge over the Abisko stream (outside Abisko Turiststation). A fixed rope sometimes leads down to the stream, a short distance to the true right (looking downstream) of the bridge.

\* *The Icicle* (WI5/M4) There is a short mixed route just left of the first main waterfall. It has a bolt under the roof before the final icicle. Some winters the ice extends all the way down.

\* *The Near Side* (WI3, 20m) The first waterfall which freezes at the start of the winter is between the fixed rope and the stream. Belay on ice screws or a tree at the top.

Later in the winter (usually around Christmas) it is possible to cross the stream on a shelf of ice below the tunnel the stream flows through to reach a number of waterfalls on the true left of the stream.

\* *Moss Route* (WI3/M2, 20m) climbs ice and frozen moss just right of the tunnel to the stone wall above. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Lisette Lundström, 11 February 2001.

\* *Bong-bong Pillar* (WI5, 20m) A slim vertical pillar often forms between the stream and the broad waterfall later in the winter and gives a good steep 15-metre climb which finishes up a wide chimney.

\* *The Far Side* (WI3, 20m) A broad waterfall 20 metres to the right of the tunnel gives a 20-metre climb, steep at the bottom, lower-angled near the top (a final snow slope leads up to a large leaning log and tops out at a tree which provides the anchor). The lefthand side is often steeper (up to vertical). It is also possible to climb to the left of the waterfall and pull out from behind a curtain of icicles onto the steep upper lefthand wall of the waterfall.



*The three main waterfalls in Abisko Canyon.*

## **KURVAN (THE BEND):**

A couple of kilometres north of Abisko Tourist Station (towards Björkliden) there is a road cutting on the left just after a section of road which is marked as an area of avalanche danger. A number of 80-90 degree ice columns up to 10 metres high form on the hundred metre long cliff. A number of mixed climbs have been bolted on this wall but the bolts often disappear under the build-up of ice later in the winter.

Parking is a bit of a problem. The safest option is to continue to a side road 400 metres further towards Björkliden and walk back.



*Kurvan/The Bend between Abisko and Björkliden (photo: Rick McGregor)*



## **NJULLA/NUOLJA:**

There are several waterfalls on a cliffline on the hillside above and north of Kurvan (just north of Abisko). The routes are up to 50 metres long, and generally not too steep. There are bolted anchors at the top of the central routes, on flat blocks 10-15 m back from the edge. The approach slope is avalanche prone (there has been a fatality here). The usual approach is from the western end of the Njulla railway tunnel, reached by an access road from the E10 (park at the bottom without blocking the entrance).



*Njulla, Abisko (photo: Tomas Mikusi)*



## **SILVER FALLS (SILVERFALLET):**

Silverfallet is just east of Björkliden, where the stream Rakkasjohka drops into the lake of Torneträsk. A track leads down from a car parking area beside the E10 to a bridge over the stream.

There is mixed climbing and dry tooling under the bridge and ice and mixed bouldering up to 15 metres (in steps) a little further up the stream (approach from below).

## **BAKTAJAVRI/PAKTAJAURE:**

Above the lake of Baktajavri (between Tornehamn and Kopparåsen) is a low-angled ice slope with some short steeper steps about 400 metres above the railway line. They provide possibilities for ice bouldering and easy training. Approach: about 20 minutes.

There is also ice bouldering on the road cutting a short distance south of this lake, c. 200 metres north of a larger parking area.

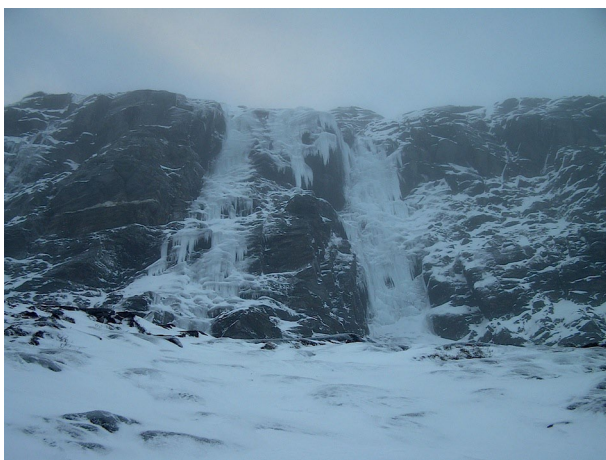


## LOKTA (BJÖRKSTUGAN):

There are a number of excellent one- and two-pitch waterfalls, and some longer ones, on the steep mountainside of Loktaohkka above Björkstugan, between the railway stations Kopparåsen and Låktatjåkka (c. 15 kilometres west of Björkliden). Approaches usually take 30-45 minutes.

\* *Revanch* (5 pitches of ice, snow and rock, WI4). Starts on the far left of the mountainside on an obvious low-angle waterfall which finishes at a broken band of rock. After the rock band pass a large, oval snowfield by scrambling up the cliff on the right to a shorter, steeper waterfall and then snow climbing till the angle eases. First ascent: Peter Sundvall, Henrik Nylund, 20 April 1999.

\* *Oktoberfest* (6-8 pitches with a crux of WI5) is a long route which climbs the centre of the lefthand half of the mountainside, with 2 pitches followed by lower-angled slopes for ca 100m, then 4 more steeper pitches to finish. Approach: about 30 minutes. Descent: to the right (west) at the top then down the gully to the left of *The Big Blue* (about an hour). The lower-angled sections of this route usually snow over later in the season. First ascent: Peter Engström, Lasse Jakobsson; Dick Johansson, Rick McGregor, 26 October 2003.



*Novemberratt (on the left) and Decemberdag (on the right) on Lokta, late November 2005 (photo: Rick McGregor).*



*Oktoberfest on Lokta, with the route marked (photo: Dick Johansson).*

\* *Gangstaleden* (The Gangsta Route) WI6, 10 pitches of ice, snow and rock. Start as for *Oktoberfest* for one pitch then do a long traverse to the right and up in an obvious corner and rock wall with very thin ice followed by steep snow (no protection). Traverse left under a cornice and continue up easier snow (unprotected) until the angle eases off. Not recommended. First ascent: Peter Sundvall, Henrik Nylund, 1 April 1999.

\* *Novemberratt* (November Night) WI4, 4 pitches. Climb a first steep step on the left (50m) in 1 or 2 pitches, then continue up a snowfield to the base of the lefthand of two prominent waterfalls. Climb the waterfall in two further pitches. Descent by 2 abseils down the upper fall, downclimb the snowfield and make 1 more abseil down the lower step. First ascent: Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 27 November 2005.

\* *Decemberdag* (December Day) WI4-5, 50m. The waterfall to the right of *Novemberratt*. Climb or solo up a snow and ice gully to the left and traverse in to the base of the waterfall. Climb it in 1 or 2 pitches and belay on pitons in a rock buttress at the top. Descent: continue up and left to ice above *Novemberratt* and make 2 abseils to the base of the upper wall. First ascent: Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 20 January 2008.



*Klimpen, Lokta (photo: Peter Engström)*

\* *Klimpen, Vänstra sidan* (The Clump, Left Side) WI4, 15m. There is short, steep ice wall to the left of a protruding cliff (*Klimpen/The Clump*) in the middle of the mountainside (above and obvious bend in the road).

\* Diagonally up to the left above *Klimpen/The Clump* is a steep one-pitch route (grade and length unknown). First recorded ascent: Peter Öhman, Kevin Edwards, Tomas Mikusi, c. 1999.

\* *Swan Lee* WI6, 30m. This route is up and slightly right of *Klimpen/The Clump*. Climb the



*Det stora blå/The Big Blue, Lokta (photo: Peter Engström)*

left side of *Klimpen* and the 45-degree snowfield above, moving slightly right to reach the foot of this short, serious pitch which climbs a groove and overhangs through a steep cliffline. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Anders Hedefalk, 19 March 2003.

\* *Klimpen, Höger sidan* (The Clump, Right Side) WI4, 40m. This is a broad steep waterfall to the right of the protruding cliff (*Klimpen/The Clump*, see above). Descend by abseil, or continue: the snowfield above this waterfall leads up and right to another steep pitch. Avoid this slope in avalanche conditions. From the top, traverse to the right and descend as for *The Big Blue*.

\* *Right of Klimpen*, WI4-5, 30m. On the wall to the right of *Klimpen/The Clump* (just out of frame in the photo). First ascent: Peter Engström, Torbjörn Ohlén, mid-November 2007.

\* *Nybörjarisen* (The Beginners' Waterfall) WI3, 60m. There is often an easier grey waterfall some 100 metres left of *The Big Blue* (one long pitch or two shorter ones of mostly 70-degree climbing with some steeper steps). Descend by abseil or walk down the gully to the left (east).

\* *Det stora blå* (The Big Blue) WI4-5, 60m. This is the most prominent waterfall on the righthand half of the mountainside and provides an excellent two-pitch climb with 85-90-degree sections at the start of each. Descend by abseil or walk down the gully to the left (east). There is a bolted anchor on a small cliff c. 15m above the top of the climb (not suitable to abseil from).





\* *Hole in the Wall* WI5, 60m. The waterfall furthest right of those in this area has a short steep section (80-85 degrees) at the start of the first pitch, then a snow slope up to the final steep second pitch (85-90 degrees). Descend by abseil or climb up and left (east) and then descend a gully (which can be avalanche-prone after snowfalls).

*Hole in the Wall, Lokta (photo: Peter Engström)*



### **LOKTAJOHKA:**

The bottom fall in the Loktajohka stream (signposted from the E10 highway) provides 20 metres of moderate ice (70-80 degrees) early in the season before the snow builds up too much. Approach: 15-20 minutes. Beware: the stream carries a lot of water, so take care not to break through into the waterfall behind.

*Loktajohka. Climber: Peter Engström (Photo: Rick McGregor)*



### **GEARGGECORRU:**

High on Gearggecorru, between Loktajohkka and Gearggevaggi, are a couple of short, steep waterfalls. Approach: 2-3 hours.

\* *Sirenernas sång* (The Song of the Sirens) WI5, 30m. The lefthand of the two waterfalls. First ascent: Christer Bjuhr, Anders Stålnacke, 25 November 2007.

*Sirenernas sång/The Song of the Sirens, Gearggecorru. (Photo: Christer Bjuhr)*



## GEARGGEVAGGI (KIERKKEVAGGE):

Gearggevaggi (Kierkkevagge, The Valley of Rocks) is the valley which contains the lake Trollsjön (Rissajavri) at its head, a popular destination for day walks in summer and autumn. The trail into the valley is signposted from the E10 highway about 3km east of Vassijaure. The five-kilometre-long valley contains a number of frozen waterfalls, up to c. 200m long. The majority of them are on the eastern side of the valley (on the western slopes of the 1388m high Gearggecorru). Information as to which of the waterfalls have been climbed is limited. The photos on this page give some indication of what waterfalls there are in Gearggevaggi in early November conditions.



*These waterfalls are a short distance N. of Trollsjön (photos: Rick McGregor)*



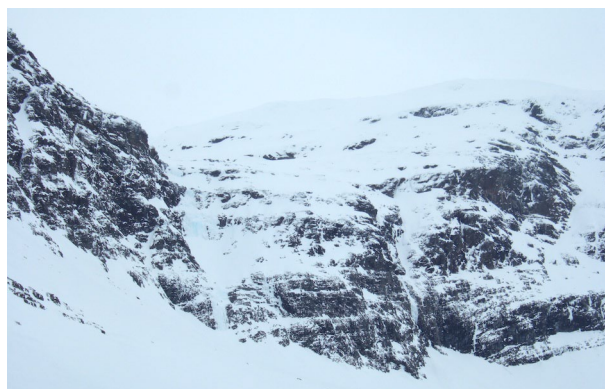


## VASSEVAGGI:

Vassevaggi (*Soldalen/The Valley of the Sun*) is one of two valleys that meet at Katterjåkk, just east of Riksgränsen. There are a number of waterfalls in the valley, but the approach is long (and snowmobiles are banned in the spring).

\* *Bassenjira* is the first waterfall on the left on the way up the valley, level with a small shelter/hut. It has been climbed (grade unknown).

\* *Vassitjokka* (WI3, 4-5 pitches of climbing). This is the obvious ice blue waterfall opposite Vuoiddasriida's triangle. Two pitches of ice, then snow up to the prominent incut gully which finishes to the right of Vassecohkka's summit. First ascent: Peter Sundvall, Henrik Nylund, 25 April 1998.



*Some of the waterfalls in the head of Vassevaggi (photos: Rick McGregor)*

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## ROHCCEVARRI:

Rohccevarri (726m) is a small summit a couple of kilometres north of Riksgränsen. One route has been done here, the line which can be seen from the road, in a gully or corner.

\* *Råtjovare* WI3, 2 pitches. Long approach, and as this route faces south it gets a lot of sun. Climbed in the early 1990s by Peter Engström, Lars Jakobsson, Conny Andersson.



*Rohccevarri from Riksgränsen i late spring conditions (photos: Rick McGregor)*



# NORTHERN NORWAY

Some of the best ice climbing within striking distance of Kiruna is to be found on the other side of the border, in Northern Norway. Spansdalen in particular has excellent routes from short to long, both sunny and shady. For Kiruna climbers tired of climbing in the shade, Traeldal also offers ice climbing on the sunny side, at the expense of a much shorter season.

## BRIDAL VEIL (BRUDSLÖJAN/ BRUDESLORET):

Bridal Veil Falls (*Brudslöjan* in Swedish, *Brudesløret* in Norwegian) drains Brudvattnet, a small lake above the railway line some 3.5 km SW of the station of Bjørnfjell (just west of Riksgränsen). Park at one of the parking areas beside the E10 highway and ski (or snowshoe) 1 km to the station (not accessible by road in the winter). From there follow a ski trail which leads SW over a low saddle and about 1.5 km later follow a narrow valley down to the right to the lake. Follow the lake W to its outlet (at Grid Ref 900 931 on the Swedish map BD6 Fjällkarta 1:100 000 series). The approach and return take about 60 mins. Abseil down the waterfall to reach



*The first pitch on The Troll/Trollet (photo: Rick McGregor)*

the start of the climb, which provides about 110 metres of ice with bulges up to 75-80 degrees.

## THE TROLL (TROLLET):

About 10 km W of Riksgränsen there is a derelict pub (Norw. *veikro*) beside the small lake Skogvann. Very early in the winter, before it is covered by snow, it is possible to do a three-pitch ice climb (about 130 metres) up the waterfall that feeds the lake from the E. The first pitch provides 70-degree ice, the second a short step of up to 80 degrees and there is a low-angle pitch to the top. The approach takes about 20 mins. Descent: it is possible to walk down to the right (east), but take care as this slope is very prone to windslab avalanches.



*Far Left, at the lefthand end of the main cliff at Katterat (photo: Rick McGregor)*

## KATTERAT:

Katterat is a rather unique place to climb—it is about 7.5 km SW of Riksgränsen (as the crow flies) and the best access is by train (from the west from Narvik or from the east from Kiruna, Abisko, Björkliden or Riksgränsen)—check the current timetable on [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se) or [www.nsb.no](http://www.nsb.no). There may be accommodation at Katterat Fjellstue nearby ([www.katterat.com](http://www.katterat.com)) or it may be possible to camp in or beside the station

itself. The climbs are close to sea level (above the Rombakselva river which flows into Rombaken fjord) and they face south, so the season is relatively short.

From the station follow a trail down to the valley floor and up the other side to the base of the climbs (about 90 mins).

\* *Far Left* WI3, 110 m. This is towards the lefthand end of the cliff. Turn left where the trail reaches the valley floor and go down it a short distance before climbing up to the start of the climb. It provides two longish pitches of climbing. Descend by abseil.

\* Further up the valley (Norddalen) are several much longer and steeper routes (4-5 pitches?).

\* There are also a few waterfalls above the railway line east of Katterat (including at least one 2-pitch route)—follow the track (*Rallarvägen*,



*The righthand lines at Katterat (photo: Rick McGregor)*

the navvies' trail) back towards Bjørnfjell and Riksgränsen to where it crosses the railway.

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## HAUGFJELL:

On the western side of Haugfjellet, on the other (eastern) side of the lake Dalvatnet, is a broad waterfall, accessed from the E10 highway. Steep snow leads up to the start of the climbing, which provides 2-3 pitches of ice and snow, WI3. The waterfall finishes with steep snow and a cornice. (Take care, people have been avalanched off the slope leading to this climb.) First recorded ascent: Peter Sundvall, Henrik Nylund, 23 April 1998.

Other climbs have been done in this area, but a bit further south, accessed from the E10 near Tinja Fjellgård.

There is also a long but not especially steep waterfall in a gully on the northern side of the Rombaksfjord. To reach it, turn off the E6 a kilometre or so north of the Rombak Bridge, drive to the end of the road (Tyttebaervika) and then walk a couple of kilometres or more along the cliff tops to reach the top of the route. Either abseil to the start or descend easier slopes to the side of it.



## KALIX WALL/KVITBERGAN:

*Kalixväggen* (The Kalix Wall) is the local Swedish climbers' name for an area a few kilometres east of the T-junction where the E10 meets the E6 highway halfway between Narvik and Bjerkevik. This area is called *Kvitbergan* (The White Cliff) by the local Norwegian climbers.

The routes are right beside the E10 highway, and the area is easily recognised by a high cliff of light-coloured rock, usually with a large icicle hanging down towards a broad ledge at half height. It is usually possible to park at a pull-out a few hundred metres up the road from the cliff. There are other routes further left which provide 25 metres or more of climbing.

From left:

\* *Treetime* WI2-3, c. 25m. Up through the forest on mostly 70-degree ice. Abseil off a tree.

\* *Rännan* (The Gully) WI3, c. 20m. Up an obvious groove on 75-80-degree ice. Abseil off a tree.



*Kalix Wall/Kalixväggen (Kvitbergan) with Walmart on the left and The Icicle Wall on the right (photo: Rick McGregor)*

\* *Walmart* WI 4, c. 20m. Some winters there is a route up the wall between *Rännan* and *The Icicle Wall* with sections of 80-85-degree ice. Finish up steep grass and moss. Abseil off a tree.

\* *The Icicle Wall* WI5, c. 30m. There is sometimes ice down to the ground from the halfway ledge and sometimes the icicle itself extends all the way down to the ledge. Other winters there is no ice at all. Abseil off a tree.

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## STORELVA:

This area has a 10-15 min. approach to a number of steep pillars and possibilities for mixed climbs up to about 30 metres. It is below Kalix Wall, but is reached from a side road off the E6 at Hergotta. Drive c. 2 km south from the junction of the E10 and the E6 and turn left on a road signposted "Åsen". Drive c. 1.5 km to the top of the hill (to a farm marked Nygårdsmoen on the map), then walk east and follow the stream up to the cliff and waterfalls. The season probably finishes in early March as the cliff is south-facing.

\* *För mycket fika* (Too Much Lunch) WI5, 30m. Climbs the lefthand side of the main waterfall. First ascent: Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 26 February 2006. Descend by abseil from a tree at the top.



*Storelva (photo: Rick McGregor)*

## TØTTEFOSSEN:

Tøttefossen is a 4- or 5-pitch route up the waterfall which drains Isvatnet, the lake on the southern side of Rombakstøtta (a prominent 1230 m peak east of Narvik). The approach (c. 2 hours) is from the end of an access road at Djupvik (signposted from the E6 highway about 4 kilometres east of Narvik). The climb is mostly c. 70-degree ice with some steeper bulges, and the descent is down slopes to the right (south).



*Tøttefossen in late autumn (photo: Rick McGregor)*

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## SILDVIK:

On the road in to Sildvik in the inner fjord of Rombaken are a couple of good beginners' waterfalls. Turn off the E6 highway just south of the bridge over the fjord (c. 15 km north of Narvik). After c. 100m two waterfalls should be visible up to the right. Approach march 5-10 mins. The waterfall on the right, *Klyftan* (The Cleft), is usually the easiest and not especially steep. The lefthand waterfall, *Yellow Wall*, is steeper and often thinner. These routes (WI3-4) are about 20m high. They do not form every winter.



*The two waterfalls near the Rombak Bridge, Sildvik (photo: Børge Soleng)*

Another couple of kilometres in towards Sildvik the road crosses a stream which provides very straightforward climbing—excellent for begin-

ners. You can park at the foot of the waterfall—no approach march!

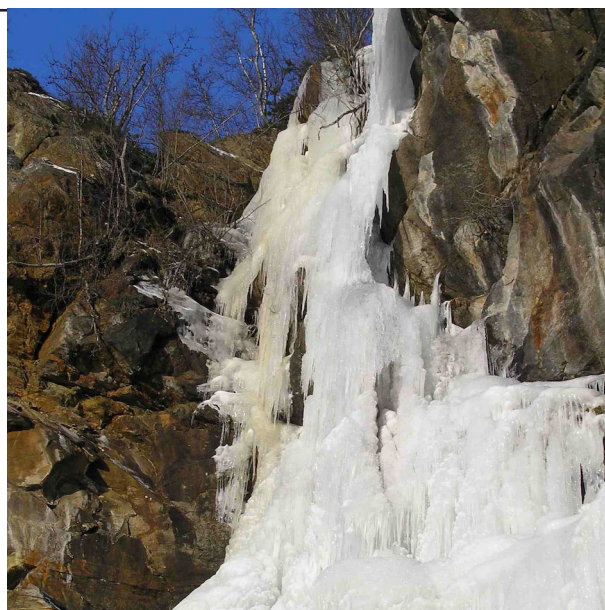
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## BEISFJORD:

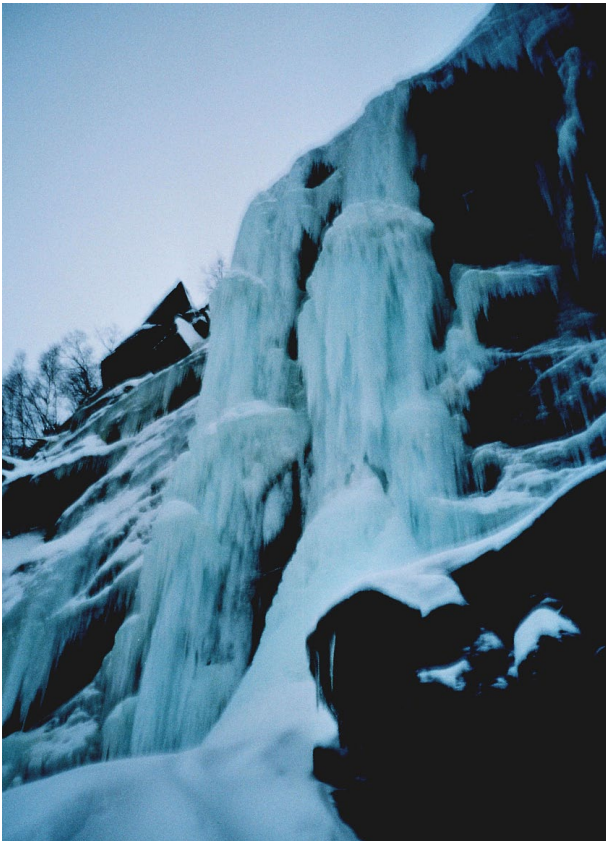
There are a number of waterfalls beside and above the road in to Beisfjord just south of Narvik (they are on the north side of the fjord). There is also a waterfall on the south side of the fjord, close to the Ankenes Bridge.

\* One of the routes in Beisfjord is above a concrete avalanche gallery about 5 km into the fjord and provides a 35m ice and mixed route to finish out left to a birch tree. Descent by abseil from the tree.

*Beisfjord (photo: Rick McGregor)*







*The initial pillar of Tre Små Grisar/ Three Little Pigs (photo: Rick McGregor)*

## **SKJOMEN:**

Skjomen is the fjord some 20 km south of Narvik. A couple of kilometres into the fjord (the road follows its northern shore) there is a prominent cliffline above the road. Depending on the prevailing temperatures a number of steep waterfalls form on this wall:

\* *Tre Små Grisar* (The Three Little Pigs) WI5, 100m. Some people say that the Three Little Pigs are three different ice climbs on this wall, others that the most prominent waterfall, with a steep pillar to start, goes by that name. The approach, through block terrain, is short but takes 15-20 mins. Climb the steep initial pillar (c. 45 metres) and continue up a low-angle slope for 15 metres to the start of the upper wall (40 metres). 85-90-degree ice on both main pitches. Descend by abseil.

\* *Björnen sover* (The Bear is Sleeping) WI4-5. To the right of *Tre Små Grisar*, round the buttress, is a route which starts with some mixed climbing or thin ice, and finishes with a steep headwall of ice. First recorded ascent: Anders Bergwall, Peter Engström, 2 January 2004.



## TRAELDAL/ELVEKROKDALEN:

There are two areas of waterfalls in the Traeldal valley, one which is best approached from below, from the combined E10/E6 highway, the other from the top, from *Brøytetasjonen* (the snow plough station) on the E10.

### LOWER TRAEILDAL:

About a kilometre north of the T-intersection where the E10 meets the E6 is a small road that leads up into a hidden valley (Elvekrokdaalen) above the signposted power station of Traeldal. Park halfway between the turn-off and the T-junction at a gravel pit, and walk up the forest road and then continue up the valley for 30-45 minutes. Make sure you stay a bit above the valley floor as you approach the climbs to avoid ending up below a cliffline hidden in the forest above the stream.

\* *Skogsfallet* (The Forest Fall) WI3. The first waterfall one encounters wends its way down a



*Above and right: The Main Waterfall, Lower Traeldal (photos: Rick McGregor)*

gully about 200 m left of the main waterfall and provides a few pitches of varied ice climbing (abseil back down off trees).

\* *Stora fallet* (The Main Waterfall) WI4. The main waterfall is 60 metres high and nearly as many broad, and provides two pitches of 70 to 80 degree ice. To descend, follow the cliff-top down to the left until it is possible to make a 50-metre abseil back to the base of the cliff.



### UPPER TRAEILDAL:

Upper Traeldal is approached via a ski-trail along the old roadway which starts by following the SW shore of a small lake. There is a snow-plough station (*Brøytetasjon*) about 4 kilometres west of the T-intersection where the E10 and E6 highways meet. Park just west of the snow-plough station where the road/ski-trail leads in to the right (NW). Follow the trail round the lake and then down the valley, passing under powerlines, for about 45 minutes until opposite the first waterfalls (*CP-fallet/CP Fall*). Another 15 minutes leads further down to the majority of the waterfalls in Upper Traeldal.





*Upper Traeldal: A. Curious, Yellow (Nyfiken, gul) on the left and B. Curious, Blue (Nyfiken, blå) in the middle (photo: Rick McGregor)*



*Thriller Pillar (left of centre) and lots of potential mixed routes (photo: Rick McGregor)*

\* *Nyfiken, gul* (Curious, Yellow) WI3, 100m. Apart from a waterfall starting halfway down the cliff, the broad yellow fall of Curious, Yellow is furthest left of the waterfalls in Upper Traeldal. It climbs three steep steps (80-85-degree ice) with lower-angled ice between for two pitches. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 11 January 2004. (Route A in the photo)

\* *Nyfiken, blå* (Curious, Blue) WI3, 80m. The hourglass-shaped waterfall to the right of *Curious, Yellow*, wider at the top than at the bottom. Two pitches, the first with 75-80-degree ice through the waist of the hourglass, the second over bulges of 80-85-degree ice on the right or up a steeper wall of 85-90-degree ice on the left to a belay on trees at the top. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Lars Jakobsson, Rick McGregor; Christer Bjuhr, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, 24 January 2004. (Route B in the photo)

\* *Thriller Pillar* WI4, 80m. A number of free-standing pillars drip over the steep cliff to the



*Gul och blå (on the left) and Blågult (on the right) (photo: Rick McGregor)*

right of *Curious, Blue*. This route climbs the lower-angled slope below them for one long (c. 55 m) pitch of mostly 70-degree ice to a belay beside the righthand pillar. Pitch 2 (c. 25m) climbs the pillar (85-90 degrees) to a belay on trees at the top. Descent: one long and one short abseil from trees. First ascent: Lars Jakobsson, Rick McGregor, 29 February 2004. (Route C and marked on photo above)

\* *CP-fallet* (CP Case/Christer and Pudde's Fall) WI3, 65 m. Further up the valley. Two pitches up to the end of the ice. 35 metres thin 70-degree ice with poor protection. 10m of 70-degree ice, 10m of 85-degree ice and 10 m 70-degree ice to the top of the pillar. Descend by abseil. First ascent: Christer Bjuhr, Fredrik (Pudde) Hansson, 29 February 2004. (The groove diagonally up to the right to the top is not always in condition, but it has been done. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Peter Engström, 18 February 2006.)

\* *Gul och blå* (Black and Blue) WI3, 35m. A yellowish waterfall halfway between *CP-fallet* and powerlines to the right of it. First ascent: Peter Engström, Christer Bjuhr, Rick McGregor, 2 February 2008.

\* *Blågult* (Blue and Gold) WI3, 30m. About 150m to the right of *Gul och blå* and just to the left of the powerlines, this is a blue waterfall which finishes under an overhang. Descent by abseil. First ascent: Christer Bjuhr, Peter Engström, Rick McGregor, 2 February 2008.



## LEIRVIK:

Leirvika is a small bay just west of the tunnel on the E6/E10 highway halfway between Narvik and Bjerkevik. A free-standing pillar usually forms from the overhanging cliff behind Leirvika. As you come out of the Leirvik tunnel on your way north, the road swings to the right and the waterfall, if it has formed, should be visible straight ahead of you. Parking can be a problem, and the approach takes at least 20-30 minutes up through the forest.

\* *Tappen i Leirvik* (The Leirvik Icicle) WI5-6, c. 25-30 m. The pillar itself is 5-10m, and not always solid enough to climb.

\* An easier route (WI4, 35m) 100 metres left of *Tappen*. Thin ice to start, then ramps and bulges leading left and up over a final short vertical headwall on yellow ice.

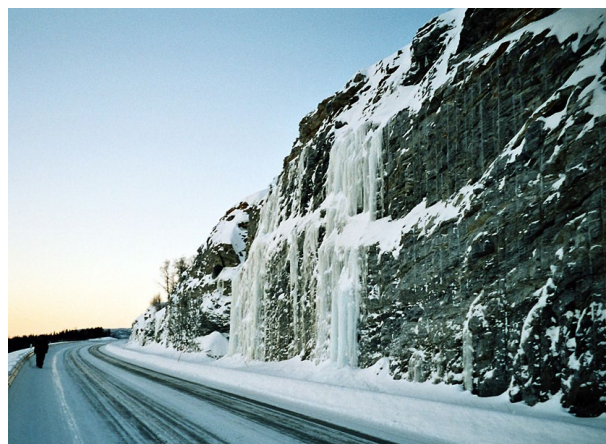
*Børge Soleng on Tappen i Leirvik/The Leirvik Icicle* (photo: Børge Soleng collection)



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## BJERKVIK:

Bjerkevik is the next town north of Narvik. A couple of kilometres W of Bjerkevik (beside the E10 towards Harstad) is a long series of road cuttings that start just after an intersection where the streetlights of Bjerkevik end. There are numerous ice and mixed routes of up to 20 metres on these road cuttings. They are right beside the road, so the only approach is from wherever you park your car (probably best back at the intersection).



*Bjerkevik road cutting* (photo: Rick McGregor)

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## ASTAFJORD:

Beside road 825 and below Bukkespelen (586m) between Grov and Gratangen about a kilometre west of Hilleshamn are a number of waterfalls:

\* *Two-Pitch Route* (WI5, 90m). Near the right-hand end of the main cliffline c 1km E of the sign marking the border to Skånland Kommune. Approach: c 40 min (250m climb).

Pitch 1: 80-degree ice for 15m to a ramp leading up and left then 15m 80-degree ice to a belay

under a rock overhang.

Pitch 2: Up and right on 70-degree ice to a 15m section of 85-90-degree ice then more 70-degree ice to belay below a 6m cone of ice. Descent by two abseils. First ascent: Rick McGregor, Peter Engström, 25 March 2006.

\* *Roadside Attraction* (WI4-5, 30m). Right above the road, almost directly below *Two-Pitch Route*. A prominent pillar up to a ledge with large birch trees (belay and abseil anchor). First ascent: Rick McGregor, Peter Engström, 25 March 2006.



## SPANSDALEN:

Spansdalen is the valley which runs down from Fossbakken (on the E6 highway north of Bjerkvik) to the Lavangen fjord at Tennevoll. Fossbakken is about 200 km from Kiruna (about 3 hours' drive—the roads are slower in Norway, especially in the winter). The valley is an ice climbing paradise, with numerous frozen waterfalls on both sides. They range in length from one to seven pitches, and most of them have short approaches from the road (up to 60 minutes). The approaches can usually be done without skis or snowshoes.

### *LEFTHAND SIDE OF THE VALLEY*

The majority of the routes in Spansdalen are on the lefthand ( southern) side of the valley. From bottom to top the areas are:

#### LOWER LEFT SIDE:

\* *Store probleman* (c. 7 pitches) WI5 M6. This route climbs a prominent iceflow to the left of the obvious main waterfall Henrikkefossen and then continues up difficult mixed ground above. First ascent: Krister Jonsson, Dick Johansson, 26 March 1999 (last pitch topoped in the dark).



*Søylefossen, Spansdalen, with more ice than usual (photo: Rick McGregor)*



*Hendrikafossen, Spansdalen (photo: Rick McGregor)*

\* *Henrikkefossen* (5-7 pitches) WI4. The longest waterfall, this is the impressive fall on the true left near the bottom of the valley. It begins with a broad wall of 80 degree ice which leads up for about 60 meters to a snow field. From the top of the snow field, a section of 60 degree ice leads up over bulges and past a short section of vertical ice to where the waterfall narrows between an overhanging wall on the right, and a steep slab (with potential mixed routes) on the left. In the upper gully a short wall of 85-90 degree ice leads up to where the fall widens again to offer a choice of exits - a steep ice pillar on the right, a narrow snow gully straight up, and steep snow and ice to the left (80-85 degrees). Descent: abseil the route, or descend to the right (towards the fjord) from the top, until it is possible to climb down through steep birch forest back to a gravel road which runs parallel to the river on the other side from the main road. First ascent: Øysten Cruikshank, Frank Dahle, 1991.

\* *Søylefossen* (c. 4 pitches) The steeper Søylefossen is some distance right of *Henrikkefossen*. The steepest section is the 3rd pitch, to the left or right of the large overhang. Descent: as above, or by abseil. First ascent: Marit Finnseth, Heidi Hansen, Aart Verhage, Bengt Flygel Nilsfors, March 1992. The steep pillar was first climbed later the same winter by



Øysten Cruikshank, Ottar Skos.

#### UPPER LEFT SIDE:

Halfway down the valley, and high up on the lefthand side, are a series of five main waterfalls ranging from 1-2 pitches at the left to 4-5 pitches on the right. There is a prominent snow shelf which cuts across the lefthand 4 waterfalls at mid-height.

Approach: The approach to these routes is from a bridge over the river and takes 45-60 mins.

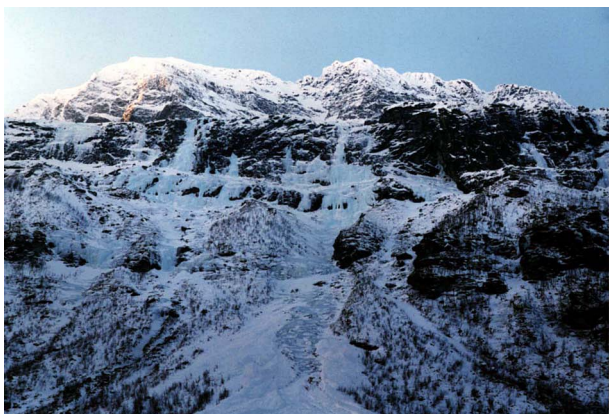
Descent: either by abseil, or walk left (up-valley) and descend a long, steep snow gully (to be avoided in avalanche conditions). Where the gully turns right, either traverse out right (up-valley) c. 100m and do one 50-metre abseil from a tree on a flat ledge, or traverse left and continue diagonally down through the forest (down-valley).

From the left:

\* *Rampfeber* (Stagefright) WI4. A short waterfall (1-2 pitches).

\* *Postcards from the Ledge* WI4. A 3-pitch route with a broad base which can be avoided by climbing a 70-80 degree right-leaning ramp from the left. After a short snow field, 75-80 degree ice continues past some ledges and bulges to a lower-angled section below the steep final gully which provides 80-85 degree ice and a fine finish.

\* *Field of Dreams* WI3-4. A 3- to 4-pitch route with low-angled ledges after the 1st and 2nd pitches.



Upper Left Side, Spansdalen (photo: Rick McGregor)

\* *Hoppbacken* (Ski Jump) A 4-pitch route further right where the cliffline steepens, with a snowfield after the first pitch and steep at the top.

\* *Henrikkas dotter* (Henrikke's Daughter) WI5. A fine 5-pitch route which looks like a smaller version of Henrikkofossen. It starts with a broad wall at the bottom, which steepens towards the top. After a snow field, a section of vertical ice leads up to a groove against the cliff on the right. Above, a series of bulges lead to the top.

#### SUNDAY WATERFALLS

(SÖNDAGSISARNA):

\* There are several excellent short routes and a longer low-angle route on the true left of the valley, opposite The Sunny Side (see below). If the river is not frozen over, these can be reached from a swing bridge downstream.

#### RIGHTHAND SIDE OF THE VALLEY

On the true righthand side (on the right looking downstream) there are a number of routes high up in the valley (The Sunny Side, see below), and some routes on the cliffs near the fjord (Lavangen), overlooking the township of Tennevoll.

#### TENNEVOLL:

A few routes have been recorded here:

\* *Tussilago* (a plant - name in English?) Mixed (WI4+, rock grade Scandinavian 4), ca 60m. First ascent: Pia Johansson and Dick Johansson, 10 April 1996.

\* *Den svarta porten* (The Black Gate) WI4, 45m. Thin, relatively low-angled ice under a sloping black roof then 15m of snow up to a belay/abseil tree. First recorded ascent: Rick McGregor, Håkan Samuelsson, 12 March 2005.

\* *Håkans fall* (Håkan's Fall) WI3-4, 40m. 200m right of *Den svarta porten*. An initial steep pillar then steps of up to 85-degree ice up to a snow slope and a clump of trees (belay/abseil anchor). First recorded ascent: Rick McGregor, Håkan Samuelsson, 12 March 2005.

\* *Broad waterfall* (WI3-4, 60m) 200-300m further right. A series of steps with a 10m snowfield in the middle, to an abseil tree.

First recorded ascent: Rick McGregor, Håkan Samuelsson, 12 March 2005.

#### LOWER RIGHT SIDE:

There is a long, low-angled waterfall on the righthand side at the bottom of the Spansdalen Valley proper. One other route has been done here, high up on the true right of the valley (and slightly up-valley from *Henrikkefossen*):

\* *Lindgren-Jensen* (WI3-4) c. 3 pitches.

Approach: about 3 hours. First ascent: Henrik Lindgren, Rafael Jensen, early 2007.

#### THE SUNNY SIDE (SOLSIDAN):

There are a number of one- to two-pitch routes halfway down the valley on the true right. Park just after the road flattens out after a steep descent (if coming from Fossbakken).

From the left:

\* *Oskar Falls* WI3. Down-valley 300 metres is a broad waterfall of about 30 metres which goes up over a series of steps to trees at the top.

\* *Gun Barrel* WI3-4. A narrow chimney a short distance left of the parking area provides a route of a pitch or so with steeper sections at the start and finish.

Up the valley a short distance from the carpark is a gully with a number of different waterfalls at its head:

\* *Kartong* (Corrugated Cardboard) WI3-4. There is a broad 60-metre fall (narrow at the bottom) with low-angled sections (often difficult conditions due to layered ice over snow).

\* *Treaty* WI4. On the right is a narrower 80 metre fall with a steep first pitch which just reaches a horizontal belay tree on the right, then continues up a series of steps to the top. Abseil off trees to get back down from both routes.

\* *Doctor's Fall* WI3. A shorter, easier waterfall leads up diagonally to the right from just right of the bottom of the latter route. Descend by abseil.

\* *Hung-Over* WI3-4. Up the road another 200 metres is an excellent two-pitch route in a relatively confined gully. There is a well-



*Hung-Over, on The Sunny Side, Spansdalen*  
(photo: Rick McGregor)

sheltered belay site under an overhang on the left after 45 metres. The second pitch starts with a section of 80 degree ice, before easing off at the top. Move out right to belay on trees (55m). Descent: abseil off trees down a line to the right (up-valley) of the climb.

#### UPPER RIGHT SIDE

High on the righthand (northern) side of the valley (above The Sunny Side) is one recorded route:

\* *Giron* WI6, 2 pitches. 25 m vertical- to overhanging ice then a snowfield up to the next ice wall. Second pitch very sustained for 25-30m. Top-out on snow. First ascent: Peter Öhman and Kevin Edwards, 7 April 1996.



# SOUTH OF KIRUNA

## HARSPRÅNGET/PORJUS:

Harsprånget is a dam on the Lule River between Gällivare and Jokkmokk about 200 km south of Kiruna and just south of the township of Porjus. Park at a minor side road that angles upstream (it is usually barred by a boom). Two short but wide frozen waterfalls form in the gorge about a kilometre downstream of the dam, one on each side of the river:

\* *Porjusgubben* (The Old Man of Porjus) is on the true left (nearest the road). It is c. 20m high and 30m wide and varies from 60 to 90 degrees.

\* *Stairway to Heaven* is on the true right, c. 75m downstream. Take extreme care crossing the ice on the river. The start is steep, and the rest of the climb is lower angled up to a belay/abseil tree after c. 50m.

\* *Blöta fötter, tungt hjärta* (Wet feet, heavy heart) (2 short pitches) Go c. 120m upstream from *Porjusgubben* and cross to the true right at an obvious crossing-point. There is c. 20m of steep climbing to start and then easier climbing (70 degrees) to the top.

\* *Trappan* (The Stairs) (1-2 pitches) is a low-angle climb (50-60 degrees) immediately upstream of *Blöta fötter*...

### TURISTFALLEN (THE TOURIST FALLS):

Closer to the dam are *Turistfallen* (The Tourist Falls) with three routes from 50-65 metres. Park at the gate immediately below the dam and follow highway 98 eastwards for c. 500-600m till you reach the old road in to the dam and industrial area. There are some large garages visible down this road. Head south, down towards the river. Look for some wooden stairs and boardwalks. Follow these to the look-out point from which the falls are visible. Take care crossing the river. Approach: 5-10 mins.

From left to right:

\* *Peters testamente* (Peter's Will) WI5, 50m. Steep climbing on sometimes thin ice.



*Stairway to heaven at Harsprånget (photo: Rick McGregor)*

Possibilities exist for some exciting mixed climbing.

\* *Chicken run* WI3, 65m. A wide fall with a variety of lines.

\* *Pensionärsparty* (The Pensioner's Party) WI3, 65m. Another wide fall with a variety of lines.

See also the now-defunct Gällivare Climbing Club's guide (in Swedish) to the ice climbing in the Luleå River valley (south of Gällivare), *Lule älvdal - Vinterförare 2004*: <http://klatterklubben.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/storasjc3b6fallet2.pdf>

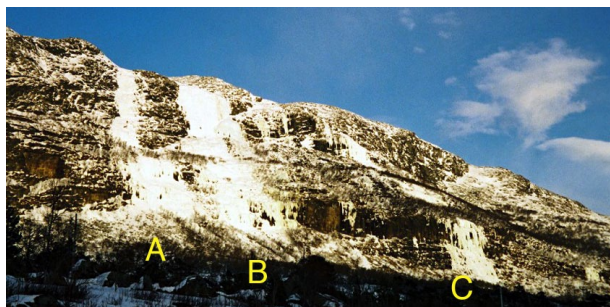
## STORA SJÖFALLET

One of Sweden's largest ice climbing areas is to be found in Stora Sjöfallet National Park near Suorva Dam, towards the head of the Lule River valley, inland from Gällivare. The routes vary in length from c. 20 m to c. 400 m. Stora Sjöfallet is some 3 hours' drive south of Kiruna. There are numerous long ice routes, mostly on the northern side of the valley, between Suorva Dam and the STF (Swedish Tourist Association) hut at Vakkotavare.

This information is based on a guide (in Swedish) by Per Hallander, Jan Hallander and Rafael Jensen in the Swedish Climbing Association's magazine *Bergsport*, with additional material from the now-defunct Gällivare Climbing Club's guide (also in Swedish) to the ice climbing in the Luleå River valley (south of Gällivare), *Lule älvdal - Vinterförare 2004*, which at present can be downloaded as a PDF file from:  
<http://klatterklubben.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/storasjc3b6fallet2.pdf>

### *Getting there:*

From Gällivare, take route 45 south for c. 40 km and turn off to Stora Sjöfallet and Vietas. From the turnoff it is c. 100 km to Stora Sjöfallet. From Jokkmokk, take route 45 north, and turn off c. 10 km north of Porjus. It is possible to take public transport (bus, train or air) to Gällivare, and then catch a bus to Vietas. Länstrafiken Norrbotten run a bus (route 93) from Gällivare to Ritsem via Stora Sjöfallet (Vietas): tel. +46-771-100 110, <http://www.ltnbd.se>



From left: A. *Greven/The Count*, B. *Grevinnan/The Countess* and C. *Adeln har kastat vatten (The Nobility have taken a leak)*, Stora Sjöfallet (photo: Rick McGregor)

### *Accommodation and getting around:*

If you have a car (which is recommended) you can stay at *Stora Sjöfallets Turistanläggning* at Vietas: tel. +46-973-40070, [www.storasjofallet.com](http://www.storasjofallet.com). Note that the snow is only cleared from the road between Vietas and Ritsem on weekdays from 1 November-15 February (but also on weekends thereafter).

If you don't have a car it is possible to get dropped off by bus at the STF (Swedish Tourist Association) hut at Vakkotavare, though it can't be booked. It usually opens a week or two into March. From there you can walk to all the routes, but it is a long way to the ones which are furthest east.

### *The routes:*

The routes which have been climbed so far are mostly found beside the road between Vietas and Vakkotavare. The first routes *Greven/The Count* and *Grevinnan/The Countess* were climbed in 1988 by Per-Elof Lidström and Thomas Krainer. The twin falls were named by the hydro workers who built the dam.

Starting from the East (with kilometre readings from the turnoff to Stora Sjöfallet hostel at Vietas), *Greven* (The Count) and *Grevinnan* (The Countess) are the two obvious twin falls immediately east of Suorva Dam. (8.1 km):

\* *Grevinnan* (The Countess) WI4, 250m. This is the right-hand and hardest of the two falls. It is about 5 pitches long. The first two pitches give good 70 degree ice, then there is a lower-angled snow- and ice-field up to a steep ice wall. The ice wall consists of c. 60 m of 80 degree ice, which is can sometimes be in poor condition. Approach c. 35 mins. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Thomas Krainer, 1988.

\* *Greven* (The Count) WI3, 300m. This is a pleasant long route (c. 7 pitches) with the steepest section 75 degrees. The route is even suitable for those who are less experienced as the steepest sections can generally be avoided. Approach c. 30 mins. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Thomas Krainer, 1988.



\* *Adeln har kastat vatten* (The Nobility have taken a leak) WI5, 100m (7.9 km). About 100 m to the right of *Grevinnan* is a very wide and yellow ice fall. The route is two pitches long and about 80 degrees. It is possible to continue up through the birch forest above the fall to a small 15 m high wall of about 60 degrees. There is one more 45-metre pitch of 80-degree ice up through some more birch forest. Approach: 45 mins. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Rafael Jensen, 7 March 1989.

Descents: The usual descent from the above routes takes a diagonal line from the right (east) of the top of *Grevinnan* to the bottom left of *Greven*, usually with abseils where the diagonal ledge reaches *Grevinnan* and down the last step left of *Greven*.

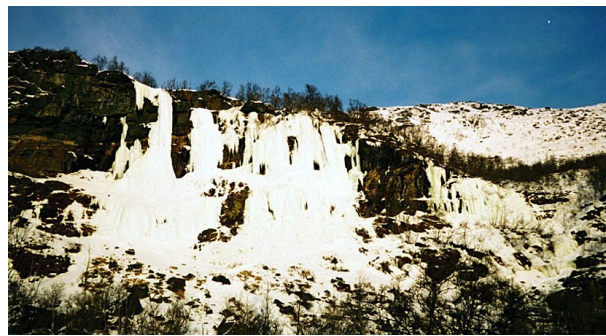
### **Suorva Dam** (9.9 km)

Immediately north of the dam are three short waterfalls. The approach is straightforward as they are only 100 m from the road and a large parking area.

\* *Pelaren* (The Pillar) WI5+ 50m. Furthest left is a prominent pillar. Climb a short ice wall to the foot of the pillar, then the pillar itself, c. 30 m of 90-degree ice. The pillar is often granular ice which makes the route very serious. First ascent:



*Adeln har kastat vatten* (The Nobility have taken a leak), *Stora Sjöfallet* (photo: Rick McGregor)



*The Suorva Dam area at Stora Sjöfallet provides 1-pitch routes with easy access* (photo: Rick McGregor)

Per-Elof Lidström, Rafael Jensen, 6 March 1989.

\* *Lätta fötter, tungt hjärta* (Light feet, heavy heart) WI3+ 60m. About 10 m right of *Pelaren* is another pillar, which also starts with the short ice wall. It then follows the c. 20 m high pillar with 80-85-degree ice up to a small ledge. From the ledge make a short traverse to the right and then up a c. 5 m high ice wall to another ledge. From the ledge make a delicate traverse right on a narrow ramp to the top of the climb. Some years the ramp can be a snow traverse. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Rafael Jensen, 10 March 1989.

\* *Ganska brett isfall* (Quite wide waterfall) WI3, 20m. Furthest right of the three falls is a fairly easy ice wall, which as the name suggests is quite wide. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Thomas Krainer, 1988.

\* *Ice Hose* WI4, c. 20m. Some winters a steep and narrow pillar forms at the righthand end of the cliff to the left of *Ganska brett isfall*.

### **Karnjelapakte:**

\* *Svordomar och brutna spetsar* (Swear words and broken picks) WI4, 4 pitches (13.1 km). Some winters there is a waterfall c. 100m to the left of *Nästan alpint*. First ascent: Tomas Mikusi, Acki Nordin, 13 March 1999.

\* *Nästan alpint* (Almost alpine) WI3 400m (13.1 km). On the mighty cliff of *Karnjelapakte* north of lake *Suorvajaure* is a 9-pitch ice route. The route consists of short steep sections of up to 70 degrees and long lower-angled sections. It is an excellent long day trip. The descent route takes

the third couloir to the east. Beware of avalanche conditions. Approach: 15-30 mins. First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Rafael Jensen, 9 March 1989.

\* *Mjuka lavinkyssar* (Gentle avalanche kisses) WI3+ 250m (14.6 km). In the gully between Karnjel and Karnjelpakte is a c. 250 m long ice route. It begins with a c. 20m high 80-85-degree ice wall, which is followed by 2 easy pitches up to an excellent 75-degree ice wall. Climb the ice wall (1-2 pitches) and then another couple of easy pitches to the top. Approach c. 60 mins. N.B.: Beware of avalanches on the upper part of the route (which got its name after the avalanche which swept past the first ascent party). The best descent route is down the western slopes of Karnjelpakte and then down the valley to Vakkotavare (or abseil the route). First ascent: Per-Elof Lidström, Rafael Jensen, 26 March 1989.

\* *Snövit* (Snow White) WI4 350m (16.6 km). This is the long ice fall which weaves its way up the southern cliffs of Karnjelpakte. It is clearly visible from STF's hut at Vakkotavare. *Snövit* is surrounded by a number of shorter ice falls (*Dvärgarna*/The Dwarves). The steepest section is c. 85 degrees and is at the start of the first pitch. Pitches 1 and 2 are 75-80 degrees; pitch 3 crosses a small snow field and then continues up into a narrow ice groove; pitch 4 follows the groove to a larger snow field; pitch 5 crosses the snow field. N.B.: the snow field may avalanche. Pitch 6 continues up a wide ice wall, offering plenty of route choice; pitch 7 continues up two small ice walls to the top. Approach c. 45 mins. The descent is the same as for *Mjuka lavinkyssar* (down the western slopes of Karnjelpakte and down the valley to Vakkotavare). First ascent: Per Hallander, Jan Esensjö, 1992.

#### **Other waterfalls:**

\* *Lagom efter en utmattning* (Sufficient after an exhaustion). The route follows the stream Luomijäkka all the way up to its source in a ravine on the side of Karnjel. It starts with easy climbing up to the first ice wall which is 15m high and 60 degrees. The second ice wall is 20-30m of 70-75 degrees. Descent: as for *Nästan alpint*. First ascent: Peter Norin, Erik Karlsson and Robert Qwint, 13 February 1994.

\* *Lilla vackra Anna* (Little beautiful Anna) c. 180m (c. 4 pitches). In the valley that runs north from Vietas there is a waterfall on the NW side of Juobmotjåkkå. The first pitch is delicate and consists of steps of 80-85 degree ice. At times the pillar is only 1m wide. The second and third pitches are easier climbing. The last pitch consists of a narrow snow gully with a shorter section of ice. The route can probably only be done when there is plenty of ice. Descent: to the south over two tops to a radio-mast. From there follow a snowmobile trail to Vietas. First ascent: Per Hallander, Rafael Jensen, 22 March 1993.

\* *Blåtungan* (Blue Tongue), 5 pitches. The obvious waterfall on the NE side of Juobmotjåkkå. The first two pitches are c. 80-85 degrees. The last three pitches follow the ice up towards the top. Descent: down the E side of the mountain. First ascent: Peter Norin, Robin Qwint, 24 March 1994.

On the hillside below *Blåtungan* are three easier waterfalls of about two pitches each. From left:

\* *Flygande vanten* (The Flying Glove)

\* *Enbent* (One-legged)

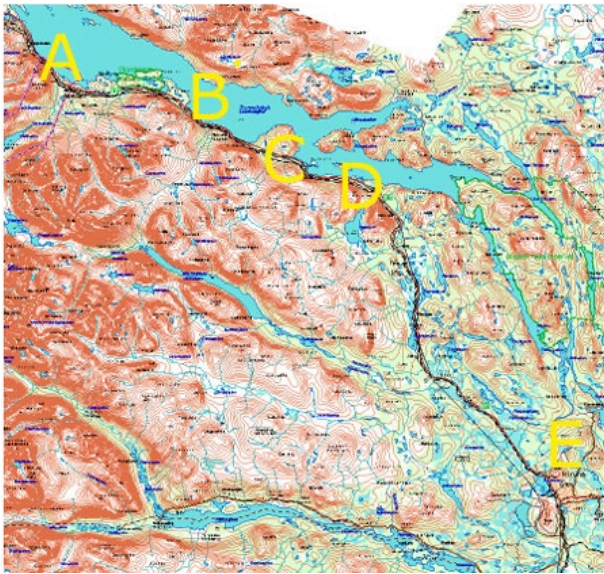
\* *Böljande brinken* (The Billowing Brink)

\* *Fjärilslätt utsteg* (Featherlight Top-Out), c. 120m (3 pitches). There are several waterfalls on the NE side of Niera. *Fjärilslätt utsteg* is the easternmost. The first pitch is easy climbing (65-75 degrees) up to a large wall. The second pitch follows an ice chimney (85 degrees) up to a sloping ice ledge. The third pitch climbs a 5m wall of 90-degree ice to an easier section. The top-out is on steep snow. Descent: abseil the route, or climb the (sometimes steep) snowfield to the top. First ascent: Per Hallander, Rafael Jensen, 19 March 1993.

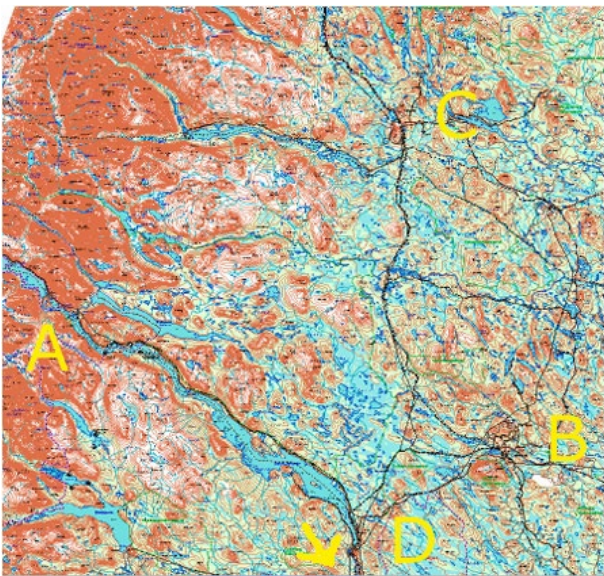
\* *Änglavakten* (Guardian Angel), c. 130m (3 pitches). On the SW wall of Atlas (Alddas) is a waterfall which starts quite high above Lake Pätsajaure. The first pitch (c. 45m) consists of steps up to 75 degrees. The second pitch has easy climbing up to a short wall. The third pitch (c. 45m) consists of steps up to 75-80 degrees. Descent: c. 2 km to the east. First ascent: Per Hallander, Erik Karlsson, 20 March 1994.



# Maps



*Kiruna and west. A. Abisko, B. Stordalen, C. Lillpakte and Kaisepakte, D. Torneträsk station, E. Kiruna.*



*Kiruna and south. A. Stora Sjöfallet, B. Gällivare/Malmberget, C. Kiruna, D. Porjus/Harsprånget.*

Text by:  
Rick McGregor (rmcgregor@hotmail.com)  
Updated 2014-03-16

**Scandinavian ice and climbing links:**

Ice climbing round Gällivare, Sweden (in Swedish):

<http://klatterklubben.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/storasjc3b6fallet2.pdf> (PDF file)

Ice Climbing in Norway (includes links to ice climbing in Salangen and Sørvalen):

<http://isklatring.no>

Kiruna klätterklubb (Kiruna Climbing Club):

<http://www.kirunaklatterklubb.se>

Rick McGregor's Kiruna ice climbing web page:

<http://kiwiclimber.se/iceclimbing>

**WARNING:**  
ICE CLIMBING IS A DANGEROUS SPORT.  
USE THE INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE WITH DUE CARE.  
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.  
IF IN DOUBT, DON'T DO IT!