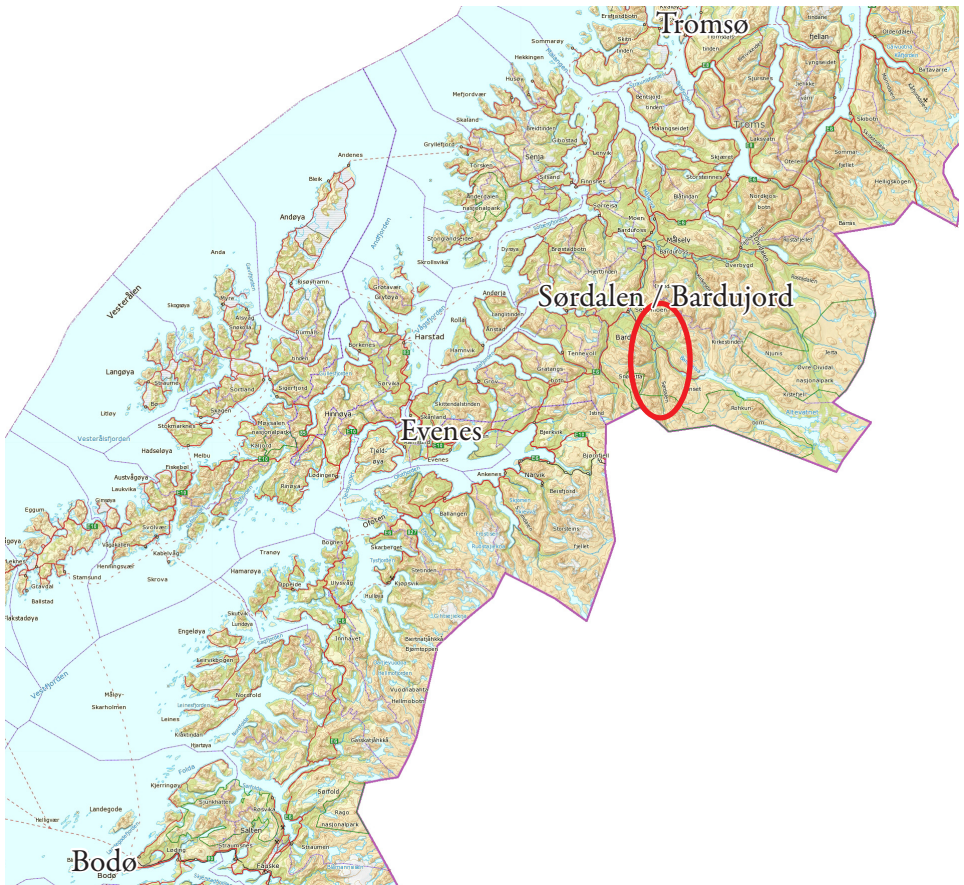


Ice climbing guide

Sørdalen and Bardufjord



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Introduction

For most people Sørдалen is a remote valley with a reputation for long, hard ice climbing routes. It is a bit strange for me to make an ice climbing guide for this area as I have never climbed here myself. But here I am, sitting in Longyearbyen trying to put together what is known about ice climbing in the Sørдалen area.

History

Because Sørдалen is relatively far away from the climbing scenes in Tromsø and Narvik, it is hard to get the whole history. Add on the climbing that is done by visiting climbers or climbers who have lived in the area for some years and you understand that this chapter is not easy to get right.

The late 80's

This is probably when the ice climbing started in the area. Ørjan Jensen worked some years as an officer in the Norwegian armed forces, and spent much of his days off with different climbing partners in the huge waterfalls in Sørдалen. Between 1988 and 1990, the main waterfalls of Skredbekken, Rubben and Storstampen got their first ascents. Other routes / lines were probably also climbed in this time, but I have no details about them.

Mid 90's

In this period, ice climbing in Sørдалen was discovered for the second time. Børge Solbakk, Kurt Kaspersen, Øystein Cruickshank and Per Ivar Weydahl all climbed many of the waterfalls in the

area. Børge thought he had the first ascents of most of the major lines, but rumors reached him about a guy called Ørjan. After some investigations, Børge finally got in contact with Ørjan Jensen. I climbed a lot with Børge during this time and he often talked about the long routes in Sørдалen and about his "loss" of several first ascents. He lost them with a big smile! Børge Solbakk died tragically in an ice climbing accident in 1999. After that, it seems like the ice climbing activity in the area ceased.

2005 - 2011

Ice climbing had grown more popular all over the country. In Tromsø, strong climbers like Trym Atle Sæland, Ole Ivar Lied and Åshild Thomassen rediscovered Sørдалen. They also brought strong climbing friends like Marius Olsen and Guy Lacelle along. They repeated most of the old classics and climbed some of the harder or more remote waterfalls. Also visiting climbers did strong ascents in the area. French climbers climbed a new waterfall in the southern, roadless part of the valley. The route exploration culminated in the winter of 2010/2011 when some extraordinary climbers from Austria visited. Albert Leichtfried, Paul Mair and their climbing partners both put up new, hard ice-/mix routes and repeated most of the other classics. That sparked my initial motivation to make this guide. It is a great ice climbing area, but it is not as pristine as some of our visitors wants it to be.

Getting there / accommodation

From abroad or southern Norway, it is most convenient to fly to either Evenes or Tromsø airport. Both have direct connections from Oslo. From Evenes, it is approximately 110 km / 1,5 hours to Bardufjord. From Tromsø, it is 170 km / 2,5 hours. Drive E6 north (from Evenes) or south (from Tromsø). At the town of Bardu / Setermoen, head east for Bardufjord / Sjødalen.

There are several opportunities if you want to sleep indoors. A few hotels and rental cabins are found in the Bardu area. Check the local tourist information or google it!

Areas described

There are several major ice climbing areas in this part of Troms. Spansdalen and Sjøvegan are mentioned at Isklättring.no. Senja is great for alpine climbing and ice climbing. A bit further north, the valley Tamokdalen has good ice climbing. In this small guide, only ice climbing in Bardufjord and Sjødalen is described. The guide is by no means complete. Only known climbing routes are included.

New routes / more information

The Norwegian alpine club (NTK) has an online route database. If you do new routes, or routes you think are new, this is a good place to register them. The webaddress is <http://www.ntk.no> or direct to the database: <http://www.ntk.no/nb/routes>.

At isklättring.no, we are thankful for

feedback on our online guides, both errors, inaccurate information and new routes. We will publish new and updated information on an irregular basis. We also ask visiting climbers in the different parts of Norway to respect the general climbing ethics, which can be summarized as “no bolts”.

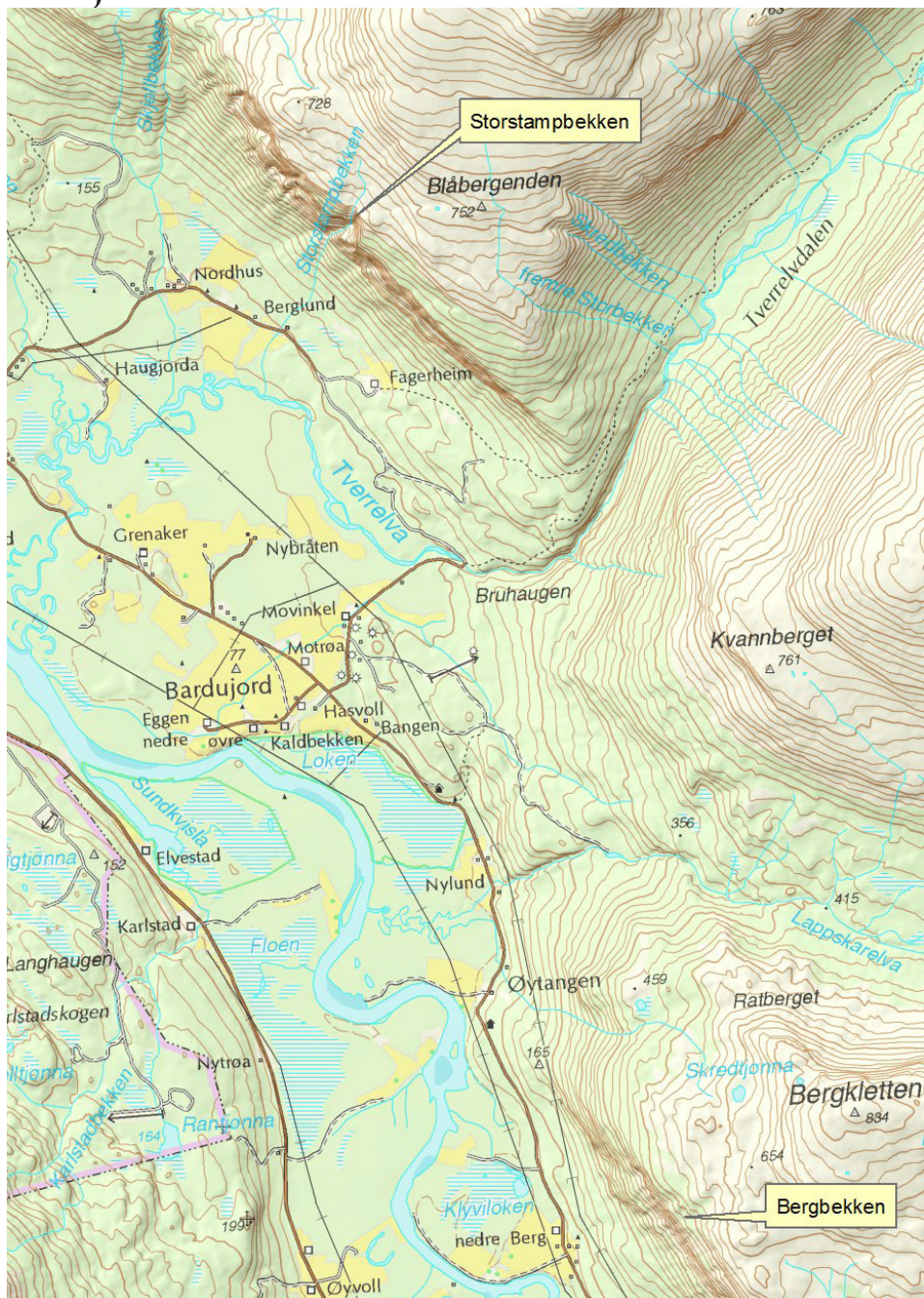
Furthermore, it is polite not to give names to everything you climb, just because you can not find it described in a guidebook. Climb, have fun and do not focus too much on first ascents.

References

The following people have generously contributed to this guide:

- Børge Solbakk
- Kurt Kaspersen
- Per Ivar Weydahl
- Albert Leichtfried
- Paul Mair
- Espen Prestbakkmo
- Marius Olsen
- Trym Atle Sæland
- Åshild Tomassen
- Ole Ivar Lied
- Bruno Martel

Bardujord area





Storstampen

Storstampen have some quality climbs in a canyon-like formation north of Bardujord. It is not known how many of the lines that were climbed by the early climbers.

1. Storstampen

WI 4

Approx 200 m, 60-85°. The first of the Storstampen waterfalls. FA: Ørjan Jensen with partners appr 1988-90.

2. Storstampen 2

WI 5-6

Approx 200 m, 70-90°. Two freestanding pillars. The central obvious ice line at Storstampen, seen from Bardujord. Approx. 200 m to the right of no. 1. FA: Marius Olsen, Anette Cecile Seland & Ashild Thomassen 2007.

3. Golden Reward

WI6, MI7

160 m long, WI6/MI7. Starts 200 m to the right of no 2. See picture next page. FA: Gerry Fiegl & Paul Mair.

Bergbekken

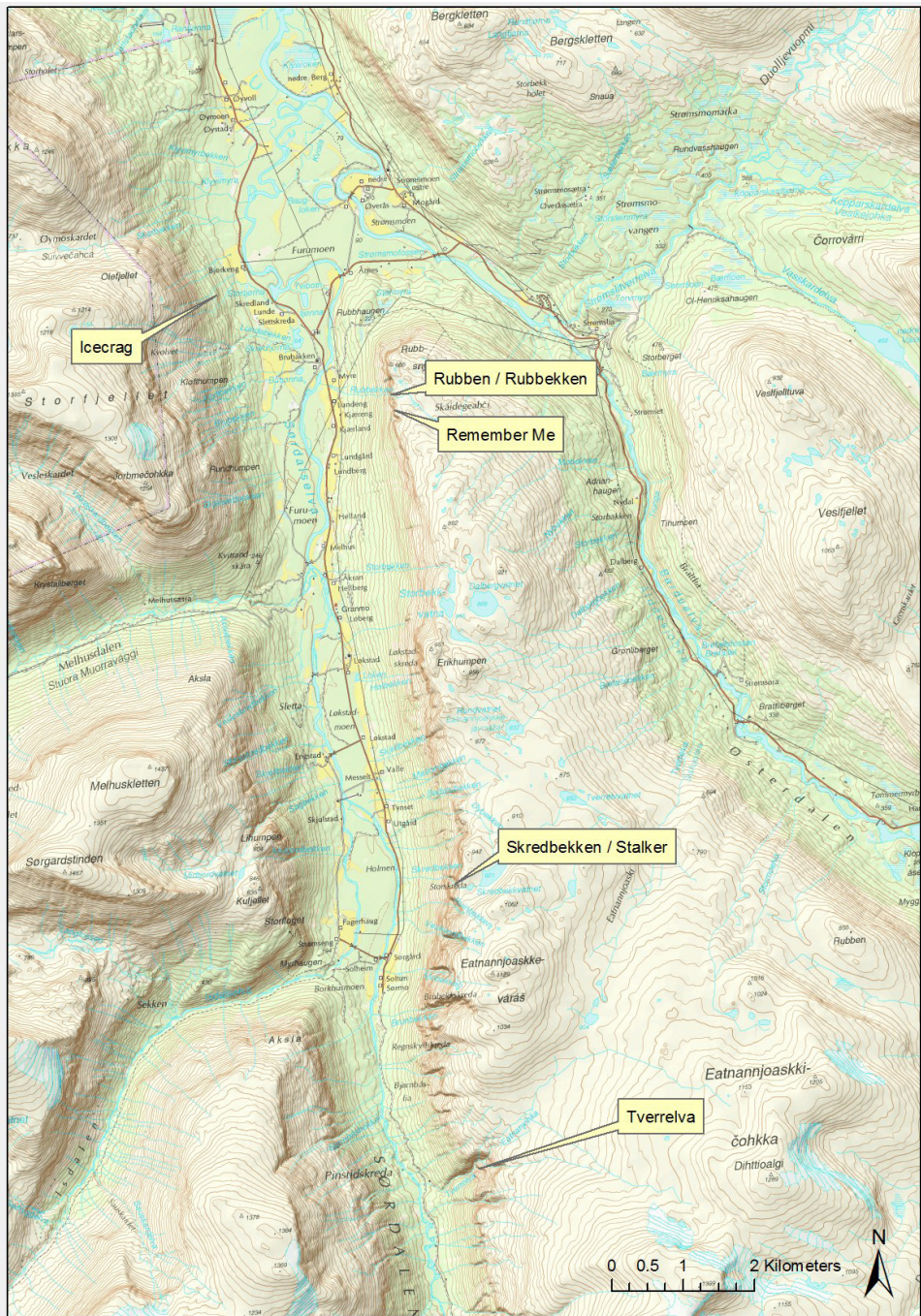
Two long, moderate waterfalls below the mountain Bergkletten (aka Ratberget).

The lines are long and offer WI3-4 ice climbing.



The line of “Golden reward” in the Storstampen area. ©Paul Mair

Sørdalen area



Icecrag

At the west side of the valley, at the entrance, there is an icecrag. This crag has several one pitch waterfalls, grades from ca WI4 to WI5+.

Rubben area

The Rubben area is on the east side, at the entrance of the valley. The main line is the waterfall Rubben. The climbs are generally long and strenuous. Descent either by rappel down the waterfall or walk down the east side of the mountain to the neighboring valley “Østerdalen”.

1. *Rubbsnyten* WI 5

200 m. Follows rather thin iceformations. FA Trym Atle Seland & Anette Cecilie Seland dec 2005.

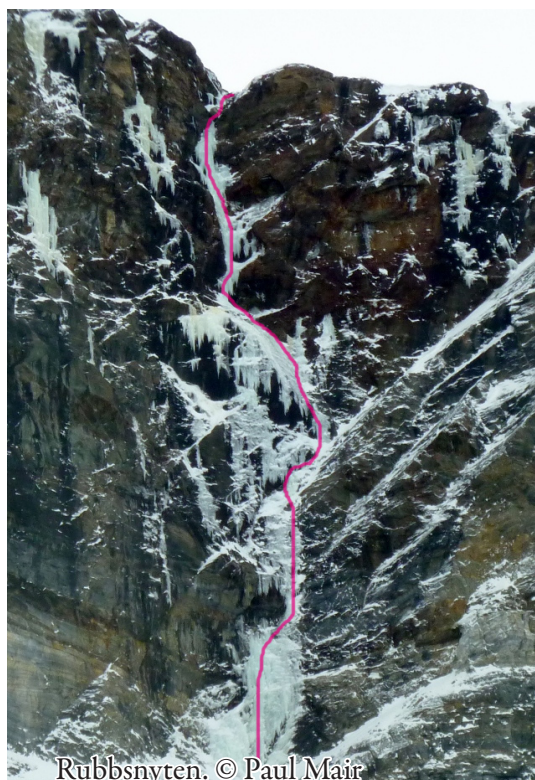
2. *Rubben* WI 5+

400 m. The main waterfall in this area. FA Ørjan Jensen with partners 1988-1990.

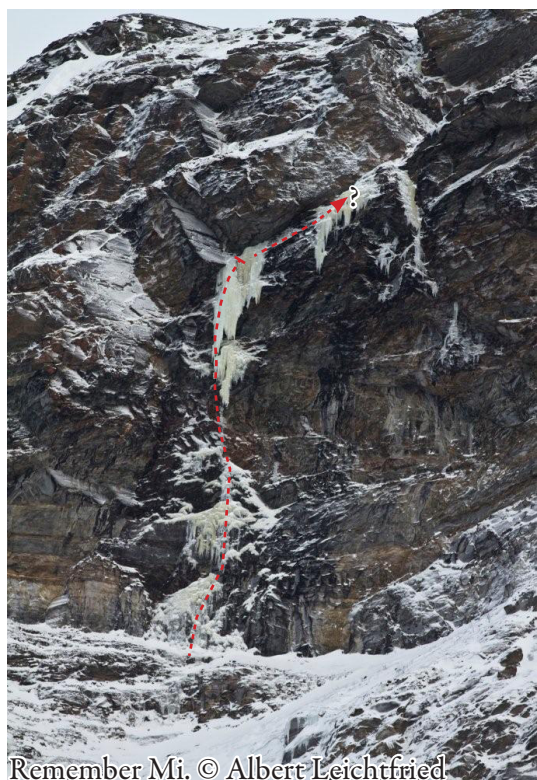
3. *Remember Mi* WI 7- / M8

100 m, 3 pitches. Rappel off before the easier traverse after pitch 3. The route name is a tribute to the late Michl Uhrmann. The route has had some dispute because the first ascensionists rappelled off after the main difficulties. In Norway, it is considered best style to top out mountain routes like this.

FA (onsight) Albert Leichtfried & Benni Purner march 2011.



Rubbsnyten. © Paul Mair



Remember Mi. © Albert Leichtfried

Skredbekken

This is the most famous waterfall in Sør dalen. The story of a two day ascent in 1995 by Børge Solbakk is a true page turner (Høyt i Nord 1996).

Descent is either by rappel down the waterfall or by walking east to Øster dalen.

1. Skredbekken WI5

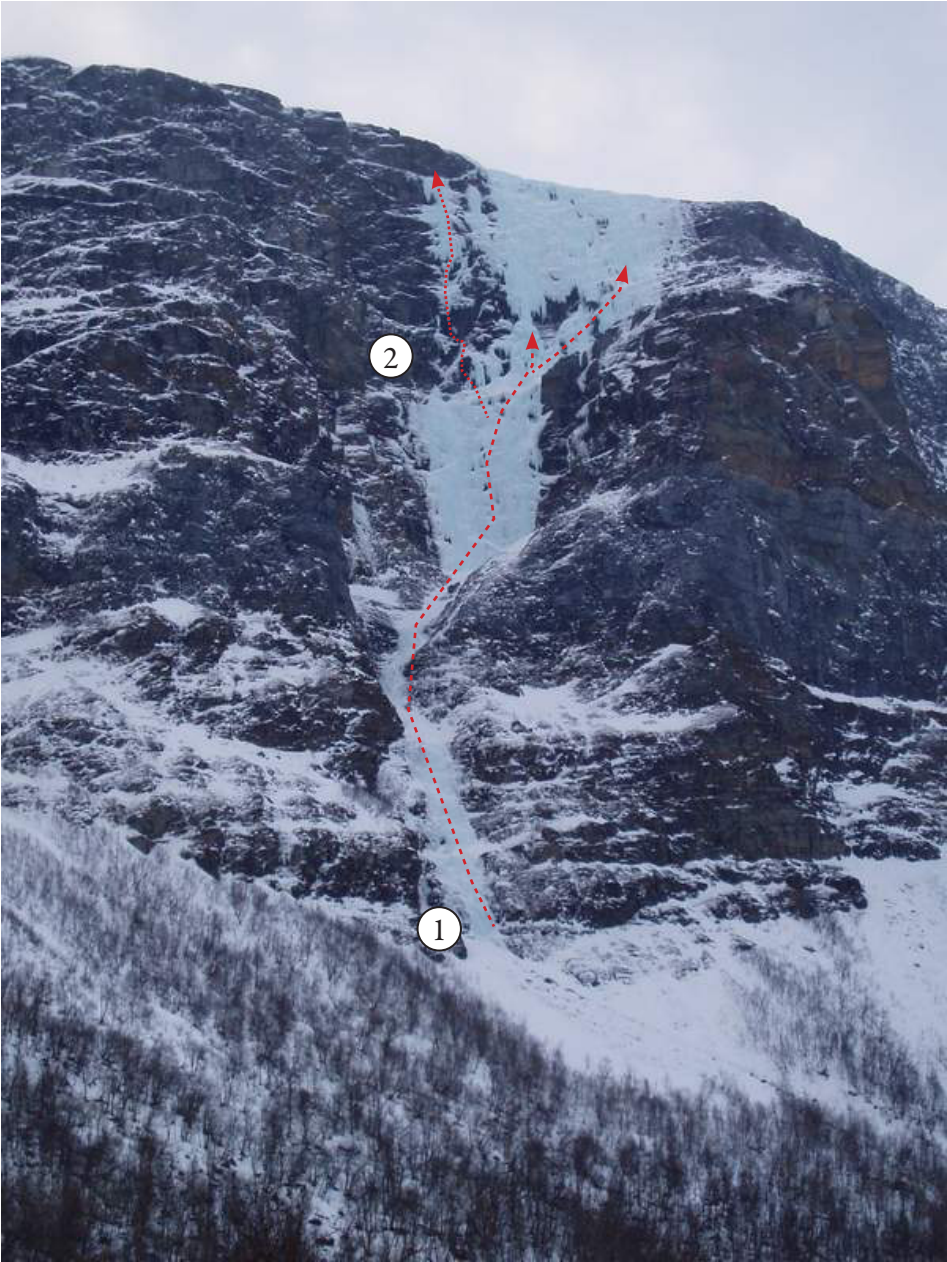
Approx 700 climbing meters, 500 elevation meters. First ascent Ørjan Jensen and partners around 1990. Three sections.

1. *Three long pitches of moderate snow/Ice. Then a long gully (simultaneously climbed).*
2. *Steep wall, two long pitches (80 m rope)*
3. *Top wall. Direct is very steep, a bit more moderate to the right. 2-3 steep pitches.*

The easiest descent is either rappel or a moderate walk down to the neighboring valley (Øster dalen). Hitchhike back....!

2. Stalker WI6/M7

700m. This is a left variation of Skredbekken with more than 300 m of independent climbing. Climb part 1 and 2 of Skredbekken, then finish directly up thin, steep ice and rock. FA (onsight). Albert Leichtfried & Benni Purner.





Tverrbekken

From the end of the road, you have to walk approx. 3 km walk before you are below these fine lines.

The approach is then through a canyon which involves hiking, scrambling and 40 m of ice climbing at WI4. You will then be at the bottom of the upper waterfalls. As far as we know, two of the three lines in the main ice have been climbed, nothing else.

1. No details / project!

2. Bibi for ever

WI 5+.

130 m. The route is named in memory of Jean-Marc Genevois. FA Christophe Poli & Bruno Martel 5. Mars 2008.

3. Lid / Seland.

WI 5.

3 pitches. The middle of the three lines of the main ice. FA Trym Atle Seland and Ole Ivar Lied 2008.

4. No details / project!

The easiers descent is down the water-fall and then hike / climb / rappel the canyon.



Albert Leichtfried climbs Remember Mt. ©Hannes Mair



Benni Purner at the hard mix-pitch of Remember Mt. ©Hannes Mair