

Texti: Matteo Meucci

Bolaklettur & Brekkufjall í Borgarfirði



Leiðarvísir fyrir ísklifur

Introduction

Many people have been driving past this little pearl for decades, without stopping, heading to bigger missions on the summits of Skarðsheiði such as NW wall of Skessuhorn and N wall of Skarðshorn. Distance from Reykjavík, tunnel toll and little information kept this place as a mystery for a long time after the first routes were climbed. Now there is no toll anymore and it takes the same time to drive to Borgarfjörður as it does to Múlafjall, so no more excuses not to give this place a visit.

If you are a beginner, you won't find that many routes to climb but it's still worth the visit. Advanced climbers will find challenging routes and room for new routes, mostly dry tooling and scottish style ones.

Driving and parking

It takes about one hour to get to Bolaklettur and Brekkufjall from Reykjavík by going through the Hvalfjarðargöng tunnel. Just before crossing the bridge over to Borgarnes, turn off Hringvegur (#1) to the right on to Borgarfjarðarbraut (#50) and drive for a few more minutes until

you can see the cliff on the right. To go to Innri-hvilt, stop by the first farm on the right. To go to Bolaklettur or Brekkufjall, stop by the farm road in front of your desired route.

Please try to park in places without closing roads and ask the farmers if it's ok to leave your vehicle on his land. Approach to the sectors can be from few minutes to half an hour to Innri-hvilt.

History of climbing

The oldest routes in Borgarfjörður date back to the late 80's and were in the Brekkufjall sector. *Ekki er allt sem sýnist* is a must (from the prolific partnership of Páll Sveinsson and Guðmundur Helgi Christensen) that every solid ice climber should have in the bag. Then there was a gap for many years until Ívar Finnbogason and friends (2005-8) climbed the magnificent gully-dihedral of *Gjöfin sem heldur áfram að gefa* and then exploring the hard crag of Innri-hvilt setting 3 new routes, among them *Bara ef mamma vissi*, a very cool line with splendid basalt formations on the very top. Recently the author has

been adding lines and bolting some dry-tooling routes (M8-9) that still await the first ascender. The very last pearl was added by Albert Leichtfried and Benedikt Purner with *Hard five*, a futuristic route graded M8/W16+.

Geology and conditions

The rock is usually columnar basalt for the western part of the crag and andesite with vertical fissuration for the eastern part. The rock is generally solid and results in quite blank faces and not a lot of gear space.

Conditions usually come in the second part of winter because the cliff is north facing and takes a bit of time to build up the ice, mostly for the Árdalsá & Innri-hvilt part and Bolaklettur. It's possible that the Brekkufjall sector gets in conditions earlier because there are more small streams on top of the mountain that freeze up easier. Sometimes a full week of cold is enough for it to be possible to climb in Brekkufjall. Due to the low elevation the climbs might be strongly affected by warm fronts and rain in winter, Brekkufjall in particular.



"Ekki er allt sem sýnist" one of the best lines of the crag

A) Árdalsá & Innri-hvilft

Turn to the farm Árdalur and then drive all the way up to the gravel mine. Park on the side. Approach takes 20-30 min heading quite straight to the cliff. After a few minutes of hiking, lower to the riverbed and then:

A) Walk along it and climb the waterfall at the end 1-2 pitches WI3, mainly to get to A1-A4

B) Cross the river and rise on the slope that lead to A13 and then traverse beneath the cliff to get to the lines.

Note that it's also possible to get to routes A1-A5 through approach B.

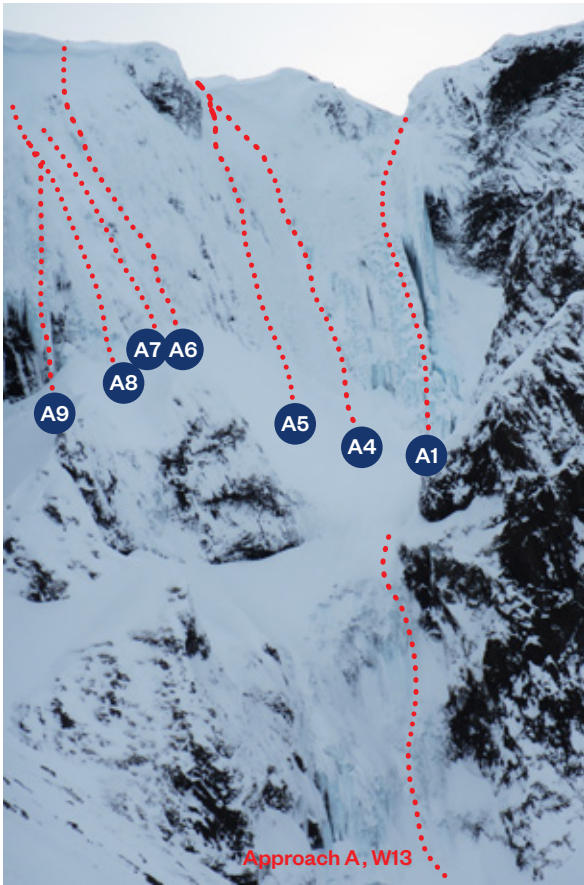
A1) **Bara ef Mamma vissi** 80M
31/01/08: Ívar F., Anthony Bonello, Haukur Elvar Hafsteinsson
This is the main and beautiful, main waterfall at the end of the crag. The original first ascent was done in less optimal condition on WI5+ spray ice following the left side.

A2) **Móri** WI4, 80M
1999: Ívar F. Finnbogason, Sigursteinn Baldursson
This is a line that was logged but we don't know it's exact location.

A3) **Mús** WI4, 80M
Ívar F., Sigursteinn Baldursson and Guðmundur Jóhannsson
A ghost line that might be the same as A4.

A4) **Glaciologist on ice** WI4, 60M
01/14: Matteo Meucci, Bergur Einarson

A5) **Take a walk on the other side of the stars** WI4, 70M
24/02/16: Matteo Meucci, Elias Holzknecht
While the two world class climbers were bolting A13 we did this line.

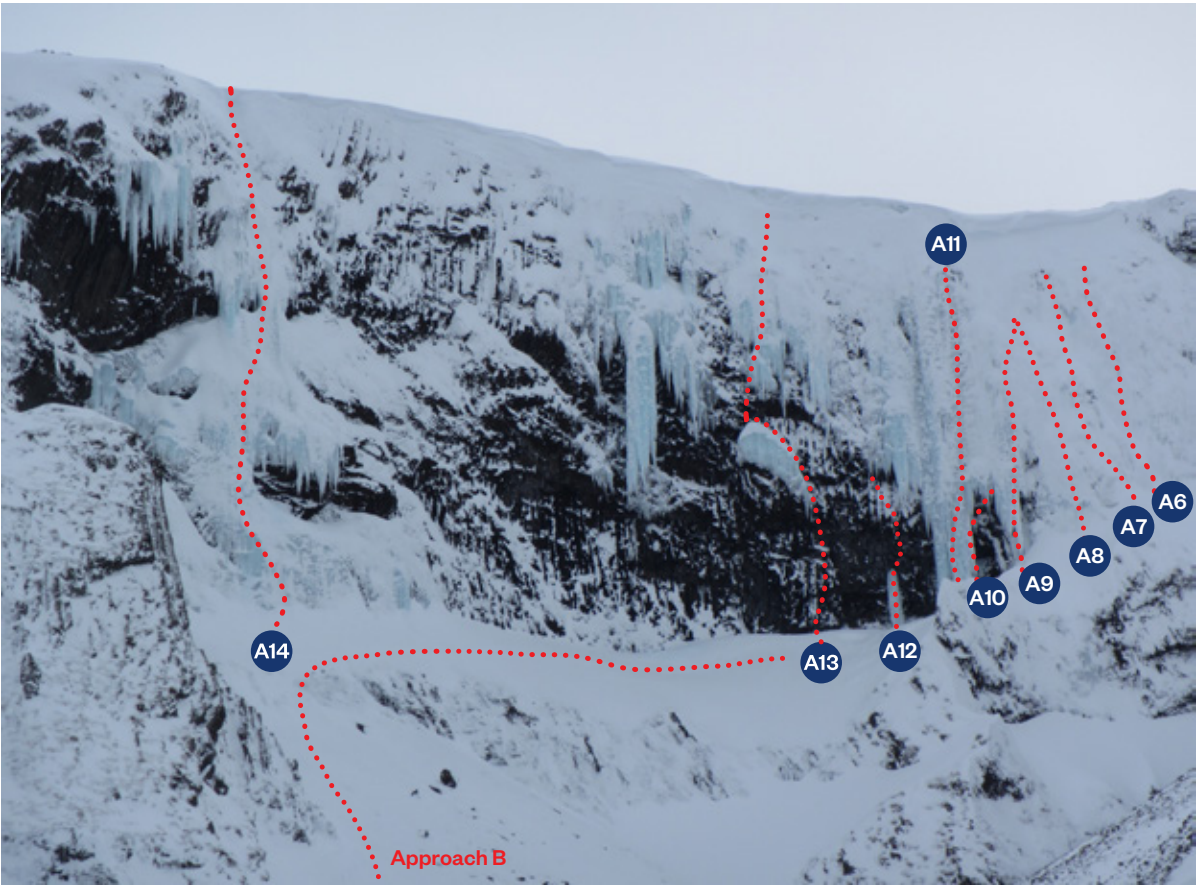


A6) **Aussie Pickings** WI4, 70M
31/01/08: Ívar F., Anthony Bonello, Haukur Elvar Hafsteinsson
In early season conditions this line is in a funnel between the basalt columns.

A7) **Aussie Pickings variation** WI4, 70M
22/03/2017: Matteo Meucci, Bjartur Týr Ólafsson
Slightly to the left of A6.

A8) **Mávahlátur** WI4, 60M
05/02/16: Jónas G. Sigurðsson, Þorsteinn Cameron
Start from the left side of the little ridge. Parallel to A7.

A9) **Engin upphitun** WI5, 60M
22/03/2017: Matteo Meucci, Bjartur Týr Ólafsson
Rare columns that form occasionally. Was the 50th route during Matteo's climbing project in 2017, so we couldn't warm up but went straight for the new and hard line.



A10) **Alea iacta est** M8?, 30M
28/10/17 (bolted by Matteo Meucci, Bjartur Týr Ólafsson)
Start behind A11 and follow the crack system which ascends to the right. After that is a slab which in late season gets some ice. Bolted ground up.

A11) **Niflheimar** WI5+, 60M
Matteo Meucci, Þorsteinn Cameron
Super icicles that occasionally reach the ground.

A12) **Múspellsheimar** 30M
01/16: (bolted by Matteo Meucci, Þorsteinn Cameron, Jónas G.)
Among the routesetters first experiments bolting mixed routes. We set the anchor halfway, rappelling from the top and then started bolting on top rope. We left a fixed rope and then finished a few months later, finding the rope covered by ice. The first pitch goes through five small roofs with steinpulls and underhooks possible, the crux though is to pass a blank slab from the last bolt and to the anchor. The second pitch starts out by doing a few moves on rock and then through an ice roof and out to sustained ice climb in the WI 5+/6 range.

A13) **Hard five** M8-WI6+, 70M
24/02/16: Albert Leichtfried, Benedikt Purner (bolted)
An astonishing line that reaches a ledge halfway which resembles a jellyfish, followed by a second overhanging icy part. Bolted and climbed in a day. The name of the route reflects the Icelandic grading tradition which is to grade every hard ice climb as WI5, continuing out to absurdity.

A14) **Ég heiti ekki Kiddi** WI5, 100M
31/01/08 Ívar F., Anthony Bonello, Haukur Elvar Hafsteinsson
First line of a great day of this team that left 3 masterpieces for next generations.

B) Bolaklettur

Huge wall with some futuristic scottish style lines waiting to be climbed. Some rock climbing may be possible as well.



B1) **Gjöfin sem heldur áfram að gefa** WI4+/M5 130M
12/01/05: Ívar F. Finnbogason, Arnar Emilsson
First gem from Ívar F. Finnbogason in the crag. After running into a king of gully-dihedral, the last pitch is on a thin slab of ice that requires pro and sangfroid.

C1) **Ekki er allt sem sýnist** WI5, 80M
01/88: Guðmundur Helgi Christensen, Páll Sveinsson
Probably one of the first routes of the crag. From afar it looks like an extreme climb, maybe a WI6, but getting closer and climbing it feels slightly easier. The first ascenders rated it WI4, although we suspect a WI5 might be more appropriate.

C2) **Þjóðmál** WI3, 150M
17/02/18: Bjartur Týr Ólafsson, Matteo Meucci
In the same gully as the previous one (C1), most likely has already been climbed but no one has ever logged or claimed the FA.

C3) **Unknown** WI4
Guðmundur Helgi C, Páll Sveinsson
Climbed several times but but lacks information. After the first wall, turn into an alpine style gully.

C4) **Skallagrímur** WI3+
27/01/89: Björn Baldursson, Stefán S. Smáráson
We don't know the exact location of this line. From the FA: The climb starts on a 30m ice shell, and from there follows up a moss covered cliff.

C5) **Dolli dropi** WI3 35M
Guðmundur Eyjólfsson, Haraldur Ólafsson, Þorsteinn Ívarsson, Stefán S. Smáráson og Ingimundur Stefánsson
We don't know the exact location of this line.

C) Brekkufjall

Spread lines across a long cliff.

