
BIG's News Letter 2008_02 (English Version)

Introduction:

Did you know that there is a website that lists 1,000 places that you must see before you die?. Sounds familiar, huh? First website that comes to my mind is: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/> . Of course we have 1,000 places where we want to go before we die. The link from one website, yes there really is another one also (<http://www.1000beforeyoudie.com/>), to another (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/>) was made by our Spanish member Claudio MONTEFUSCO. He's got the BIG heart at the right place one can say. When cycling the Flemish BIGs during the last Rendezvous his fellow country BIG members indicated that in Barcelona there are streets that are more steep and longer. Why are that not BIGs? He replied: "Because the Tour of Flanders" does not pass over them." Here is a new newsletter to fill all our BIG hearts with news about our precious BIG challenge.

Chapters of this newsletter

1. TOP 5 BIG news.
2. The BIG is online!
3. About a BIG.
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1. TOP5 BIG news.

TOP 1: More than 1,000 BIG Members

On the 15th of April we were able to welcome our 1,000th BIG member. Our 500th member was the well known Belgium professional Kurt van de Wouwer so as our 1,000th member we also tried to get a famous professional cyclist. And we were please that Michael Boogerd replied positively to our request. So he is our 1,000th member as you may have seen. Michael has a lot of other activities but I think that when his live is less busy that in due time he will find that the BIG offers him a new cycling challenge.



TOP 2 BIG increase!

The challenge B.I.G is happy to see that its amount of members is increasing so fast:

- 634 at the 1st of January
- 826 at the end of January 198
- 894 at the end of February 68
- 974 at the end of March 80
- 1028 at the end of April 54
- 1100 at the end of May 72 +

472 new members in 5 months!

So nearly 500 additional members in 5 months. A tremendous growth in size. This is mainly due to our new website but many members among the old ones haven't yet logged in this new website. They still think that they have to send their annual claims at the end of the year like before. But no, now you can claim your successes all year round and you have many new information and pictures, more dynamic and more useful, everyday.

Note: If you don't log in as a member by using a username and a password, you'll stay a visitor with only the ability to look at a few pages and not being able to send your claims and pictures. If you log in, you can do all those things all the time.

If you pay 10€ a year, you become a contributing member and you'll have the ability to look at the pages with the charts, the classifications of the current year, by country, by age, the topographic maps, your own photo and soon your personal card. If you invest yourself in the BIG's committee, you'll be a VIP and will have the ability to edit news in the home page. Don't hesitate to install you in the best place according to your wish, this challenge is yours.

TOP 3: BIG changes?

As you know, we just have had a major re-organization of our dear list of 1,000 ascents. Hence we will refrain from major changes from now on and have renamed our list of 1,000 BIGs to "Superlist". It's the mother of all lists with famous ascents. Does this mean we have a fixed list now? No, that is not the case either. We still will have changes due to the points as have been reported in the news part (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/news.htm>).

- Changes due to problems with the ascents such as the ones for BIG 732: Monte Camoscio. Increasing danger and road obstruction due to the work in the stone enterprise that causes falling stones. And the fact that there are more and more "forbidden" road-signs. The Italian GIOs have been asked to suggest a successor.
- Changes like for BIG 244: Puy-de-Dôme. Plans exist to replace the current road by a railway so the ascent will not be possible anymore by bike. It is planned to be ready though in 2012 so the change will not take place in the coming years. Do note that as such, the Puy-de-Dôme can only be cycled from 7AM to 9AM every Wednesday and Sunday! But for the time being, Puy-de-Dôme will stay in our list of course.
- Changes due to new climbs that occur in professional races, the mediatic criterium. TV broadcasting of professional races showed recently two impressive climbs. Tirreno-Adriatico had a terrible arrival in Montelupone up a 1800m long 20% climb. The Tour of Romandy had a scenic cobbled climb in Fribourg, called Côte de la Lorette, 1km long with 16% sections. Those two climbs aren't in our Superlist but could come in if one southern Italian or Jurassic Swiss BIG would have to be deleted one day or another. Currently we do not anticipate that these changes will take place.

Note: The amount of changes in the Superlist will be very small and have to adhere to strict rules! This year for instance the only change foreseen at the moment is that of BIG 732: Monte Camoscio.

TOP 4: VIP news.

Some so called VIP members, members who do or have done a lot for the challenge, from different countries have been granted the possibility to add news on the BIG webpages. We hope that this change will bring you more diverse news as it comes from different angles. I have already posted my first news for you, did you see it? And are you curious who these people are? Look at: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/news.htm>.

TOP 5: BIG Meetings, meetings, meetings and meetings

I hope you don't get fed up by our articles on the BIG meetings. Here are a few notes with regards to the BIG meetings:

- First of all a quick look back at the BIG meeting in Flanders that has occurred. You can find feedback of members who joined, the speech of our President and loads of pictures at: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/flanders/flanders2008.htm>.
- Two spontaneous initiatives have been brought up by Etienne MAYEUR and Gabór KREICSI for **2008**. These are not official BIG meetings and hence they are referred to as "**Crossroads**" as these are two initiatives where the roads of BIG members may cross and where they can meet. There is no official program and Etienne MAYEUR and Gabór KREICSI do not arrange accommodation though they offer suggestions. The rest you have to arrange yourself.

The crossroad of Etienne MAYUER is situated in Sion (Switzerland) and that of Gabór KREICSI in the Matras (Slovakia/Hungary). Are you interested? Then you can see who is also interested and who is coming and what BIGs can be cycled at:

<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/sion/sion.htm>.

- The **2009 BIG meeting** will be held in the Allgau mountains around the border between Germany and Austria for surely 4 days. What do you prefer ? In the end of the month of May (ascension days) or in the beginning of the month of July (beginning of the summer holidays)? Please go to the forum and give your opinion and tell us if you have the intention to come and meet us in this occasion:
<http://big-forum.forumsmotion.com/plans-2008-f22/allgau-tyrol-2009-t148.htm>
- And last but not least we are already asking for your feedback for the **BIG meeting in 2010**. Yes, 2010! This BIG meeting will take place in England, in the lake and Peak district to be precise. You can read about the suggestion by Kevin SPEED on:
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/lakedistrict/lakedistrict2010.htm>

If you want to give feedback or suggestions then you can mail Kevin SPEED at:
kevinandruth@speed3146.fsnet.co.uk

2. The BIG is online.

We have had a look at the website of the runner up: Eric Lucas. So now it is time to look at the website of our current number 1: Etienne MAYEUR (<http://users.skynet.be/bicycledream/>)

There is an overview from 1908 up until 2008 of all his travels when you follow the link "[Qui suis-je ?](#)" on his webpage.

Etienne wrote in the Forum in a poll that for him, without doubt that the whole B.I.G challenge is fantastic. It allowed him to travel to the 4 corners of the Europe and the Earth, it opened the eyes on marvelous landscapes and other cultures than ours. As you can read, Etienne also has a BIG heart at the right place. When you follow the link "Voyages" on his webpage you can travel with him to the United States ("[Etats-Unis](#)"), [Himalaya](#), South Africa ("[Afrique du Sud](#)"), South-Amerika ("[Amérique du Sud](#)") and the North Cape ("[Cap du Nord](#)").



Etienne at Chacaltaya (5350 m) in Bolivia 1998

Etienne's trips give suggestions for the 50 ascents in Zone 12 (The remainder of the world). Let me remind you that these 50 ascents will never be determined by selection by the Committee of the BIG but will be to the free choice of the member. Note that the following restrictions apply:

- a) Among those 50 climbs, one must find 10 climbs in Asia, 10 in Africa, 10 in Oceania, 10 in North-America and finally 10 in South-America.
- b) They will have an average height always surpassing the 500m of the height difference (be 25.000m altogether series).
- c) The member declaring a number of 951 to 1000 (series 12) has therefore imperatively to accompany his declaration of the name of the realized ascension and of the height difference.

Back to Etienne, he has covered the 50 ascents in Zone 12 and he's together with Eric LUCAS the only member with a BAG status. What, you have never heard of the BAG status? BAG indicates amongst others that Etienne is an **A**dventurous cycloclimber. Well, looking at where his travels lead him we can not disagree on that! BAG also implies Etienne has cycled BIGs in 20 different countries and on 3 or more continents outside Europe (South-America, North America, Africa and Asia in Etienne's case) and that he has reached the level BIG 10. The BIG 10 level is reached when one has cycled 500 or more BIGs out of our Superlist.

Quite impressive don't you think? Well, look at the BIGs he cycled. The list goes on and on and on upto 724 BIGs until now. And if you think that is all? Oh no, Etienne has also cycled the highest rideable pass the Kardun La in Northern India. This pass is 5,606 meters high! It takes your breath literally away when you cycle that high. It's a 40km long ascent with some 2000 altimeters that need to be taken. That takes quite an effort at this height. For the Dutch one can read about this trip in their own language but other members can also look at pictures of this pass at: <http://home.zonnet.nl/harms15/index.html>. And if you are not Dutch then you can click on the link that is called [Himalaya](#).

And now Etienne is coördinating a crossroad as you can read in the news section in Switzerland. So he's very involved in the challenge also.

Note: The BIG challenge has a few rules as you have read in this chapter. You can find them at: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/rules.htm>. Or look at newsletters 02 up to 05 of 2005 and 01 upto 04 of 2006. The links in the articles "BIG rules!" are outdated but these newsletters contain a more detailed explanation of some rules and also examples.

3. About a BIG.

This time, we are going to approach a school BIG. Who (in France at least) did not learn by heart in his young time : " Loire river has its source in Mont Gerbier de Jonc " .



The longest river of France (1 012 km) is born in Ardèche in the form of three sources on the base of this volcanic relief 1551 metres high. There is thus "the real source", "the authentic source" and "the geographical source"! Mont Gerbier is situated on watershed divide: the water which passes by on its south hillside goes to the Atlantic Ocean and that of its north hillside to the Mediterranean Sea. 500,000 visitors a year go on this classified site.



The origin of Gerbier-de-Jonc comes from words "Gar" meaning rock and "Jugum" for mountain. As for Loire, it is the Celtic word "Liga" (shady water) which gave its name. Finally, at the beginning of June the ceremonial of the " Circle of three sources" is organized which gathers the representatives of the villages where are the big rivers of Europe spring. This completes your school instruction on this subject. But there is naturally another motive which attracts us here: Mont Gerbier de Jonc is a BIG (261).



If you choose the western hillside from Monastier-sur-Gazeille you can kill two birds with one stone. From 920 metres in height at the bottom you will pass quietly in 18 kilometres to 1500 metres through la Croix des Boutières (BIG 260) which offers you an attractive panorama on the Alps. After a small descent, you will join Mont Gerbier de Jonc whose road peaks at 1435 metres with the Clède pass road(1385 metres). The pass hunters will thus record this one as well as Croix des Boutières which is a pass but not Gerbier de Jonc which is a Mountain.

On this hillside, you will thus have to make for weak average percentages and 9% maximum. Nothing terrible thus. You will not have terrified our account in Europoints but you will be one of the 100 first biggers to have climbed these 2 mountains in the Ardèche region.

François CANDAU



6. Conclusion:

Soon the BIG members who had ordered the new BIG clothes will be able to wear them and advertise our BIG challenge to even more cyclists. It is still possible to order BIG clothes of course and now we even offer BIG clothes for the winter! Interested? Look at: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/clothes/en.htm>

As you have seen, the newsletter as such did not change really but the frequency it will be send to you did. This as the newsletter is being written completely by volunteers. And the six time a years takes a toll on the volunteers and their families. So a little less often it will arrive at your doorstep in March, June, September and December But we hope though that it was worth waiting for and that it is still as interesting as always. Until September!

Best regards,
The newsletters team

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