

BIG's News Letter - 2010.02

English Version

Edito: Behind the Website

On the 24th of April I was cycling with 6 Italian members and 5 Dutch members in our beautiful country along the great rivers to cycle the 3 "Northern" BIGs (101, 102 & 103). During our break on top of the Posbank (BIG 101), Ingmar de Weijer (Member 1162) said to me: It's amazing that there is so much more behind the BIG website. I immediately realised the importance of this remark and had the idea to share it with you. As long as you don't join events like the BIG day, BIG meetings/crossroads you will only see the webpage of the BIG. It's when you join one of the events you will realise that the BIG offers so much more. It's worth the effort to join our events I can ensure you. So we hope to see you in the future when you join one of our events.

1. TOP5 BIG news

TOP 1: BIG Meetings

Well, after this edito it's easy to continue with a topic on the BIG meetings/Crossroads where members gather.

- The 2010 BIG meeting in the Lake and Peak District in the United Kingdom:



Posing in front of Lake Windermere where the Youth Hostel in Ambleside was located.
Beautiful don't you agree?

We have just had our UK meeting which was a typical BIG meeting. I have said it many times: "BIG meetings are more or less organised and it's less than more". What do I mean with that? Well, the program is there but members will deviate from the program to claim additional BIGs or skip BIGs they have already claimed. Members will travel by car to the town where the program indicates the tour will start and then some will continue the tour on bike while others will drive to the next BIG and hunt down the BIGs by car. Along the way members will meet and yell or wave to one another. All in good atmosphere and in the evening we visit the BIGs we cycled that day by discussing the beauty, gradients or how much we suffered.

You can read up on the UK meeting by reading through the feedback of members who joined on: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/lakedistrict/texts.htm>



There are, as usual, plenty of pictures too that were made during the meeting. You can see many pictures of the different BIGs we cycled or of the quiz night. Go on, have a look and get inspired to cycle these BIGs that are beautiful for the eyes but hard for the legs. To the left you can see for instance the descent from Kirkstone Pass (BIG 83), towards Ambleside which is called "**The struggle**"!

For more pictures go to: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/lakedistrict/photos.htm>

To the right you see the ascent of Mam Tor (BIG 90) from Castleton



- Future BIG meetings (2011 and beyond) and Crossroads

During the UK meeting we have discussed where the 2011 meeting will be and here is the result of our discussion as well as a list for planned crossroads and meetings that are planned even further ahead:

- **Official**
 - ◆ 1->5/6/2011 BIG meeting in Corsica (10 BIGs), manager : Bernard Giraudeau.
 - ◆ 29/10->03/11/2011 BIG Crossroad "Provence & Liguria", manager: Pierre Chatel
- **Unofficial (to be confirmed):**
 - ◆ 1->5/7/2012: BIG meeting in the Tatras (Czech, Poland, Slovakia), managers 3 from CZ, PL, SK.
 - ◆ 2012 BIG Crossroad UIC/BIG manager: Giordano Castagnoli
 - ◆ 3->10/8/2013 BIG meeting in Ardennes (Belgium) manager: Daniel Gobert
 - ◆ ??/5/2014 BIG meeting in Cataluña (Spain), manager: Claudio Montefusco.

TOP 2: Iron BIG the continuing story.

Since the last newsletter we had many new Iron BIGgers! Not all of them succeeded but also those who have tried and did not succeed deserve our respect!

5.	02/04/2010	RECKHAUS Jürgen (2064)	D	Waseberg (151)
7.	09/04/2010	GUIDE André (2855)	B	Col de la Croix-Fry (277)
8.	17/04/2010	CLAUDE Jean (1698)	B	Mont Saint-Aubert (118)
9.	17/04/2010	MENARD Michel (78)	F	Butte de Montenoison (226)
10.	02/05/2010	GOBERT Daniel (2)	B	Mur de Huy (125)
11.	08/05/2010	NIJSTEN Stan (903)	NL	Oude Huls (107)
12.	08/05/2010	DEKKERS Helmuth (246)	NL	Oude Huls (107)
13.	11/05/2010	SPINA Luigi (377)	I	Colle Braida (681)
14.	18/05/2010	DERUYCK Wouter (584)	B	Paterberg (116)
15.	23/05/2010	JANSEN Axel (162)	B	Côte de Wanne (132)
16.	23/05/2010	PIQUE Jean-Marie (2760)	B	Côte de Wanne (132)
17.	27/05/2010	STANEKE Rens (896)	NL	Posbank (101)
18.	30/05/2010	NICODIN Gheorghe (2484)	H	Pasul Bran (863)
19.	05/06/2010	ALBERINI Enrico (506)	I	Telegrafo (747)

The Ironbig25 stays a true challenge, a place for some heroes. The french text written by Philippe Demars about the attempt of a Belgian group on the slopes of the Col du Rideux is a proof of it. They abandoned the attempt between the 15th and the 20th attempt. To become a godfather of a BIG requests some physical and mental training and also some luck, a thing that this cycling group didn't have. They'll come back! And they will succeed, we are sure. The full French text can be read in tgh Forum: <http://big-forum.forumsmotion.com/ironbig25-your-feedbacks-f47/birong-big-le-col-du-rideux-histoire-dun-echec-b-t380.htm>.

Besides the above Iron BIGs we had a special Iron BIG alike attempt from 2 of our members CANDAU François (F) and FROGNEUX Bernard (B) honoured the BIG's birthday in their own special way. Using the annual BIG meeting and some extra days, they succeeded in climbing 25 BIGs in the UK inside one week. Here is an "IronBritishBIG" very sympathetic. Congratulations for this alternative Iron BIG event.

TOP 3: Sad and Good news

Let's start with the Sad news so we have some good news after that. We regret to inform you with sadness in our hearts about the death of 3 of our members:

- Germain Geenens (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/member/37.htm>)
A Belgian pioneer of the challenge BIG, our nr 37 with 230 BIGs was just 62 years old. He was a pioneer, he was also the official Belgian manager of the Cent Cols club. He was a fantastic cyclist and cycloclimber, with more the appearance of Petit-Breton than Mario Cippolini, a very strong "randonneur" and a very kind man with the sense of the responsibility.
- Piero Rota (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/member/320.htm>)
Our large friend Piero Rota was a man passionate about cycloclimbing and a formidable friend. He was the UIC webmaster (<http://www.cicloscalatori.it>), part of the newsletter team as Italian translator for 4 years and part of the BIG Committee for Italy for many years. Thanks Piero for all your support and friendship.
- Bernard Grevink (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/member/1753.htm>)
Bernard, 57 years old, was a BIG member since 2009, but was for decades a cyclist who liked to bike in the mountains. Bernard joined the BIG day on March 21st in Velp during the BIG day and cycled with the group to Posbank (101) and Italiaanseweg (102) to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the BIG.

We will miss them all but let's remember them during our climbs!

As stated above, we also have some good news. Our oldest and still active members, good friends too, have turned **80!** We congratulate both DEJACE Jules (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/member/172.htm>) and FRANCK Jacques (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/member/158.htm>) with their 80th birthday!

TOP 4: ALL Dutch BIGs

On Saturday the 24th of April & Sunday the 25th of April 2010, 6 Italians, 1 Belgian and 7 Dutchmen spread over the 2 days cycled all Dutch BIGs. The organisation by Gerard van Dongen, Ingmar de Weijer and Marin Kool was as good as the weather was that weekend. I.e. Perfect!

The 6 Italians (Luigi Candelli, Alberto Simoni, Bortolo Casolari, Carmine Moccia, Gabriele Brunetti and Giuseppe Masina) were the first Italians to cycle the Italiaanseweg (Italian Road, BIG 102) in The Netherlands. And Gerard had organised 2 photographers for instance to depict this special moment. They enjoyed the typical Dutch landscape between the big rivers. And the next day they took on the 7 BIGs in Limburg. This time accompanied by Jean-Luc Matte from Belgium.

Here you can find the pictures of the first day (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/13522460@N03/sets/72157623923292758/>) and of the second day (<http://picasaweb.google.com/gastheerg/BIGHollandseBIGs?feat=directlink#>) of this beautiful weekend:

TOP 5: Greece

Eric Lucas and Etienne Mayeur, who are leading the general classification, were in Greece to claim some new BIGs. Eric, in a "solo" trip, climbed 38 new BIGs in the Balkans and Greece, including some virgin ones (not cycled yet by any BIG members), confirming that he stays a pioneer. He notably climbed the Macedonian and Albanian BIGs. And Etienne, in a "solo & familial" trip, climbed 12 Greek BIGs, included some very long ones. Finally, Eric now has 881 BIGs and Etienne has 822 BIGs. Amazing figures!

The BIG is online.

No, it is not an act of provocation but the person that I want to present you, I met him during the BIG Day ... in France!

I was a bit too early before noon at the top Granier Pass, I thus decided to ride down in the direction of the only other participant for this "gathering": Guillaume De Carvalho. It is thus 3 kilometres before the summit that I saw, appearing out of the fog, a guy in white shirt with short (!) sleeves on a heavy MTB. We hardly began our discussions that I understood that these 3 kilometres will be intense. We did not last long at the top of this cold and wet Granier and we rapidly met around a table at Guillaume, Aurélie and Lucile (old of some weeks) home. And there I discovered the guy I came to meet!



My new friend explains me that he is an occasional cyclist but that he tried to ride Tour de France 2008 before the real race. In which conditions? In full autonomy: hike bike loaded with all the equipment (garment, cooking, bivouac) for a total weight of 30 kg and connections with regional trains. Objective: start a day before the race and arrive not later than one week after the official arrival in Paris. Preparation: 2873 kilometres in June and 15 rides in winter. And that is all! Like me (and many others) I suppose you think he is a madman! But indeed he succeeded with a small difference: he took no delay on the race and arrived the day before the Tour on Champs Elysées! Someone interested? In that case, here is the assessment of his 3 952 km tour with 48 928 meters difference of altitude, his experience and his advices: <http://pleinsud.top-depart.com/france/alpes/recits/le-bilan--33548.html>



Guillaume is fond of open air sports: parachuting, climbing, diving and since recently BASE jump. Last year, he thus decided to join his favourite spots in the Norwegian fjords in bike from Chambéry (with 1 Austrian BIG and 2 Norwegian BIGs on the way).

When I looked at my watch it was 3 pm. With 700 km to drive back in Normandy through Paris, it was high time that I leave! Do I need to tell you that I returned really delighted with this BIG Day meeting?

On Guillaume's website, <http://pleinsud.top-depart.com/>, discover his enthusiast personality, pictures of his adventures, his convictions, the addresses of his videos. Everything was in French (and in good French) but for you, Guillaume translated the main part in Shakespeare's language!

About a BIG

We, of course, have chosen English BIGs from our last meeting for this new newsletter.

Kevin Speed waited for us in Lake District (north of England) with an ambitious program and a perfect organization.

We were filled with wonder by our first accommodation: the Youth Hotel was in fact nothing but a pure British style lakeside House in front of Windermere Lake. Our happiness was complete when we discovered that the usual attendants to our meetings and the top ranking «BIGgers» were there, even our Spanish and Italian friends despite this Icelandic volcano (it had it's revenge though on their way back!).

At 9 pm we only missed our president who was increasing his geographic knowledge of main British cities and the surroundings of Ambleside!

The first morning of the meeting was composed of 3 BIGs. Those first 3 climbs are surely among the most emblematic that we rode and that is why I have decided to describe them for you.



We were around 25, with our dear President, when we left the hotel for Ambleside which is precisely the foot of Kirkstone Pass. 5,2 kilometres with an average of 7,6%, that sounded like a good starter. We had just a warning with this 17,85% maximum. This warning was completed with the name of the side that Kevin chose for us: «The Struggle»!



We thus discovered at once these terrible British slopes along stones wall and sheep. Fortunately this first ascent has a flat/descending part over 500 meters. This stage enabled us to recover before the last steep rise. Under a generous sun, Kirkstone Pass greeted one by one all the attendants of this BIG meeting with one extra not registered: Jean Luc Matte, our climber photographer, never foreseen but always present!



Back to Ambleside we directly rode towards the next two passes. The problem is that even those road links were not flat at all, rather roller coaster type where we discovered our first 30% signboard (many others will follow!). In front of us rose Wrynose Pass and Hard Knott Pass, the last was presented as a bogey in the program edited by Kevin.

The Wrynose Pass is 2,5 kilometres long with an average 11,6% and a 24% maximum. It made a strong impression among us: here no flat section, the steep slope without any rest, a narrow road filled with minibuses carrying tourists that brushed us while climbing. At the top, faces clearly said that it was a relief to be there at the end of this violent effort.



Just time for the descent and we faced Hard Knott Pass: an average 10% wall beginning with a 24% slope. See pictures below where you can see the cyclist in the background mastering this steep start.



As we saw the wall come nearer and some of our friends (Mauro particularly) at the top of the first steepest part, we understood that it would be tough. Indeed this first part was terrible and we were quite happy to reach the top in a rather good condition saved by the short distance of this ascent: 1,8 kilometre.



There 2 groups were splitting: those who thought that it was enough before climbing the other side of Wrynose Pass, crossing back the roller coaster part and preparing the 2 BIGs of the afternoon. And those who thought that the other side of this Hard Knott Pass might be interesting: they were not disappointed, 3 kilometres with an average of 10% with a 29% part! «Masochism» according to Kevin, and we agreed! Here is the way we started our meeting with this so particular kind of BIGs that we will experienced during the main part of the stay.

A word about the rest of the meeting for those who missed it and wished to attend: not even a single drop of rain(!), Kevin's organization was perfect with another very nice hotel in the centre of the lovely village called Castleton in the Peak District, scenic and difficult BIGs such as the green defile of Mam Tor (see picture below)



A first evening with official speech and an emotional gift for our President. The usual quiz evening in a joyful atmosphere. Another debate evening, a climate of serenity, respect and rich exchanges between Belgians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, Dutchmen (and women) , Italians and Spaniards.

About Spaniards, we cannot speak about this meeting without mention the new photographer who came along with Claudio Montefusco. His Christian (!) name was Jesus and he completely integrated into our group with his facetious temperament. You can easily imagine the jokes that we had with the numerous apparitions and disappearings of Jesus that went along with in our ascents (driving and often walking). He was undoubtedly the main star of this meeting for which we owe enormous thanks and a huge gratitude towards our host Kevin.



Jesus



Kevin Speed

François CANDAU (423)

Conclusion:

We hope your summer holiday plans are clear by now and include many BIGs. This is the time to cycle some BIGs abroad after the training that you have done in the past months. Enjoy the steep slopes, the beautiful scenery or to cycle where your heroes have cycled also. It's all in our Superlist of 1000 BIGs. When you return and want to share your experiences with other members via the newsletter then you can send us your "BIG is online" story and we will publish it.

Reminder: It is still possible to add the special backpack with text: "Challenge B.I.G - 25th birthday - 1985-2010" as a collectors item to remember the 25th anniversary of our challenge. The backpack costs € 9,- year. See pictures and more information on: <http://big-shopping.over-blog.com/>



Regards, the newsletters team:

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