

BIG's News Letter – 2011.02

English Version

Edito: Engagement.

This time, our secretary Helmuth Dekkers has devoted his time to prepare a BIG quiz for the official BIG Meeting on Corsica (a quiz that we had not the time to play it!). So he told her baby newsletter to others. This is an opportunity for all members to thank the Leading Committee of the BIG (President, Secretary, Treasurer) and all those who perform a specific task: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/page/committee>. It is them who keep our challenge alive and kicking. They are all thanked for their commitment!

1. TOP 5 BIG news

TOP 1: Together

Members of BIG are pleased to find one another during this quarter:

30 members attended the ABC Trip on the 10th of April in the heart of Limburg under a bright shining sun. Steven Rooks joined the group during the break in Vijlen as you can see in the picture below (Steven Rooks is the one at the far right of the picture).



On the 14th of May, 20 members have tried to climb the slopes of BIG 851: Galyatető 3 times on the BIG Day in Hungary.



Finally, on the 13th of June, 14 Belgian members found themselves in Bouillon to cycle one of the two routes with BIGs, a drink and a meal on the menu! The report and pictures of this beautiful day with the President (see picture below to the left) who formally took up the reins of the Challenge after an unsuccessful experience in football can be found there:
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bigday2011-be.htm>.



TOP 2 Official Visit in Corsica

We were with a dozen brave members who had found a solution to go to the island of Corsica. Some had crossed the Mediterranean with their vehicle and all necessary equipment, others with a simple bicycle! Once these logistical details settled, everyone is launched to attack the Corsican roads as splendid as tormented.

From Bastia to Cap Corse and ending with the demanding Bocca di a Battiglia.

The beautiful creeks of Piana in the sun before climbing the Col de Vergio storm under a deluge.

Of the sequence of very athletic Haut Asco, cervical Prato, to complete the beautiful valley of Restonica and leading to terrible proportions of Bergeries Grotelle.

Finally: the Col de Bavella and Col de Verde with the return of thunderstorms.

You understand the program was ambitious but very friendly atmosphere with tables made up of seven nationalities in the middle of another very specific: the Corsican! Find the reactions and photos:

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



TOP 3: More than 3,500 members

We are to date more than 3,600 members including more than 1,000 Dutch. The 3,500th will be a VIP member of Switzerland, whose name will be revealed soon.

TOP 4: BIG Shout

A new social media for members of the BIG : The bigshout!

With this new feature developed by our webmaster Wouter, you can instantly send information visible on the home page for your friends. You can also respond to information sent by a friend after viewing all the reactions of all your friends about this info. Finally your new successes and those of your friends are announced in a single line of bigshout.



This line is in the bottom of the page. To publish your details type your text and click submit to react to news of your friends: Click react! It's simple!

TOP 5: Iron BIG 2011

The success of the Iron BIG continues unabated, the Netherlands and England inspired the brave. Kevin Speed, one of our leaders in the overall ranking, to work his way up to the Cow and Calf 25 times, 125 km of effort badly rewarded by theft of his bike and its effects on the train home!

The first Polish Godfather has also chosen to shine the British Isles: Krzysztof Bufnał succeeded in three days what was normally required in a month on the Oxenhope Moor before relapse a week later for the 2nd Iron BIG "The Cow and Calf"!

Other references unpublished, on the 1st of May 2011 on the slopes of Vijlenerbos! The largest group of Iron BIG Men 5 Dutch -member smanaged 25 times on one-day to ascent BIG 109! This group consisted of the youngest godfather to date: Daan ter Horst, 18 years old. Other Godfathers are Wim Van Els, Roland Schuyer, Stan Nijsten (2nd Iron BIG) and Helmuth Dekkers (2nd Iron BIG).

In turn, Miel Vanstreels managed to climb 25 times the Gulpenerberg and he became the Godfather of this classic climbs of the Amstel Gold Race.



Finally, just before writing this letter, the first Czech Iron BIG arrived. Mojmir Skala, a Czech member, had just become Godfather of Suchy vrch. This represents 25 ascents in 10 days of June for a total length of 740 km and an altitude of 14,110 meters.

BIG is not online::

It is a BIG member doing nothing like other BIG members do. His name is Patrick Plains. For a long time you see his name already appearing in the overall BIG ranking as the highest ranking French member, long time he climbed the French BIGs and all the mountains of Mont de France, but since quite some time he did not claim new BIGs. But yet he's still cycling.

His nickname by the way is "Roule toujours" (Roll forever). At 40, Patrick decided to devote his life to cycling. And since then he rolls across France and Europe. He runs in complete autonomy at a rate of 40,000 kms per year. He is a legend of French cycling an extraordinary cyclist. Some numbers, he cycled:: 20x Tours de France, 71x diagonal across France and 4,000 passes. And he travelled 1.6 million miles and many other long-term courses throughout Europe. A DVD has been released to explain his philosophy of life on the bike.

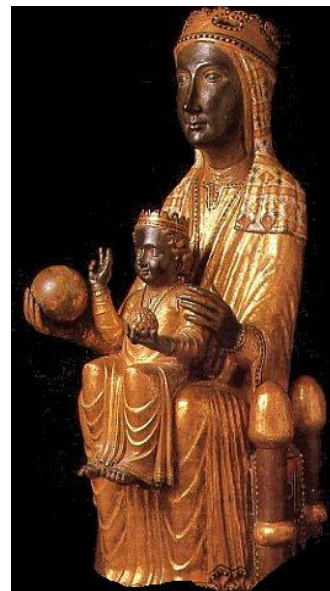
And since he does nothing like the others, if we have not heard from Patrick in recent years within BIG, then it's just because he has no Internet! The BIG is not always online.

About a BIG: Montserrat BIG 435



Montserrat mountain is magic and a symbol for the Catalan people. The origin of its rounded forms has been all sorts of speculation and legends. These wonderful mountains were created as they are today, about 25 million years ago, through a long process of erosion of the rock. It is believed that this area was under water, through which sediments were created. Vertical cracks up the mountain caused detachment of part of it exposing the curious shapes such as fingers.

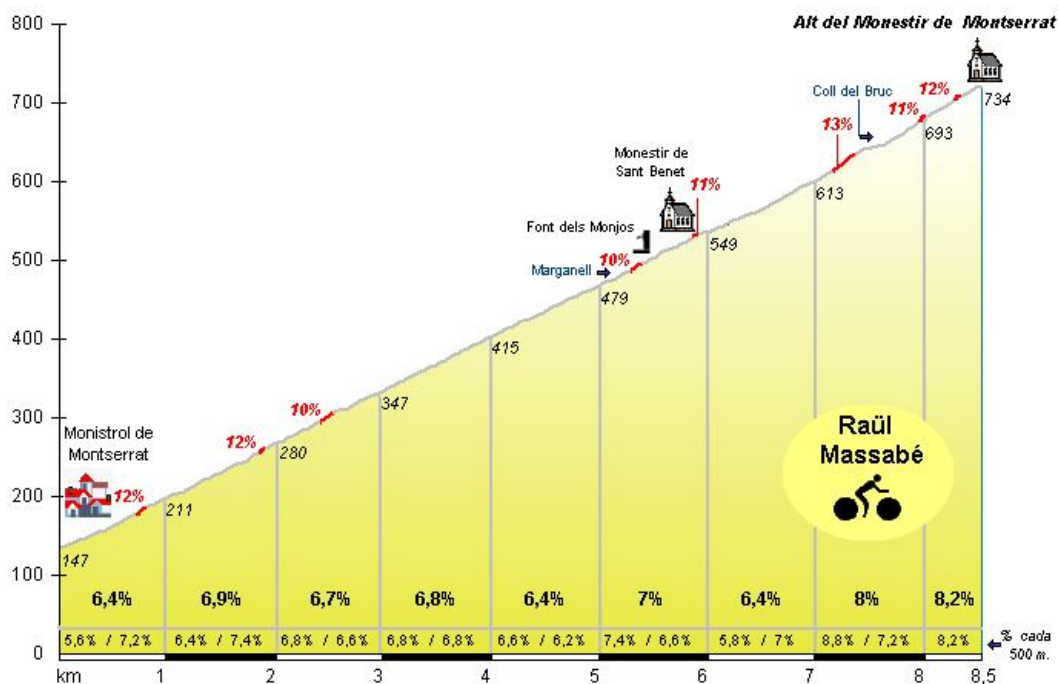
About the year 880 was found in a mountain cave the virgin image that you see in the picture (a black Madonna, the "Moreneta" in Catalan) and the year 945 was founded the monastery of Santa Cecilia. About the year 1200 the first documented reference to the "Escolania (Choir) of Montserrat", another highly respected institution that gives personality to Montserrat, a school of singing children. In addition to intense human and intellectual offers intense musical education. At this point we should mention that the Virolai is a hymn in honour of the Virgin that over time has become a spiritual and patriotic symbol for the Catalan people.



Montserrat today is a massif that rises to over 1,000 meters above the surrounding land, which is an excellent vantage point over Catalonia. Montserrat Monastery is situated at 734 meters, while the highest peak is St. Jeroni, to 1,236 meters, accessible by foot without any technical difficulty.

The whole mountain is a veritable museum, with several shrines, chapels and sculptures. There is also a Monumental Rosary with 15 groups of sculptures which leads to the Santa Cova (Holy Cave), where the image of the Virgin was discovered. Few people know that one of these groups of sculptures was designed by the modernist architectural genius Antonio Gaudi, creator of the Sagrada Familia, a perfect complement to a visit to Montserrat when you approach Barcelona.

Montserrat is a BIG that has it all: tourism is one of the main destinations of Catalonia with more than 2 million visitors each year: the beauty of the mountain is spectacular, from any point of view. On a sporting level is challenging as you will see in the profile of Raul Massabé you will see at the end of the article. Finally, at the media, Montserrat has been a point of passage and even final stage in various stages of the Tour of Catalunya and the extinct Setmana Catalan (Volta a Catalunya, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1995 (final stage Jalabert to win), 1996 and 1997, and the Setmana Catalana, 1983.



But that stages always arrived to the monastery at 734 m. (or more accurately to the preceding car park), which is the altitude that is on our web page. But for the climber there is a very interesting extension to Sant Joan, the last train stop, which rises to 1034 meters, assuming this extension length 2750 meters and 300 meters difference height- 11 % average - with a harder km at 16% between 1400 and 2400 meters with a maximum of 30%. This section is not paved, but grounded, perfectly passable for a road bike.

There are different ways to reach the Monastery of Montserrat. We are interested especially in climbing up the road, of course, are 8.5 km from a medium gradient of 6.9% (see profile), but I must say that the attractions of the mountain causes the road is somewhat dangerous and is full of coaches, especially on holidays. It is particularly interesting that can also be reached by cable car and also a cogwheel railway (opened in 1892, closed in 1957 and reopened in 2003, does not this remind you of the Puy de Dome?). Obviously you can also get up on foot (hiking especially recommended for children) at a distance of not more than 1.50 hours from Monistrol de Montserrat.

Montserrat is a mountain closely linked to sport. In the road bike must be said that each year at the cyclist's National Day is celebrated La Montserratina, rising all cycling catalan clubs to Montserrat in

late October, and in which the Abad (the highest authority of the Monastery) gives a present to all the clubs represented. In Mountain bike it is quite known the race “Sant Joan Despi – Montserrat”, 73 km, and the newly formed “Portals of Montserrat” (<http://www.laportals.cat/>). At foot-level competitions is celebrated the “Cursa Montserrat Nord” (<http://www.montserratclimbing.com/>), with 22 miles of hard running, and the Matagalls Montserrat (<http://www.matagallsmontserrat.cat/mm/>), a hard popular hiking of 83 km to be covered in less than 24 hours.

The shapes of the mountain make it also a popular destination for lovers of sport climbing. Characteristic Needles (or fingers) are a real challenge for climbing lovers.

No wonder that Montserrat was the place chosen by the BIG to celebrate 25 years, raising the bike up



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