

BIG's News Letter – 2011.04

English Version

BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS

For the ones who have not read it on our webpage just yet:

The second BIG member to reach the ultimate goal of 1,000 BIGs is:

Eric Lucas!



Congratulations Eric with this FAN_TAS_TIC result!

Edito: Iron BIG

Some do not understand that there are members who will attempt an Iron BIG. And it's even harder for them to understand that they go for a 2nd or 3rd Iron BIG even. The members who don't understand it may think it is very boring to cycle up a BIG 25 times on 1 day, in 1 month or in 1 year. So what's the catch? This question I raise as the Iron BIG challenge seems to be very popular. I myself have 2 Iron BIGs now and am aiming on a 3rd one next year. The catch is perhaps that it not only challenges your body but also your mind. In much the same way as a tough BIG may do. It's not just the amount of altimeters and kilometers that one has to master but also to take on the same slope time on time again. You have to have the right mindset to make it to number 25. Not to give up after 5 attempts because it is boring or after 15 attempts when the muscles get sore and the back starts to ache. In fact it's not boring as I see it. You get to know the BIG very well. Know exactly when to lower the gear or where one can accelerate again. And boring? You are allowed to take different sides of a BIG to reach 25 ascents. And when cycling them in 1 month or 1 year, no day will be the same. It may rain, snow, or be hot or still quite cold. So try an Iron BIG for a change and get hooked perhaps for a 2nd or 3rd Iron Big even!

1. TOP 5 BIG news

TOP 1:Update website

You might have already noticed it but the pictures are back on the top of our webpage. This is just one example of an update that our webmaster Wouter De Ruyck has made to our webpages. Click on them to increase the size and have a better view. Soon, a simple overfly of the mouse on one photo will show who uploaded the photo and which climb it is showing.

And this is not the only improvement he made:

- Photo's
You can add comments again to the pictures that you have uploaded yourself. Go to the pictures and find a menu to the right where you can click on the pencil to add a comment.
- Steps
In the general overview of the members, the steps appear more clearly. The amount of ironbigs also appear on the right. Soon, the steps from 1 to 20 will appear in a different shape, with links to explain what the acronyms BIG, BAG and BEG exactly mean. Look at the chapter "BIG Rules!" to find the answer already now.
- Classement
There is also an Iron BIG classement now on the classements page: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/users/classement/>
- Menus
 - The common blue menu called "notes" in the individual pages of our climbs will let you soon the ability to write a short text, commentary about the BIG that you just climbed.
 - The green menu called "track" for the contributors will be replaced by a menu "query" where any contributor will be able to find what he wants as a request in our database about BIGs.
 - The left column with menus in the home page is changing. A new chapter called "parallel challenges" already shows the option "Godfather". But soon we will add the option "Local challenges" that will bring you to the Local or National challenges that some countries are preparing since some time now.
 - Finally, in the statistics of the menus given for your personal pages of member, you'll see your evolution year after year since your entrance in our challenge.



TOP 5 GODFATHERS		
	HOCHULI Olivier	3
	JANSEN Axel	3
	GOBERT Daniel	3
	CASTAGNOLI Giordano	3
	NICODIN Gheorghe	2
More		

If you want to read more then go to: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/news/656>

TOP 2: 2011 Summary

This is the 26th year BIG exists. And at the end of the year we want to look back to the **main events of BIG**:

1) Annual BIG Meeting Corsica.

Well, there was the annual BIG meeting on Corsica. Just small group of 12 persons but coming from 7 different countries to cycle 10 BIGs. Some very beautiful, some very demanding. But all in the usual enthusiastic and friendly BIG atmosphere. This year on an Island and next year on the continent again. At last there is the first annual BIG meeting in Eastern Europe! Link: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/corsica/corsica.htm>

2) BIG Crossroad Côte d'Azur/Ligurie

Then we of course also had a well visited Crossroad in the south of France in combination with our sister club "Mont des France". A bit chaotic but like for a BIG meeting one has to take actions to get the most out of it. Read also the chapter: "About a BIG meeting". Link: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/cotdazlig2011/cotdazlig2011.htm>



Crossroad Côte d'Azur/Ligurie 2011

- 3) And then there were of course the regional meetings:
- a) The one in the south of The Netherlands with former professional cyclist Steven Rooks. You can look at the pictures on:
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bigday2011-nl.htm>
 - b) Or the one in Hungary where on Saturday the 14th of May 2011 20 members gathered on the slopes of the Galyatető. For some of them, these climbs were part of their Iron BIG attempt. You can watch pictures and even a video of the event on:
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bigday2011-hu.htm>
 - c) And in Bouillon where after a long time our President cycled along (look to the right) after his unfortunate injury that he had this year. Pictures and other information on
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bigday2011-be.htm>



We can also look back on the **Evolution of our challenge:**

We have in the last years grown tremendously as is also written in the "BIG Rules!" chapter that you can find further on in this newsletter. The committee is always cautious that the increase of the quantity does not result in a decrease of quality.

The amount of new members per year has decreased since the enormous increase in 2008 (~1100 members in 1 year) and we think it will stabilize at approximately 500 new members per year.

The general increase in members has also resulted in an increase of the amount of members that visit the website per day and in an increase of the amount of active members (more than 10 BIG claims/year). Though general increase in members is more significant than the other 2 increases that I mentioned.

Thanks to the efficiency of our treasurer, Christian Le Corre, our accounts are solid now (i.e. stable and with enough financial reserve). The accounts are open and are present every year as part of our Review magazine.

This year we did not see any changes in the Superlist as we promised a more stable Superlist to you. The only main change was that numbers 866-875 can be chosen now by the members but with the same rules that apply to the climbs that can be freely chosen for Zone 12.

TOP 3: Review 2012

First there is of course the appeal of Martin Kool:

Dear fellow BIG members,

Every year BIG offers you the opportunity to publish your cycling adventures in the BIG-review. Also this year you can send us your stories.

Share your cycling adventures with other BIG members. Your experience in a certain area or with a certain BIG(s) is good information for your fellow members.

Look back and share us your experiences on the bike. Or look forward to the next season and tell us about your cycling plans for 2012. Send at least one picture with your stories.

We are also looking for nice pictures for the cover. Send them to us in portrait shape and enough pixels (minimum is 2530x2470 pixels).

Please make sure that we receive your data before 15 January 2012.

Send your article by e-mail only in MS-Word and your pictures in JPEG-format.



The Review 2012 will appear in March 2012 and contains as usual several rankings, experiences and news about BIG-activities.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Martin Kool

e-mail: mm.kool@quicknet.nl

And the 2011 Review will also contain the answers from more than 60 personalities on 6 questions that were asked:

- 1) How would you define yourself as a cyclist?
- 2) What did or does motivate you to climb BIGs?
- 3) What are your 3 best BIG's souvenirs?
- 4) Which were your main difficulties or constraints to increase your BIG's conquests?
- 5) How do you imagine your coming 2012 BIG year?
- 6) How do you imagine the challenge BIG in the year 2020?

As well as an interview of several pages of Etienne MAYEUR and perhaps also Eric LUCAS.

Contributing members (class 2) will receive the review in March. If you want to have an idea how a BIG Review magazine looks like the go to: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/page/reviews>. There you can find previous issues of the BIG review in PDF format. Click on: **pdf – form**

TOP 4: Meetings 2012

The annual **BIG meeting 2012** is held in Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia as you may have read already. There are still 18 places left so you can still subscribe. The prices for this magnificent event will soon be published on the website: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/tatras/tatras.htm>



The plan is to cycle 14 BIGs between the **3rd of July and the 9th of July 2012**. Here is the short version of the program:

- 3rd of July: Arrival in Vrchlabie / Czech Republic
- 4th of July: Cycle BIG 836: Vrbatova Bouda, BIG 827: Przel'ecz Okraj and BIG 837: Spindlerova Bouda.
- 5th of July: Cycle BIG 838: Sùchy Vrch, BIG 839: Cevernohorske Sedlo and BIG 840: Pradíd.
- 6th of July: Cycle BIG 826: Przehyba, BIG 843: Tatliakovo Jazero and BIG 844: Sedlo Certovica.
- 7th of July Cycle BIG 828: Przel'ecz Salmopolska, BIG 829: Przel'ecz Krowiarki and BIG 830: Glodowka.
- 8th of July Cycle BIG 845: Slieszky Dom and BIG 846: Martinske Hole.
- 9th of July Departure from Habovka /Slovakia

Tip: Before you subscribe or leave for this meeting or for the Crossroad that is presented on the next page, read the "About a BIGmeeting" chapter in this newsletter.

The 2012 Crossroad is in Scotland. The webpage is there now:
<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/scotland2012/scotland2012.htm>

Map of Scotland

www.camusnagaul.com

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Amazon Livres - Amazon.de

**Visit the Scottish Highlands for Cottages - For hotels, b&b and cottages go to
Scotland Travel**



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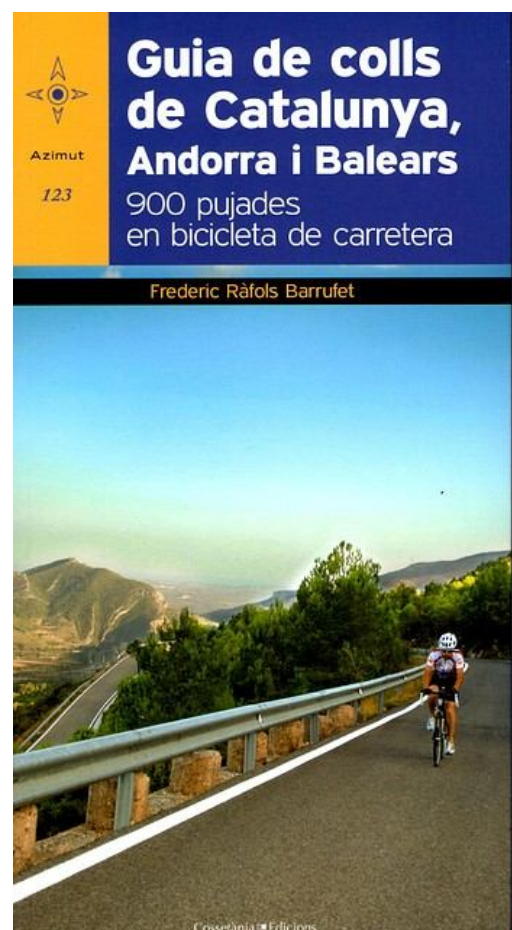
The plan is to cycle 10 BIGs between the 6th of April to the 11th of April 2012. On the next page you can find a short version of the program:

- 6th of April: Arrival in Byrness
- 7th of April: Cycle BIG 75: Carter Bar and BIG 68: Lowther Hill.
- 8th of April: Cycle BIG 74: Glen Quaich, BIG 73: Devils Elbow, BIG 72: The Strone and BIG 71: Tom Dubh,
- 9th of April: Cycle BIG 70: Lecht Road, BIG 69: Cairngorm.
- 10th of April: Cycle BIG 67: Bealach Ratagan and BIG 66 Bealach Na Ba (the Pass of the Cattle).
- 11th of April: Departure from Kyleakin or Inverness.

TOP 5: BIG Book

Our member Frederic Rafols has written a book that covers 900 ascents in Catalunya, Andorra and Balears. It's written in Spanish. Here is a link towards a page that gives more information:

http://www.cossetania.com/mostrar_producto.php?prod=1192



BIG Rules!

Long, long time ago, back in 2004 when we had less than 1/10th of the members we have nowadays (360 opposed to 3959) I wrote already some chapters that explained the little rules that BIG has. As so many members have joined since then, I think it is time again to explain some of our rules.

Let's begin with the classification. A topic that I did not touch in 2004 even! BIG distinguishes 20 classification steps and to make this step one has to have cycled a certain amount of BIGs.

Step	Amount of BIGs required	Step	Amount of BIGs required
CA* / Welcome	10	11	550
01	30	12	600
02	60	13	650
03	90	14	700
04	120	15	750
05	164	16	800
06	240	17	850
07	300	18	900
08	360	19	950
09	430	20	1000
10	500		

* C.A. stands for Certificat d'Accueil = Welcome Certificate (Diploma).

Now if you look closely to the amount of BIGs required then one step has a peculiar number. It's step 05 where you have to have cycled 164 BIGs. So where does this peculiar value stem from?

164 was the amount of BIGs cycled by Raymond Mayeur one of the pioneers of BIG (member number 34) when he suddenly and sadly died on his bike in 1993 (not cycling a BIG by the way). His son you know also, it's Etienne Mayeur the 1st member who reached 1,000 BIGs and also a pioneer of BIG (member number 33). And with pioneer we do not only mean that they registered shortly after BIG was founded but also that they were pioneers as they cycled for example already BIGs in former Yugoslavia. So 164 BIGs was tied to BIG step 05 to honour these pioneers. It's a pretty tough step to reach as you need to travel to several countries

Besides the classification steps we have also 3 titles you can earn. These titles are BIG, BAG and BEG. And what do you have to do to get such a title next to your name in the general classification?

Title	Requirement
BIG	You must have reached BIG step 05, in other words you must have cycled 164 BIGs <u>and</u> these 164 BIGs must have been cycled in at least 10 different countries.
BAG	You must have reached BIG step 10, in other words you must have cycled 500 BIGs <u>and</u> these 500 BIGs must have been cycled in at least 20 different countries <u>and</u> on 4 different continents.
BEG	You must have reached BIG step 20, in other words you must have cycled 1,000 BIGs. According to the rules this automatically implies you have cycled on 6 different continents.

We will display these titles in the member overview as follows:

If you have reached step 05 and cycled these in 10 different countries then this is shown as BIG 05 and else it will just read 05.

If you have reached step 12 and cycled these BIGs in 20 different countries on 4 different continents then we will show this as BAG 12 else it will just read 12.

Step & Title	Amount of BIGs required	Amount of Countries required	Amount of Continents required
CA / Welcome - 05	10 – 120		
05 - 09	164 – 430		
BIG 05 – BIG 09	164 – 430	10	
10 -19	500 – 950		
BIG 10 – BIG 19	500 - 950	10	
BAG 10 – BAG 19	500 - 950	20	4
BEG 20	1,000		6 (implicit)

And last but not least we will show in the member overview with IRON and a number how many Iron BIGs a member has cycled. I am hence not going to explain what IRON3 means ;-)

Now you know about the steps and titles I hope to have motivated you to increase your ranking to make the next step. Or to have given you a good excuse to travel to get a BIG or BAG title even. As has been proven by Etienne Mayeur and Eric Lucas, BEG is reachable. But it'll take a lot of travelling, cycling, time and effort to get this title.!

About a BIG Meeting

This time we do not want to share information of a BIG with you but we want to share information about a BIG meeting instead. So in case you will join a BIG meeting you know what to expect. At the same time I will try to remove some hurdles that might prevent you from joining. I will use my own experiences as a base to address the above mentioned objectives. But if you are not interested in the story and only want to know the facts then you can follow this link:

<http://danielgobert.free.fr/MeetingSummary.html>

The first BIG meeting I noticed on the BIG webpages was the one in May 2005 that was held in Saint-Ursanne in Switzerland. What prevented me from going was that I found it was too far away and that I did not know many BIG members.

Later in 2005 I was in close contact with Jacques Franck who organised a tour / regional BIG meeting in Belgium as he asked me to promote this tour in the newsletter. This I did but I also decided to join this tour regional BIG meeting as it was nearby. And so I drove in the early morning on the 4th of September to Rotheux to cycle together with Daniel and some other BIG members a 75km loop that included BIG 128: Côte de la Redoute. It was good to meet Jacques Franck after all the email contact. And I met Axel Jansen, Juris Martin and Arnaud Decostre. After the cycling we all went to Jacques Franck's home to eat a little. A little? We had bread & cheese, pasta, icecream and add to that wine and grappa to name a few. This is the hospitality that BIG members offer other BIG members I now know. It's heartwarming!



In the garden of Jacques Franck during the 2005 Regional BIG meeting.

So for 2006 I checked if there was a BIG meeting. And indeed there was a regional BIG meeting in Luxembourg. I had a good experience from the regional BIG meeting of 2005 and even the distance was OK. But unfortunately the BIG meeting coincided with the birthday of our daughter and hence I could not join :-)

In December 2006 I received a presentation from our president, Daniel Gobert, about a combined meeting of BIG and UIC in Trento in 2007. It stated that the president would be there and the secretary. Well, I am the secretary but there is again the distance problem. So I checked with Daniel if the presence of the secretary was really required. He replied that my presence was not mandatory but that it would for sure be nice if I could join. This made me think that perhaps I should go despite of the distance. So I checked with my wife and as she was OK with the idea I replied to Daniel that I would come along.

I left for Trento together with Daniel and he was my guide for these days. He arranged the Formula 1 hotel in Frankfurt and he had planned to cycle the trip that was suggested by the organisers of this meeting and that contained 2 BIGs: Passo Mendola and Passo Palade on our way to Trento. And by chance we met our roomy: Luc Willem while cycling this trip. This is also typical for a BIG meeting. While you are cycling up BIGs you will see other BIG members who will overtake you or who are already on the way back. There are of course BIG members who are stronger and cycle faster but don't worry you can cycle at your own speed. And it's nice to hear them encouraging you when you go up! We had a quick chat before we continued the trip. And then I just followed Daniel's directions and so we arrived at the hotel in Trento with 2 beautiful nice Italian BIGs in the pocket.

At the hotel I met numerous BIG and UIC members (some are a member of both clubs). A few I had met, a few I had been emailing with, a few I only knew their name of from our website and others I did not know at all. But the main thing to share with you here is that I again felt welcome, part of the group. And I still have good contacts with the members who I met during this meeting in Trento.



On the top of Monte Bondone (BIG 706) during the 2007 BIG meeting in Trento with UIC.

The hotel was organised by BIG/UIC. And in this case we stayed in the same hotel during the BIG/UIC meeting. But note that this is an exception. Normally you have to move from one hotel to another and hence you need transportation. The latter is not organised by BIG! You either come with your own car or fly to the BIG meeting.

In the case you fly you can either rent a car (you can of course try to organise that you can rent a car together with another BIG member on beforehand) or organise on beforehand that you drive together with another BIG member who is coming with his own car. The names of the BIG members who will join are known and you can use the internal mail to reach them. Or you can use the email address that will be shared with all participants. But you have to organise this yourself. BIG only arranges the accommodation which can also be a guesthouse or a youth hostel by the way and you may need to sleep with others in one room to keep the costs low. In Trento I slept together with 2 other members in the same room and I even shared a double bed with Daniel. No problem for me. But take into account that this can happen! A good tip is to take along ear plugs in case one of your roomies snoors! If you want a private room, for whatever reason, then please clearly indicate this to the organising committee on beforehand.

The BIG/UIC meeting had only 1 fixed event: Cycling up BIG 706: Monte Bondone on Saturday morning the 26th of May. For the rest there were suggestions for UIC members (who have different objectives than BIG members) and for BIG members what to cycle. Normally the BIG meeting will suggest trips to cycle BIGs. And the planning of a BIG meeting is often quite demanding. This is good in one way as you can cycle many BIG but less good also as the amount of cycling and driving that is involved takes its toll I can assure you. Fortunately the BIG meetings are loosey organised and one can adapt the planning so it fits your own needs. let me give you a few examples:

1st example:

In 2008 the BIG meeting was held in Flanders. For the first day the BIG had suggested a 126km long trip that started in Oudenaarde and that would include 6 BIGs. Now 126km with 6 BIGs is a bit too much for my wife and so I suggested we would skip one BIG (Muur van Geraardsbergen) and that we would cycle a 75km long trip instead that would take us along 4 BIGs. With some emails I aligned with the main group that we would start in Oudenaarde and that after we had cycled the BIGs Mont Saint-Aubert and Kluisberg, that we would wait at the top of the Kluisberg for the main group to arrive. From there we would cycle back together with the main group via the 3 other BIGs to Oudenaarde. Finally it was not only my wife and me who cycled this tour but we cycled it with 8 others who also preferred this shorter and less demanding trip. The next day a trip was planned that included 4 BIGs and my wife and me cycled along only the first 2 BIGs with the group and then we cycled to BIG number 4 where we waited for the others to return after we had cycled to the top.



BIG meeting 2008 at the foot of BIG 112: Kemmelberg.

2nd example:

In 2010 the first day of the BIG meeting was again packed with 5 BIGs! And one of them had to be cycled from 2 sides even. Anyway, after we had cycled the first 3, including the one that we had to cycle from 2 sides, the German couple Karl Brenner and Claudia Sommer indicated they would not follow for BIGs 4 and 5 but would have a relaxing afternoon. I found out they had arrived a few days earlier and had already cycled BIGs 4 and 5. I can tell you that after cycling 5 BIGs I was worn out and the plan of Karl and Claudia made even more sense to me.

3rd example:

So for the 2011 meeting on Corsica with again a very demanding planning, my wife and me decided to leave for Corsica earlier so we could already cycle 2 BIGs in advance. And we added some extra time to enjoy Corsica and to cycle a couple of BIGs after the BIG meeting was already ended. This is another drawback of the demanding plannings; there is hardly no time to enjoy a beautiful area such as the Lake District (UK BIG Meeting) or Corsica to name a few. One is too busy driving from here to there and to cycle the BIGs along the way. Our plan worked out great for us. After we had cycled 2 BIGs we joined the BIG members in Bastia. We were together with the group most of the meeting but here and there we had some slack which allowed us to have a short hike on Corsica also and to relax a bit more. And in the evenings we were together with the group. A small group of just 12 persons but from 7 different countries. It's so nice to meet BIG members from all over Europe and to chat with them about the BIGs of course that we cycled that day by discussing the beauty, gradients or how much we suffered. But we also have fun talking about things that range from food to animal noises. Do you know how a cow is called in Italian and how the noise that a cow makes is called in England? And what the typical food is of Valtellina in the north of Italy? The answers are Mucca (Cow in Italian), Moo (Sound the cow makes in England) and Pizzoccheri, Sciatt and Bresaola (Typical food of Valtellina).

It's also possible you have already cycled some of the BIGs that are planned for the BIG meeting. This happened to our president, Daniel, in the UK. Hence he decided on day 2 not to follow the main group but to drive to Scotland instead to be able claim 2 BIGs he had not yet cycled.

So check the roadbook carefully before you go to the BIG meeting. Check if the amount of BIGs on one day is OK for you. Look at the length, average gradient and the timers for this. See if you can exchange BIGs that you have cycled for some that you are still lacking. It's up to you to get the most out of a BIG meeting!

You can check if BIG can prolongue a stay in a hotel for instance that is also booked for the meeting. For us BIG arranged that we stayed extra nights in the hotels in Bastia and Ghisonaccia for instance. Contact the committee for this. The other hotels that were required for our alternative plan we booked ourselves on beforehand via Internet (one option is via www.booking.com but there are others of course).

To conclude, BIG meetings can be seen as a bit chaotic at first due to the flexibility that is allowed. But this is also the strength of a BIG meeting as it allows you to get the most out of it. My good friend Francois Candau stated it correctly: "It is always different but still the same. The pleasure is huge. Do not change this magic formula!"

Helmuth DEKKERS

Conclusion:

It's the end of the newsletter and the end of the year. The BIG newsletter team wishes you a wonderful und healthy 2012!

Regards, the newsletters team:

Enrico ALBERINI

François CANDAU

Gerd DAMEN

Helmuth DEKKERS

Daniel GOBERT

Anja VON HEYDEBRECK

Claudio MONTEFUSCO

Luc OTEMAN