

# BIG's News Letter - 2012.02

## English Version

### Edito: Fundametalists.

You have heard the term fundamentalist before, I'm sure. But do you know we also have fundamentalists in our challenge? BIG fundamentalist members who will not claim a BIG when the ascent was not started from the foot, when the top has not been reached (due to snow, bad road, etc.) or when they had to step down during the ascent (sanitary break, taking a picture, ect). The good news is that these fundamentalists are allowed to apply these tough rules on themselves but that they can't force other members to follow their rules. BIG has formal rules as you know (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/page/rules>) and we'll highlight yet again a BIG rule in this newsletter for you.

### 1. TOP 5 BIG news

#### TOP 1: In memorial: Jacques FRANCK (†)

My first contact with Jacques FRANCK (BIG member158) was in 2005 when I wanted to inform BIG members about the "Redoutable". A 76km tour in the Ardennes region which passes over Côte de la Redoute (BIG 128) amongst others to raise money for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). Jacques' was a doctor himself. Mails went back and forth but on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September we finally met in Taverne des Moges in Rotheux as I had decided to cycle the Redoutable after the inspiring mails of Jacques. So I met this friendly man with passion for cycling who was busy with the organization of the Redoutable. Jacques did not cycle but after he had finished his work we went to his home in Neupré where we had an overwhelming lunch in the garden (see picture below, bottom left). The hospitality of Jacques and his family were fantastic!



Besides a passion for cycling, Jacques showed us he also had a passion for food, beer, wine and people! There I also met Jacques dear friend Jules DEJACEe (BIG member 172). Together they have cycled in many places and cycled many mountains and BIGs of course. I met this nice team again during the BIG-UIC meeting in Trento in May 2007. It was not so nice news a few years ago when I heard Jacques had felt during a cycling trip and had a severe head injury. Fortunately he recovered. When I told him by mail I would cycle Cauberg, Keutenberg and some other Dutch BIGs he wrote back: They are old friends of me. I still like this quote and remember it every time I cycle up Cauberg as it's an old friend of me now too. His dead due to a heart attack, at the age of 82, came as a shock to me as it was unexpected. Yes, we will miss Jacques very much as he was one of the early BIG members and meant a lot for others cyclists and people. As well as that together with Jules he showed that becoming old does not mean you cannot enjoy cycloclimbing anymore. I hope that like Jacques and Jules I can enjoy cycloclimbing also for many years to come. Bye Jacques my other old friend.

## **TOP 2: Regional meetings**

Since last newsletter, we had 2 regional meetings. One in Germany and one in Hungary.

### **German regional meeting:**

The German regional meeting in the Black Forest, in Aitern, was good despite the clouds and the rain. This did not spoil the good atmosphere between the participants. The organization was done by Heiko LINNERT (BIG member 2028) and Anja VON HEYDEBRECK (BIG member 2052). Newcomers when looking at their member number and very welcome as they are very active in our dear BIG challenge.



The pictures of this regional meeting can be found on:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/anja.von.heydebreck/Mai2012BIGSchwarzwald?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCI3MI4XXkr68Lw&feat=directlink#>

and

<https://picasaweb.google.com/100216271662024252352/BIGMeetingSchwarzwald?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCN6voz-q8vKKw&feat=directlink#>

### **Hungarian regional meeting:**

On Saturday the 19th of May 2012, the Hungarian regional meeting took place. The BIG members who joined met on Kekestető which is the highest surfaced road in Hungary. We know BIG is alive and kicking in Hungary as in the past the BIG meetings were always visited by many members. And this regional meeting was not different as 22 members were present!



Visit the web page created for this event:

<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/hungary2012/hungary2012.htm>

And you can find the pictures of the Hungarian regional meeting on:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/112459401346737740934/Kekesteto3X?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCKmE3I7mu9-cnAE&feat=directlink&gsessionid=EjV4X1NtK4jwEFV7azkOfg#>

### **Iron BIG day Cauberg The Netherlands**

A special Iron BIG day, coming from the mind Axel Jansen, will be managed on the slope of the wellknown Cauberg (BIG 142) on Saturday 15th of September 2012. To make an Iron BIG of the Cauberg, one has to cycle up the Cauberg 25 times in one day.

There is a relation of course with the upcoming World Championships for cyclists that takes place from Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of September to Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September. On the Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of September also a tour is organized for tour riders by the World Championship organization.

All the members who are interested can contact Axel by sending a mail to:

<mailto:axel64jansen@gmail.com>

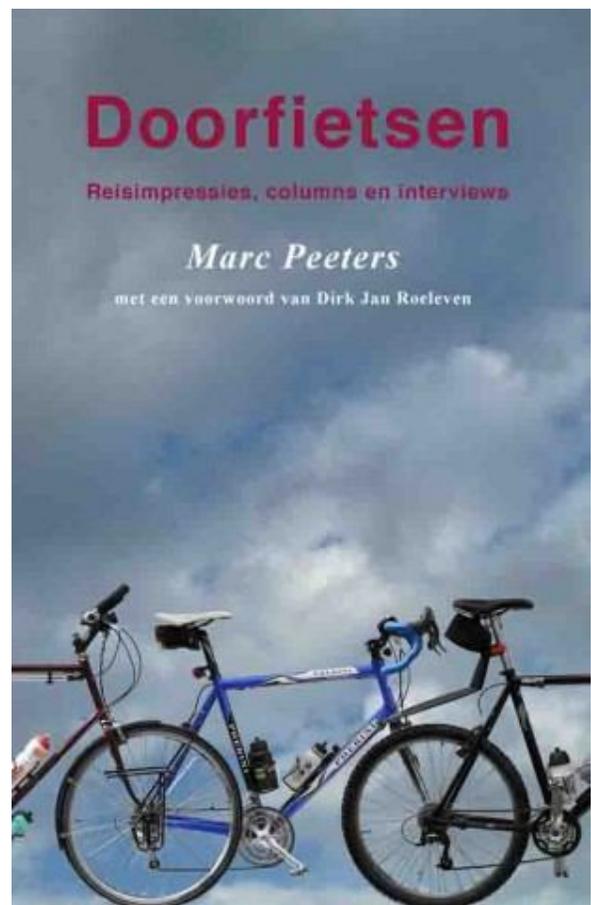
Gerd DAMEN - the first IRONBIG of this climb - has been invited as a guest star :-)

We will keep you updated on the timetable for this event.

### TOP 3: Books, books, books

We have fundamentalists ;- ) and we have also members who write books like Marc PEETERS (BIG member 112). After his 1<sup>st</sup> book, : I Bike, So I Am (**written in Dutch language**) he has written a new 128 pages thick book called: Bike on. (again **written in Dutch language**). By the time this newsletter arrives at your doorstep, the 1<sup>st</sup> book has already been presented to Dries van Agt. (former prime minister of the Netherlands and a cycling enthusiast). The book contains travel impressions, columns and interviews all written in a fluent and honest style. He writes as it is and in a way that catches your imagination.

The book can be ordered through regular channels (bookstores like <http://www.booxstore.nl/products/Doorfietsen-%252d-Marc-Peeters.html>, Bolcom etc), through the publisher (Book Plan), or Marc PEETERS himself (a signed version!). Marc can of course be contacted via our internal BIG mail.

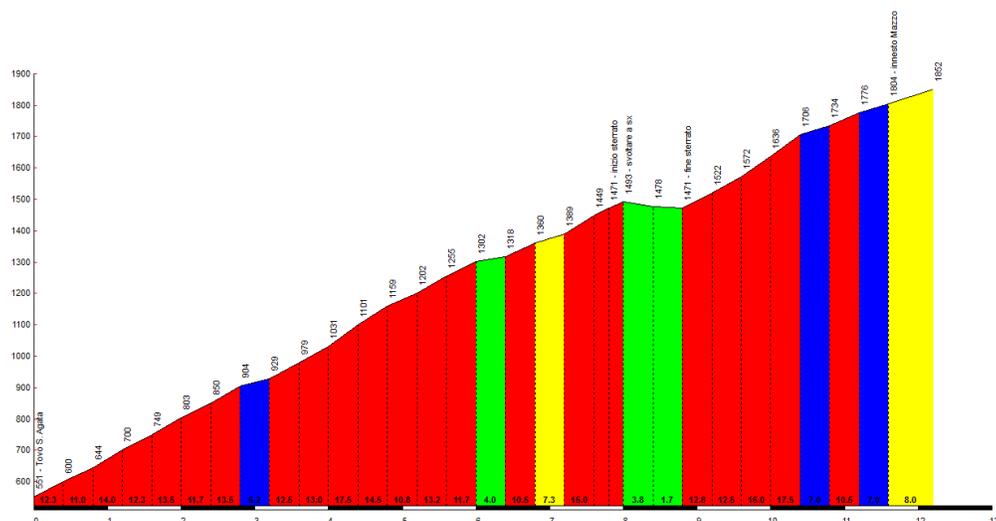


Another BIG member who has written a book is Frederic RAPOLS (BIG member 700) who wrote "Guia de colls de Catalunya, Andorra i Balears" (**written in Spanish language**): [http://www.cossetania.com/mostrar\\_producto.php?prod=1192](http://www.cossetania.com/mostrar_producto.php?prod=1192)

### TOP 4: Passo dello Mortirolo News

On the BIG website you find 3 ascents for Passo dello Mortirolo (BIG . The one from the South-East from Edolo, the one from the North from Grosio and the most toughest one from the West from Mazzo the last one is the toughest one. But there is also an interesting climb up from Tovo di Sant'Agata. This one has a 1km gravel stretch in it but is rideable with a racing bike. Here is the profile:

Mortirolo, da Tovo S. Agata



This ascent starts just before the village when you come from Tirano (there are no sign posts and the road looks like it only goes to a house there). As soon as you reach the woods the road becomes better and steep.

You can find more information on this side at:

<http://markoci.blogspot.nl/2011/09/il-mortirolo-da-tovo-s-agata.html#!/2011/09/il-mortirolo-da-tovo-s-agata.html>

Check out a site with a map that shows the route upwards on:

<http://cycloclimbing.com/alpspass1700paved/106mortirolo.html>

Or for a detailed description with a lot of pictures you can look at: <http://www.intornotirano.it/notizie-tirano-e-provincia-di-sondrio/salite-ciclistiche-il-mortirolo-da-tovo-s.-agata>

All the above sites are in Italian but you can use <http://translate.google.com/> to translate the Italian text to English. Just copy and paste the link.

#### Data summary:

Foot	Tovo di Sant'Agata (538m)
Top	Mortirolo (1852m)
Defference:	1314 m
Length:	12.5 Km
Average gradient:	10.6%

#### MEMORIAL ON THE MORTIROLO

Also this year, Leonie van de Pol came to the Passo dello Mortirolo to commemorate her husband Hans Milder. He died 2 years ago because of cancer. Hans was an enthusiastic cycloclimber and hence there is a memory plaque of Hans Milder on the Mortirolo sign at the top. The Mortirolo being his favorite maountain. After a request of Mauro REPETTI (BIG member 718), Martin Kool got in touch with Leonie van de Pol and hence Mauro also got in touch with her. Mauro is Godfather of Passo dello Mortirolo and even dedicated 1 ascent to Hans Milder.



In the week of the 5<sup>th</sup> of June it was 2 years ago that Hans Milder died and a good reason for Leonie to go back to the Mortirolo. Our dearest BIG member Mauro and his uncle Fernando guided Leonie. They put flowers near the memory plate and Leonie was Mauro's guest for the whole weekend.

It's nice to see how BIG brings people together!

If you are on the Passo dello Mortirolo then please make a picture of yourself and the Hans Milder memory plate and mail it to Leonie van de Pol: [leonievandepol@kpnmail.nl](mailto:leonievandepol@kpnmail.nl)

#### TOP 5: Iron BIG website

We had never thought that the Iron BIG challenge would be so successful. The Iron BIGs come one after the other at such an enormous speed that it's hard to keep track of them. And they rule the news so you would almost forget the actual BIG challenge itself ! And as the BIG challenge is our main challeng, a separate Irion BIG website has been created: : <http://bigascensions.free.fr/ironbig25.htm>.



From now you can go to this page to link to check the:

- Iron BIG news <http://bigascensions.free.fr/news.htm>
  - Last Godfathers <http://bigascensions.free.fr/godfathers.htm>
  - Iron BIG rules <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rules.htm>
  - Iron BIG results <http://bigascensions.free.fr/results.htm>
  - Iron BIG details <http://bigascensions.free.fr/details.htm>
- Iron BIG 1, 2, etc  
Date, Time, Pictures

Soon we will create a similar website for the national challenges. The list of the winners will be available in the main website but parallel websites will edit the news about them.

## 2. BIG Rules!

As stated in the news, a new side was found for Passo dello Mortirolo (BIG 694). Now in fact this is not really a new side as you could have found it on other websites. But when you look at our page for the Passo dello Mortirolo (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/big/694>) then you will not find this side where the foot is in Tovo di Sant'Agata on this page.

So suppose you would have cycled up Mortirolo from Tovo di Sant'Agata. Would you have been allowed to claim the Mortirolo then? Well, let's first check the rules on our rules page (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/page/rules>) and then we see at Point 1.2

If a member has climbed on a day in his life, on a bicycle, and that **WHATEVER THE ROUTE CHOSEN (among the sides described in the Passacol)**, to a summit corresponding in the list to a number among the 1.000: he can declare, by honour, the success of achieving the climb corresponding to this number.

Now we used to have a Passacol. An Excel file that contained all the BIGs and the sides of these BIGs and the data that belongs to the sides. But nowadays we have the web page instead of the Passacol so we have to look at the website which sides exist for Passo dello Mortirolo: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/en/big/694> and then we see a side from Mazzo di Valtellina, Grosio and Edolo.



I have combined 2 pictures and you can see that on the map the ascent from Tovo di Sant'Agata is not there. So currently you are not allowed to claim Passo dello Mortirolo when you cycle it from this side.

But the member can contact the filter group to see if this ascent can be turned into an official side. And then it can be claimed as the side will be added, like the new side of Mortirolo will soon be, added to the website.

The filter group can be contacted by sending an email to: [newlist@challenge-big.eu](mailto:newlist@challenge-big.eu).

Note: The filter group is to give their opinion to new sides, new heights, new roads but NOT new BIGs. They also decide on the content of the National lists that are coming...

### 3. About a BIG: Bealach Na Ba

#### Nonsense! :

Maybe you remembered that we announced in the last newsletter that the crossroad in Scotland was cancelled. Then that was nonsense! We explained very often the difference between a meeting and a crossroad. In a meeting, everything is organised by the Challenge (program, accommodation). In a crossroad, nothing is organised: the program is free, the accommodation has to be found by each participant. Thus, the crossroad in Scotland could not be cancelled because there was nothing to cancel. Moreover the crossroad in Scotland was held! We were with three: Claudi MONTEFUSCO (SPA or rather CAT!), Bernard FROGNEUX (BEL, should I write WAL?) and François CANDAU (FRA) to gather and build our program to ride the 10 Scottish BIGs of this crossroad. We would have been very pleased to invite some other guys but since the official decision was that it was cancelled, I was denied the chance to communicate widely on the website about this organization.

#### A real crossroad:

Anyway, on the 5th of April, François and Bernard met at their usual secret point in Calais before rushing in Eurotunnel. On the evening, we could have dinner in Newcastle where Claudi just landed from Barcelona. A small effort of organization and the 3 guys, their 3 bikes, 3 GPS and luggage fitted in the Renault Scenic from France. On the next morning, after a full English breakfast and less than one hour of driving, we were in Byrness, the foot of our first Scottish BIG: Carter Bar. An easy one indeed, leading to the boarder between England and Scotland where we could find an English biker for the official picture. The next one: Lowther Hill reminded us Great Dun Fell that we all climbed in the UK official meeting under cold and foggy conditions. Here we also had rain! And then we climbed Glen Quaich: a very steep one, another reminder of UK meeting, a kind of Hard Knot Pass with an 10,7% average and 17% sections. At last we found a really typical Scottish inn in Spittal of Glenshee that we warmly recommend. Just a regret for this day: we missed Frederic RAFOLS and Nuria ESCUER MESTRES who left this place just one hour before we arrived at the end of this first stage.



#### Ask the menu:



Our crossroad was organised like a menu. After these solid starters, the following day was the main course. My mates had to ride four BIGs in a row: Devil's Elbow, The Strone, Tom Dubh and Lecht Road within 56 kilometres of riding from foot to the first BIG to top of fourth. Some anecdotes : The Strone whose feet is Balmoral Castle is not a difficult one but it will remain in Frederic RAFOLS's memory as his 500<sup>th</sup> BIGs and in mine as the one giving to me the place of French leader of the Challenge (at least for a while!).

*Picture : Top of the Strone*

The funniest event happened on the foot of Tom Dubh: Claudi and Bernard faced this slight problem: (see picture) Climbers they are, climbers they climb! So please, just correct the profile of Tom Dubh south side on the website, for the time being (and quite for a long time apparently), it starts with a 55% section!



Next one was Lecht Road. A terrible one: really long sections over 15% and a cold, windy weather. It was so good to reach the ski station and rush into the cafeteria! We finished that busy day with a 5<sup>th</sup> BIG, another ski resort called Cairn Gorm. Then the manager of the Tour decided that it was time to return to civilization and imposed a B&B in Inverness. In fact he had also organised a small event that can be seen on

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdLvWN-KmJ0&feature=youtu.be>

Claudi also arranged an appointment for himself in an Italian restaurant there (no pictures, pity for you!).

#### Amazing Grace:

From Inverness we, of course, visited Loch Ness.



We drove this really nice road to ride along the lake. My mates saw nothing special in there but I personally wonder what were those two curious yellow and blue dressed creatures along the Loch. Claudio was our guide to every castle nearby:

*Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness*

*Eilean Donan Castle*



And then we had our last two BIGs in the Highlands: Bealach Ratagain and Bealach Na Ba. Since the beginning of the tour, I had the intuition that something would happen in that last BIG. I felt it will be the special one. Honestly I was also a bit scared. The figures said 7,4 kms long, average 8,4% and maximum 21%, 621 europoints. It was the toughest of the tour. A perfect Gaussian curve starting gently but under an incredible facing wind; in the middle such a long section over 10% or rather 15% with a narrow road and no flat section at all to rest a bit. I thought I would suffer but I didn't that much. I was so amazed by the landscapes around me that I climbed it gently, nearly slowly (just aiming not to fall!) to take benefit of every second of it. I cannot describe it: loch, rare vegetation, stones, fantastic road, just watch at Claudi and Bernard's pictures. It is certainly in my favourite 10 BIGs till now.



At 14 PM, after 2,5 days of both climbing and visiting, the team was down from its 10<sup>th</sup> BIG, happy to finish with such a marvel. It was time to start the long way homewards bound. The feeling of achievement and friendship was strong. That is why I am personally very fond of these meetings or crossroads where you can meet and make friends with Biggers you only know through Internet or that you know very well and have great pleasure to meet again. Please come and taste the menu: cooked (official meeting) or uncooked (crossroad)!

François CANDAU

*Pictures from Bernard Frogneux and Claudio Montefusco (on this side picture), video from Bernard.*



## Conclusion:

Well, when looking at the astronomical calendar, Summer has arrived. But when looking to the weather there is still room for improvement I would say. I will keep my fingers crossed so you can enjoy summer and enjoy cycling BIGs in nice, warm and sunny weather, Have fun out there and we meet again after the summer holiday in a next newsletter.

***Regards, the newsletters team:***

***Enrico ALBERINI***

***Gerd DAMEN***

***Helmuth DEKKERS***

***Daniel GOBERT***

***Anja VON HEYDEBRECK***

***Claudio MONTEFUSCO***

***Luc OTEMAN***