

# BIG REVIEW 2013

The annual magazine for BIG members  
La revue annuelle pour les membres du BIG

Récit d'une terrible défaillance

B&B in the Black (?) Forest

Mannen met een missie

6 BIGs, 4 millions de brebis et  
plusieurs couleuvres noires

1001 Miglia

And more, much  
more.....



Nr. 27  
1-3-2013

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# MEMBRES DU MONDE CYCLISTE

LE MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Daniël GOBERT

Maintenant que nous avons près de cinq mille membres et que beaucoup d'entre eux nous ont rejoints lors de ces dernières années du troisième millénaire, beaucoup d'entre vous témoignent de réactions, questions ou suggestions, entièrement compréhensibles et normales, mais qui ignorent les fondements de notre philosophie de base, sorte de recherche d'une participation grimpeuse en tant que membres à part entière du monde cycliste dans toute sa globalité.

Par conséquent, nous ne sommes pas des représentants du monde cycliste sportif professionnel uniquement, ni du monde cyclotouriste uniquement, ni des pratiquants du VTT, ni des touristes à vélo, ni des cyclistes globe-trotters, ni des randonneurs mondiaux, ni des cyclotouristes sportifs, ni de toute autre forme de pratique unilatérale semblant pédaler à l'encontre de toutes les autres pratiques.

Notre philosophie de base est une philosophie ouverte sur toutes les pratiques tant qu'on grimpe, sur le plus grand nombre possible de pays d'Europe en harmonie avec leur propre développement interne de la pratique du vélo, une philosophie de rassembleur de membres du monde cycliste, dans toute sa variété, dans toute sa complexité, dans toute ses composantes et par conséquent, dans toute sa richesse.

Nous avons édité trois critères (sport, tourisme et médiatisation) et cinq principes dans notre règlement afin de donner un avis objectif et structuré à vos nombreuses requêtes, témoins du dynamisme et de l'implication dont vous faites preuve dans le challenge. Ces phrases explicites servent mieux que de longs discours à rappeler la folle envie de grimper tout et partout qui nous unit, sans nous emprisonner dans des murs trop restrictifs.

Bref, le sommet atteint est plus important que le versant par lequel on l'a atteint à condition d'être fier de son ascension jusqu'à ce sommet. Son avancement personnel au classement général est plus important qu'une comparaison avec un autre membre dans celui-ci puisque deux membres n'ont jamais effectué les mêmes ascensions. Toutefois, dès qu'un membre a grimpé plusieurs centaines de B.I.Gs, les niveaux des performances entre les classés se resserrent très fort. La découverte d'autres pratiques grimpeuses est plus importante que l'acharnement à prouver que la sienne est la meilleure. La rencontre fortuite d'un collègue d'un lointain pays au hasard d'un B.I.G est plus important que la performance collective d'un groupe local sur une ascension locale. Pourtant, même si les premiers cas donnés sont plus importants que les seconds cas donnés dans les exemples précédents, il nous arrive de promouvoir les seconds de temps en temps. Par contre, nous privilégions, nous stimulons et nous prônons les premiers cas.

Vous constaterez dans les objectifs ci-après pour les deux années à venir que nous allons intégrer des classements dans notre page de classement qui pourront donner un retour plus particulier à ceux qui privilégient certaines pratiques, soit plus sportives, soit plus touristiques, soit plus légendaires et nous allons aussi ouvrir les challenges nationaux, aux accents plus locaux et moins axés sur la découverte lointaine. Mais ces particularités ne prendront jamais le dessus sur l'esprit d'ouverture du grand challenge B.I.G lui-même, qui emmène chacun de ses membres, autant sur les traces des champions en roulant sur les routes de leurs victoires, que dans des culs-de-sac inconnus au charme envoûteur, que dans des pentes à la folie insoupçonnée ou que dans les altitudes suprêmes qui font la fierté de chacun des pays visités.

Au sommet, le membre du B.I.G domine le monde, mais il n'écrase personne. Ne l'oubliez pas ...

Grande et joyeuse saison 2013 à tous les membres du monde cyclogrimpeur.



# MEMBERS OF THE CYCLING WORLD

## PRESIDENT'S WORD

Daniël GOBERT

Now that we have nearly five thousand members and that many among us reached us during the last years in the third millenium, many members send us requests, reactions, questions or suggestions, sometimes very far from our basic philosophy, which is a kind of research of a climbing inclusion in the general cycling world, considering its globality.

Consequently, we are neither only members of the cycling races world, nor only of the cycletouring world, nor of those who ride only on MTB, nor of tourists on bike, nor of cycling globe-trotters, nor of cyclesport world, nor of any other particular shape of unilateral practice seeming to turn its pedals against all the other practices.

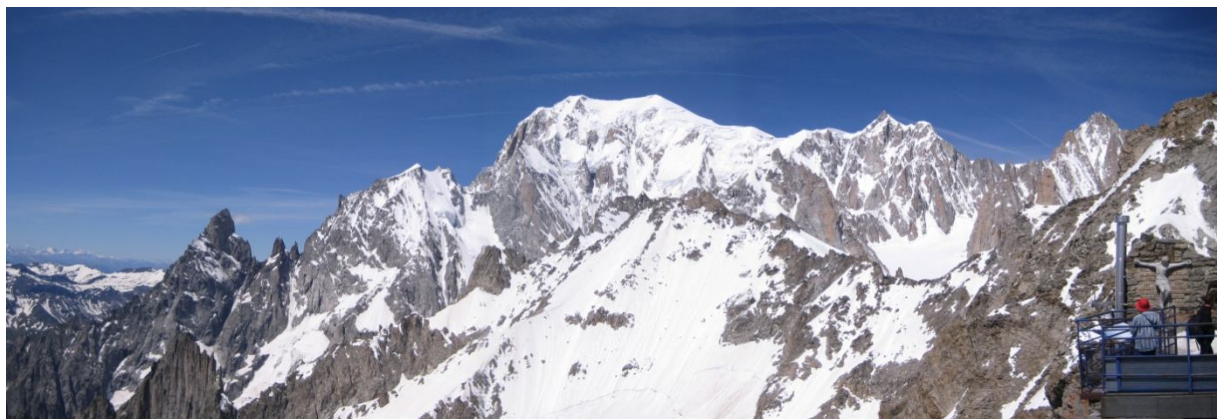
Our basic philosophy is an opened philosophy, opened to all the cycloclimbing practices, wherever and however you're climbing, opened to the most possible countries in Europe in harmony with their own principle to use the bike, a philosophy that puts together those different practices in the cycling world, in all its varieties, all its complexities, all its components and all its richness.

We edited three criteria (sport, tourism and legend) and five principles in our rules with the goal to give a correct and objective answer to all your requests, inlightning your implication and your wish to take part in the BIG-challenge world. Those sentences, very explicit, help more than long speeches, to recall our common crazyness on slopes everywhere, that makes us meeting without too strict walls keeping us in a kind of prison of thoughts.

In fact, the top reached is more important that the side by which you reached it, if you are proud of your ascent. Your personal increasing in the general classement is more important that the way by which you compare yourself with the other members, almost in the low classement, because there, we add apples and pears, because all the members have not climbed the same B.I.Gs. However, in the higher classement, the levels of performances are very near one to another. The discovery of other climbing practices are more important than the defence against all of his own personal practice of climbing. The meeting with a member living in a far foreign country, with some hasard, during a climb, is more important than the performance of a local group on a local climb. Of course, we sometimes consider with congratulations the second approaches but we give a main priority and we stimulate our members to climb with ideas near the first ones.

You'll see in the coming targets 2013-2014 of our BIG-challenge for the two coming years that we'll include new classements in the general classements'page of our website, to give some feedback to the members who query those kinds of particular practices of cycloclimbing, either with more sporting performance, or with more tourism, or with more legendary or higher climbs and we'll also open the national challenges, giving the opportunity to ride more local climbs, nearer our home. But those parallel challenges and classements will never, never go over our great central BIG-challenge, which leads you to the tracks of our great cycling champions on the roads of their victories, or in end-roads from nowhere with surprising landscapes, or in unbelievable gradients or in the higher altitudes of every country that we visit.

On the top, the B.I.G member rules the world, but doesn't splash anybody. Don't forget it ...  
Happy great 2013 season to the whole cycloclimbing world.



# Meetings 2013

## 1. The official annual meeting : The Ardennes

21 BIGs

03 - 08/08/2013

### Organisation

1) All the participants are like always in the challenge B.I.G under their own responsibilities

1) Tous les participants sont comme toujours au challenge B.I.G sous leurs propres responsabilités

2) The basic main tour is exposed here below but the participant stay free to short, to enlarge or to deviate his own tour

2) Le parcours de base est exposé ci-dessous mais le participant reste libre de raccourcir, allonger ou dévier son propre circuit par rapport à celui-ci

3) The price of the basic tour is 250,- € (countaining 5 accomodations, 5 breakfasts, 3 dinners (evening), welcome cocktail, food & drinks at every top of every big, transport of luggages inside a truck ). The official subscription will be agreeded with the reception of 100,- €through one of our payments'possibilities explained in the menu contribution of the website. The 25 first persons subscribed in this way will have all the availabilities offered by the organization. The other ones can manage their own organization, accomodations, can only take part in one or more stages and will have the help of the organization, but only if it's still possible after the service given to the 25 first subscribers. Their own prices will be decided with the organization according to their request.

3) Le prix du circuit de base est de 250,- € (comprenant les 5 logements, les 5 petits-déjeûners, 3 dîners (du soir), le cocktail de bienvenue, les ravitaillements au sommet de chaque BIG, le transport des bagages dans une camionnette). L'inscription officielle sera accordée aux 25 premiers qui aurtont versé 100,- €sur un des comptes du challenge visible sur la page du menu "cotisations" de notre site web. Les autres peuvent faire leur propre organisation, choisir leur propre hôtel, et prendre part aux circuits lors d'une ou plusieurs étapes seulement mais disposeront des services de l'organisation, seulement si c'est encore possible après avoir servi les 25 inscrits. Leur propre prix sera décidé en accord avec l'organisation en fonction de leur requête.

4) The food & drink on the tops will be available in the fork of hours indicated between breakets and a general photo will be taken with all the group in a precise hour also indicated. Attention : a bodybagg is necessary for one night in Wanne.

4) Les ravitaillements au sommet des bigs seront disponibles dans la fourchette horaire indiquée entre parenthèses et une photo générale du groupe présent sera aussi dispensée à l'heure indiquée. Attention, un sac de couchage est nécessaire pour une nuit à Wanne.

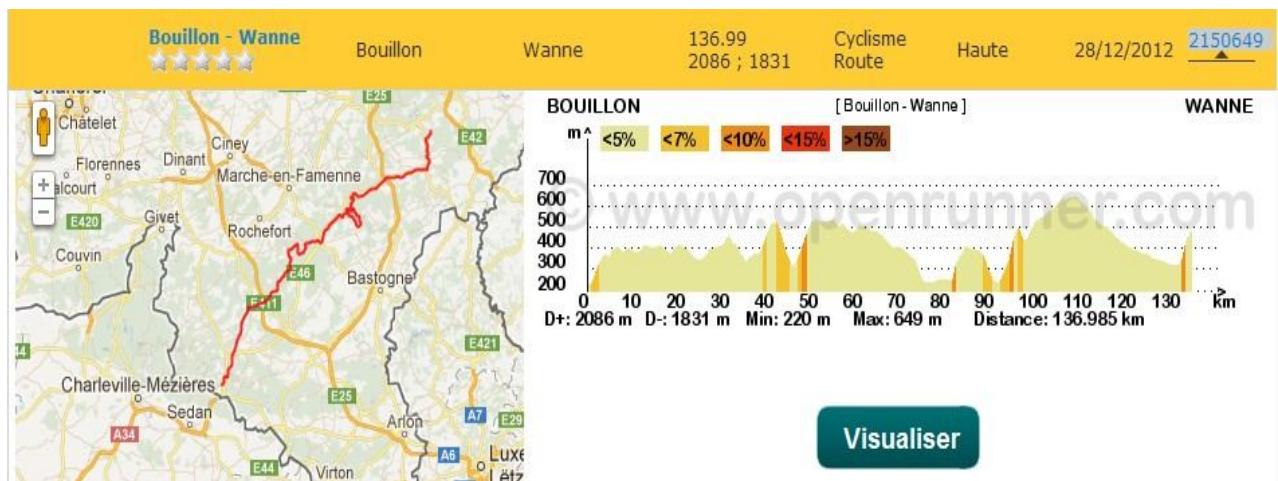
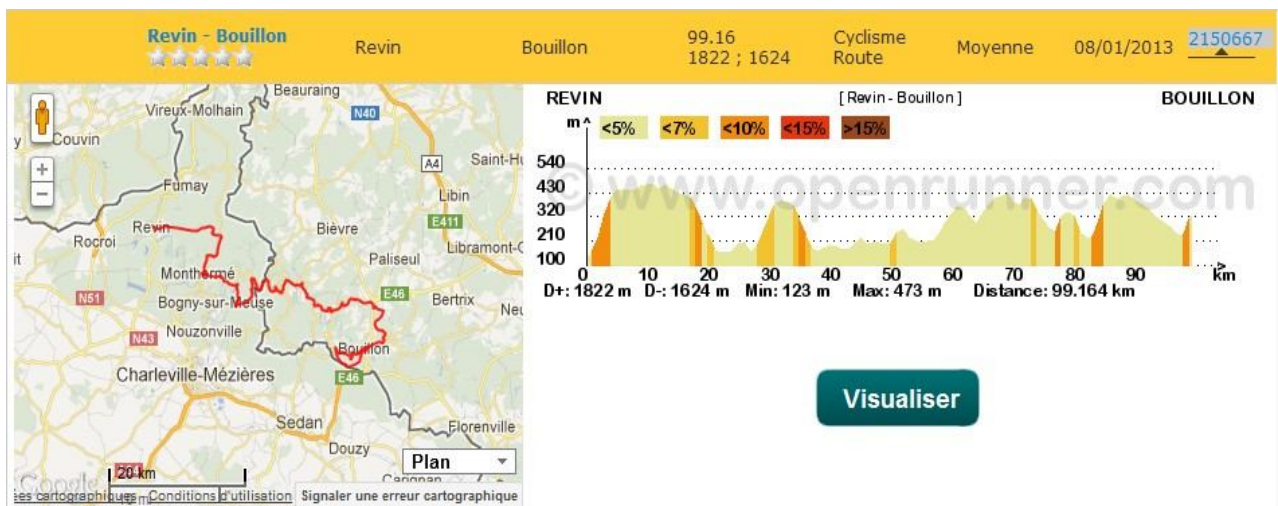
### Here are the required current hostels / Voici les hôtels prévus :

				
AJ Namur	Hôtel François 1er REVIN	AJ Bouillon	Gîte château WANNE	Sol Cress SPA

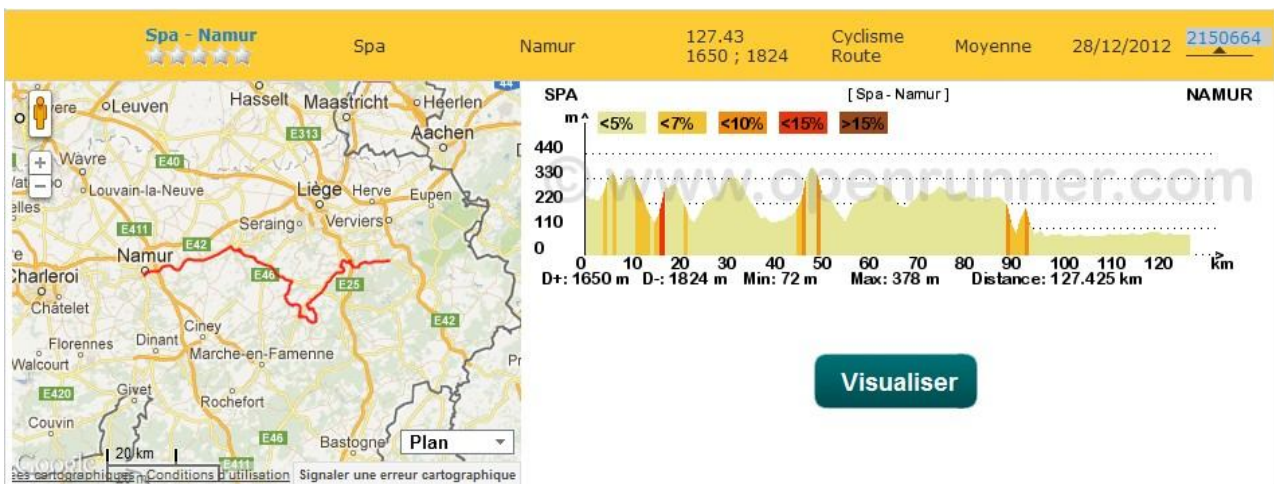
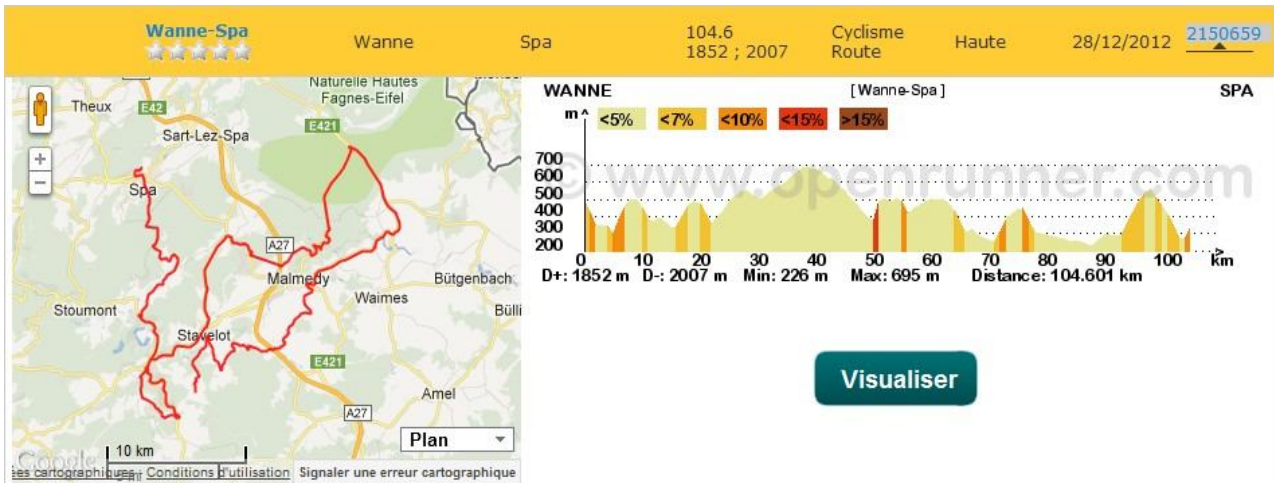
## BIG Review 2013

And here are the profiles of the stages because this year, there will be stages with precise kilometers and not just bigs to reach like often during the official meetings.

Et voici les profils d'étapes, car il y aura bien des étapes cette année-ci au lieu de la conquête simple de bigs à rallier comme la plupart du temps durant les rendez-vous officiels.



## BIG Review 2013



## 2. Regional meetings

HU more informations in the website

DE Regionales BIG-Treffen in Bad Wiessee am Tegernsee → 04 – 05/05/2013

## SUPERLIST 1000

**Iceland**

- 1 Hrafnseyrarheiði
- 2 Öxnadalsheiði
- 3 Námaskarð
- 4 Halfdan
- 5 Hellisheiði
- 6 Oddskarð
- 7 Almannáskarð

**Norway**

- 8 Nordkapp
- 9 Guolasjavri
- 10 Saltfjellet
- 11 Umskardet
- 12 Tron
- 13 Dovrefjell
- 14 Blåhö
- 15 Vestkapp
- 16 Trollstigveien
- 17 Dalsnibba
- 18 Gamle Strynefjellsvei
- 19 Sognefjellhytta
- 20 Valdresflya
- 21 Tyinosen
- 22 Juvasshytta
- 23 Osen-Eldrevatnet
- 24 Nystølensskardet
- 25 Stalheimskleiva
- 26 Aurlandsvegen
- 27 Hardangervidda
- 28 Gaustatoppen
- 29 Dyrskar
- 30 Lysefjordveien

**Sweden**

- 31 Luossavaara
- 32 Ullådalen
- 33 Stekenjokk
- 34 Flatruet
- 35 Sä lens Högfjällshotellet
- 36 Vemdalskalet
- 37 Nipstugan Pass
- 38 Klevaliden
- 39 Tossebergsklätten
- 40 Hunneberg
- 41 Högkullen

**Finland**

- 42 Kilpisjärvi
- 43 Kaunispää
- 44 Pallastunturi
- 45 Rukatunturi
- 46 Tunturi-Ylläs
- 47 Vuokatti
- 48 Ukko-Koli

**Denmark**

- 49 Ejer Bavnehøj
- 50 Himmelbjerget

**Northern Ireland**

- 51 Sperrin
- 52 Spelga Dam

**Ireland**

- 53 Gap of Mamore
- 54 Grianan of Aileach
- 55 Glengesh Pass
- 56 Cliffs of Moher
- 57 Connor Pass
- 58 Coomakesta Pass
- 59 Ballaghasheen Pass
- 60 Ballaghbeama Gap
- 61 Healy Pass
- 62 Mullaghanish
- 63 Slieve Bloom Mountain
- 64 Sally Gap
- 65 Wicklow Gap

**Scotland**

- 66 Bealach Na Ba
- 67 Bealach Ratagain
- 68 Lowther Hill
- 69 Cairn Gorm
- 70 Lecht Road
- 71 Tom Dubh
- 72 The Strone
- 73 Devil's Elbow
- 74 Glen Quaich
- 75 Carter Bar

**England**

- 76 Great Dun Fell
- 77 Westernhope Moor
- 78 Hartside Cross
- 79 Whinlatter Pass
- 80 Honister Pass
- 81 Hard Knott Pass
- 82 Wrynose Pass
- 83 Kirkstone Pass
- 84 Fleet Moss
- 85 Rosedale Head
- 86 Cow & Calf
- 87 Oxenhope Moor
- 88 Holme Moss
- 89 Snake Pass
- 90 Mam Tor
- 91 Bush Down
- 92 Exe Plain
- 93 Dunkery Beacon
- 94 Chineway Hill
- 95 Cheddar Gorge

**Wales**

- 96 Llanberis Pass
- 97 Horseshoe Pass
- 98 Bwlch-y-Groes
- 99 Devil's Staircase
- 100 Gospel Pass

**Netherlands**

- 101 Posbank
- 102 Italiaanse Weg
- 103 Oude Holleweg
- 104 Cauberg
- 105 Keutenberg
- 106 Eyserbos
- 107 Oude Huls
- 108 Gulpenerberg
- 109 Vijlenerbos
- 110 Drielandenpunt

**Belgium**

- 111 Rodeberg
- 112 Kemmelberg
- 113 Koppenberg
- 114 Kluisberg
- 115 Oude Kwaremont
- 116 Paterberg
- 117 Muur van Geraardsbergen
- 118 Mont Saint Aubert
- 119 Barrage du Ry de Rome
- 120 Triple Mur Monty
- 121 La Gayolle
- 122 Montagne de la Croix
- 123 Col de Corbion
- 124 Col du Sati
- 125 Mur de Huy
- 126 Signal de Botrange
- 127 Ferme Libert
- 128 Côte de la Redoute
- 129 Col du Rideux
- 130 Les Hézalles
- 131 Col du Rosier
- 132 Côte de Wanne
- 133 Col du Stockeu
- 134 Baraque de Fraiture
- 135 Cheval de Bois
- 136 Col d'Haussire
- 137 Pied Monti

**Luxembourg**

- 138 Côte de Munshausen
- 139 Mont Saint Nicolas
- 140 Bourscheid
- 141 Jardin-Tour Napoléon
- 142 Côte d'Eschdorf
- 143 Ferme de Masseler
- 144 Herrenberg
- 145 Berdorf Gorges du Loup
- 146 Altrier



## BIG Review 2013

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148	Eoliennes de Pafebiert	205	Roc de Toullaëron	265	Crêt de Châtillon
149	Birgerkraiz	206	Ménez-Bré	266	Mont du Chat
150	Mont Saint Jean	207	Mûr-de-Bretagne	267	Mont Revard
<b>Germany</b>					
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154	Hoherodskopf	211	Mont Cassel	271	Col de la Ramaz
155	Mützenich	212	Mont Noir	272	Col de l'Encrenaz
156	Schwarzer Mann	213	Mont Tranet	273	Avoriaz
157	Hohe Acht	214	Col du Loup	274	Col de Joux-Plane
158	Krautscheid	215	Mont Saint-Walfroy	275	Mont Salève
159	Steigung von Bremm	216	Grand Wintersberg	276	Col de la Colombière
160	Stumpfer Turm	217	Col du Donon	277	Col de la Croix-Fry
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175	Lochenpass	232	Mont Poupet	292	Col du Granon
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177	Petersberg	234	Mont Morond	294	Col d'Izoard
178	Kahler Asten	235	Mont d'Or	295	Sommet du Bûcher
179	Großer Inselsberg	236	Fort de Chaudanne	296	Chapelle de Clausis
180	Wasserkuppe	237	Haut-Crêt	297	Col de Tourniol
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183	Katzenbuckel	240	Signal du Cuiron	300	Col du Noyer
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186	Roßtrappe	243	Col du Chevalard	303	Col du Pontis
187	Auersberg	244	Puy-de-Dôme	304	Col du Parpaillon
188	Fichtelberg	245	Col de Guéry	305	Col de Vars
189	Schwarzriegel	246	Col de la Croix-Morand	306	Col d'Allos
190	Großer Arber	247	Col de la Croix Saint-Robert	307	Col de la Cayolle
191	Oberjochpass	248	Col du Béal	308	Cime de la Bonette
192	Nebelhorn	249	Col de Baracuchet	309	Col de la Lombarde
193	Riedbergpaß	250	Col de la Croix de l'Homme Mort	310	Col des Champs
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199	Hirschbichl	256	Col de Légal	316	Col de l'Espinouse
200	Roßfeld	257	Col de Finiels	317	Pic de Tantajo
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202	Ménez-Hom	259	Col de Meyrand	319	Mont Saint-Clair
203	Ménez-Kerque	260	Croix de Boutières	320	Guidon du Bouquet
		261	Gerbier de Jonc	321	Mont Faron
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354	Col de Péguère	413	Alto de Azurki	469	Puerto de la Quesera
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364	Châlet-hôtel des Cortalets	423	Collado de Sahún	479	Monasterio San Salvador
365	Tour de Madeloc	424	Cerler	480	Las Palomas de Ronda
366	Col de Serra	425	El Portillon	481	Gibraltar
367	Serra di Pigno	426	Collado de la Bonaigua	482	Alto de Cascajares
368	Bocca di a Battaglia	427	Llac de Sant Maurici	483	Puerto del León
369	Haut-Asco	428	Coll de Cantó	484	Puerto del Sol
370	Col de Prato	429	Rasos de Peguera	485	Mirador Cabra Montés
371	Col de Lava	430	Coll de Pal	486	Puerto Lobo
372	Col de Vergio	431	Vallter 2000	487	Pico Veleta
373	Bergeries de Grotelle	432	Coll de Bracons	488	Puerto Haza del Lino
374	Col de Verde	433	Turó de l'Home	489	Puerto de la Ragua
375	Col de Bavella	434	Coll Formic	490	Puerto de Tiscar
		435	Monasterio de Montserrat	491	Las Palomas de Cazorla
				492	Alto de la Sagra
				493	Puerto Padilla
				494	Calar Alto
				495	Las Cañadas
				496	Pico del Inglés
				497	Pozo de las Nieves
				498	Roque de los Muchachos
				499	Cumbrecita
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376	Monte Aloia	436	Arcalis		
377	Vixía Herbeira	437	Coll de Ordino		
378	Alto de San Clodio	438	Els Cortals		
379	Puerto del Buey	439	Port d'Envalira		
380	Cabeza de Manzaneda	440	Port de Cabus		
381	Puerto de Ancares	441	Bosc de la Rabassa		
382	El Sestil				

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- 500 Garajonay
- Portugal**
- 501 Monte do Faro  
502 Nossa Senhora da Graça  
503 Barragem do Alvao  
504 Alto de Espinho  
505 Marofa  
506 Buçaco  
507 Torre  
508 Bom Jésus  
509 Alto do Trevim  
510 Caramulinho  
511 Sao Mamede  
512 Marvao  
513 Capela São Macario  
514 Monsanto  
515 Alto de Sintra  
516 Serra da Arrábida  
517 Monte Foia  
518 Montejunto  
519 Eira do Serrado  
520 Bocca da Encumeada  
521 Cabo Girao  
522 Pico Arieiro  
523 Lagoa do Canário  
524 Pico da Barrosa  
525 Caldeira do Faial
- Switzerland**
- 526 La Barillette  
527 Col de la Givrine  
528 Col du Marchairuz  
529 Mont Tendre  
530 Col de l'Aiguillon  
531 Vue des Alpes  
532 Le Chasseral  
533 Mont Soleil  
534 Noirmont  
535 Montfaucon  
536 Sur la Croix  
537 Weissenstein  
538 Balmberg Passhöhe  
539 Passwang  
540 Regensberg  
541 Bachtel  
542 Hauta-Chia  
543 Col de Jaman  
544 Col des Mosses  
545 Col de la Croix  
546 Jaunpass  
547 Gurnigel  
548 Glaubenbergpass  
549 Glaubenbüelenpass  
550 Ächerlipass  
551 Melchsee-Frutt  
552 Engstlenalp  
553 Etzelpass  
554 Pragelpass  
555 Stoss  
556 Schrina-Hochrugg
- 557 Buchs-Malbun  
558 Ovronnaz  
559 Col du Sanetsch  
560 Lac de Tseuzier  
561 Crans-Montana  
562 Gorneren  
563 Fafleralp  
564 Axalp  
565 Grosse Scheidegg  
566 Oberaarsee  
567 Sustenpass  
568 Furkapass  
569 Oberalpass  
570 Klausenpass  
571 Tannenbodenalp  
572 Pas de Morgins  
573 Col de la Forclaz  
574 Col des Planches  
575 Monte Generoso  
576 Barrage de Mauvoisin  
577 Thyon 2000  
578 Barrage de la Grande Dixence  
579 Arolla  
580 Glacier de Moiry  
581 Chandolin  
582 Mattmarksee  
583 Simplonpass  
584 Nufenenpass  
585 Sankt-Gothardpass  
586 Lago del Naret  
587 Lukmanierpass  
588 Lago Luzzone  
589 Passo di Neggia  
590 Passo del San Bernardino  
591 Glaspas  
592 Lenzerheidepass  
593 Arosa  
594 Flüelapass  
595 Ofenpass  
596 Albulapass  
597 Julierpass  
598 Juf  
599 Berninapass
- Lichtenstein**
- 600 Malbun
- Austria**
- 601 Millrütte  
602 Furkajoch  
603 Schattenlagant  
604 Hochtannbergpaß  
605 Berwang  
606 Hahntennjoch  
607 Bielerhöhe  
608 Möseralm  
609 Pillerhöhe  
610 Kühtai  
611 Ehrwalderalm  
612 Kaunertal  
613 Rettenbachtal
- 614 Timmelsjoch  
615 Mutterbergalm  
616 Speicher-Zillergründl  
617 Halltal  
618 Zillertaler Höhenstraße  
619 Sagalm  
620 Kitzbühler Horn  
Steinplatte-Kammerkör  
621 Bergbahnen  
622 Gerlospaß  
623 Staller Sattel  
624 Höhenstraße Loferer Alm  
625 Hochtort  
626 Neues-Luckner Haus  
627 Volkzeiner Hütte  
628 Oscheniksee  
629 Hochstein Parkplatz  
630 Dientner Sattel  
631 Gaisberg Straße  
632 Arthur Haus  
633 Zirknitztal  
634 Plöckenpass  
635 Jamnig Hütte  
636 Moldaublick  
637 Loser Hütte  
638 Stoderzinken  
639 Roßbrand  
640 Hochwurz Hütte  
641 Tauernpaß  
642 Maltatal  
643 Katschberg  
644 Naßfeldpaß  
645 Poludniger Alm  
646 Turracher Höhe  
647 Falkertsee-Hütte  
648 Villacher Alpenstraße  
649 Kanzelhöhe  
650 Gerlitzten  
651 Oberst-Klinke Hütte  
652 Hochkar-Gleichschlägerhaus  
653 Sölkpaß  
654 Gleinalmsattel  
655 Lammersdorfer Berg  
656 Gaberlsattel  
657 Klippitztörl  
658 Magdalensberg  
659 Großer Speikkogel  
660 Eisenkappler Hütte  
661 Seeberg Sattel  
662 Weinebene  
663 Jauerling  
664 Grubberg  
665 Zellerain  
666 Bürgeralm  
667 Rohrer Sattel  
668 Hocheck  
669 Hohe Wand  
670 Preiner Gscheid  
671 Sonnwendstein  
672 Stuhleck

## BIG Review 2013

673 Schanzsattel  
674 Auf dem Straßegg  
675 Ebenwald-Parkplatz

### Italy

676 Breuil-Cervinia  
677 Colle San Carlo  
678 Colle del Nivolet  
679 Colle Sommeiller  
680 Colle delle Finestre  
681 Colle Braida  
682 Pian del Re  
683 Colle dell' Agnello  
684 Colle di Sampeyre  
685 Il Fauniera  
686 Colle di Tenda  
687 Prato Nevoso  
688 Passo dello Spluga  
689 Menarola  
690 Passo di San Marco  
691 Rifugio Barbara Lowrie  
692 Val Malenco  
693 Passo del Vivione  
694 Passo del Mortirolo  
695 Passo di Foscagno  
696 Passo di Gavia  
697 Passo dello Stelvio  
698 Val Martello  
699 Val Senales  
700 Passo di Monte Giovo  
701 Passo di Pennes  
702 Merano 2000  
703 Passo delle Palade  
704 Passo della Mendola  
705 Val Genova  
706 Monte Bondone  
707 Passo Manghen  
708 Torri del Vajolet  
709 Plan de Corones  
710 Passo delle Erbe  
711 Passo di Gardena  
712 Passo di Sella  
713 Passo Pordoi  
714 Passo di Fedaià  
715 Passo di Valparola  
716 Passo di Giau  
717 Passo Duran  
718 Forcella Cibiana  
719 Tre Cime di Lavaredo  
720 Monte Zoncolan  
721 Monte Paularo  
722 Passo del Cason di Lanza  
723 Sella Carnizza  
724 Mataiur  
725 Piancavallo  
726 Passo Tomba  
727 Monte Grappa  
728 Passo Porte del Pasubio  
729 Passo di Campogrosso  
730 Alpe Cheggio  
731 Alpe Rossonbolmo

732 Cascata del Toce  
733 Il Mottarone  
734 Passo Cuvignone  
735 Campo dei Fiori  
736 San Martino  
737 Passo del Gran San Bernardo  
738 Monte Bisbino  
739 Monte Legnoccino  
740 Monte Croce di Muggio  
741 Madonna del Ghisallo  
742 Giogo di Bala  
743 Passo Coe  
744 Rifugio Alpo  
745 Passo di Tremalzo  
746 Prati di Nago  
747 Punta Veleno  
748 Colle Garezzo  
749 Poggio di San Remo  
750 La Cipressa  
751 Colma di Sormano  
752 Passo di Melogno  
753 Monte Beigua  
754 Passo del Faiallo  
755 Passo della Bocchetta  
756 Monte Penice  
757 Passo del Ghiffi  
758 Colle dei Due Santi  
759 Passo del Cirone  
760 Passo Lagastrello  
761 Passo di Pradarena  
762 San Pellegrino in Alpe  
763 Abetone  
764 Croce Arcana  
765 Passo della Futa  
766 Passo la Calla  
767 Passo dei Mandrioli  
768 Valico Monte Fumaïolo

### San Marino

769 San Marino

### Italy

770 Santuario della Verna  
771 Bocca Trabària  
772 Monte Amiata  
773 Monte Argentario  
774 Montelupone  
775 Sella di Leonessa  
776 Forca Canapine  
777 Forca di Presta  
778 Gran Sasso d'Italia  
779 Campo Felice  
780 Monte Perone  
781 Campo Staffi  
782 Campo Catino  
783 Passo del Diavolo  
784 Forca d'Acero  
785 Valico Monte Godi  
786 Blockhaus della Maïella  
787 Monte Carpegna  
788 Monte Sant'Angelo

789 Abazia di Montecassino  
790 Campitello Matese  
791 Sella di Perrone  
792 Monte Taburno  
793 Monte Vergine  
794 Vesuvio  
795 Monte Nerone  
796 Picco Sant'Angelo  
797 Monte Faito  
798 Cima Mutali  
799 Monte Vulture  
800 Monte Sacro o Gélbison  
801 Monte Armizzone  
802 Colle del Dragone  
803 Serra di Tuono  
804 Passo Crocetta  
805 Botte Donato  
806 Colle d'Ascione  
807 Stazione Forestale-Latteria  
808 Monte Sirino  
809 Passo de Pietra Spada  
810 Monte Alto Cocuzza  
811 Portella di Bova  
812 Erice  
813 Monte Pellegrino  
814 Piano Battaglia Carbonara  
815 Portella Femmina Morta  
816 Portella dello Zoppo  
817 Sella Mandrazzi  
818 Castelmola  
819 Etna  
820 Balestrieri  
821 Passo Punta Masiennera  
822 Sporting Club Monte Spada  
823 Arcu Correboi  
824 Genna Silana  
825 Serpeddi

### Poland

826 Przehyba  
827 Przelec Okraj  
828 Przelec Salmopolska  
829 Przelec Krowiarki  
830 Glodowka

### Ukraine

831 Pereval Uzhokskiy  
832 Bukovel › Áóêâäëü  
833 Pereval Vyshkivskiy  
834 Pereval Nikitskiy  
835 Ai-Petri › Àé-Ïàòðè

### Czech Republic

836 Vrbatova Bouda  
837 Špindlerova Bouda  
838 Suchý vrch  
839 Cervenohorské Sedlo  
840 Pradid  
841 Pancír  
842 Klet'

## BIG Review 2013

### Slovakia

- 843 Tatliakovo jazero
- 844 Sedlo Certovica
- 845 Slieszky Dom
- 846 Martinské Hole
- 847 Skalka
- 848 Sitno
- 849 Panske Sedlo

### Hungary

- 850 Dobogóko
- 851 Galyateto
- 852 Kékesteto
- 853 Pannonhalma
- 854 Felső-Borovnyák
- 855 Misina

### Romania

- 856 Pasul Prislop
- 857 Pasul Tihuta
- 858 Pasul Ciumarna
- 859 Pasul Rarău
- 860 Pasul Bicz
- 861 Páltinis
- 862 Pasul Bălea
- 863 Pasul Bran
- 864 Stana de Vale
- 865 Pasul Bratocea

### Georgia

- 1876 Goderdzi pass
- 1877 Zagar pass

### Russian Federation

- 866 Ex-Ussr 01
- 867 Ex-Urss 02
- 868 Ex-Urss 03
- 869 Ex-Urss 04
- 870 Ex-Urss 05
- 871 Ex-Urss 06
- 872 Ex-Urss 07
- 873 Ex-Urss 08
- 874 Ex-Urss 09
- 875 Ex-Urss 10

### Slovenia

- 876 Vršic
- 877 Rogla
- 878 Mariborsko Pohorje
- 879 Crnivec
- 880 Mangrtško Sedlo
- 881 Pavlicevo Sedlo

### Croatia

- 882 šljeme
- 883 Ucka Vojak
- 884 Motovun
- 885 Vratnik
- 886 Óltare
- 887 Stara Vrata
- 888 Nevoljas Pass
- 889 Sveti Jure

### Bosnia-Herzegovina

- 890 Kupreška Vrata
- 891 Makljen
- 892 Mrakovica
- 893 Jahorina
- 894 Metaljka
- 895 Cemerno

### Serbia

- 896 Mount Avala
- 897 Iriski Venac
- 898 Kapaonik
- 899 Vincina Voda

### Montenegro

- 900 Cakor
- 901 Orjen
- 902 Durmitor Sedlo
- 903 Njegošev Mausolej
- 904 Crkvine

### Macedonia

- 905 Popova Sapka
- 906 Bukovo
- 907 Babuna Pass

### Greece

- 908 Vitsi
- 909 Lailias ski center
- 910 Pissoderi ski center
- 911 Hortiatis
- 912 Seli ski center
- 913 Pantokrator
- 914 Prionia-Olympos >
- 915 Megalo Papingo
- 916 Katara Pass
- 917 Great Meteoro
- 918 Pliasiidhi
- 919 Velouchi ski center
- 920 Mount Didima
- 921 Fterolaka ski center
- 922 Enos de Kefalonia
- 923 Apollo Epikourios
- 924 Mycenae Citadel
- 925 Karabola-Parnitha
- 926 Oligirtos
- 927 Kosmas Pass
- 928 Langáda Pass
- 929 Omalos
- 930 Akones
- 931 Idéón Antron
- 932 Giouhtas
- 933 Asfendilia
- 934 Dikteon Andre

### Bulgaria

- 935 Aleko-Vitosha
- 936 Trojanski Prohod
- 937 Sipcenski Prohod
- 938 Maljovica Complex
- 939 Rilski Manastir

- 940 Rožen Manastir
- 941 Popski Preslop
- 942 Snežhanka

### Albania

- 943 Rožafá
- 944 Qafá ë Llogorasë

### Cyprus

- 945 Chryssorrogiatissa
- 946 Makarios Grave
- 947 Olympus
- 948 Adelphi
- 949 Makheras
- 950 Stavrovouini

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951-1000

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4	VAN ELS Wim 712	37 MORALES GARCIA A. 358	70 LALOUX Michel 260
5	SPEED Kevin 687	38 PIRET Véronique 357	71 SVEHLIK Karel 260
6	JACQUEMIN Dominiq. 682	39 BERASATEGI Ruben 349	72 PELISSIER Michel 258
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19	HUL Philip 447	52 DEWEZ Rudy 296	85 HERNOT Bertrand 236
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13	TORELLI Cecilia	70
14	SASIK Rastislav	67
15	HILSON Daniel	66
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41	ELLAURI IB. M	34
42	KUBELE Petr	33
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45	BETTA Enrico	33
46	NILSON Jerry	33
47	SPEICH Mike	33
48	VONHEYDEBRECK A	33
49	SEGUY Marc	32
50	LOPEZ ROBLES Cr	32

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5	DEKKERS Helmuth	5
6	SPINA Luigi	4
7	KREICSI Gabor	4
8	PUSKAS Aladár	3
9	COUCKE Raphaël	3
10	CASTAGNOLI Giordano	3
11	HOCHULI Olivier	3
12	WEYTMANS Christiaan	3
13	CATTANEO Luciano	3
14	EUSSEN Thomas	3
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# THE YEARLY CLASSEMENTS – PALMARES

## 1985

1 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
39 claims  
2 LONGO Jeannie 32 claims  
3 MAYEUR Etienne 22 claims

## 1986

1 CHATEL Pierre 22 claims  
2 BERNARD Patrick 19 claims  
3 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
19 claims

## 1987

1 VAN DEN BREE Fred 21  
claims  
2 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
20 claims  
3 MEIRESONNE Jaap 18  
claims

## 1988

1 MAYEUR Etienne 28 claims  
2 JACQUEMIN Alain 22  
claims  
3 RUIZ-OPITZ Mario 21  
claims

## 1989

1 JACQUEMIN Dominique 42  
claims  
2 JACQUEMIN Alain 42 cl  
3 MAYEUR Etienne 33 claims

## 1990

1 JACQUEMIN Alain 51  
claims  
2 MAYEUR Etienne 44 claims  
3 JACQUEMIN Dominique 37  
claims

## 1991

1 MAYEUR Etienne 104  
claims  
2 JACQUEMIN Alain 61  
claims  
3 JACQUEMIN Dominique 50  
claims

## 1992

1 JACQUEMIN Dominique 50  
claims  
2 MAYEUR Etienne 42 claims  
3 JACQUEMIN Alain 31  
claims

## 1993

1 LUCAS Eric 56 claims  
2 WINTER Charles 45 claims

3 JACQUEMIN Dominique 45  
claims

## 1994

1 JACQUEMIN Dominique 38  
claims  
2 LUCAS Eric 38 claims BEG  
3 JACQUEMIN Alain 33  
claims

## 1995

1 LUCAS Eric 64 claims BEG  
2 JACQUEMIN Dominique 49  
claims  
3 MAYEUR Etienne 38 claims

## 1996

1 MAYEUR Etienne 35 claims  
BEG  
2 JACQUEMIN Dominique 34  
claims  
3 JACQUEMIN Alain 32  
claims

## 1997

1 MAYEUR Etienne 52 claims  
2 SPINA Luigi 19 claims BIG  
3 HERNOT Bertrand 18 claims

## 1998

1 MAYEUR Etienne 41 claims  
2 PRUIJSEN Rolf 38 claims  
3 FARAZIJN Peter 30 claims

## 1999

1 SAINZ-PENA Luis Miguel  
69 claims  
2 MAYEUR Etienne 36 claims  
3 TAYLOR Martin 24 claims

## 2000

1 HUL Philip 34 claims  
2 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
28 claims  
3 BORSJE Martin 26 claims

## 2001

1 OOSTRA Ard 48 claims  
2 HUL Philip 47 claims  
3 VAN ELS Wim 39 claims

## 2002

1 LUCAS Eric 50 claims  
2 HUL Philip 36 claims  
3 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
33 claims

## 2003

1 VAN HECKE Marnix 58  
claims BIG  
2 HUL Philip 52 claims BIG  
3 LUCAS Eric 42 claims

## 2004

1 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
45 claims  
2 DEMIGUEL Juanjo 39  
claims  
3 DEMIGUEL Jesus 39 claims

## 2005

1 LUCAS Eric 53 claims  
2 DEJACE Jules 46 claims  
3 HINK Mark 38 claims

## 2006

1 VAN AMEIJDEN Richard  
77 claims  
2 LUCAS Eric 73 claims BEG  
3 MARIANI Danilo 60 claims

## 2007

1 LEUFKENS Jos 125 claims  
2 LUCAS Eric 91 claims  
3 HARLE Guy 70 claims

## 2008

1 CANDAU François 135  
claims  
2 HILSON Daniel 91 claims  
3 JACQUEMIN Gilles 77  
claims

## 2009

1 VAN ELS Wim 172 claims  
2 SPINA Luigi 172 claims  
3 TORELLI Cecilia 161 claims

## 2010

1 BOSDIJK Rob 153 claims  
2 TAYLOR Martin 151 claims  
3 VAN ELS Wim 121 claims

## 2011

1 MAYEUR Etienne 154  
claims  
2 TAYLOR Martin 136 claims  
3 RECKHAUS Juergen 108  
claims

## 2012

1 TAYLOR Martin 124 claims  
2 MOGA Claudiu 104 claims  
3 BOSDIJK Rob 96 claims

**Classement over the years / Classement à travers toutes les années**

1: Wim Van Els et Luigi Spina	172
3: Etienne Mayeur	154
4: Cecilia Torelli	161
5: Rob Bosdijk	153
6: Martin Taylor	151
7: François Candau	135
8: Jos Leufkens	125
9: Juergen Reckhaus et Claudiu Moga	104

**Analysis**

We can see all over the years that an incredible increasing happened in the maximum of claims a year. Etienne opened the way in the early 90's but in the last years the amount of claims over 100 a year are legions. Very numerous. The last 6 years, every time many members claimed largely over this round number.

The beginning showed some same names every year. Those names are always now on the top of the general classement. Their main characteristic is the regularity. Some other ones came afterwards and made incredible scores with the marvelous battle between Luigi and Wim, ending with a friendly draw in the year 2009. One of the best pages in the B.I.G's history on my own.

The amazing highest scores mean that more than one day on two, the member climbed a big during this full year. Do you imagine climbing one big yourself one day on three or one day on four ? That's what they did. It's a challenge, it's a feat !

Of course, this classement is just like the other ones, just behind the main general classement, counting the total of bigs claimed in one's life. But other classements help to find motivation and to stimulate the passion that we have all inside ourselves once again. It's a tremendous life, always reacted by a new idea of climbing, by a new classement, by a new social subscription in an association.

Cycloclimbing is a battle of every year of our life, showing to those who know us that we have this kind of spirit inside ourselves, for always.



Luigi Spina



Wim van Els

# Charts and Stats of the BIG-challenge in 2012

Do you know that in the year 2012 ...????

## In the meetings

- 41 members took part in the Tatra meeting somewhere
- 22 members took part in the regional hungarian meeting
- 22 members took part in the regional german meeting
- 11 members took part in the Ironbig-day in the Cauberg.

## About the evolution of the amount of members

- 2003 : 277 (+84)
- 2004 : 360 (+83)
- 2005 : 440 (+80)
- 2006 : 535 (+95)
- 2007 : 634 (+98)
- 2008 : 1863 (+1229)
- 2009 : 2665 (+802)
- 2010 : 3398 (+733)
- 2011 : 3992 (+694)
- 2012 : 4424 (+432)

*This period shows some stability in the increasing during the life of our old website (subscription through an excel file to fill personally)*

*This period shows a big boom with an higher yearly increasing than before but a decreasing of those increasing numbers.*

## Quality of the increasing (active members)

Members with more than 500 bigs : 3 (end 2007) --> 13 (end 2012)

Members with more than 164 bigs : 70 (end 2007) --> 154 (end 2012)

Members with more than 30 bigs : 398 (end 2007) --> 1361 (end 2012)

## Yearly classement

Largely more than 1.000 members claim each year at least one new big.

1144 precisely in the year 2012 with 319 members claiming more than 10 bigs inside those twelve months.

*Attention please ! Those classements only ranked those who declared the year of their claims.*

## Contributions

139 contributors in 2008 for 259 in 2012.

It increased but it was 8% of the members in 2008 against only 5% in 2012.

## Visitors in the website

The amount of visitors in the year 2012 is simply **67.190** visitors.

That means around 200 different visitors a day with 350 real visits inside those 24 hours (some are coming back in the website the same day after a first visit).

The average visit is a visit long of a time located between 5 and 15 minutes.

They are surfing in approximatively 25 pages inside our challenge's website.

The main months are the summer ones.

The main hours are at 1PM and at 8PM everyday.

## Clothes

Ordered in 2012 :

- 11 jerseys
- 6 shorts
- 2 pirat pans
- 13 ruckbags
- 3 gloves

## Best BIG's climbed

- Alpe d'Huez 1684
- Col du Galibier 1640
- Mont Ventoux 1570
- Cauberg 1349
- Col de la Croix-de-Fer 1317
- Keutenberg 1258
- Eyserbos 1215
- Drielandenpunt 1214
- Côte de la Redoute 1213
- Gulpenerberg 1140

## Women

193 women are ranked in our classement.

## Godfathers

There are 175 godfathers

- 61 in 2010
- 37 in 2011
- 77 in 2012

## Forum

298 members subscribed in the forum

4176 posts

Record : 2382 in the magyar forum

## Newsletters

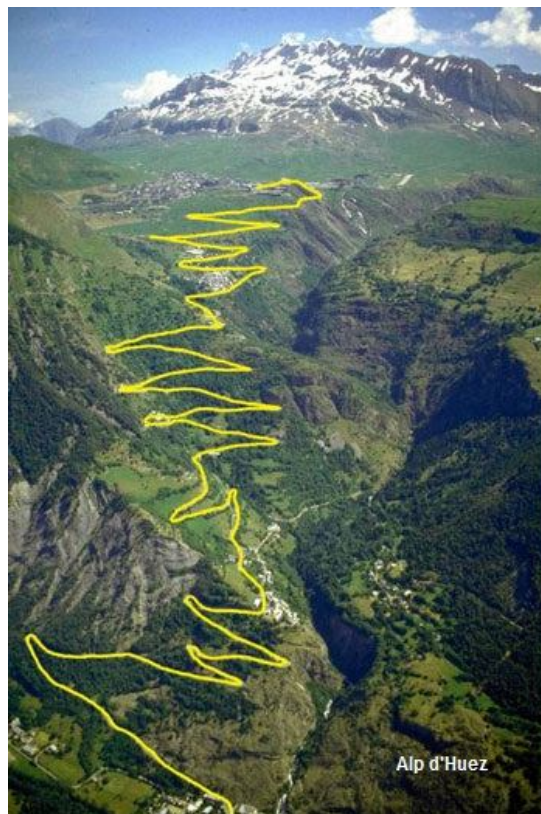
Since the beginning, 20 newsletters had been edited

That means more than 100 different newsletters, according to the different languages

## Countries

Here are the countries with more than 1000 claims all together among the fellowcountrymen

- |               |       |                  |      |
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|
| • Netherlands | 44355 | • Switzerland    | 3170 |
| • Belgium     | 30088 | • Czech Republic | 2966 |
| • France      | 21238 | • Hungary        | 2763 |
| • Italy       | 15158 | • England        | 2339 |
| • Spain       | 14448 | • Poland         | 1118 |
| • Germany     | 7298  |                  |      |



# Plan B.I.G 2013-2014

Just like we promised before, we'll explain you our way to work and manage the B.I.G challenge in the coming two years 2013-2014 in 4 points : the committee, the website, the targets and the general philosophy.

Comme promis, nous allons vous expliquer notre plan de travail et d'organisation pour les deux années 2013 et 2014 à venir en 4 points : le comité, le site web, les objectifs et la philosophie générale.



## 1. The committee

No change in the Leading Committee.

Some national managers left us for personal reasons or simply because they don't feel so useful at this place during the last two years. Some other ones are coming in their national group. There are still places to be taken.

Etienne Mayeur and Axel Jansen will organize the meeting 2013 in the Belgian Ardennes. Claudio Montefusco will organize the meeting 2014 in Catalogna.

The material managers don't move (webmaster, clothes, trophies, zone12, review, stickers)

The database managers have a new coming delegate to whom we send our welcome and our great thank for a laborious job : Daniel Briollet. He will correct the faults observed in the database. The other ones stay on their place.

The filter group will stay with our 2 winners of the superlist1000, to dispatch your requests about the database and to overview the building of the national challenges. The judges of the list disappear for 2 years because there will be, as stated two years ago, no more change in the superlist until 2015.

The newsletter team saw the exit of our secretary who will work differently for the challenge and will have a new shape for the newsletter in 2013 and 2014, always threemonthly, but shorter with tweets, videos and photos, classements showing the summary of the last three months. There are still several translators but we need some other ones to translate those short tweets into all the languages of the website with a start in english or french language.

Finally a good strong team with old committee's members and new ones. With query of new national managers and translators.

## 1. Le comité

Aucun changement dans le Comité Directeur.

Quelques délégués nationaux sont partis pour des raisons personnelles ou simplement parce qu'ils ne se sentaient guère utiles à ce poste durant les deux dernières années. D'autres y arrivent et il reste des places à prendre.

Etienne Mayeur et Axel Jansen organiseront le rendez-vous 2013 dans les Ardenne belges. Claudio Montefusco organisera le rendez-vous 2014 en Catalogne.

Les délégués pour le matériel ne changent pas (webmaster, vêtements, trophées, zone12, revue, autocollants)

Les délégués pour la base de données ont un nouvel apport en la personne de Daniel Briollet à qui nous adressons nos voeux de bienvenue et qui se chargera de la lourde tâche de corriger les erreurs constatées dans cette base de données. Les autres conservent leur poste.

Le groupe filtre reste en fonction avec nos deux lauréats de la superliste1000 afin de filtrer les requêtes concernant des modifications dans la superliste et d'aider la constitution des listes en vue des challenges nationaux. Les juges de la liste disparaissent pour deux ans, vu qu'il n'y aura aucun changement, comme décidé il y a deux ans, jusqu'en 2015.

L' équipe du bulletin voit la sortie de notre secrétaire qui va oeuvrer différemment dorénavant pour le B.I.G. Le bulletin, toujours trimestriel aura une nouvelle configuration, sera plus court et sera composé de tweets, vidéos et photos, classements établissant un résumé des trois derniers mois. Nos traducteurs sont toujours au poste mais nous avons besoin d'autres traducteurs pour traduire ces petits tweets dans toutes les langues de notre site à partir du français ou de l'anglais tous les trois mois.

Finalement, un bon compromis entre anciens et nouveaux membres avec juste deux requêtes pour de nouveaux délégués nationaux et de nouveaux traducteurs.

## BIG Review 2013

### 2. The website in 2013-2014

- 1) National challenges
  - \* Opening of the two promised pages (list+classement) for every stamped B.I.G new national challenge (january 2013)
- 2) Newsletters new shape
  - \* Opening of a new, more automatic, more simple and shorter shape for the threemonthly newsletter (march 2013)
- 3) PDF roadbook
  - \* Creation of a PDF roadbook just like Passacol being able to be printed by a member when looking at some precise big of the superlist 1000
- 4) File to compare
  - \* Possibility to query the way to compare 4 or 5 given bigs of the superlist according to some definite criteria, under tables for datas and different profiles on the same graphic
- 5) Cross hair function
  - \* To have a cross hair function on the profile that shows height, distance and possibly also the gradient.
- 6) Neighbourhood maps and lists
  - \* To be able to read the list of the bigs near a given city where a member stays, and if possible the link to the map.
- 7) Form for datas/faults
  - \* To create a form that members can fill to signalize faults in the database.
- 8) Transfer more easy to GPS
  - \* On the maps to be downloadable as GPX track for a GPS device.
- 9) Help for administration
  - \* To allow them to find easily some query like all the emails of a same country,...
- 10) Fixing of old problems
  - \* To allow the members to claim an old big, an internal mail to contain a hyperlink,...

### 3. Our targets 2013-2014

- TARGET 1 - Superlist 1000 stability
- a) no change one/one until 31/12/2014
  - b) updates and corrections of the faults in the current database, slowly but surely, thank to the filter group which will dispatch the requests of the members into those about changes in the list or about sides (filter group) and corrections to update ( Daniel Briollet's work).
  - c) A private site called Tribuweb in the committee will keep the track of those suggestions and corrections.
- Target 2 – Financial helps
- a) Creation of PACKS with a price of of 50 € giving the right to the subscription, the access to all the pages of the website, the annual review, the last diploma with a new design, a ruckbag and a BIG-jersey shorts sleeves = value 81 €- that means 31 €won) - WELCOME PACK in 2013 for the first 30 members paying 50 €for it, who have only paid until yet a contribution of 5 €(not more not less), and who will answer properly to 3 questions about the BIG-challenge. (online in the website during january 2013) - FIDELITY PACK in 2014 for the first 30 members paying 50 € for it , who have paid a contribution of 15 €and more the last 5 years and who will answer properly to 3 questions about the BIG-challenge. (online in the website during january 2014)
  - b) Material help of 200 €meeting to the annual meetings, thank to the money won by the previous meetings.
  - c) Material help of 200 €in one shot for new stickers more adapted against UV.
  - d) Websmaster's work around 500 €/year.
- TOTAL BUDGET: 3460 €for both years together.

### 2. Le site web en 2013-2014

- 1) Challenges nationaux
  - \* Ouverture des deux pages promises (liste+classement) pour tout nouveau challenge national labellisé BIG ( janvier 2013)
- 2) Nouvelle forme des bulletins
  - \* Ouverture d'une nouvelle présentation des bulletins trimestriels, plus automatiques, plus courts et plus efficaces
- 3) PDF livre de bord
  - \* Création d'un livre de bord en format PDF genre Passacol imprimable par un membre qui désire les caractéristiques d'un ou plusieurs bigs donnés
- 4) Fichier pour comparer
  - \* Possibilité de chercher à comparer des bigs entre eux par un tableau comparatif de données ou par des profils superposés sur un même graphique
- 5) Icône pointeur
  - \* Avoir un icone pointeur sur un profil qui montrerait les distances à parcourir, les altitudes et éventuellement les pourcentages de l'endroit pointé.
- 6) Voisinage par listes et cartes
  - \* A partir d'un endroit où nous nous trouvons, avoir la possibilité de demander une liste des bigs les plus proches indiqués sur une carte
- 7) Formulaire pour les erreurs de la base de données
  - \* Editer un formulaire où nos membres peuvent nous signaler les erreurs constatées dans la base de données
- 8) Transfert plus simple vers les GPS
  - \* Pouvoir télécharger à partir de la carte les tracés GPX pour une utilisation GPS.
- 9) Aide administrative
  - \* Permettre la recherche rapide de caractéristiques par le comité, comme la liste des emails de membres d'un même pays,...
- 10) Fixation d'anciens problèmes
  - \* Permettre aux membres de déclarer un ancien big, autoriser les hyperliens dans les mails internes au site,...

### 3. Nos objectifs 2013-2014

- OBJECTIF 1 - Superlist 1000 stabilité
- a) aucun changement un contre un jusqu'au 31/12/2014
  - b) mises à jour et corrections des erreurs existant dans notre base de données, lentement mais sûrement, grâce au groupe filtre qui dispatchera les requêtes des membres entre celles qui concernent des changements au sujet des versants (pour lui-même) et celles qui demandent des corrections (travail de D.Briollet)
  - c) maintien du site interne au comité Tribuweb qui conservera les traces de toutes ces requêtes et de leur suivi.
- Objectif 2 – Aides financières
- a) Création de LOTS B.I.G au prix de 50 € donnant droit à la cotisation, l'accès au site complet, la revue annuelle, le dernier diplôme sous une nouvelle forme, un sac à dos B.I.G et enfin un maillot été B.I.G à manches courtes = valeur de 81 €- donc 31 € gagnés. - LOT DE BIENVENUE en 2013 pour les 30 premiers membres ayant payé 50 €pour ce lot, qui n'ont jusqu'à présent payé que des cotisations à 5€(ni plus ni moins) et qui répondront correctement à 3 questions sur le challenge B.I.G (à paraître sur le site en janvier) - LOT DE FIDELITE en 2014 pour les 30 premiers membres ayant payé 50 €pour ce lot, qui ont payé les 5 dernières années des cotisations d'au-moins 15€et qui répondront correctement à 3 questions sur le challenge B.I.G (à paraître sur le site en janvier 2014)
  - b) Aide matérielle de 200 €rendez-vous pour les rendez-vous annuels officiels, grâce à l'argent récolté par les boni des rendez-vous précédents.
  - c) Aide matérielle de 200 €en une fois pour l'achat de nouveaux auto-collants meilleurs contre les UV.

## BIG Review 2013

### Target 3 – More functional informations

- a) translation of all the news (around 50 a year) in all the languages of the website
- b) edition of a 2 pages-newsletter threemonthly in all the languages of the website with more links and more titles and short descriptions but less texts than now.

### Target 4 Particular classements

- a) New dynamism for the members lower in the classement (under 100) with the edition of all the members before him until the score of 100.
- b) Analysis if we'll introduce new classements instead of the classements by age in the classement's page to motivate some particular mentalities inside our members, like the ones who want to give honour to those who have climbed the most difficult bigs, the most touristic ones, the most legendary ones,...)

### Target 5 - Parallel challenges

- a) Start of the national challenges with the introduction of 2 pages for every new national challenge allowed : the list of the climbs and the general classement. Technical help for their external websites by imitation of the ironbig website.

### Target 6 – Preparation of the 2015 curve

- a) contact one by one of the committee's and old committee's members by the president
- b) edition of a synthesis of those contacts at the end of the year 2014
- c) management of a week-end meeting around a table during the winter 2014-2015 to vote about this eventual curve and to thank the workers of the 30 first years of the challenge.

### Target 7 – Website

- a) Website suited to the situation and ameliorated by following our designed points to manage (see 2/4 plan 2013-2014), according to the financial plan too (see target 2)

### Target 8 – Clearer committee

- a) creation of jobs'descriptions to know better who is making what and to whom the members must send a mail to have an answer to their questions or a feedback to their suggestions.

### Target 9 – Value setting of our 1000 bigs

- a) To give some reputation to our 1000 bigs, contacts with the municipalities having the bigs inside, through the national managers, for inclusions in promotional touristic papers and eventual roadsigns.

### Target 10 – Contacts with other associations

First contacts with MDF, UIC, OCD,CCC,Cima, to look to eventual interests in the future of common meetings, beginning with two associations only in 2016 and more later, if it works, an eventual «one shot» great meeting.



- d) Payment du webmestre budgétisé à 500 €an  
TOTAL BUDGET: 3460 €au total des deux années.

### Objectif 3 – Informations plus fonctionnelles

- a) traductions de toutes les news (infos-environ 50 par an) dans toutes les langues du site
- b) edition d'un bulletin trimestriel de 2 pages dans toutes les langues du site avec plus de liens, moins de textes qui seront sous forme de tweets, et des résumés clairs et efficaces.

### Objectif 4 - Classements particuliers

- a) Dynamisation des membres du classement général ayant moins de 100 bigs avec l'édition de tous les membres devant eux jusqu'au score de 100, pour témoigner de leur remontée.
- b) Analyse du fait de savoir si on va remplacer les classements par âge apparaissant dans la page des classements par des classements rejoignant des mentalités fort demandées, comme ceux qui veulent mettre à l'honneur la valeur sportive de leurs ascensions réalisées dans la liste, ou la valeur culturelle, voire leur légende,...

### Objectif 5 : Challenges parallèles

- a) Lancement des challenges nationaux avec l'introduction de 2 pages pour chaque challenge national labellisé B.I.G : la liste des ascensions et le classement général de ce challenge. Aide technique pour le site externe en imitation, s'ils le souhaitent, du site de l'ironbig.

### Objectif 6 – Préparation du virage de 2015

- a) contacts individualisés par le président à ce sujet avec les membres nouveaux ou anciens du comité
- b) edition d'une synthèse de ces contacts avant la fin 2014
- c) organisation d'un rendez-vous autour d'une table pendant l'hiver 2014-2015 afin de voter au sujet de cet éventuel grand virage et d'honorer les membres actifs de ces 30 premières années.

### Objectif 7 – Site web

- a) Site web adapté à la situation et amélioré en suivant les points déterminés dans le chapitre de notre plan 2013-2014 qui concernait le site web en accord avec notre plan financier (voir objectif 2)

### Objectif 8 – Comité plus clair

- a) création de descriptions de tâches afin de mieux savoir qui fait quoi et à qui doivent s'adresser les membres pour maximiser le retour à leurs questions ou suggestions.

### Objectif 9 – Mise en valeur de notre superliste

- a) Afin d'augmenter la réputation des bigs de notre superliste 1000, prise de contact avec les municipalités possédant l'un d'eux sur leur territoire, pour les inclure dans leurs dépliants touristiques, voire installer un panneau routier indiquant le numéro big et son nom.

### Objectif 10 – Contacts avec les autres associations

Premiers contacts avec les associations MDF, UIC, OCD,CCC,Cima, pour voir s'ils envisagent un intérêt quelconque dans le futur à organiser en commun des rendez-vous d'abord à deux associations dès 2016 puis un gigantesque grand rendez-vous collégial plus tard.



**4. OUR GENERAL PHILOSOPHY**

**a) NEVER COMMERCIAL**

Since the beginning, the B.I.G challenge always tried to be soft financially speaking, no sponsorship, no necessary need to pay to subscribe, no financial interest, with the goal to avoid the loss of our natural freedom to manage the challenge only by ourselves.

**b) BALANCE BETWEEN INCREASING AND STABILITY**

The throwing of the website in the B.I.G-world increased very (too ?) rapidly the amount of members in the beginning of the 21st century. Now since 2010, we tried to stabilize and we'll wait for 2015 before trying a new impulsion with an eventual new boom of members, just before a new phase of stability, to enlarge our basis before giving it more fixed structure.

**c) FRIENDS BEFORE, RANKED AFTERWARDS**

We always tried to give more importance to the tops to reach, than to the sides to ride. Of course, with some short walls, the side is important but those kinds of B.I.Gs are very few in our superlist. We reach points in a map with the pride to have reached them on the bike. The classement isn't the main priority, but the experiences shared on the same places make us unified, even if our way to communicate is mainly virtual. Friends before, ranked afterwards.

**d) OUR CRITERIA**

Like the president will explain in the president's words in the beginning of the coming annual review, we show the cycling world in its whole shape, through all its practices of cycloclimbing. Forever, sport, tourism and legend will be inside the B.I.G challenge, not only one of those topics.

**e) OUR PRINCIPLES**

Like we suggest for the coming lists of the national challenges and forever for the superlist, we have to keep in our mind for always the 5 principles of the lists of our favourite climbs, able to be read in our rules. The large vision of those principles always give a good dispatching in our lists, avoiding the trend to go to some very too precise cycling way of life.

**4. PHILOSOPHIE GENERALE**

**a) JAMAIS COMMERCIAL**

Depuis le commencement, le challenge B.I.G a toujours tenté de rester soft financièrement, sans sponsoring, sans absolue nécessité de payer pour s'inscrire, sans intérêt financier, avec le but d'éviter la perte de notre liberté dans l'organisation par nous-mêmes du challenge.

**b) EQUILIBRE ENTRE CROISSANCE ET STABILISATION**

Le lancement du site sur le web a provoqué une grande (trop?) croissance de nos membres d'un seul coup au début du 21e siècle. Maintenant, depuis 2010, nous avons tenté de freiner le mécanisme en privilégiant la stabilisation de nos structures. En 2015, nous redonnerons une nouvelle impulsion peut-être pour un nouveau boum, avant de stabiliser ce nouvel ensemble dans une structure forte agissant sur une base élargie.

**c) AMIS D'ABORD, CLASSES ENSUITE**

Nous avons toujours privilégié le sommet aux versants car c'est le point sommet sur la carte qui compte. Le versant n'est vraiment essentiel qu'en cas de murs très courts, ce qui est assez rare dans la superliste. Pour le reste, seule la fierté de l'avoir fait intervient. C'est pourquoi, même si nos rapports sont souvent internautes et virtuels, nous privilégions le partage de l'expérience commune au classement.

**d) NOS CRITERES**

Comme le président va le rappeler au début de la revue annuelle à venir, nous avons toujours voulu être représentants de l'entière du monde cycliste dans toutes ses formes et pratiques de la grimpe. Pour toujours, sport, tourisme et légende seront associés sans jamais privilégier l'un des 3 critères.

**e) NOS PRINCIPES**

Comme nous l'avons indiqué de manière précise dans notre règlement pour l'élaboration des listes nationales et pour le futur de notre superliste, nous devons toujours correspondre aux 5 principes du challenge. La large vision de ces principes a toujours donné à notre liste une bonne répartition, en évitant la tendance de se diriger de manière trop accrue vers une seule pratique cyclogrimpeuse.





# Our legendary BIG's

Some of our bigs are since a long time included in the classical races of one day, now in the spotlight through the world tour. Here are their names and their characteristics in the coming races of the year 2013.

Inside the classics, some bigs are since a long time in the races. For example, the Poggio in **Milan – San Remo** is the central place of the race every year. The Cipressa has been added since the 90's. Now, the Manie, just after the Turchino, first part of our Faiallo, has been also added.

**The tour of Flanders** is quite different since last year . The Muur in Grammont was the central place before but it has been deleted, to give the place to a triple loop including Oude Kwaremont and Paterberg. Of course, the terrible Koppenberg made its office a little before.

The **GPE3** has kept the Muur and this Muur is also the final stage of the Eneco Tour now.

**The Gent-Wevelgem** kept its loops with the Mont Cassel and the famous stones of the Kemmelberg.

The labyrinth of the road in the **Amstel Gold Race** always lead the racers through plenty of climbs, including seven of our bigs and the final part with the wall of Keutenberg and the finish in Cauberg.

**The Flèche Wallone** has always a triple loop passing by and finishing at the wall in Huy.

**Liège-Bastogne-Liège** has a first terrible section with our Wanne and Stockeu, a middle section with our Rosier and Redoute, finishing now at Ans with climbs outside our list: Roche aux Faucons and Saint-Nicolas.

**The clasicà San Sebastian** offers its double loop with the wellknown Alto de Jaizkibel up to the basque coast, in community with l'Alto de Arkalle.

**The Vatenfall Cycclassic** in Hamburg shows a triple last loop with the short wall of Waseberg.

Inside, the three great tours in this year 2013, the trend seems to go to a final hard stage with difficult climbs just before the final stage like a criterium in the capital city. Tre Cime di Lavaredo before Milano, Crêt de Châtillon (Semnoz) before Paris and Angliru before madrid. It will keep the suspense until the end. Plenty of final tops among our bigs too, like Val Martello, Galibier and Tre Cime in the **Giro** ; Mont Ventoux, Alpe d'Huez and Crêt de Châtillon in the **Tour** and Peyresourde (Peyragude), Peña Cabarga and Angliru in the **Vuelta**.

Our bigs are always in front of the news every year. Our superlist is the list of the cycling world.

## CLASSICS

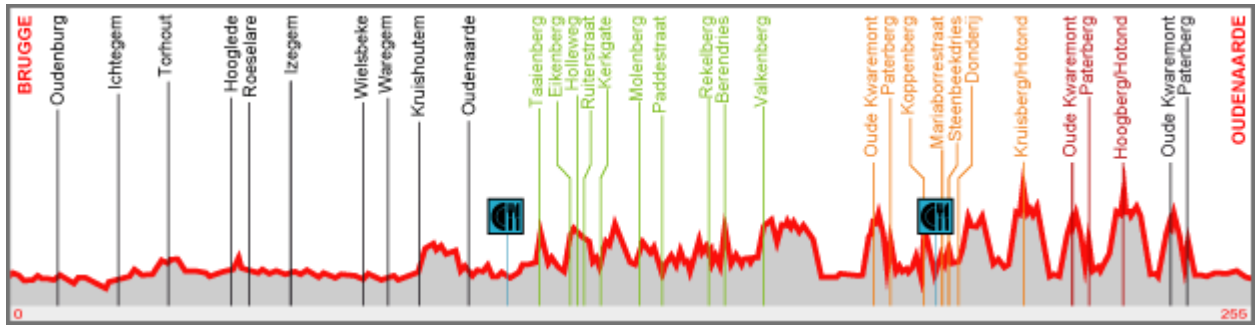
### Milan – San Remo



- Km 275 : La Cipressa (big 750)
- Km 291,5 Poggio di San Remo (big 749)
- Note : Passo del Turchino (km 142,5 = part of Passo dello Faiallo – big 754)

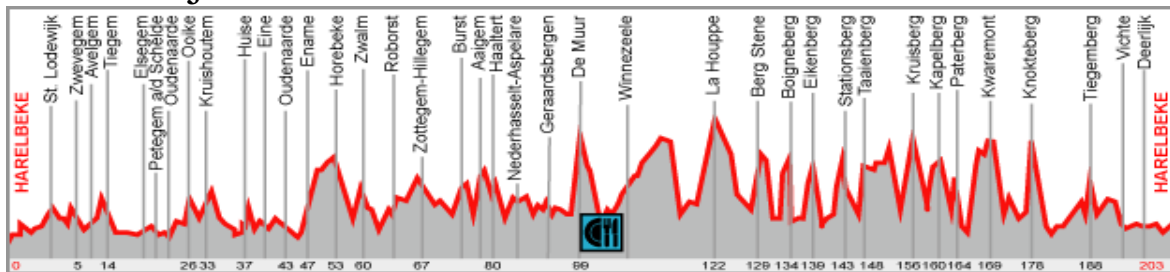


## Ronde van Vlaanderen



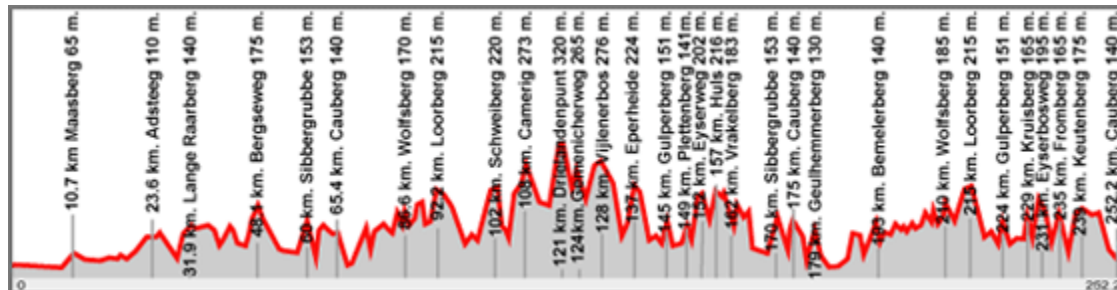
- km 177 – 218 - 238 : Oude-Kwaremont (big 115)
- km 181 – 222 – 242 : Paterberg (big 116)
- km 186 : Koppenberg (big 113)

## Grote Prijs E3



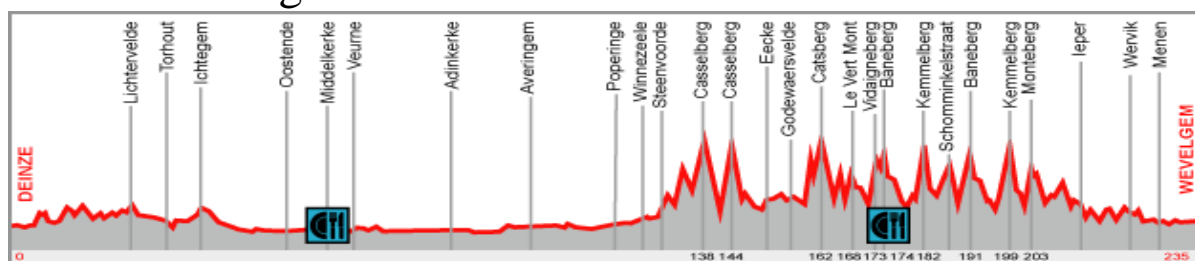
- km 99 : Muur (kapelmuur Geraardsbergen – big 117)

## Amstel Gold Race



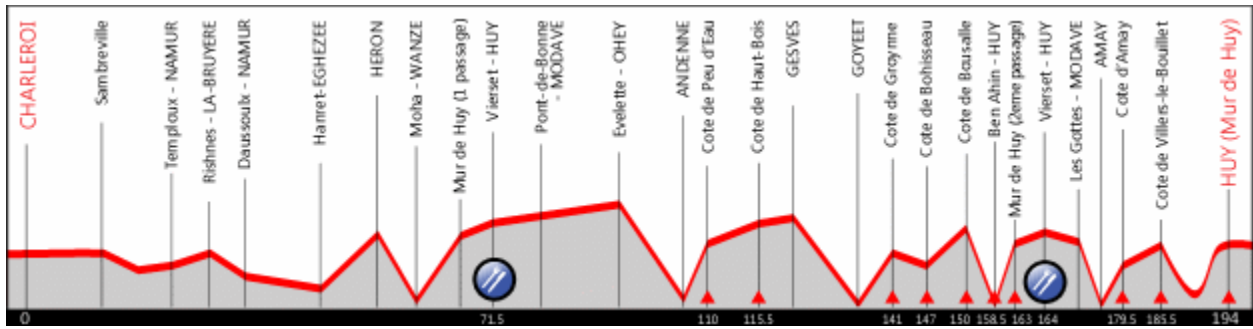
- km 65,4 – 175 – 252,5 : Cauberg (big 104)
- km 121 : Drielandenpunt (big 110)
- km 128 : Vijlenerbos (big 109)
- km 145 : 224 : Gulperberg (big 108)
- km 157 : Oude Huls (big 107)
- km 231 : Eyserbosweg (big 106)
- km 239 : Keutenberg (big 105)

## Gent – Wevelgem



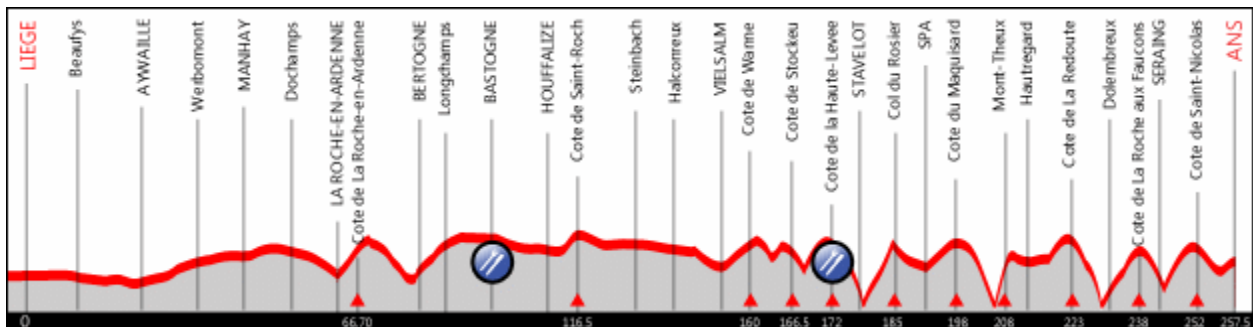
- km 138 – 144 Mont Cassel (big 211)
- km 162 – 199 Kemmelberg (big 112)

## Flèche Wallonne



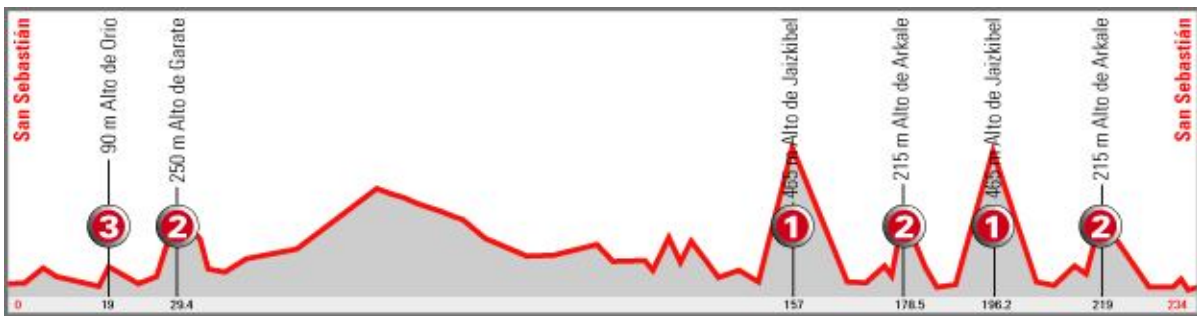
- km 68 – 163 – 194 : Mur de Huy (big 125)

## Liège-Bastogne-Liège



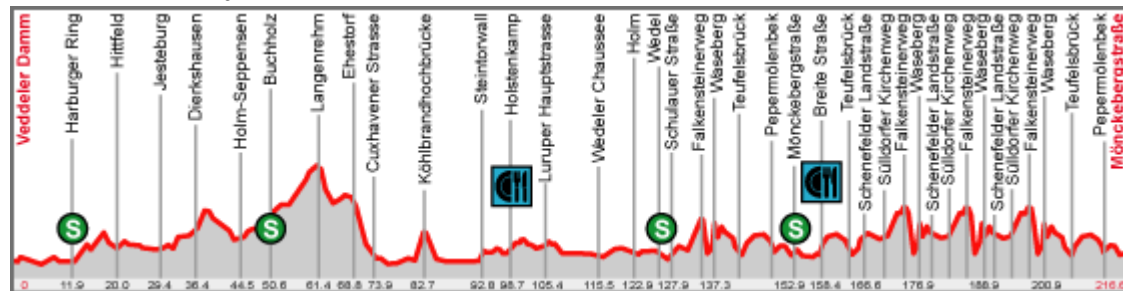
- km 160 : côte de Wanne (big 132)
- km 166,5 : Stockeu (big 133)
- km 185 : col du Rosier (big 131)
- km 223 : côte de la Redoute (big 128)

## Clasica San Sebastian



- km 157 – 196,2 : Alto de Jaizkibel (big 412)

## Vatenfall cyclastic



- km 176,9 – 188,9 – 200,9 : Waseberg (big 151)

# TOURS

## Giro d'Italia



- 10a tappa : Cason di Lanza (big 722)
- 15a tappa : Mont Cenis (big 288) Col du Galibier (big 291)
- 16a tappa : Mont Cenis (big 288)
- 19a tappa : Passo di Gavia (big 696) Passo dello Stelvio (big 697) Val Martello (big 698)
- 20a tappa : Passo di Giau (big 716) Tre Cime di Lavaredo (big 719)

## Tour de France



- 8e étape : Col de Pailhères (big 357)
- 9e étape : Portet d'Aspet (big 288) Col de Mente (big 291) Col de Peyresourde (big 348) Col d'Azet (big 347)
- 15e étape : Mont Ventoux (big 301)
- 18e étape : Alpe d'Huez x2 (big 290)
- 19e étape : Croix-de-Fer (big 287) Col de la Madeleine (big 280) Col de la Croix-Fry (big 277)
- 20e étape : Mont Revard (big 267) Crêt de Châtillon (big 265)

## Vuelta a España



- 11a etapa : El Moncayo (big 447)
- 14a etapa : Port d'Envalira (big 439) Coll de Ordino (big 437)
- 15a etapa : Coll de Cantò(big 428) Collado de la Bonaigua (big 426) Port de Balès (big 363) Col de Peyresourde (big 348)
- 18a etapa : Estacas de Trueba (big 406) Peña Cabarga (big 408)
- 20a etapa : L'Angliru (big 393)

### L'Angliru



# Dépenses et recettes 2012

## Outcomings and incomings 2012

Tous les montants sont exprimés en Euro. All the amounts are expressed in Euro.

### 1) Situation au 31/12/2011 / Financial situation on the 31/12/2011

Solde du compte Fortis / Balance of the Fortis account	4343,23
Solde du compte PayPal / Balance of the PayPal account	102,87
Solde du compte "vêtements" / Balance of the "clothes" account	151,66

Stocks :

- vêtements / clothes (valeur : 1922,00)
- sacs à dos / rucksacks
- auto-collants / stickers
- ramettes de papier / paper sheets blocks
- couvertures plastifiées / laminated covers
- enveloppes / envelopes

Au 31/12/2011, il y avait 3987 membres dont 303 cotisants 2011.

On the date of 31/12/2011, there were 3987 members, 303 of them were 2011 contributors.

### 2) Dépenses / Outcomings

Revue / Reviews	509,75
Diplômes et médailles / Diplomas and medals	202,04
Vêtements / Clothes	868,70
Frais postaux pour / Postage for :	
• revues / reviews	236,41
• diplômes et médailles / diplomas and medals	24,75
• vêtements / clothes	141,65
Total frais postaux / Total postage	402,81
Site Web / Website	399,30
Rendez-vous / Meeting	3764,17
Frais bancaires / Bank charges for :	
• Fortis	89,07
• PayPal	84,06
• Compte "vêtements" / "clothes" account	0,90
<i>Total frais bancaires / Total bank charges</i>	174,03
<b>Total dépenses / Total outcomings</b>	<b>6320,80</b>



## BIG Review 2013

### 3) Recettes / Incomings

Cotisations / Contributions	3070,32
Vêtements / Clothes	1132,80
Rendez-vous / Meeting	4381,00
Intérêts Fortis / Fortis interest	1,90
<b>Total recettes / Total incomings</b>	<b>8586,02</b>

### 4) Situation au 31/12/2012 / Financial situation on the 31/12/2012

Solde du compte Fortis / Balance of the Fortis account	6241,26
Solde du compte PayPal / Balance of the PayPal account	382,81
Solde du compte "vêtements" / Balance of the "clothes" account	238,91

Stocks :

- vêtements / clothes (valeur : 1942,50)
- sacs à dos / rucksacks
- auto-collants / stickers
- ramettes de papier / paper sheets blocks
- couvertures plastifiées / laminated covers
- enveloppes / envelopes

Au 31/12/2012, il y avait 4424 membres dont 260 cotisants 2012.

On the date of 31/12/2012, there were 4424 members, 260 of them were 2012 contributors.

Note : Une partie des paiements concernant le rendez-vous dans les Tatras (445,33) a été effectuée en 2011.

Note : The payments concerning the meeting in the Tatras have been done partly (445,33) in 2011.



# Vier dagen BIGgenjacht in de Benelux

**Johan de GROOT**

Nou ja, de Benelux is niet helemaal waar. Ik wilde starten in Noord Frankrijk bij BIG 211. Het plan was om 25 BIG's te rijden in vier dagen.

Daardoor zou ik zone 3 hebben volbracht en en passant ook Noord Frankrijk.

Woensdagmiddag, eind november, vertrok ik uit Groningen om vijf uur later op het Vlaamse platteland te eindigen bij B&B De Diligence in Heuvelland de Klijte. Een soort ranch, maar dan op z'n Belgisch.

Van daar was het ongeveer 30 kilometer naar Mont Cassel

(BIG 211). 's Avonds zocht ik uit hoe ik moest rijden. Wat bleek? De B&B lag precies midden tussen BIG 212, 111 en 112. Ik wijzigde mijn plan. De volgende dag dus direct na het ontbijt op de fiets en daarna pas naar Mont Cassel. Vandaar naar BIG 118 (een uur met de auto) en dan BIG 114, 115 en 113.

Eerst de avond maar eens genieten van Ajax. Dat was een drama.

De volgende ochtend een vroeg ontbijt, zodat bij het kriecken van de dag gestart kon worden. De waardin vond gebakken eieren niet goed voor een wielrenner. Haar hele familie

zat op de fiets en daar waren gebakken eieren uit den boze. Voor mij maakte ze een uitzondering en het smaakte me prima. Om 8.15 uur op de fiets. Het was koud. Handschoenen aan en regenjas over de fietskleding. Het was moeilijk te kiezen, als kind in de BIGgenstal. De GPS besliste. De dichtst bijzijnde voet van een berg moest het maar zijn. Het werd de Rodeberg, BIG 111-NE vanuit Reningelst. Een lekker opwarmertje. Niet te stijl, alleen het laatste stukje was 10%. En van de gebakken eieren had ik geen last. Vanaf de top richting Franse grens. Net daarvoor afgeslagen richting Westouter. Terug naar de top via een smal landweggetje. Ik zou er nog veel zien vandaag. Ik begreep eveneens waarom ze de wielerrondes in West-Vlaanderen 'strontkoersen' noemen.

Terug aan de top opnieuw richting de grens, maar nu ook gepasseerd richting Mont Noir (BIG 212). Voor de Belgen de Zwarteberg. Deze was saaiër dan de Rodeberg. Mont Noir ook van twee kanten gedaan, want ik was er toch. Daarna richting Kimmelberg (BIG 112). Dat werd een echte klim. Zelfs een stukje van 23% volgens het bord langs de kant van de weg. Op zich niet erg, maar op natte kasseien werd een ander verhaal. Vooral omdat ik wegbanden onder mijn mountainbike had gemonteerd. Iets te veel kracht en naar voren zitten en het achterwiel slipte door. Iets te veel achterop en ik maakte een pracht van een wheelie. Al balancerend toch mooi bovengekomen. Dat was weer kicken. Gezien de doelstelling van de dag om acht BIG's te halen, maar geen tweede beklimming gedaan. Terug bij B&B stond de waardin al te





wachten om een foto te maken en te vragen hoe het ging.

Daarna met de auto in een half uurtje naar Cassel. Een schattig dorpje wat ik al vanuit de verte zag liggen boven op de heuvel. Mijn startplaats was Sainte-Marie-Cappel. Een goed begaanbare weg, met op het eind van de klim uiteraard kasseien. Wat was ik blij dat ik de racefiets niet had meegenomen. Ook hier een tweede kant (SW vanuit Bavinchove) gedaan. Ik had niet voor niets het hele eind naar Noord Frankrijk gereden en het paste nog in het tijdschema.

Om 12.30 uur weer in de auto richting Mont-St-Aubert (BIG 118).

Ook deze van twee kanten gedaan hoewel de startplaatsen vlak bij elkaar liggen. De zuidwest kant is veel mooier. Prachtige herfstkleuren werden zichtbaar terwijl ik over een landelijk strontweggetje reed. De tijd begon te dringen om nog voor zonsondergang de laatste drie BIG's te doen. Vlug in de auto naar de voet van de Kluisberg (BIG 114S) Vandaar uit begon het eenvoudig, maar het laatste stuk was glibberig van de natte bladeren. Boven aan de top direct door naar de noordkant van de Oude Kwaremont (BIG 115). De weg daar naar toe was op mijn GPS niet duidelijk, dus dan maar over een nat bospad vol met kuilen. Dat was het voordeel van een mountainbike. Ik kwam vanzelf weer bij asfalt. Eerst een heerlijke afdaling via de Ronse Baan naar Berchem. En daarna kon ik mijn lol wel op. Bijna de hele klim van 2 km bestond uit kasseien. Gelukkig niet te stijl. Bovenaan kon ik direct weer afdalen over die mooie weg naar Bechem. Vanuit Bechem liep een nieuw fietspad over een oude spoorbaan naar Melden. De startplaats van de Koppenberg

(BIG 113). Ik ben niet snel onder de indruk van een helling, maar dit gaf 'schrik', zoals de Vlamingen zeggen. Er doemde echt een muur van kasseien op die loodrecht omhoog leek te gaan, omgeven door aarden wallen en eindigend in een bos. Met 100 km in de benen wordt het lastig. Gelukkig was het eerste stuk droog. De ervaring van de Kemmelberg kwam goed van pas op het laatste natte stuk. Boven aan de top vroeg ik mij af wat te doen. De zon ging bijna onder en doorrijden betekende ook een stuk omrijden. Dan maar over de kasseien weer naar beneden. Krijsende remmen, maar dat liever dan vol onderuit. Daarna weer over het nieuwe fietspad terug naar de Kluisberg. Achteraf had ik dus helemaal niet door het bos naar BIG 115 te gaan. Om bij de auto te komen was de kortste weg vanaf de noordkant over de Kluisberg heen. Dus het laatste klimmetje ging in de schemering. Daarna nog ruim een uur in de auto naar mijn nieuwe slaapplek. B&B Le Relais De Charlinette in Boignée. Kon ik in de auto eindelijk weer warm worden. Het laatste uur was koud geweest. Prima eten. Echt wielrennersvoer. Pasta op z'n Italiaans. West Vlaanderen zat

er op. De volgende dag stond Wallonië op het programma.

Iets later opgestaan, want de bakker had niet eerder warm brood. 8.30 uur op pad. Nog drie kwartier rijden naar Huy. Een drukke plaats, waar gelukkig net een parkeerplaats vrij kwam. In mijn herinnering was de muur van Huy (BIG 125) op tv veel breder, maar dat viel tegen. Net als het stijgingpercentage. Blij dat ik boven was. Vanuit een koude start direct volle bak omhoog was niet het ideale begin van de dag. Vanuit Huy naar Yvoir. Ik wilde BIG 120, 122 en 121 in een rit rijden. Tactisch parkeerde ik bij de voet van La Gayolle (BIG 121) zodat ik bij pech niet de maximale afstand terug zou hoeven te lopen. Ik stond geparkeerd bij een marmerfabriek. Wat een troep! Om niet weer koud met de klim te starten fietste ik eerst langs de Maas naar Triple Mur Monty (BIG 120). Richting de Maas lagen er ook nog een paar steengroeven, dus de troep op de weg was weer echt Belgisch. Mijn fiets zag er uit als na een ochtendje crossen op de Drentse heide. Langzaam begon het te regenen. Na Huy was Triple Mur Monty alweer een smerig steile klim. Bovenaan de regenjas aan en via een bredere weg weer





afgedaald richting de Maas. Wat een prachtig uitzicht! Op de terugweg werd het kouder en natter. In plaats van door te rijden naar Montagne de la Croix in Dinant (BIG 122), maar terug naar La Gayolle. Deze klim is glad en stijl en het stinkt flink naar olie. Er liggen veel oliesporen op de weg. Ook komt er nog langzaam een tegenligger aan. Niet zomaar een auto, maar een grote vrachtauto die naar beneden kroop. Dan was een landpad met van die dijken langs de kant wel lastig bij een stijging van 17%. Gelukkig liet de vrachtauto nog wat ruimte over. Omdat het koud was op de top direct omgedraaid naar de auto. Onderweg naar Montagne de la Croix lekker opgewarmd. Dat was wel nodig want deze klim was vooral de

eerste 600 meter verschrikkelijk lastig, ook nog met een nat wegdek. Gemiddeld 16,9 %! Boven was het gewoon een koud, nat en winderig landbouwgebied. Daar bleef ik niet voor mijn lol in november.

Vandaar naar Luxemburg. Omdat ik voor lag op het schema kon ik mooi nog Jardin-Tour Napoleón (BIG 141) meepakken. Wat een verschil met België! Goed onderhouden weg, langere beklimming, maar minder stijl. Deze lag mij beter dan het steile werk in de Waalse Ardennen. Het monument van Napoleon werd verbouwd, dus was gesloten. Via een andere weg weer terug naar de auto. Ik wilde BIG 142 nog doen, maar door een wegomlegging

verloor ik te veel tijd en het werd al schemerig. Côte d'Eschdorf moest maar wachten tot de volgende dag.

Overnachting in B&B Pommerloch. Een onpersoonlijker ruimte had ik nog niet meegemaakt. De douche was echter prima en de tv ook. Nog een stukje 'The Voice' gekeken en daarna was het 'over and out'.

Zaterdag werd weer een drukke dag. Het plan was om zeven à acht BIG's te doen, zodat ik zondag wat tijd over had om terug te rijden naar huis. Om 8.30 uur zat alweer op de fiets. Nu was Côte d'Eschdorf (BIG 142) aan de beurt. Ik startte vanuit het mooie plaatsje Esch-sur-Sure aan de rivier de Sure. Ook vandaag valt een koude start weer tegen. Ook bleek de weg naar Eschdorf afgesloten te zijn. Met de fiets op de nek liep ik honderd meter langs de opgebroken weg, waarna ik mijn tocht kon vervolgen. Via de noordoostelijke route daalde ik af naar mijn startplaats. Een prima weg voor een snelle afdeling.

Ferme de Masseler (BIG 143) was een lekkere klim. Niet te steil, zodat er met een lekker tempo tegenop gereden kon worden. Meestal was er op een top nog wel iets te beleven, zoals een of ander monument. Hier was helemaal niks. Gewoon een landweg door een weiland. Waar de lichte stijging overging in een lichte daling bleek de top te zijn. Hoe simpel kon het zijn! Deze BIG was goed te combineren met Bourscheid (BIG 140) want die voet lag 3 km verder op. Op de een of andere manier liep deze klim niet. Bij het schrijven van dit stuk zag ik dat het gemiddelde 9,1 % was over een lengte van 3,4 km en was het duidelijk waarom het tegen viel. Boven op de berg was er weer een monument ter ere van Napoleon. Ook staat er de

Arbre de Napoleon. In de specificatie van beide startplaatsen zijn de aanduidingen Oost en West verwisseld\*. Via veel binnenweggetjes naar Côte de Munshausen (BIG 138). Omdat het beter op de route lag gekozen voor de lichtere zuidkant. Dit was echt makkelijk. Zeker omdat de afstand 3 km was in plaats van de vermelde 6,2 km.\*. Monte Saint Nicolas (BIG 139) kende een valse start. De coördinaten van de start aan de NW-kant komen uit in Putscheid. Vandaar naar de top is eenvoudig waar het eindigt bij een waterreservoir. Het venijn zat in de afdeling. Terug in Putscheid kon ik doordalen naar Stolzembourg, de eigenlijke startplaats. Volgens de locals 17% gedurende 1,9 km. De weg is recht dus als een speer naar beneden. Daarna weer omhoog gaf ik de locals gelijk.\*

De topper van de dag was de Herrenberg (BIG 144) in Diekirch. Kort, maar heftig vanuit de zuidoost kant. Vanaf het begin door een smal straatje recht omhoog. Leuk als er dan ook nog een auto probeert in te keren. Dat werd surplace op een helling van 21%. Het was een echte klassieker. In het begin dacht ik dat het wel meeviel, halverwege werd het minder eenvoudig en toen de top naderde was mijn hartslag maximaal en de snelheid minimaal (bijna weer een ongewilde surplace). Afstappen was geen optie, want opstappen zou niet meer lukken. De afdaling deed ik via de noordwest kant vanwege de veiligheid.

De laatste klim van de dag werd Berdorf Gorges du Loup (BIG 145). Vanaf de westkant was de weg voor alle verkeer afgesloten. Ook voor fietsers, want halverwege de route werd de brug vervangen. Vanaf de oostkant was het een mooie tempoklim. Onderweg waren

abseilers bezig bij een bijzondere rotsformatie. Terug afdalen was een genot. Eindelijk een droge weg en dan ook nog overzichtelijke bochten. Echt het toetje van de dag.

Ik sliep in het Duitse dorp Bollendorf. Vanuit Hotel Hauser zag ik aan de overkant van de rivier Luxemburg liggen.

Nog 5 BIG's te gaan.

De dagopening startte vanuit Moersdorf naar Eoliennes de Pafeberg (BIG 148). Vroeg in de ochtend een taaie rakker. Mijn spieren waren stijf. Zelfs de tussenribspieren deden zeer na de inspanning op de Herrenberg. Boven gekomen voelde ik mij als Don Quichotte, vechtend tegen windmolens.



Daarna was de beurt aan de Altrier (BIG 146) vanuit het oosten. Deze route had ik gekozen vanwege de lengte. Toen ik bij de startplaats kwam was ik bijna terug bij het hotel in Bollendorf! Stom om een route uit te zetten op basis van de coördinaten van de toppen. Startplaats 146-E ligt dus vlak bij start 145-E en was mooi in een rit te doen geweest. De klim zelf zou ik iedereen afraden. Het was echt niet veilig als de auto's je met 110 km/uur inhaalden. Gelukkig reden er op zondagochtend geen vrachtauto's. Côte d'Houwald (BIG 147) was een leuke klim. De spieren waren opgewarmd. De

buitentemperatuur was 11 graden en de wind speelde met de herfstbladeren. Op de top was het een grote leegte met mooi uitzicht. Prachtig al die herfstkleuren.

Ik dacht tijd over te hebben, dus deed ik de Birgerkraiz (BIG 149) van beide kanten. Het voelde niet goed als geen enkele BIG in Luxemburg van twee kanten was bedwongen. Nog één BIG te gaan in zone 3. Ik moest het even kwijt, dus sms'te ik naar Roland (member 463 en grote inspirator): One to go! Uiteraard wist hij direct waar het over ging en liet me weten dat ik ook vooral moest genieten.

De laatste BIG van deze jacht was niet voor niets Mont Saint Jean (BIG 150), de laatste op de lijst van zone 3, dus een goede reden om met deze te eindigen. Het plan was om Mont Saint Jean ter afsluiting van de jacht nog van beide zijden te bedwingen, maar dat lukte niet. Vanuit Esch-sur-Alzette bleek de lengte van de westelijke route veel meer dan de aangegeven twee kilometer te zijn en de coördinaten van de top kwamen op mijn gps midden in het weiland uit.\* Nadat ik helemaal om de berg heen was gefietst vond ik eindelijk de ingang naar de top. Al mijn opgespaarde tijd was ik kwijt en de zon ging bijna onder. In de nabijheid van het kleine kerkje op Mont Saint Jean overdacht ik de afgelopen dagen. Het was een echte jacht. Vooral door de korte dagen van november was de tijdsdruk groot. Het was soms afzien door de koude, regen en gladheid, maar daardoor werd het juist volop genieten! De missie was volbracht: in vier dagen 31 beklimmingen op 25 BIG's! Het werd tijd om naar huis te gaan.

\* Opmerkingen ten aanzien van de routes zijn doorgegeven aan het BIG-committée.

# Luxembourg

**Kevin SPEED**

## Friday 16th March 2012

Holmes Chapel 07.46, Crewe 08.01. Crewe 08.29 Euston 10.04. St Pancras 12.57 Brussels 16.08. A meal in first class and a seat on my own and bike tucked away in its bag and safely in sight, couldn't ask for more. Arrived in Brussels on time and lugged the bike down to the platforms and along to track 12 for the 16.33 for Luxembourg to arrive at 19.40. I got on the wrong train and waited in Namur 17.42 to 18.42 for the Luxembourg train.

Finally arrived at 20.40 then couldn't find the hostel. It was quite easy really but I wandered all round the city but finally found it at 22.50 just before the hostel closed. Bike to the lock up down below and I made up the bed and went straight to sleep. 45.80€ for two nights bed and breakfast Saturday 17th March

Day 1 Train, Thomas Cook timetable T439 Luxembourg 09.15 to Clervaux 10.08, 99km Cycled out from Clervaux heading east towards Marnach and took a road to the right at Reuler for Cote de Munshausen BIG 138, passing through woods on the climb then an open clearing to the village. A right turn then a short distance to the top at the end of the village on the Marnach road. The usual photos then open country to Marnach then main road south through Hosingen where I finally got my front brake sorted out at a garage. I needed an allen key to tighten it from rubbing on the wheel. On then to Diekirch 27km and took a right then a left up the very steep Rue Montee Herrenberg to join the main road near the top then right for Herrenberg BIG 144, there's a military base at the top, took the usual photos then down the



main road leading to the north of Diekirch at a police station then right, back into the town then took the road for Echternach. I took a right for Berdorf 9km before reaching Echternach and climbed the next BIG; BIG 145 Berdorf-Gorges du Loup, 36km, passing the rocks halfway up that resemble a mini Saxon Switzerland with steps up and crevasses through the gaps between the rocks. I had a short stop here then on to the top of the BIG at Berdorf and took photos at the road junction in the village that marks the top. From there steeply down to Echternach, passing more gorges on the way down. It started raining but went off when I reached Echternach. Straight on at the crossroads on the Wasserbillig road then took a right for Osweiler but straight on at the crossroads after a long climb. To the right is Osweiler and left for Dickweiler. Straight on then shortly a fork to the right led to the wind turbines marking the top of BIG 148 Epliennes de Pafebiere, a few photos in the barren landscape and could see how effective those wind machines are at this point. Along and down to Herborn then a right turn for Bech, a

short stop here then a gradual climb up to the main road then a left turn and along to Altrier BIG 146, a mast on the right of the road marks the top but there's nothing of interest here on the busy main road. From here downhill all the way then took a right at Gonderange for lanes through Hostert, Niederaanvan, Oetrange, Hesperange, Bettembourg and Dudelange 35km, and lost far too much time negotiating the lanes and arrived at Kayl for BIG 150 Mont Saint Jean when it was already dark so no photos. I wanted to get back quickly now, so directly back through Bettembourg to Luxembourg, 32km. Total 130km or 81 miles 10.30 to 20.30

## Sunday 18th March

Day 2, An early start and first one down for breakfast at 06.30 and out at 07.30 and this time I had the route to the station sussed - under the bridge to the right and along Rue Sosthene Weis and Rue St Ulric in the valley then steeply up Montee de la Petrusse to Avenue de la Gare. This time it took me only half an hour. I boarded the I.C. 133 train from Luxembourg at 08.20, arrived in Koblenz at 10.35, T915, then from

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Koblenz T914 at 10.54 on the same platform for the regional train via St Goarhausen and Wiesbaden to Frankfurt Höchst at 12.54 – well it was ½ an hour late so made up for that by jumping on the local service SE12 to Königstein, arriving ½ an hour later at 14.00. From there I started my afternoon cycling and rode the steep main road north then off to the right for Grosser Feldberg BIG 182 25km, 2hours 14.00 – 16.00. It took me 1 ½ hours to reach the top. Another right turn in the woods led up the final 3km to the towers at the top, shrouded in mist but the day was overcast. There was no view at the top and the towers stood like ominous sentinels. From here quickly down and back to Königstein. I had a quick look around the small town streets – definitely a tourist area- then 28km to Weissbaden at 18.00 and enough time before dark to cycle the Hohe Wurzel BIG 181. I originally planned this for the following day but good to cram the climb in now and hopefully realise a better day tomorrow. I was a bit confused in Wiesbaden so asked a few people for directions in my best German of course. I last asked a petrol station and knew I was on the right road when I was told ‘geradeaus’ The climb took me an hour, arriving at 19.30. I don’t think it’s particularly steep except for one sharp section 3km from the city. I could see the lay of the land ahead and could see that when I reached the trees I would be near the top. The only indication that I arrived at the top was the brown road summit markers either side of the road in an open clearing. It was just getting dark when I reached the top so a quick few photos and on with my jacket and helmet and speedily down to find somewhere to stay the night before it got totally dark. I found a hotel to the north west of the city before reaching the

busy streets. I was still on the road down from the Hohe Wurzel. The hotel is the Hostellerie Landhaus Diedert and set me back 117€- 70€ for the room – a very nice en suite – should be for the price – a very filling evening meal of Barlauchschaumsuppe followed by a filet vom Havellander Apfelschwein and drinks and breakfast in the morning. I slept very well that night after previous nights' broken sleep at Luxembourg hostel and two very active days under my belt. Total 70km or 43 miles 14.00 – 20.00

### Monday 19th March

Day 3, After a filling breakfast, out from the hotel at 09.30 and into Weissbaden and to the hauptbahnhof and took a regional train to Rudesheim on the Rhine at 10.33 then the 11.33 ferry across the Rhine to Bingen. I realised I had to make up time if I was to reach a point further west by the end of the day so I took another regional train at 11.55 from Bingen to Rockenhausen, arrived at 12.54 and asked the way for Donnersberg. I ended up cycling an estate on a hillside to the east of the station but soon found out this was wrong. I wasted time here but eventually found the road north

of the town signposted for Marienthal. It’s a fairly steep rise on the main road leading out of Rockenhausen. Marienthal is a pretty village and the traffic seemed to disperse but was busy again on the monotonous section leading up to the right turn to Donnersberg BIG 165, 3km along this road to the top at 14.40 and a cul-de-sac and a one way system at the top. There was even a police car up there to enforce it – or was he having an afternoon nap? There’s a pub at the top but just my luck – Monday is ruhetag so couldn’t get a celebration drink. The top is marked by a radio/tv mast among the trees and I had a short walk through the woods for the view. After taking the usual photos and one with the self-timer I put on jacket and helmet and did an about turn back down to Rockenhausen, 20km and went to the station at 15.20 for a train but had a ¾ hour wait so decided to cycle on heading north along the valley to Bad Munster, 25km at 16.30. There was a train from here to Turkesmuhle at 17.03 arriving at there at 18.40. I went for this then cycled from Turkesmuhle to Tholey, 15km. It was dark half way there but it was a good cyclepath the whole way.



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I arrived in Tholey at 19.30 but had some difficulty finding somewhere to stay. All hotels and b&b's on the main road were closed. I stopped for a kebab at the only eating place and asked there. I was in luck and was directed to a hotel on the Schaumberg road ½km above the village. I arrived at Das Hotel Schauenburg 20.45 and had a Bolognese with nudels and went to sleep at 22.15. Total 60km. or 40 miles 09.30 – 19.30

### Tuesday 20th March

Day 4, 08.00, Tholey to Schaumberg BIG 163 3km without any bags as I left them at the hotel to be picked up later. I asked a German construction worker up there to macht mein foto to which he readily obliged. I had a good look round at the top and could see this area is a tourist attraction with signboards and coloured walkways around the mountain side. At 09.00 I collected my bags and cycled back to Turkesmuhle, in daylight for a change then struck north for the first time and hoped to complete four BIG's today as the first one was done early in the day. It was a sunny day for a change but there was climbing involved just after Birkenfeld where the road continues up through woods then the left turn then left again for the final 3km to Erbeskopf BIG 161, I left my bags hidden in some bracken for the final 3km to the top and took the usual photos in front of the military base and walked along boards on to an overhanging viewpoint. A radio/tv mast again marks the top. 42km via Birkenfeld, 11.30, Downhill to Morbach and joined with a very busy main road from Trier to Mainz and also Frankfurt Hahn airport is nearby. The road passes Stumfer Turm BIG 160 18km from Erbeskopf, 13.00. I wasn't impressed with this as

not only a parking place but also another P place – it smells – especially behind the turn that really is a stump. I went a bit further just to make sure it was the top – it was. I didn't stay here long, only enough to take photos then back to the road junction near here for a right hand turn for an easy road steeply down to the Moselle at Kues Bernkastel and admired the pretty houses there, many photos. The road down to this point was closed because of men working on the road just above the town so it was fantastic to have the whole road to myself and enjoy the sweep down the hairpins safely. It was a further 70km to St Aldegund following the curves of the river and it was impossible to reach BIG 159 Steigung Von Bremm today, let alone reach

Cochem as planned. I also took far too long admiring the scenery along the way. I cycled the west side of the Moselle as far as Traben then the east side to Zell and back across to the west side finishing at St Aldegund for the day at 19.30. I made too many stops for sausages and photos. I found a place to stay for 30€ at a pub and had two pastas at a really good restaurant run by a Pakastani. Wonder what Pakastani food is? What ever it is he can't sell it but his pasta was good. To bed at 23.00, full up and tired. 133km or 83 miles 08.30 – 19.30

### Wednesday 21st March

Day 5, Final day so ready for the big push. I must reach Cologne tonight no matter what. My accommodation is



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already booked and I'm booked on the Thalys from Koln to Brussels and Eurostar from Brussels to London tomorrow so today has to be serious riding and complete the final three BIG's. I set off at 08.30 after a bland breakfast but at least it was filling. It was the usual bread, meat, cheese and jam and plenty of coffee to wake me up. I went for the bike in the garage but die frau insisted on 3.00€ for the garage space even for a bike. It was dry this morning but cool but that soon changed after 2km as I left the Moselle and began the climb up Steigung Von Bremm, BIG 159. The climb is mainly up through woods and there is a series of hairpins similar to the descent yesterday down to the Moselle. At a clearing there is no fanfare at the top such as a café or pub, just a wooden post with a footpath direction indicator and a plate pointing to an old ruin of a Roman Temple nearby. Over the top it's just open country as I passed through a series of villages; Kliding, Urschmitt, Driesch, Alfien on a main road after just passing another military base with aircraft this time. I was on a busy main road by-passing Ulmen then on reaching Kelberg I took a right then a left at the next village,

Hunnerbach, then left again to Welcherath then right through a wooded area popular with walkers to Meuspath. When I reached that point I got my answer to what the Nurburgring really was – it's a racetrack circuit of approx 20km – and the noise was deafening. I took a right along a straight section of main road parallel to it and after a few kilometres took a left fork on to the Ahrweiler road and on through the woods heading for my next climb, the Hohe Acht BIG 157, 52km from St Aldegund. This is a very interesting area. I took a left at a pub off the main road where the large yellow sign had its brown indication for the BIG. I continued for approx 4km to the brown sign in the woods indicating Hohe Acht. From there I rode through the trees, up a little, a turn to the left then to the right then very steeply up along a narrow tarmac path to the viewing area underneath the stone tower. I took a few photos and was joined by a very enthusiastic German walker who was telling me the history of the area and that he would like to have a plaque put here when he dies in memory. He told me – all in German – I kept saying 'langsam bitte!' – of the fact that in pre-history Hohe Acht was a volcano that

when it erupted the shock was felt as far away as Paris. Around the hillside among the trees are evidence of dried lava, now huge boulders. I continued on to Kempenich, another long uphill on the way. Once there I took a left (well a right then right and under the road) and headed north again and uphill as far as Hannebach then a glorious downhill to Ahrweiler, a photo of the walled gateway there then headed east a long way on a busy road heading directly for the Rhine at Sinzig. 12km to Kempenich, 20km to Bad Neuenahr. Across Rhine at Kripp near Remagen, 15km, 17.00. I asked if there was a bridge along here rather than a ferry. A German told me that there was once until you British bombed it in 1945. I shouldn't have asked that question! How inconsiderate, the British pilots could have waited until I got across. Now along right bank of Rhine and to Schloss Drachenburg and plenty of photos of the climb and the Schloss. I wasted too much time. I could see the large building marking the top at Petersberg BIG 177, just across at the other hill but at 19.00 it was already getting dark. Back down again, and slightly to the north in Königswinter then up the few kilometres on the road in the dark. I was disappointed. I should never have gone to the Schloss first. It was just that it took my fancy when I saw the rack and pinion railway at the foot of the climb. Back down in Königswinter I cycled the Rhine Radweg some distance but gave up and took a train soon after and journeyed on into Koln and on to my accommodation at Station Hostel Backpackers in Marzellenstrasse. 2 hours, 24km, down to Bonn, 16km, 20.30. 125km or 78 miles. 08.30 – 20.30



# B&B in the Black (?) Forest.

**Helmuth DEKKERS**

Now the title is a bit misleading as B&B does not stand for Bed & Breakfast but for 2 beautiful BIGs in the Black Forest that I want to tell you something about: Belchen & Blauen.

We visited the Black Forest by the way in autumn to be able to enjoy the multi-colored leaves of the trees. For Belchen, the BIG website shows 3 possible routes for a BIG member to cycle to the top. And as usual I took the toughest side. This implied I had to start from

Staufen im Breisgau. The first 11km were not steep at all. Just 2.8% on average. The weather was really good and though it was already near the end of October, I could cycle in shorts and short sleeves. After 11km the turn off to Belchen is reached.

You can also continue here to another BIG called Schauinsland but note that this is not an official side. Though perhaps it should be as the start to the summit of Schauinsland is quite steep (10.9% for 3.3km).

Anyway, I was not yet after Schauinsland, I was after Belchen! After the turnoff, the climb really started. The views on the valley while I made my way up were awesome. The leaves of the trees had turned red, yellow and brown and the sun shone through the trees and set them in a golden light. I always leave it up to my wife, Patricia, to pick the right time to leave for our autumn week or weekend. Because if you leave too early then the leaves do not yet have the beautiful colors and if you leave too late then there are no leaves at all anymore. Here's the secret tip from her: Go to the Black Forest or Eifel regions in Germany or to the Semois in the South of Belgium to name a few in the last week of October or the week before to be able to enjoy to the fullest the autumn colors. Note though that it can be quite cold in the mornings.

When we cycled for instance the Hohe Acht, the temperature was well below zero at start. Back to Belchen. So again my wife picked the right time so we could enjoy autumn when the leaves of the trees had the most beautiful colors. I especially like the beech trees as they stick out due to the beautiful mix of green, yellow and brown leaves where the brown leaves more look like orange when the sunlight shines on or through them. In this time of year the name Black Forest seems totally wrong, hence the question mark in the title, as it's not Black at all in autumn. I really enjoyed this climb as the road kept offering different views on the valley and each view was gorgeous.

**Foto 2, the view**



At some stage the road swung to the left and I noticed a bare rock face which a bit later turned out to be the Scharfenstein as I read on a sign. A nice contrast with the autumn colors. From Neuhof there is a shortcut that can be taken. But you should have really good legs if you would like to give it a try. It's only for people who live next to that road but I did notice cars coming down this steep looking road. I later calculated, based on my GPS readings, that the main road would take 2.3km whereas the shortcut was just 695m and the height difference was 122m. Or 5.3% for the main road and 17.5% for the shortcut. And that for ~700m! I did not take on that challenge as I had more on the





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program that day as you know (Schauinsland). But I don't want to withhold this information from you as some BIG members do want to take on this challenge.

So I took the main road and after 22km of cycling the road went down. And it did so for 2.2km with 5% on average before a right hand turn towards the cable lift station turned the descent into an ascent again. The part up to the cable lift station is just 600m and it was really busy here as it was Sunday and very nice weather. So many people had taken the car to the cable car station to get to the summit of Belchen. And they need to park their car somewhere too and the small parking place at the cable car station is too small on such days. I took the small graveled part next to the cable lift station. This graveled section is really short fortunately and then the last 3.7km are encountered which are 7% on average. There's a hairpin and then a broad turn around the mountain top. It's there that some people on skateboards came soaring down the road swinging from the left to the right. I fortunately did not have a close encounter with one of them :-). After the road has curved around the mountain top the guesthouse at the top itself can be seen.

### Foto 3, Belchenhaus



The view was a bit hazy but nice though it's the views on the first part after the climb had really started that have been etched into my memory.



### Foto 4, view from the top of Belchen

Well, are you getting curious for the second B now we have finished Belchen? Then lets move on to Blauen. The reason I want to tell you about Blauen is because it offered us a special phenomenon that can be encountered when cycling in the Black Forest. We were staying in a hotel in Todtnauberg (not a B&B even) that offered a nice view from the dining/breakfast room on

the valley. We noticed during breakfast already some clouds hanging in a valley further away and as I had read about temperature inversion I thought

that this could be the reason. Usually the air near the surface of the Earth is warmer than the air above it as the solar radiation warms the Earth's surface, which in turn then warms the layer of the atmosphere directly above it. But under certain conditions, the normal vertical temperature gradient is inverted such that the air is colder near the surface of the Earth. With sufficient humidity in the cooler layer, fog is typically present below the inversion cap. In the Black Forest the

temperature inversion is caused by high pressure systems. And we were lucky to experience this while we were there but it did help that we were there in the autumn as there's a fair chance that the air is quite humid then. These temperature inversion phenomena results in sunshine on the tops of the mountains and mild temperatures, whereas the valleys have fog and cooler temperatures. So we took the car to get to Niederweilen where the foot of Blauen is located. On our way to Niederweiler it was foggy and it even started drizzling near Niederweilen. So when we stopped in Niederweiler so I could start cycling, I took my rain jacket, rain covers for my shoes and then started cycling. Yes, in Niederweiler it was wet and foggy but not cold. The first 3.5km the gradient is around 4%. Then I left the L132 and the road went briefly down before the more quiet L140 took me up again. There the ascent really starts as the next 5km until the turn towards Blauen could be taken are 9.6% on average! This stretch took me through the forest. Tough cycling but a nice part until the turn off to the summit. In the mean time it had stopped drizzling but it was still quite foggy.

**Foto 5, the fog**

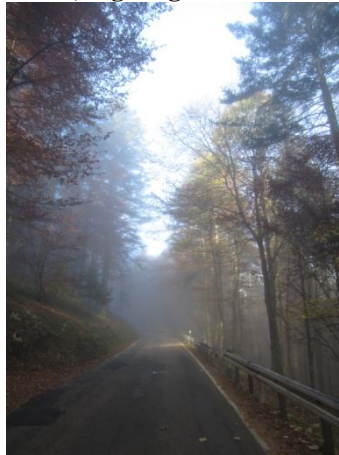


**Foto 6, me and the fog**



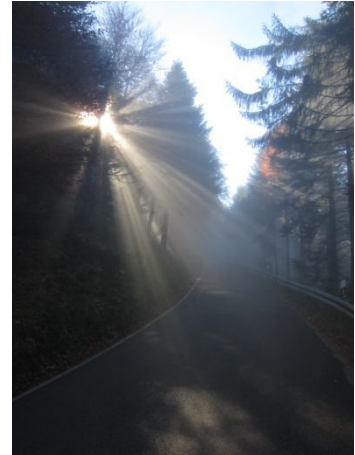
Even after the turn off to Hochblauen it was foggy but I could see that the sky was no longer grey but white. It was getting lighter :-)

**Foto 7, it got lighter**



After 1.5km at 8.1% the road swung in a 90 degrees turn to the left and I saw beams of sunlight peeking through the fog and trees. It was beautiful! I had to take a couple of pictures and continued the ascent.

**Foto 8, the sunbeams**



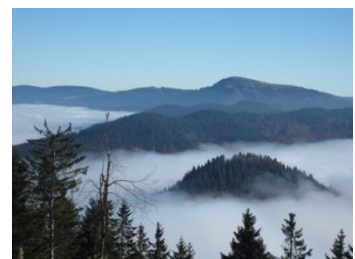
After 1km at 7.8% I encountered a hairpin turn and there I came above the inversion cap. Or in other words, above the cloud layer. The view was superb and I could see mountaintops in the distance. It was even warm there as the sun was shining abundantly so I took off my raincoat and arm pieces even.

**Foto 9, me above the clouds**



Just 500m left at 6.4% and then I reached the summit. I cycled onwards to the tower where I could see some nearby mountain tops that stuck out of the fuzzy clouds. A very nice view indeed!

**Foto 10, the mountaintops above the clouds**



As you can read, it's worthwhile to go to the colorful Black Forest in Autumn. But take some rain protection and warm cycling clothes along also! It can also be wet and cold.

## Quatre BIGs en Ardèche

**Olivier NIHOUL**

Alors que le voyage vers l'Ardèche s'était déroulé sous une chaleur accablante, les deux premiers jours sur place voient les vannes célestes déverser tout ce qu'elles peuvent et la température est quasiment comparable à celle que nous pensions laisser en Belgique. Heureusement, le mardi, le soleil revient et les nuages se font plus rares.

En ce début de matinée du mardi 3 juillet, je peux enfin enfourcher mon vélo. Je me gare tout d'abord à Saint-Martin-de-Valamas. Le temps est encore assez frais et le vent présent avive cette sensation désagréable. J'ai choisi de commencer directement par le Mont-Gerbier-de-Jonc (1417m), première côte BIG des vacances, -mais aussi première côte BIG de l'année en ce qui me concerne-, dont les pentes sont relativement douces. L'ascension commence par quelques kilomètres aux pentes variant de 1 à 3%, ce qui facilite l'échauffement. Peu avant le hameau de La Chazotte, je quitte la route principale pour poursuivre l'ascension telle qu'elle est décrite sur le site du BIG. Cette variante est assez sauvage et se déroule en pleine forêt, jusqu'au moment de déboucher sur le sommet du village de Saint-Martial, avec une superbe vue sur le lac.



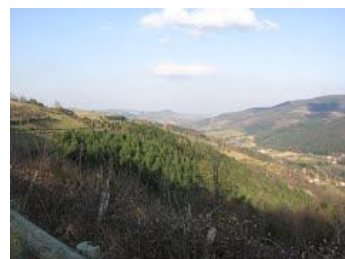
J'attaque alors la dernière partie de l'ascension aux

pourcentages réguliers de 6 à 7%. Un vent violent de face contrarie les deux derniers kilomètres et je suis content d'atteindre le sommet même si le vent est glacial. La fin de la montée permet cependant d'admirer de fabuleux panoramas avant de déboucher sur le Mont-Gerbier-de-Jonc.



Je continue un peu vers l'Ouest afin de ne rater aucun point de vue, avant de faire demi-tour et redescendre chercher ma voiture. Après le froid du sommet, la vallée est baignée par une température enfin plus agréable mais pas vraiment estivale.

Jeudi 5 juillet. La veille, de violents orages de grêle se sont abattus dès midi et il a plu une bonne partie de la nuit. Je pars de Villevoce afin d'escalader mon deuxième BIG, le col de la Charousse (1238m). C'est jour de marché dans ce petit village mais je trouve quand même facilement une place de parking. Les routes sont encore un peu humides lorsque je m'élanche mais le ciel est dégagé et le soleil brille. Après 4 kilomètres en légère montée, je vire à droite et quitte la route principale pour affronter les premières pentes, très sinueuses comme souvent en Ardèche.



J'arrive au village de Monestier où je croise enfin une voiture sur ces routes désertes et tranquilles. A la sortie de ce village, mon GPS me fait quitter le parcours de l'Ardéchoise pour emprunter une petite route confidentielle en direction du col, bien indiqué par un panneau directionnel. Cette route s'enfonce très vite dans la forêt. Le calme y est absolu. Au bout de quelques kilomètres, où je n'ai croisé personne, je me demande quand même où je vais aboutir. Certes, je suis sur la route renseignée sur le site BIG, et la route est bien renseignée sur la carte Michelin, mais le revêtement est très usé et l'herbe commence à y pousser en de nombreux endroits, ce qui me fait dire que très peu de véhicules y passent ! Le silence n'est troublé que par quelques cris d'animaux, parfois lointains. J'arrive alors dans la partie la plus pentue, qui se trouve à hauteur du hameau de Bégue, lui-aussi bien repéré sur la carte. Trois maisons se trouvent ici, au bout de nulle part, et elles sont bien habitées même si je ne vois ou n'entends personne. Quelle doit être la vie de ces habitants en hiver ? Je poursuis l'ascension lorsque, ô surprise, le vieux macadam se transforme brusquement en un chemin de terre ! Horreur ! Je m'arrête et après quelques secondes, je remarque un petit panneau en bois directionnel indiquant que ce chemin en terre ne fait que 500 mètres avant de rejoindre la route principale menant au

col. Me voilà donc un peu rassuré et je m'élance prudemment sur ce sentier afin d'éviter les pierres sortant du sol et les nombreuses branches de sapin tombées suite aux orages de la veille. Je rejoins sans crevaison la belle route large tant attendue. Plus que 3 kilomètres moins pentus et me voici au col, en plein milieu de la forêt. Je m'y arrête cinq bonnes minutes afin de mettre mon coupe-vent et manger une frangipane. Bizarrement, je n'ai toujours pas croisé quelqu'un depuis le village de Monestier. Je m'élance dans la courte descente, courte car je suis sur une sorte de plateau constitué de quelques montagnes russes mais rien à voir avec des ascensions de cols. Je poursuis ainsi, en jouant du dérailleur jusqu'au village de Les Setoux, où je vire à gauche, mais où je ne vois toujours personne ! C'est vraiment étrange cette sensation. Que se passe-t-il ? Suis-je devenu l'acteur involontaire d'un film de science-fiction ? Y a-t-il encore de la vie sur terre ou la civilisation a-t-elle entièrement disparu durant mon ascension ? Plus loin, après avoir encore traversé un petit village lui aussi totalement désert, j'entame une côte d'environ 3 kilomètres.



Seul le bruit du petit ruisseau serpentant entre les sapins vient troubler le silence méditatif. Au sommet, j'arrive au hameau de la Berche où enfin, je croise une voiture et vois quelques personnes. Je serai resté 1h40 sans croiser un véhicule ni voir personne, ce qui doit être un record. Je pense alors à ces aventuriers qui traversent les pôles en solitaire, ou qui font le

tour du monde à la voile. Cela doit être totalement fou, cette impression de solitude sans fin... Je continue alors jusqu'à Saint-Bonnet-le-Froid où j'entame la rapide et belle descente jusqu'à Villevoacance, mon point de départ.



Un beau dessert, en sorte, surtout que comme partout dans la région, la circulation est très faible et que les vélos sont vraiment respectés comme je ne l'ai jamais vu ailleurs ! En tout cas, c'est vraiment une sortie que je n'oublierai pas de si tôt.

Dimanche 8 juillet. Après un vendredi mi-figue mi-raisin et un samedi enfin caniculaire passé dans la vallée du Rhône, il pleut à nouveau ce matin. Vers 8h30, la pluie s'arrête et un timide soleil pointe ses pâles rayons. Un peu après, j'en profite pour faire une petite sortie au départ du gîte. Cela commence par 300 mètres de descente suivis d'une ascension de 3 kms à 8% pour atteindre Saint-Basile. Dur, dur l'échauffement ! Après ce petit village, je poursuis via une petite route en assez mauvais état, très gravillonneuse, avec beaucoup de 'rustines', et malgré la pente assez faible de 3 à 4%, il n'est pas facile d'avancer.

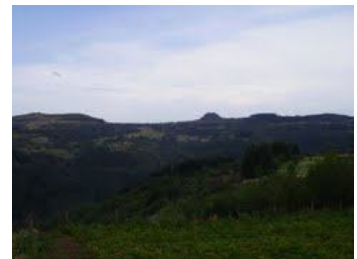


Je dois même me frayer un passage à travers un troupeau de moutons se trouvant au milieu de cette route. Le revêtement ne rend rien mais je rejoins assez vite la départementale qui me permet d'atteindre le col de Montreynaud (760m). De là, je vire à droite



pour rejoindre les villages de Cluac, puis Saint-Julien-Labrousse et le col des Nonières (671m) au terme de quelques petites bosses. Ensuite, il ne me reste que 7 kilomètres de descente jusqu'au gîte, situé quant à lui au sommet d'une bosse de 150 mètres à 12%.

Lundi 9 juillet. Il est temps de penser au 3ème BIG, le col de la Croix des Boutières, plus haut col routier d'Ardèche. Je pars à nouveau de Saint-Martin-de-Valamas pour débiter la randonnée par le magnifique col de l'Ardéchoise. Cette route est très étroite, sinueuse et confidentielle à souhait, et la pente y est parfois assez sévère mais c'est un vrai régal cyclotouristique. Chaque virage offre une vue différente entre les forêts, les hameaux et les quelques prairies disséminées.



A quelques hectomètres du sommet, la vue se dégage et s'étend soudain jusqu'aux Alpes et le spectacle est

tellement hallucinant et grandiose que j'en oublie les fatigues de l'ascension. Quelques fermes et chalets bordent cette route et cela doit être un vrai bonheur que de se lever le matin avec une vue aussi exceptionnelle. Une fois le col passé,



une légère descente de 2 bons kilomètres m'amène au pied de l'ascension finale. La route est tout d'abord très large et assez droite, ce qui mine toujours le moral même si je monte bien. Après 4 kms, je vire à gauche pour emprunter la dernière partie de la montée qui me mènera au Col de la croix des Boutières, à 1506 m d'altitude. Cette route est à nouveau plus étroite et la pente y est sévère, atteignant les 10% sur la fin. Les panoramas y sont cependant tout aussi sublimes



et j'aperçois le sommet au loin. Celui-ci est atteint après quelques derniers efforts.



Je décide de continuer un peu dans le département de la Haute-Loire, qui débute au sommet, afin d'atteindre un peu plus loin le col de la Croix de Peccata, qui culmine à 1564 mètres, et qui sera le sommet de mes vacances. Une fois

celui-ci atteint, je fais alors demi-tour pour rejoindre mon point de départ via une route légèrement différente de l'aller



et qui me surprendra par une violente remontée de quelques hectomètres à 10% au milieu de la descente, et juste après un virage serré.

Mercredi 11 juillet. Je peux encore faire un BIG pas trop éloigné, le col de Serre-Mûre, ou col de la Mûre (765m). Après les nouveaux orages de la veille, le ciel est à nouveau bleu et le soleil réchauffe vite le village de Saint-Fortunat-sur-Eyrieux où je me prépare.



La chaleur s'installe doucement et le village semble vivre au ralenti. Je remonte d'abord un peu la vallée pour virer assez vite à droite et prendre le chemin du col convoité. L'ascension commence par 8 kilomètres réguliers à 4%, de quoi bien s'échauffer, même si le revêtement ne rend pas grand chose. Durant cette partie, je peux admirer à souhait les ruines du château de la Tourette, en haut de la vallée opposée.



Le paysage est magnifique et le calme est absolu. Après cette première partie qui se termine au hameau de Roumezoux, j'ai droit à 4 kms de plat avant d'arriver au pied de la montée finale. Cela ne doit pas être trop difficile vu qu'il ne me reste que 4 kms à 7% de moyenne pour atteindre le sommet. Je vire à droite pour entamer l'ascension et directement, un terrible mur avec un lacet à droite, très serré me, contraint à descendre directement sur le 30\*25. Me voilà presque collé à la route. Heureusement, la pente redescend assez vite vers un 6% un peu constant. C'est après le premier kilomètre que je me rends compte que ce col ne se laissera pas avoir aussi facilement. La montée devient totalement irrégulière, se transformant en un escalier dont les pentes varient entre 4 et 15% ! Je déteste ce genre de côte où il est impossible de garder un rythme et où il faut sans cesse relancer et changer de braquet. Mais pas question de renoncer bien sûr, et finalement la pente s'adoucit, laissant présager d'un sommet proche. Je m'y arrête et contemple un magnifique panorama tout en me désaltérant.



## BIG Review 2013

Après m'être un peu reposé, je redescends ces 4 kilomètres et je me rends bien compte de la difficulté rencontrée à l'aller et de la variation incessante de la pente. Je continue vers Vernoux-en-Vivarais via une montée bien plus sympathique. De là, je me dirige vers le col de Montreynaud via Chateauneuf-de-Vernoux. La chaleur s'est installée mais ce col par cette route n'est qu'une formalité. Je fais demi-tour et rejoins Vernoux où j'avais décidé de descendre via St-Maurice de Chalençon pour rejoindre ma voiture. C'est heureusement à ce moment que je croise un cyclo qui m'interpelle. Lui venait de monter par la route que je commençais à emprunter, et il me signale plusieurs passages en travaux, sans macadam, ainsi qu'une portion de plusieurs kilomètres fraîchement gravillonnée ! Je décide donc de redescendre via ma première ascension du matin afin d'éviter cette mauvaise route. Arrivé à un peu moins d'un kilomètre de ma voiture, je sens du flottement à l'arrière après être passé dans un trou un peu auparavant. J'ai dû pincer la chambre à air qui se dégonfle lentement... Je sprinte un peu afin de ne pas devoir réparer sur la route, mais plutôt tranquillement au gîte, et je parviens tout juste à finir sur le pneu presque plat. Ouf !

Vendredi 13 juillet. Il a encore bruiné ce matin jusque 8h00. Heureusement, le ciel se dégage vite et le soleil sèche tout. Vers 9h30, je m'élanche donc du gîte vers Lamastre où je prends la nationale vers Saint-Agrève. Bien que ce soit une grand-route, on peut y rouler en toute quiétude tellement la circulation est faible. Arrivé à Desaignes, paisible village médiéval,



je prends une petite route afin de faire l'ascension via une départementale qui doit être très tranquille. Trois kilomètres plus loin, je vire à gauche afin de débiter la montée. Horreur ! La route a été récemment gravillonnée... Tant pis... Je continue mais la côte d'environ 5% m'en paraît parfois le double. Après 3 kilomètres, je retrouve le vieux bitume, assez accrocheur, mais sans gravier.



L'ascension se fait souvent en sous-bois, avec quelques belles échappées sur la vallée. De temps à autre, une maison isolée borde la route étroite. Tellement étroite que je devrai m'arrêter pour laisser passer un mobilhome italien qui montait prudemment et semblait s'être égaré. Encore un chemin du bout du monde... Peu à peu, je me rapproche de la nationale, située de l'autre côté de la vallée, et que j'avais quittée à Desaignes. Encore deux lacets et je la rejoins, juste à l'entrée de Saint-Agrève, à un peu plus

de 1000 mètres d'altitude. Là, je vire vers le Col des Nonières mais auparavant, je dois encore monter jusqu'au col de Pouzat (1125m),



facile par son versant ouest si ce n'est quelques ultimes hectomètres à 10%. La descente qui s'en suit est extrêmement rapide

jusqu'au col des Nonières, où je poursuis la descente maintenant bien connue, jusqu'au gîte.

L'Ardèche est un paradis pour le vélo. Les montées sont magnifiques et rarement difficiles. La circulation y est faible et l'on peut emprunter toutes les routes en toute quiétude. N'hésitez pas à y aller. Moi, en tout cas, je suis prêt à y retourner !

# Ax-les-Thermes

**Hans KOEDIJKER**  
BIG 195

*Het Zuid-Franse Ax-les-Thermes is een uitstekende uitvalsbasis voor wie van fietsen in de bergen houdt. Zo kun je vanuit dit stadje in een rondje van nog geen 60 kilometer zomaar 4 cols rijden. Zelfs voor een matig getrainde fietser uit Noord-Holland is dat nog goed te doen.*

Net onder de Col du Pradel (BIG357) moet ik van de fiets omdat een groep koeien de weg blokkeert. Misschien wel terecht ook. Dit is hun domein en ik ben maar een toevallige passant. Eén van de weinige, dat wel. Het biedt me meteen de mogelijkheid om even bij te komen van de laatste klimkilometers. De weg is hier smal en al wandelend passeer ik de zachte beesten met hun koeienbellen. De laatste meters naar de col op 1680 meter gaan weer op de fiets. Col du Pradel vormt de grens tussen de twee departementen Aude en Ariège.

Een klein uurtje eerder ben ik vertrokken uit Ax-les-Thermes. De route richting Col du Pradel en naar de Port de Pailhères (BIG358) vertrekken beide uit dit kuuroord en gaan de eerste 7 kilometer regelmatig omhoog. Er zijn meer fietsers onderweg maar de meesten kiezen voor de Port de

Pailhères. Ik niet, want ik vind het leuk om ‘rondjes’ te fietsen. Daarom kies ik net na een camping voor de D25b, de weg naar de Col du Pradel, waarna er nog minder bewoning is en de weg allengs slechter en smaller wordt. Er volgen dan wat lastige klimkilometers waar ik serieus moet werken om het kleinste verzet rond te krijgen. Na de ontmoeting met de koeien mag de beloning op de col er zijn. Het uitzicht op de laaghangende mist en met rondom de hoge Pyreëntoppen is fantastisch.

Er volgt een moeilijke afdaling richting Niort-de-Sault. In het bos is het vrij donker, de weg is nat en bezaaid met steenslag. Eenmaal uit het bos passeer ik La Fajolle, een verstillid bergdorp waar de lokale bevolking zich gereed maakt voor het jaarlijkse dorpsfeest. Hoe kun je hier leven vraag ik me af, terwijl ik de bidons bijvul bij de dorpspomp. De weg wordt nu breder en volgt de wildstromende Rébenty, een zijrivier van de l’Aude, richting Mérial, nog een vlek in deze prachtige omgeving. Vlak voor Niort-de-Sault gaat het jasje weer uit, omdat ik afsla richting Camurac. Afwisselend langs bergweiden en door het bos, gaat het omhoog naar de Col des Sept Frères op 1253 meter. Buiten de mooie naam is



er niet zo veel te beleven aan deze col. Iets verder ligt Camurac, waar in de winter wat skiliften geopend zijn. Ik passeer de afslag naar Montailou, een voormalig kettters bolwerk van Katharen die begin 14e eeuw door inquisitoren uit Pamiers en Carcassonne gruwelijk zijn vervolgd. Montailou is bekend geworden door het historisch naslagwerk van Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie; ‘Montailou, een kettters dorp in de Pyreëeën’. Genoeg tijd om deze geschiedenis te overdenken, want het fietst hier heerlijk. Lichtjes omhoog, maar nooit moeilijk. Voorbij Prades ligt de Col de Marmare op een hoogte van 1361 meter. Dit is eigenlijk een tussencol onderweg naar de Col de Chioula, want die volgt iets verder op een hoogte van 1431 meter. Het is hier wat drukker met auto’s en wandelaars en er is een restaurant. Het ‘zware’ werk zit er op. Voor me ligt een brede afdaling van 10 kilometer terug naar Ax-les-Thermes. De afdaling van de Chioula heeft alles: schitterende haarspeldbochten en brede, rechte, stukken waar je absoluut met je vingers van de remmen af moet blijven. Gaan, volle bak! Heerlijk. Onderweg opent zich het dal van de Ariège, met schitterende vergezichten over de Pyreëeën en ik kom weer langs de afslag naar Pradel en Pailhères. Zomaar een prachtig rondje gereden met 4 echte cols.

Vanuit Ax-les-Thermes in de Pyreëeën kun je geweldige cols fietsen. Naar het oosten liggen de genoemde Col du Pradel, Port de Pailhères en de Vallée d’Orlu. In het noorden liggen de Col de Chioula, Montagne de Tabe, en, iets verder, Montségur (BIG356), les Monts d’Olmes en Prat d’Albis (BIG355). Naar het westen ligt in het dal van de Ariège Les Cabannes. Van daaruit klim je naar het legendarische Plateau de Beille (BIG 346), waar Raborenner Michael Rasmussen in 2007 een heroïsch gevecht leverde met latere tourwinnaar Alberto Contador. Tot slot ligt aan de zuidkant van Ax-les-Thermes de weg open naar Andorra, Catalonië, Ax-3-Domains en Col de Puymorens. Afstand Utrecht-Ax-les-Thermes bedraagt 1268 kilometers.





## BIG Review 2013

(puisqu'il n'y a pas de pyrénées) durant dix bonnes minutes, enfui dans les herbes hautes afin d'éviter leur attention, je gagnai dix mètres d'altitude pour me retrouver au-dessus des maisons isolées. Je m'y repris certes à quatre fois pour faire passer mon vélo au-dessus du dernier talus escarpé, mais voilà : j'étais sauvé.

Et je m'en allai, respirant à nouveau l'optimisme, vers le sommet perdu dans les nuages, avec un carrefour indicateur à l'entame du dernier kilomètre. A deux cent mètres du sommet, il me reste deux épingles, quand je tombai nez à nez, sur le troisième tableau animalier, le plus attendrissant, composé d'une vingtaine de marmottes au milieu de la route et sur le talus la bordant, pas du tout effarouchées par la présence d'un petit cycliste belge à l'assaut d'un big. Je me

rappelai le parc animalier d'Argelès et je tentai de m'arrêter. Elles ne bougèrent pas. Je m'assis sur le talus à deux mètres de certaines d'entre elles. Elles me regardèrent, prêtes à s'enfuir mais finalement, voyant que je ne bougeais pas, vinrent près de moi et se mirent à jouer à leurs jeux habituels sans s'occuper de ma petite personne. Je les préférais aux deux chiens. Après quelques minutes de bonheur, je gravis les deux dernières centaines de mètres jusqu'à la station, entièrement vide, déserte, froide. Quelques photos du lieu et je me dis qu'il était temps de redescendre.

C'est alors que je me dis qu'il fallait repasser par l'endroit des chiens et je m'imaginai les pires des scénarios comme leur brusque apparition alors que je dévalais à soixante à l'heure la descente régulière de Luz-

Ardiden. Ou le devoir de refaire à nouveau le chemin inverse dans les grandes herbes avec le talus en descente. Un kilomètre, deux kilomètres, ça approche. Je vois les maisons : rien. J'approche des maisons : rien ! Soulagement, je vois un homme sur sa porte dans l'une des maisons. La présence humaine me ravigote. L'homme rit, fort, très fort. En me voyant arriver, il fait les quelques mètres qui le séparent de la grille d'entrée de sa maison. Je passe devant lui et là, je remarque... qu'il tient en laisse deux énormes molosses à qui il montre un couillon de cycliste étranger.

On s'amuse comme on peut dans ces petits patelins perdus...



# Luz-Ardiden,

**Meindert BRUGMAN**

Deze berg is o.a. bekend door de val van ene Armstrong (Ullrich wachtte op hem), de man die de wielerved dit jaar op zijn kop zette. Dit is een berg waar ik altijd goed ben. I "love" this mountain. Is gelijkmatig qua stijging, wegen zijn mooi ruim, afwisselend landschap.

De eerste kennismaking was in september 2010. Ik had een fietsvakantie geboekt bij Fiets en Beleving

[www.fietsenbeleving.nl](http://www.fietsenbeleving.nl). De groep startte in Argelez-Gazost. Omdat ik minder snel rij, dan de groep, ben ik met de auto naar Luz-Saint-Sauveur gereden. Na even warm gereden te zijn ben ik de BIG-berg omhoog gegaan, de D12 op. Na een kwartiertje werd ik voorbijgestoken door de mannen uit het marathonpeloton. Vervolgens schreeuwde de reisleider een bemoedigend woord uit zijn raampje. Ik deed er een schepje bovenop. Ook



de overige deelnemers haalde mij in. Onderweg nog wat koeien begroet die midden op de weg liepen, met woorden: "Noh heu", een Westfriesche groet voor goedendag. Toen ik bijna boven was doken de marathonmannen de berg al weer af.

Boven kreeg ik een lekker soepje van Pascal. Met mijn tijd van 2 uur was ik dik tevreden.

2012 stond de beklimming weer op het menu. De auto parkeerde ik weer op het zelfde plekje. Weer haalde de andere van de groep mij in. Pieter reed nog een tijdje met mij op. Er haalde ook een leuke vrouw mij in. Ik was vast van plan boven een praatje met haar te maken. Deze keer kreeg ik het soepje van Gerrit. Tijd was nu krap 2 uur. We gaan de goede kant op. By the way de leuke mevrouw stond met een man te praten, het voorgenomen praatje maar achterwege gelaten. Uiteraard weer een foto gemaakt van het bordje met de naam van de beklimming erop. Beneden nog een shirt gekocht met Luz-Ardiden erop. Dit shirt draag ik met trots met spinnen in de sportschool. Daar blijkt niemand te weten dat die beklimming er is.

Hoop over een paar jaar deze favo berg weer te mogen beklimmen.



# Récit d'une terrible défaillance

**Michel MENARD**  
BIG 78

*Sur une épreuve de 173 km et 5000 m de dénivelé, comptant trois BIGs :*

*No 287 : col de la Croix de Fer / No 291 : col du Galibier / No 290 : l'Alpe d'Huez*

Bourg d'Oisans samedi 11 juillet 1987, 7 heure du matin, le départ viens d'être donné pour 3960 participant(e)s et je m'élance pour ce qui sera ma première « Marmotte » car l'an prochain j'y reviendrai et je prendrai ma revanche sur aujourd'hui qui sera l'une des journées des plus terribles de ma carrière cyclo suite à une défaillance spectaculaire et d'autant plus inexplicée que rien ne présagait un tel dénouement. Pourtant comme à mon habitude dans ce genre d'épreuve et croyez moi ce n'était pas la première, tout avez été minutieusement préparé, peaufiné, tant d'un point de vue physique / psychologique et matériellement, et de plus les prévisions météo étaient excellentes.

Jusque Rochetaillée, bifurcation où l'on vire sur la droite pour débiter l'ascension du col de la Croix de Fer (on pourrait dire aussi celui du Glandon, car la route ne passe qu'à 300 mètre environ de son sommet) ; départ rapide sur une route assez large et bien droite présentant une légère déclivité ; après quoi tout le monde commença à se calmer pour ce qui arrivé, une longue montée de 29 km avec 1352 m de dénivelé. J'étais bien, entouré de toute part par de nombreux cyclos qui avaient le même but, réussir une belle « Marmotte » et peut être même un peu plus, tout comme moi, marquer des points pour le Trophée d'Or

des cyclosporatives qui venaient d'être créées en cette année avec cinq épreuves : l'Épervier / le Chevreuil / la Marmotte / l'Isard-Bahamontès / et la Louison Bobet. (1)

## Premier acte

Tout à coup, j'entends un claquement à l'arrière. Je me retourne et constate un bris de rayon. Zut, mais ce n'est pas bien grave, la roue n'est que très peu voilée, espérant que ça en resta là. La montée se poursuit sans autres problèmes lorsque arrivant sur le sommet, un nouveau claquement et toujours à l'arrière. Un deuxième rayon viens de casser mais cette fois c'est sérieux, la roue et vraiment voilée et je suis obligé de détendre l'étrier pour éviter qu'elle ne frotte sur les patins. Je vais être obligé de descendre le col avec prudence et la faire réparée dans la vallée à St Jean de Maurienne par les mécanos de l'organisation (Mavic). Ce n'est pas très bon, je vais perdre du temps. Effectivement et je vais en perdre beaucoup car je ne suis pas seul avec des petits problèmes. Assis dans l'herbe je profite de ce contre temps pour me ravitailler en attendant mon tour de dépannage, et voyant de nombreux cyclos passer, je comprends dès lors qu'il ne faudra pas compter pour un bon classement final. C'est agaçant.

Alors pour gagner quelque peu du temps, me vint l'idée de « bidouiller » ma roue avec une clé à rayons sans pour autant remplacer les deux manquants, en la demandant à un mécano

pour moi la remettre un peu prés correctement ; ce qui fut fait et celle-ci retrouva une forme un peu plus normale. Je pouvais repartir en espérant que, bien que fragilisée, elle puisse tenir au moins jusqu'au bout. Effectivement, elle tiendra et encore heureusement puisque arriva ce qui fut le plus terrible, le :

## Deuxième acte

Le plus gros des cyclos était passé lorsque je reparti, et maintenant il n'y avait plus que des petits groupes ou quelques individualités. Pour se présenter au pied du col du Télégraphe à St Michel de Maurienne, il faut compter environ 10 km sur un très léger faut plat remontant et je suis pratiquement seul vent dans le nez. C'est alors que quelque chose ne tourne plus rond, je sens la machine détraquée. Non non, ce n'est plus le vélo mais moi-même ; ça ne vaut pas mieux sinon pire. J'attaque le Télégraphe mais cette fois ce n'est plus une impression, j'accuse réellement le coup. Certes, psychologiquement l'incident des rayons m'a un peu démoralisé, mais ce n'est pas suffisant pour expliquer cet état de fait et comme il commence à faire chaud, là viendrait peut-être la raison réel de la défaillance qui va suivre, car sachez le, je n'ai



jamais aimé la grosse chaleur (remarqué, je n'ai jamais aimé non plus le grand froid). Après m'être fait dépasser par de nombreux cyclos, j'arrive péniblement au sommet du col et plonge immédiatement sur Valloire où j'espère me refaire une petite santé.

Impossible de m'alimenter correctement ; seul quelques cartiers d'oranges seront avalés, le « solide » ne passe plus. Mon chemin de croix commence ...

Inutile de vous décrire la montée du Galibier. Si vous avez déjà subi une défaillance, faite appel à vos souvenirs et vous comprendrez. Seulement en ces moments, je suis dans un de ces cols légendaires parmi les plus difficiles, après quoi il



me faudra faire la longue descente pour rejoindre la vallée et Bourg d'Oisans, pied de l'Alpe d'Huez un « monument » du cyclisme. Mais attendez, lorsque je dis longue descente, ne vous y trompez pas ; parfois la route s'élève de nouveau avec bien des passages pentus ; la galère quoi!

Voilà ce qui fut fait, et je me retrouvais au pied des 13 kilomètres de la montée « mythique » avec ses 21 lacets numérotés (2) portant le nom

d'un champion ayant triomphé au sommet. Bien sûr j'aurais pu en rester là, retrouver mon hôtel situé à quelques centaines de mètres et sombrer dans un sommeil comateux, fin de mon calvaire. Il n'en fut rien. Je voulais faire un bon classement pour le Trophée d'Or, donc il me fallait monter jusqu'au bout, finir l'intégralité du parcours. C'est certain, en terminant dans les profondeurs du classement, mon capital points ne serait pas terrible mais ce serait toujours ça.

Donc, après quand même un petit détour à mon hôtel pour changer et varier ma boisson, j'attaque (façon de parler) la pente sèche, dès le pied avec ses 14%. Je suis « mort » je n'ai plus de force, se sont

simplement les nerfs et la motivation qui me permettent de continuer, et au bout de 1 km, je m'arrête pour récupérer. Je n'ai plus rien mangé depuis bien longtemps et même la boisson me fait dégoûter ; j'en arrive à vomir le peu que j'ai ingurgité. Je resterai ainsi pendant un long moment prostré avant de repartir et je peu vous assurer qu'il en fut ainsi tout au long de la montée. Facile de calculer le nombre d'arrêt qu'il put y avoir sachant le nombre de kilomètres pour cette montée. Ça y est je suis

au sommet, je viens de franchir la ligne, mon temps est enregistré.

Dans l'indifférence totale, j'ai posé mon vélo dans l'herbe à un endroit tout à fait quelconque et me suis allongé à ses côtés sans prendre conscience (évidemment, j'étais dans le « cirage ») qu'à tout moment, n'importe quel individu aurait pu me le voler. Au bout d'un certain temps j'ai repris mes esprits et je suis redescendu sur Bourg d'Oisans. Hé oui, car il a fallu la faire aussi cette descente, et rarement une descente ne m'aura paru aussi pénible (3)

### Conclusions

J'ai terminé à la 1458ème place sur 2164 arrivant(e)s dans le temps de 10 H 52 mn 18 secondes

Vainqueur de l'épreuve : Pascal ROTA dans le temps de 6 H 29 mn 53 secondes

(1) Ce récit s'intègre dans le déroulement de celui paru l'an dernier. Voir revue BIG No 26 Pages 50 / 51. Correction : Pour la roue, j'avais noté à l'avant alors que c'était l'arrière.

(2) A cette époque, ils n'étaient pas encore numérotés et ne portaient donc pas de nom.

(3) Revue BIG No 25 : « Une journée mémorable au Mont-Ventoux ». Là aussi le final se termina par une descente pénible.

Vous allez penser, comment fait-il pour se souvenir aussi bien d'événements aussi lointains ? Très simple, ils m'ont profondément marqués, en outre j'ai toujours pris des notes ; donc si vous le désirez, l'an prochain vous pourrez lire mon aventure sur Bordeaux – Paris 1988, car les années 1980 furent mes meilleures années. Par la suite les ennuies de santé s'enchaînèrent.

## Gerbier de Jonc, Tattras e qualcos'altro

**Gianni SOLENI**

*Archivio il 2012 come uno dei migliori anni della mia storia ciclistica, probabilmente il più "internazionale" tra tutti anche se con chilometraggio inferiore rispetto alla media di quando partecipavo alle Granfondo.*

Tra la fine di aprile e l'inizio di maggio sono stato in Francia a ovest di Gap. Sono rimasto per alcuni giorni da queste parti e nonostante il freddo, è pure nevicato a quota relativamente bassa, sono riuscito a scalare diversi montagne. Ho poi proseguito il mio viaggio puntando a nord e dopo Aubenas sono arrivato in zona Gerbier de Jonc: una magnifica scalata ed una magnifica montagna. Qui vicino nasce la Loira e tutt'intorno è un Paradiso ciclistico. Avevo programmato un giro che oltre al Gerbier comprendeva altri BIG e che avrei dovuto terminare intorno alle 16-17 del pomeriggio. Non avevo fatto i conti però, con il vento: terribile! Di fronte o laterale non mi permetteva di avanzare come normalmente faccio, una



spaventosa "folata" laterale mi ha fatto cadere di lato sui cavetti di recinzione per le mucche...ho preso pure la "scossa"! L'ultima salita da affrontare era il Mezilhac: credo di aver impiegato più di un'ora, mi sono pure fermato a riprendere fiato e ho concluso il giro alle 8 di sera ma pieno di soddisfazione.

In auto ho poi percorso la strada sempre verso nord-ovest. Lì non mi aspettavano solo i BIG della Bretagna e Normandia, avevo anche da

visitare altre cose, ogni tanto si può fare il turista. Ho visitato gli "Alignements de Carnac", i Dolmen, Menhir e Tumoli della zona ed anche l'isola di Gavrinis dove c'è una primordiale tomba con spettacolari e antichissime incisioni. Poi via avanti con il Mur de Bretagne dove capeggia una gigantografia di Hinault, poi i tre Menez a sud di Brest, dove mi sono fermato ricordando la Parigi-Brest-Parigi cui partecipai nel 2003, l'altro Menez, il Toullaeron, Bel Air e alla bellissima ascensione a Cap Frehel. Il freddo però continuava anche se le giornate erano soleggiate, mi sono beccato un bel raffreddore ma avevo la forza di continuare e fare anche l'ultimo Big della zona, il Mont Dol. Cortissimo e durissimo proprio un vero muro "Belga", da qui la vista spazia verso il mare ed a est per la prima volta ho scorto l'inconfondibile sagoma del Mont St. Michel che poi ho visitato attraversando quel famoso tratto di mare con la navetta. Ancora a nord poi per la visita alle spiagge dello Sbarco degli Alleati: ho avuto momenti di commozione in tutta la zona ma soprattutto alla visita del Cimitero Americano.



## BIG Review 2013

Sono poi giunto a Caen esattamente sul porto di Ouistreham, da dove in primis in bici e percorrendo la ciclabile lungo il fiume Orne ho raggiunto il Pegasus Bridge, famoso ponte conquistato dagli Alleati nelle prime ore dello sbarco. In secundis nonostante la febbre...ma ormai ero lì...ho preso il battello e sono andato in Inghilterra dove tramite il treno e poi in taxi sono arrivato a Sthonenge: le pietre megalitiche più famose del mondo. Il tassista vedendomi in uno stato pietosamente infreddolito mi ha acceso il riscaldamento a tutta ma è valso il solo tempo della corsa. Veramente ho fatto una

corsa con battello-treno-taxi-treno-battello ed in meno di 24 ore ero di nuovo in Francia. Questa veloce trasferta ha comunque peggiorato il mio stato di salute, perciò ho "dovuto" decidere di rientrare velocemente in Italia lasciando purtroppo "sul campo" tutti i BIG che avevo in programma di fare nelle Ardenne e nella zona dei Ballons.....un vero peccato.

Alle fine di giugno sono partito alla volta dell'Est Europa per il Raduno Big sui Tatras. Sono partito qualche giorno prima e rientrato diversi giorni dopo così da potere scalare diversi BIG sia in Slovenia, Austria,

quelli del Raduno in Repubblica Ceca, Polonia e Slovacchia inoltre Ungheria fatti tutti, e Croazia.

Della settimana con gli amici del Big voglio solo ricordare l'ultima cena: eravamo a mio avviso nel più bel posto di tutta la settimana un bellissimo albergo in Slovacchia, ed alla fine dell'ultima cena ci siamo trovati intorno ad un tavolo dove si parlava in 4/5 lingue diverse: una Babele di suoni e canti in Francese, Italiano, Slovacco, Tedesco, Inglese...con le lingue "sciolte" da un eccezionale digestivo offerto dall'amico Rastislav e dalla sua graziosa e simpatica compagna. Al rientro avevo un paio di mesi per prepararmi all'ultima trasferta ciclistica dell'anno: il Ladak! Per abituarci all'altitudine sono stato nelle giornate precedenti al Sestriere quota 2000m ed ho scalato passi sino a 2800m ma non ho potuto fare quello che avevo in mente causa una anticipata nevicata: era il 1° settembre.

Il 18 dello stesso mese sono partito e ritrovati gli altri a Kathmandu ci siamo recati il Ladak. I passi non sono numerosi ma sono altissimi, ci sono i due carrozzabili più alti al mondo: il Khardung La e il Thaglang La rispettivamente 5602 metri e 5328 il secondo. Ne ho scalati altri due poco sotto i 5000, e due sterrati ancora sopra i 5000 metri: esperienza indimenticabile. La cultura Tibetana, gli Stupa, i Monasteri, i Guru, la valle dell'Indo e del Shiok e naturalmente le lunghe, lunghissime salite per giungere con la fedele bici a oltre 5000 metri resteranno sempre nella mie mente e nel mio cuore.



# The Stoss (BIG 555)

**Dirk BUSCHMANN and  
Anja von HEYDEBRECK**

Coming from Germany or neighbouring countries to a holiday in the Alps, one may be tempted to quickly rush through the Rhine valley between Lake Constance and Chur. But the BIG shows that it is worth to pay closer attention to this region – for instance to the Stoss. To explore this BIG, one best starts on the east side. The old road – Alte Stossstrasse – from Altstätten is very rewarding, due to its exposed location above the Rhine valley and the company of a cog railway. If you now think that this road must be quite steep, you're perfectly right – it goes straight up the hill and features several stretches around 20%. The new main road is much less steep, going up in hairpins that make the road very popular for motorcyclists. Both roads come together shortly before the top, where you will find an old-style guesthouse (don't miss to step in for a coffee or refreshment), the battle-chapel Stoss and a historical monument.

Now it's time for a different kind of travel, a travel in time to the year 1405. On June 17th



it is raining heavily and it is too cold for summertime. 400 people from Appenzell are hiding on top of the hill, just where we are standing now. They are waiting for the enemy. From the Rhine valley, 1200 well-armed soldiers from the Habsburg army are approaching by foot and on horseback. Confident of their victory, this elite troop doesn't feel the need to explore the terrain – a big mistake. As cyclists we know how exhausted we are after a hard ascent. And we try to avoid muddy slopes when we are riding a bike with slick tyres. The Austrian soldiers in their heavy armours are facing similar problems. Moreover, due to wet bowstrings, they are hardly able to use their bows and crossbows.

The people from Appenzell are in a better position: They just wait on top of the hill, having big stones ready for rolling them down the hill. Barefooted they stand firmly in the mud. The Habsburg troops are completely surprised by the stones thrust downwards and the following attack with halberds (sort of a combination of a lance and an axe) conducted in a wedge formation. The army is dissolved and put to flight, with around 400 soldiers being killed. More than one hundred suits of armour – at that time worth a fortune – are captured. Only 20 of the Appenzell people die, among them Uli Rotach, who is honoured as a hero of the people since then. The memory of this fierce battle is kept vivid by a pilgrimage of the Innerrhoden people to the battle chapel (since 1597).

What is the historical context of the Battle of the Stoss, which was part of the Appenzell Wars (1401-1429)?



In the 14th century, Appenzell was under the rule of the monastery St. Gallen, which was at that time on its decline due to mismanagement. When the monastery tried to compensate this through increased taxes (as we have seen it in today's Europe), the Appenzell people revolted and won in a first battle against St. Gallen. But then the situation became threatening for the Appenzell people. Their general urge for freedom (think also of the young Switzerland nearby) was a source of annoyance for the mighty Habsburg regents. They planned to make an example of Appenzell. Together with St. Gallen, Habsburg went into war against Appenzell after first having isolated it politically.

Indirectly, the outstanding and surprising victory of Appenzell at the Battle of the Stoss was also a victory for the young Switzerland. Appenzell, which so far belonged to the Swabian Städtebund (league of towns), but was heavily disappointed for not having received support, turned to orient itself self-confidently more towards Switzerland. In 1411 it joined the Swiss Confederation.

# Melchsee-Frutt

**Meindert BRUGMAN**

In mijn omzwervingen door de Alpen kwam ik terecht in Kerns (Zwitserland). Hotel was niet zo gezellig. 's Avonds om half negen kwam er een bus Japanners aan, die voor ik ontbeet al weer op pad gingen. Voor de rest waren er geen gasten. Hotelhouder was wel heel vriendelijk, zo ook het overige personeel. Eten was redelijk tot goed.

Dag drie (23 juli) dat ik daar was, had ik genoeg moed verzameld voor het zwaarste stuk fietsen in mijn leven (tot nu toe). Na eerst wat warm gefietst te zijn, ging ik op pad naar de beklimming met de bijzondere naam Melchsee-Frutt. Het zal wel een afwijking van mij zijn, maar als ik aan die beklimming denk, komt altijd "zeebanket" in mijn hoofd, en laat zeebanket nu net mijn favoriete chocolade zijn. Het eerste stuk was niet zo steil, weg was goed, landschap afwisselend. Maar halverwege (Stöckalp) werd de weg smaller en steiler, en steiler en nog steiler. Het was hier ook eenrichtingverkeer. Volgens Strava was het de laatste 7,9



km, gemiddeld 10,5%. Ik snap nog steeds niet dat ik dat heb gered, maar de cijfers liegen niet. Ik schrijf dit verhaal nu een half jaar later, maar ben de ontberingen vergeten. Wel weet ik dat het op laatst zo smal was, dat ik blij was als een auto me weer had ingehaald, zonder dat ik van de weg werd gedrukt. Autorijders kunnen zich in mijn ogen slecht inleven in hoe "lastig" fietsen is, als de klim eigenlijk net te zwaar voor je is. Het zij zo. Boven heb ik nog een stuk langs de Melchsee en de Tannensee gefietst, tot de

Tannalp (1977m). Het was mijn voornemen nog een col (Jochpass) te scoren daar, maar dat lukte niet, het laatste stuk was onverhard, en dat lukte niet met mijn racebandjes. Het was juni en het was fris. Je kon duidelijk zien dat de natuur op achter was bij Nederland. De boterbloem bloeit bij ons in april, nu is het juli!! Voor ik afdaalde nog wat gegeten. Zeer voldaan kwam ik in het hotel aan: I habe es gemacht.

's Nachts droomde ik dat ik een kruiwagen zeebanket moest opeten.





# Mannen met een missie

## Martin KOOL

Als ik op 22 juni 2012 's avonds mijn bed op zoek vraag ik me af hoe dat de komende 6 dagen verder moet. Philip en ik zijn namelijk deze morgen heel vroeg vertrokken vanuit Maastricht naar Lofer. Een klein Oostenrijks plaatsje nabij de Duitse grens.

In Lofer staat de 1e van, wat later blijkt, 16 beklimmingen op het programma. De Höhenstrasse Loferer alm om precies te zijn. In 8,5 kilometer overbrug je hier de 1000 hoogtemeters om op de top van 1628 meter te komen. Lekker begin met 800 autokilometers in de benen. Gelukkig hebben we de MTB mee dus we kunnen een kleine molen malen. Maar we zijn er nog niet voor dag 1. Ook de Steinplatte Kammerkör Bergbahnen moet er nog aan geloven. Deze beklimmen we vanuit Waidring. Hier zijn 7 kilometer beschikbaar om je 900 meter omhoog te brengen. Pfieuww weet ik nog uit te brengen als ik op de top bij een nietszeggende zendmast sta uit te puffen. Een stevig begin van een weekje klimmen in Oostenrijk en Italië! Als mijn hoofd het kussen raakt sluiten mijn ogen als vanzelf. Ik droom al snel van wat nog komen gaat.

## Dag 2

Pension Noëlla in Sankt Johann is een aanrader. Een mooi uitvalsbasis voor de beklimmingen in de Kitzbüheler Alpen, prima eten en een gastvrije eigenaar. Het ontbijt gaat er snel in want vandaag moet er weer stevig geklommen worden. De benen zijn nog stram van de 1e dag maar we hebben een missie. We parkeren de auto aan de voet van

niets minder dan de Kitzbüheler Horn. De klim naar de Kitzbüheler Horn geldt als een van de zwaarste in de professionele wielersport. De constante extreme stijging van 15 tot 18% en het feit dat je in de volle zon rijdt zorgen ervoor dat de klim extra zwaar is, terwijl de afstand (7,7 km) en het hoogteverschil (920 m) steviger is dan bij veel beroemde Tour-de-France-bergen. Al snel zit de hartslag op maximaal. Ook hier bewijst het kleine verzet van de MTB weer zijn diensten. Hoewel de benen het toch moeten doen. De laatste 2 km van de klim is een privé weg in eigendom van de ÖRF (the National Austrian Broadcasting Company) waar geen auto's mogen komen. Een slagboom zorgt er voor dat er geen auto's en motoren door kunnen. Voetgangers moeten door een draaihek. Ook fietsers mogen er niet door of je moet onder de slagboom door kruipen. Dat doen we dus maar. We willen toch echt de ultieme top bereiken. Met een laatste krachtsinspanning weten we (ook hier weer) de zendmast te bereiken. We zakken snel die 2

kilometer weer af naar het restaurant. De Goulashsoep in Oostenrijk doet het altijd goed! Met een sticker, vanwege het goed volbrengen van de klim, op zak dalen we voldaan af naar de auto. Nu snel op weg naar Mühlbach am Höchkönig. Een kleine 80 kilometer met de auto. We parkeren de auto en starten aan de relatief eenvoudige klim naar Arthur Haus. Vergeleken met de eerste drie is dit een makkie. Af en toe een steile hecto maar als je 8 kilometer beschikbaar hebt voor 600 hoogtemeters mag je niet klagen. We dalen weer af naar Mühlbach en fietsen gelijk door naar het Dientner Sattel. Een doorgaande, brede weg met aardig wat verkeer. Ook eenvoudig maar het is de 3e van vandaag dus de benen voelen zwaar aan. Eenmaal terug in Pension Noëlla hebben we alweer praatjes. Het gaat best goed. Morgen naar Italië!

## Dag 3

Tijdens het ontbijt bedenk ik me pas dat het mijn verjaardag is. Ik was zo "In de ban van de klim" dat zo'n futilliteit naar de achtergrond verdwijnt.



## BIG Review 2013

Onderweg naar Italië pakten we nog een Oostenrijkse BIG mee. Het Neues Luckner Haus ligt zo mooi op de route dat we die niet kunnen laten liggen. Nabij Huben stappen we op de fiets voor deze prachtige klim. Het "haus" op de top mag er zijn, evenals de serveerster die ons (alweer) een goulashsoep serveert. Terug bij de auto rijden we door naar het zuiden. Via de Plöckenpass rijden we Italië in. Vorig jaar beklommen we deze pas in de stromende regen. Ons reisdoel is Sutrio. Een doorgwinterende bergfietsster weet dan welke col er op het programma staat. Juist ja, ik schenk mij zelf de beklimming van de Monte Zoncolan voor mijn 55e verjaardag. Eerst brengen we onze spullen naar Hotel da Alvise. Ook weer zo'n mooie uitvalsbasis. Dan de fiets op voor de Zoncolan. Van de 'makkelijke' kant zeggen sommigen. Maar 13 kilometer voor 1200 hoogtemeters is niet mis. Vooral de laatste 7 kilometer van deze Girobeslissing hakken er in. Op de top hef ik de fiets boven mij uit voor een foto. Een mooi cadeau!

### Dag 4

Dit is alweer de 4e dag. We starten in Paularo voor de Passo del Cason di Lanza.

Deze pas staat op het programma van de Giro 2013 en wij mogen er nu al op. Het is een fraaie klim door rustige streken en over smalle wegen. Op de top staat een eenzame boerderij in een alpenweide.



Niks geen toerisme hier. Mooi! We dalen af en gaan naar Ligosullo. Daar slaan we af voor de 1e onverharde klim van

deze trip. De Monte Paularo. Na 5 kilometer fietsen we tegen een blokkade aan. Bosarbeiders hebben de weg (nou ja weg) geblokkeerd vanwege kapwerkzaamheden. De Oost Europeanen zijn de

moeilijkste niet en we mogen er langs. Het begint te regenen. De 1e druppels van deze trip. De regen geeft de klim een mysterieus karakter en maakt het rijden over de stenen er niet eenvoudiger op. Het is hier wel heel fraai en stil. In het laatste open deel van de klim is de natuur overweldigend. Meertjes, watervalletjes en prachtige vergezichten bepalen het beeld. We schieten wat plaatjes en dalen af. In Hotel Da Alvise genieten we voor de 2e keer van een geweldig stuk rundvlees. Dik verdiend!

### Dag 5

Na een flinke verplaatsing met de auto komen we aan in Savogna. In 14 kilometer klimmen we naar de Mataiur. Niet heel bijzonder maar het



uitzicht op de top is fraai. Je hebt mooi zicht op het vlakke deel van Friuli. Snel weer naar de auto want we willen nog naar Mangrsko Sedlo, een Sloveense klim. Slovenië is hier prachtig. Via Volce, Kolbarid en Bovec rijden we naar Strmec. Daar in de buurt start het onverharde deel van de Mangrstko. De klim voert ons naar de top die precies op de grens van Slovenië en Italië ligt. De grijze rotsen geven de klim een apart aanzien. Op de top zijn de meertjes van Fusine prachtig te zien. We gunnen ons even tijd om hiervan te genieten. Dan zoeven we terug om op weg te gaan naar de laatste BIG van vandaag. De Sella Carnizza moet er nog aan geloven. Door een dicht begroeid bos klimmen we over een smal weggetje naar de top. De tijd heeft hier stil gestaan. Dat zien we ook aan het wegdek. Dat is echt heel slecht. Gelukkig komen we zonder lekke banden boven en even later ook weer beneden. We gaan terug naar Sutrio voor onze laatste nacht hier.

#### Dag 6

Deze dag staat in het teken van een lange verplaatsing naar Rovereto. Maar ook dan vinden we nog tijd voor 2 BIGgen. In Pederobba parkeren we de auto. De Passo Tomba is de volgende in de rij van 16. De pas laat zich typeren door een ultra steil begin door het bos en een eenvoudiger slotakkoord. Op de top staat een monument ter herinnering aan de bloedige gevechten die hier zijn geleverd in de 1e wereldoorlog. Nu we hier toch in de buurt zijn gaan we ook maar door voor de langste klim van deze trip. De Monte Grappa bereik je vanuit Romano d'Ezzelino in 27 kilometer. We peddelen rustig omhoog. Af en toe vlakt de klim wat af. Dat is maar goed ook want alle inspanningen beginnen hun tol te eisen. Toch draaien we redelijk eenvoudig

Wij verbleven in:

Sankt Johann: Pension Noëlla <http://www.pension-noella.com/>

Sutrio: Osteria Da Alvisè <http://www.osteriadaalvise.it/>

Rovereto: Agritur Masi Brenta <http://www.agriturismotrentinomb.it/>

door naar de top. Ook daar weer een oorlogsmonument. Er liggen hier een kleine 25.000 Italiaanse en Oostenrijkse militairen begraven. Allemaal hier gesneuveld in de 1e wereldoorlog. Als je dat bedenkt wordt je wel even stil. We arriveren laat in Rovereto. Gelukkig heeft onze nieuwe huisbaas nog wat eten bewaard. Nog één dag fietsen en dan naar huis.

#### Dag 7

We gaan deze laatste dag op weg naar de Pasubio. We moeten naar Vallarsa maar wegwerkers gooien roet in het eten. Uiteindelijk rijden we een mijl op zeven om bij onze bestemming te komen. Maar dan heb je wel wat! De Pasubio wordt het hoogtepunt van onze reis. Via de strade degli Eroi (de Heldenstraat) gaan we naar Rifugio Papa op de top van de Pasubio. Ook hier herinnert veel aan de gevechten die hier gedurende de 1e wereldoorlog zijn geleverd. Gedenksteden, tunnels die hiervoor zijn aangelegd en er zijn zelfs nog loopgraven aanwezig. De MTB is hier echt noodzakelijk want

het wegdek is heel slecht.

Vooraf het laatste deel vraagt stuurmanskunst en een groot hart. De weg is smal en slecht begaanbaar en de afgrond is dichtbij. Je maakt hier prachtige plaatjes van het kalkmassief. Helaas is het nu mistig en zo ontgaat ons een deel van de schoonheid. De gele rifugio is te zien in het laatste deel van de klim. Eenmaal daar laten we ons verwennen met een 'galgenmaal'. Als we weer zijn afgedaald pakken we nog 'even' de Campogrosso mee. Een aardig klimmetje maar in het licht van het geweld wat we achter de kiezen hebben is dit te vergelijken met de klim van de van Brienenoordbrug.

De trip is goed voor 16 BIGgen en bijna 16000 hoogtemeters. Missie volbracht! Morgen weer naar huis.

[www.martinkool.blogspot.com](http://www.martinkool.blogspot.com)

#### Pasubio



# BIG LAZIO

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BIG 781 Campo Staffi e  
BIG 782 Campo Catino -  
**Agosto 2012**



Per la scelta delle vacanze estive ho scelto la Ciociaria, la zona a sud del Lazio al confine con l'Abruzzo.

*For summer vacation, I chose to visit Ciociaria in the southern part of Latium, close to the Abruzzo region.*

Base all'Hotel Iris Crillion a Fiuggi, amena città termale posta in collina a 600 m.s.m. Oltre la visita alle città d'arte e le numerose Abbazie (siamo sulla via benedicti che da Norcia, patria di San Benedetto, attraversa il Lazio e termina in Molise all'abbazia di San Vincenzo al Volturno), volevo conquistare 2 BIG posti in quella zona entrambi a ca. 1800 m di altezza.

*My base is Hotel Iris Crillion at Fiuggi, a hilly spa town 600 m.s.a.l. (meters above sea level). I had two goals:  
1.To visit historical art cities and different abbeys (we are on Via Benedicti – San Benedetto road begins at Norcia, crosses*

*Latium and ends in Molise at S. Vincenzo al Volturno' abbey).  
2.To achieve two important BIG summits in this area: Campo Staffi and Campo Catino.*

BIG 781 Campo Staffi è il primo traguardo. Lasciato Fiuggi si inizia a salire verso il passo della Sella a quota 931 senza eccessive difficoltà con bella vista sulla città antica, dopo 5 km si arriva al valico (2 Passo della Sella) e si scende su Altipiani di Arcinazzo (845 msm).

*BIG 781 Campo Staffi is the first goal. I leave from Fiuggi where the road begins to rise toward Passo della Sella (931 m.a.s.l.) without too much difficulty. The climb offers nice overviews of the old hill town. At 5 kms, the pass is achieved. Then there is a 1 km descent to Altopiani di Arcinazzo.*

Si torna a salire per 1 Km e poi discesa ripida fino al fiume Aniene a quota 600 come Fiuggi. Si riparte in salita direzione Trevi nel Lazio su una strada stretta e piuttosto trafficata, da quota 821 si ridiscende a valle di nuovo e si prosegue verso Pantano. Alla

bella fontana sosta piacevole per provvista d'acqua e da lì inizia la salita a tornanti che porta a Filettino a quota 1037.

*Going upward again, there is another km followed by a descent to Aniene valley at the same sea level (600 m) as Fiuggi. The ascent up to Trevi nel Lazio is along a narrow and fairly busy road that reaches 821 m of altitude in this hill town. Then it is downhill again, proceeding toward Pantano. The fountain there is a pleasant rest stop before attacking the switchbacks up to Filettino (1037 m.a.s.l.).*

Questo paese è posto per lo più lungo la strada, grande movimento di turisti in questo periodo. Oltrepassato l'abitato cessa il traffico, solo alte montagne attorno e si procede verso l'alto per arrivare prima al Passo S. Antonio quota 1608 da dove, scendendo inizia la regione Abruzzo, mentre continuando verso l'alto a sinistra dopo 3,5 km si arriva alla meta di Campo Staffi. Una serie di costruzioni con poca fantasia accolgono il visitatore, dovrebbe essere una stazione sciistica ma all'apparenza ha



poco da offrire.

*Filettino is primarily located along the road, and there are numerous tourists there in the summer time. Once I leave the town, the traffic is gone, and nothing is left but high mountains that surround me. After 10 kms ascending a pass, S. Antonio arrives (1608 m.a.s.l.). The descent brings me to the beginning of the Abruzzo region. Once I proceed left for 3.5 km, Campo Staffi is reached (1836 m.a.s.l.). A series of nondescript buildings welcome visitors. It is a ski resort during the winter.*

In compenso le trattorie offrono un bel pasto a base di agnello alla brace, non c'è male dopo una scalata non difficile ma lunga e contrassegnata da tanti sali scendi che innervosiscono il ciclista.

*On the other hand, there are restaurants that offer a good meal, especially grilled lamb specialties, ideal after the long ride of ups and downs that irritate many cyclists.*

**BIG 782 Campo Catino:** Sempre partendo da Fiuggi si scende verso Alatri e si inizia a salire da quota 481 direzione Guarcino lungo la via Benedicti. Guarcino paese conosciuto per i suoi amaretti, ha già con i suoi 625 m di altezza una posizione panoramica sulla valle.

*BIG 782 Campo Catino starts from Fiuggi, descends toward Alatri (starting at 481 m.a.s.l.), follows through Via Benedicti Guarcino (625 m.a.s.l.), a hill town that overlooks a valley known for its Amaretti (macaroons).*

Ristorato al King bar (dove nel retro bottega fanno a mano gli amaretti), a centro paese storico curva a destra ed inizia la via



che porta a Campo Catino, una salita lunga ben 18 km.

*A short rest at King Bar (where people prepare handmade Amaretti), then on to the middle of the historic center. Turning right, there begins an 18 Km ascent leading to Campo Catino.*

Panorama stupendo, nessun traffico si procede tranquillamente anche perché la pendenza è costante sul 6-7% che non dà preoccupazione. In cima capisco il significato del nome Catino: si tratta di un cratere di vulcano spento.

*There are marvelous views, no car traffic, a constant 6-7% grade that makes for a nice ride to the top. At the top, the meaning of Campo Catino becomes clear to me: I am at the edge of a dead volcano's crater.*

Dopo aver pranzato all'Hotel Eden, in simpatica compagnia dei proprietari, con la moglie, che mi ha raggiunto in auto verso la fine della salita, si decide di traversare a piedi il Catino raggiungendo le rocce del lato opposto per ammirare il panorama.

*My wife, who comes by car, meets me for lunch at Hotel Eden, where I have a good relationship with the owners. Afterward, we cross the crater by foot, reaching the rocks across the way and enjoy the panorama.*

Questi due BIG del Lazio meridionale, sebbene lunghi parecchi Km non sono difficili per uno scalatore, quello che impressiona è l'altezza delle montagne che per secoli sono state una vera barriera tra Lazio ed Abruzzo.

*Although these two BIG of southern Latium are several kms long, they are not so difficult to achieve. What remains impressive is the height of the mountains which, over the centuries, were a major barrier between Latium and Abruzzo.*



# 1001 Miglia

## La più lunga randonnée d'Europa nel paese più bello del mondo.

**Gigi CANDELI**

Ho cominciato a pensare alla 1001 Miglia subito dopo aver concluso felicemente la PBP nel 2011.

Anche l'amico Yuji Kaneda, ciclista giapponese conosciuto al pasta party di St. Quentin all'arrivo della PBP, ha certamente contribuito, con le sue mail, a rafforzare la

Garmin che segnava +44,7°. Non mi era mai capitato di pedalare in quelle condizioni. Anche nei tratti in discesa si aveva poco sollievo perchè l'aria surriscaldata bruciava la braccia, le gambe, per non parlare del viso e degli occhi in particolare.

Partiamo da Nerviano, (foto 1) che è considerata la culla dei randonneurs italiani, alle 21.45 del giovedì 16 Agosto e dopo

quanto riguarda la distanza che la durata in bici).

Il giorno dopo, partenza alle 5 e, con il fresco, scendiamo l'unico BIG di tutto il percorso, l'Eremo della Verna, transitando quindi per Caprese Michelangelo, Anghiari, Valico della Foce, poi la piatta e bollente Val di Chiana fino al controllo al Velodromo di Montallese, poco prima di Chiusi.



decisione di affrontare insieme a lui anche questa incredibile sfida.

E così, dopo lunghi mesi di meticolosa preparazione sulle lunghe e lunghissime distanze, mi sono ritrovato a Nerviano, nell'interland milanese, con Yuji e con gli inseparabili amici modenesi, Alberto, Carmine e Lorenzo.

Direi che il problema maggiore sia stato il gran caldo che ha oppresso l'Italia in Agosto 2012.

Durante la terza tappa, forse la più dura, prima di Montalcino ho scattato una foto al mio

tutta l'estenuante, noiosa pianura Padana (addolcita solo dal saluto che le nostre mogli (foto 2) sono venute a portarci al controllo di Massa Finalese, insieme ad un ottimo e graditissimo (foto 3) gelato), affrontiamo l'appennino forlivese al Passo dei Tre Faggi, poi, dopo il controllo di Dicomano superiamo anche il facile, ma lungo, Valico di Croce a Mori. Arriviamo a Poppi, dove avevo prenotato il primo albergo, poco dopo le 23.

Quindi abbiamo fatto ben 511 Km in 25 ore e trenta (un record per tutti noi sia per

Costeggiato il Lago Trasimeno, puntiamo su Todi (foto 4), dove arriviamo all'imbrunire, dopo tantissime soste alle fontanine e bar presi d'assalto lungo il percorso. Timbro, rapido rifornimento e subito via, perchè ci attendono impazienti nell'albergo che ho prenotato sul lago di Bolsena, che non abbiamo, purtroppo, potuto ammirare perchè era ormai notte. Ci consola il sapere che abbiamo raggiunto in sole due tappe il punto più a sud di tutto il percorso. Da qui si punta a nord verso l'arrivo, ma sarà anche la parte più impegnativa.

Ci facciamo un ricchissimo piatto di spaghetti alla carbonara, molto apprezzato da Yuji, poi a letto.

Ripartenza ancora alle 5 verso Pitigliano con le sue case di tufo, che ammiriamo illuminate dalla calda luce dell'alba e dopo, Saturnia con le sue terme solfuree che emanano un inconfondibile odore.

Dopo Scansano, per molti km vediamo in lontananza il Mar Tirreno che a noi sembra come un miraggio, immersi come siamo nella calura.

Affrontiamo qui il tratto più impegnativo (foto 5), sia per i dislivelli con continui

saliscendi che per il caldo torrido passando per i piccoli borghi di Polverara, Granaione e Cinigiano prima di affrontare la lunga e assolata strada che porta al Passo del Lume Spento e quindi a Montalcino tra gli splendidi vigneti del Brunello Banfi. Ci sentiamo un pò come sulle strade di casa nostra abituati a passarci nelle innumerevoli edizioni dell'Eroica finora disputate.

Superate le stupende e fotogeniche Crete Senesi (foto 6) arriviamo a Castelnuovo della Berardenga verso le 20,30 (foto 7). Ormai è impossibile raggiungere Colle Val d'Elsa dove avevo prenotato il terzo Hotel.

Per fortuna Carmine, in grandissima forma, va in avanscoperta e trova una carinissima nonnina che ci affitta due camere per la notte. Il mattino dopo, piccolo assaggio di strade bianche dell'Eroica nei pressi di Siena prima di entrare in città. E' ancora buio e il dover affrontare un paio di chilometri di sterrato crea qualche apprensione nell'amico giapponese (che stenta a credere che si possano percorrere più di cento chilometri sterrati durante l'Eroica).

Purtroppo l'ingresso alla Piazza del Campo, forse la più bella piazza del mondo, che io speravo di potere mostrare a Yuji, ci è precluso da un inflessibile quanto sgarbato vigile urbano che sta presidiando l'accesso, dato che sono ancora in corso, alle 6 del mattino del 20 Agosto, i lavori per rimuovere la sabbia



messa in occasione del Palio dell'Assunta.

La Cattedrale però ce la gustiamo tutta come si deve, illuminata appena dalla luce rosata dell'aurora.

Ma il tempo stringe e allora via verso Colle Val d'Elsa e subito dopo San Gimignano (foto 8), che insisto per attraversarla nel centro storico e potere ammirare anche questo nostro piccolo gioiello medioevale che desta l'ammirazione di Yuji.

Dopo il controllo di Montaione ci dirigiamo verso la pianura passando l'Arno a Santa Croce e dopo Altopascio puntiamo verso la Garfagnana che

percorriamo tutta fino a Piazza al Serchio. Breve sosta, naturalmente, per una foto al caratteristico Ponte della Maddalena a Borgo a Mozzano.

Qui sentiamo aria di casa nostra dato che la provincia di Modena è giusto di là dal crinale appenninico. Potrebbe essere una via di fuga per un ritorno inglorioso. Nessuno di noi la prende minimamente in considerazione e si va avanti.

Arriviamo dopo le 20 ad Aulla. Anche il 4° pernottamento programmato (a Deiva Marina) salta e troviamo lì per lì un alberghetto confortevole che ci ospita. Questa sera, al

ristorante, al posto della solita pasta, ci facciamo una bella tagliata con rucola e grana. Andiamo a riposare molto soddisfatti.

Domani ci attende una tappa estremamente impegnativa sia dal punto di vista altimetrico che chilometrico. Abbiamo deciso



ad arrivare a Nerviano senza ulteriori pernottamenti: sono 335 km. con più di 3100 m. di dislivello.

Quindi anticipiamo la partenza alle 4 e percorriamo la Val di Vara ricordando la tragedia dell'alluvione del Novembre scorso, scolliniamo alla Colla di Gritta e scendiamo a Levanto per poi risalire subito alla Colletta M. Guaitarola e ridiscendere a Deiva ove ci aspetta un controllo (foto 9).

Risaliamo ancora per raggiungere l'Aurelia appena sotto il Passo del Bracco poi, finalmente, giù verso il mare a Sestri Levante che superiamo di slancio in mezzo ad un traffico caotico e con una calura afosa ancor più insopportabile. Sosta a Lavagna, prima di abbandonare la Riviera Ligure, per un gelato ed una Coca Cola ormai rituale.

Affrontiamo la lunghissima e caldissima (39°) Valle di Fontanabuona che lentamente ci porta sotto al Passo della Scoffera che è l'ultimo Passo di tutta la randonnée. Dalla cima infatti si scende verso la Valle Scrivia e, dopo il controllo di Casella Ligure, velocemente ci portiamo sotto i Colli Tortonesi.



Qui c'è l'ultimo controllo proprio a Castellania, piccolo paese ben noto a tutti i ciclisti per avere dato i natali al Campionissimo. Il timbro e il ristoro sono proprio a fianco della tomba del grande Fausto e



del fratello Serse. Tante le foto che scattiamo a ricordo del nostro passaggio (foto 10-11).

Partiamo verso le 19 e mancano ancora quasi 120 Km. Comincia a far sera. Il nostro gruppetto si è rinforzato per la presenza di altri 5-6 amici e quindi il lavoro in testa viene meglio ripartito.

Decidiamo di fermarci per un ultimo ristoro nel piccolo borgo di Molino dei Torti, non lontano da Voghera, dove ci facciamo una mezza pizza a testa. Ripartiamo che è già buio, ma dopo pochi chilometri, una foratura dell'amico Yuji, poco prima del Po, ci costringe ad una

sosta forzata proprio in una zona infestata da nuvole di zanzare che aspettavano solo noi, belli sudati, per aggredirci e farsi una scorpacciata del nostro sangue. In qualche modo riusciamo a ripartire temendo però di essere rimasti soli. Invece dopo 500-600 metri troviamo tutto il resto del gruppo che ci sta aspettando inanellando giri su giri in una rotatoria per evitare di farsi

assalire dalle zanzare. E' anche questo il bello delle randonnée, e cioè il clima di solidarietà e amicizia che si stabilisce tra chi vi partecipa a differenza delle GranFondo, dove ognuno corre per sé.

Attraversiamo, purtroppo al buio, il Parco del Ticino, senza poter godere del paesaggio che ci circonda e che sicuramente meriterebbe una visita, e arriviamo finalmente a Nerviano.

Alle ore 01,15 del 22 Agosto entriamo nello stadio da cui siamo partiti. Il Diploma attesta che abbiamo impiegato 123 ore e 37 minuti, cioè 5 giorni e tre ore. Anche questa è fatta. Ma è stata molto dura (foto 12).

Ora stiamo già pensando al prossimo anno. Avevamo pensato di partecipare alla LEL (Londra-Edimburgo-Londra). Purtroppo appena si sono aperte le iscrizioni il 5 Gennaio, tutti i 750 posti sono stati assegnati e noi siamo rimasti esclusi. Pensiamo quindi di consolarci iscrivendoci alla MGM (Madrid-Gjion-Madrid) .....di soli 1200 Km. Dovrebbe essere una passeggiata al confronto con la 1001 Miglia.

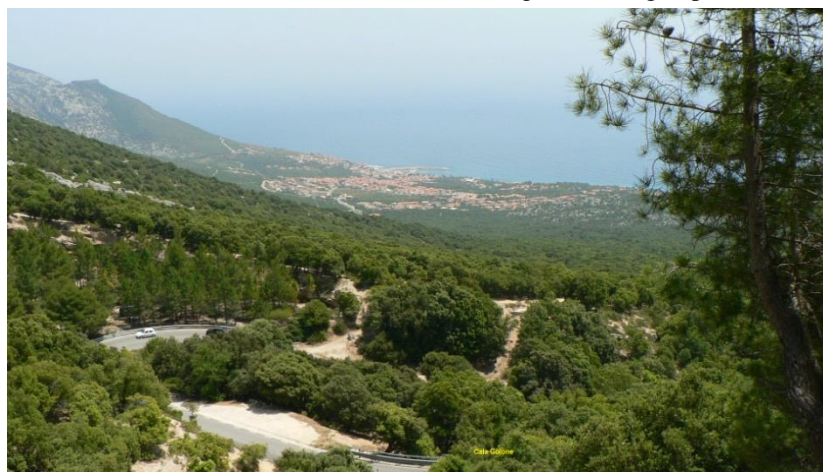
In ogni caso potremmo completare una bellissima tripla.



## 6 BIGs, 4 millions de brebis et plusieurs coulevres noires.

Marc SÉGUY

Si j'ajoute que le drapeau du lieu comporte quatre profils de tête de maure au front ceinturé d'un bandeau vous devinez qu'il s'agit de la Sardaigne, même si le titre est pour l'instant peu explicite. C'est par la côte nord-est, joliment urbanisée et bien entretenue, que commence notre tour de pays. Nos camps de base seront au nombre de 6, dans des campings de bord de mer obligatoirement : il n'y a pas de camp en montagne, à l'intérieur des terres, dommage. Le littoral, côté mer Tyrrhénienne, est superbe et il est assez bien mis en valeur contrairement au reste du pays. Il faut donc, en fonction des 6 BIGs de l'île, bien choisir nos



arrêts.

Et pour commencer, à partir de Cannigione (au nord d'Olbia) notre premier point de chute, je vais me rapprocher de Tempio Pausania pour aller monter Balestrieri (BIG n°820). La montée est pentue mais régulière même si par 2 fois le pourcentage semble dépasser les 10%. Le vent ne souffle pas trop fort, il est juste là pour rafraîchir, tant mieux. L'ascension se fait en partie au

milieu de blocs de rochers aux formes variées évoquant parfois des figures animales. Et avant la dernière partie, on y rencontre la Madone des Neiges qui pourrait aisément être surnommée « Madone des antennes ».

Sur la route du retour nous longeons des forêts de chêne-liège avant de visiter une des fameuses tombes des géants de la période nuragique. Oui, voilà un terme nouveau et savant !! Nous ignorions, avant de venir ici, l'existence d'un élément important du patrimoine sarde : le nuraghe (construction creuse).

Changement de camping. Direction Siniscola, au sud d'Olbia. Dès le lendemain, je me dirige vers Dorgali pour me

rendre vers Genna Silana (BIG n°824), une montée sans aucune difficulté avec une belle vue sur des collines couvertes de végétation rase. Se rendre à la station balnéaire de Cala Gonone vaut le détour mais il faudra s'en extraire pour se remettre sur la fameuse N°125 (450 m de dénivelé en 7 km) . Le lendemain, à partir de ce camping, je vais à Pattada, la capitale du couteau sarde, puis à Ozieri pour monter le passo Punta Massiènera ( n°821).



Pas de difficulté pour cette grimpée en 2 temps. Pour ce qui est des fameux couteaux, 2 fabricants parmi les plus connus de l'île sont bien présents dans de petits ateliers mais il ne sera pas possible d'en voir le moindre exemplaire !!! Ceux-ci peuvent être admirés sur internet ou dans une boutique de Cagliari par exemple. C'est dans un camping de la ville de Tortoli que nous déplaçons la caravane. Pour commencer la visite des environs, je m'offre une 2ème montée du Genna Silana (BIG n°824) mais par le versant sud cette fois. La traversée du village de Baunei, installé à flanc de montagne et visible de loin, vaut le coup. La montée n'est pas pénible.

Vers le bord de mer, nous allons voir le port d'Arbatax et ses roches rouges ainsi que la petite station balnéaire de Santa Maria Navarrese (olivier millénaire, tour génoise entre autres curiosités). Mais, c'est à vélo que je reprends volontiers la route passant par Lanusei, pour Arcu Correboi (BIG n°823) et ensuite me diriger vers Sporting Club Monte Spada (BIG n°822). Ces 2 BIGs, situés dans les « Monti dei Gennargentu », sont parfois très sauvages et même assez déserts en cette saison. Intrigués par une publicité et désireux de prendre un café, nous sommes allés en voiture voir Bruncu Spina, la seule station de sports d'hiver de l'île (au sud du BIG n°822). Si la route est large et bien revêtue,

elle se termine en cul de sac sur d'anciennes bergeries et bâtiments en tôles : pas de bar, pas de restaurant, pas d'hôtel. Où sont les investisseurs ? Tout reste à faire.

Dans le village montagnard de Fonni (à plus de 1 000 m d'altitude) on peut observer de très belles peintures murales représentant des scènes de la vie quotidienne du village : le berger sarde ; le taciturne paysan coiffé de son béret et portant veston ; des scènes religieuses ; des trompe-l'œil ; des silhouettes de femmes sardes toutes de noir vêtues et portant cabas au bout des bras ou charges sur la tête.

Prochaine escale : la capitale Cagliari ou pour être précis un camping à l'est vers le capo Carbonara, Villasimius et la Costa Rei autant de lieux et de panoramas agréables à découvrir ... en cette saison. Avant de nous rendre dans la ville principale de l'île, je préfère aller grimper le 6ème et dernier BIG (n°825) : Monte Serpeddi. Une inconnue subsiste : la route est-elle goudronnée en totalité ? Arrivé en vélo à Quartu S'Elena et après plusieurs erreurs et hésitations, je demande mon chemin à deux autochtones qui me disent clairement qu'un vélo de route (équipé de pneus 23) ne passe pas. Ils m'indiquent une autre voie, tout en émettant un doute sur l'accès final !! C'est donc par l'est que je repars (voir la note que j'ai ajoutée sur le site). Hélas, le final est bien muletier. Demi-tour vers le camping, pose de pneus de 32 et retour sur les lieux pour en terminer avec ces 7 km de piste en plus



ou moins bon état. Au sommet, la vue sur Cagliari et les environs est fort belle. J'ai pu aussi constater que l'autre versant du Serpeddi était également muletier.

Quant à la capitale présentée dans certains guides telle « un bijou qui s'ouvre à l'improviste, comme une rose, dans la profondeur de la vaste baie (des Angès) », nous l'avons parcourue longuement à pied. Depuis les remparts



bordés d'aloès et menant à la Cathédrale di San Maria (et ses mosaïques) le regard porte sur des murs blancs, beiges, jaunes, ocre, orangés, rouge sang. On y voit beaucoup de terrasses aménagées et des coupoles vertes ou brunes et le bleu violet des jacarandas bordant des avenues. La couleur claire domine, mais les éclats du bijou sont parfois ternes. Notre voyage se poursuit par la côte ouest. Il fait de plus en plus chaud (jusqu'à 40° en ce début juin). Plus de BIGs à monter, quelques cols encore sur des routes bordées de lauriers roses et blancs ou d'autres qui surplombent une mer à faire rêver.

N'allez pas imaginer que tout est merveilleux sur l'île : il faut mentionner l'existence des grands camps militaires de l'OTAN et des déchets toxiques entreposés dans certaines vallées (voir par

exemple

<http://www.michelcollon.info/La-Sardaigne-poubelle-de-l-Otan-et.html>).

Je n'ai parlé pour l'instant ni des brebis ni des couleuvres :

Les premières sont au nombre de 5 millions alors que la population de l'île n'est que de 1,7 millions d'habitants ! J'ai roulé presque tous les jours pendant 3 semaines et finalement je n'ai vu qu'une

quinzaine de gros troupeaux. Par contre, l'excellent pecorino (« Dehors il y a l'étiquette, à l'intérieur il y a la Sardaigne ») est bien là pour témoigner d'une importante industrie liée à la présence des ovins.

Quant aux secondes, je ne connais pas leur nombre, mais tous les jours j'ai pu en apercevoir au moins une sur le goudron surchauffé. Elles sont noires (ou vertes et jaunes), longues d'un mètre environ, avec de petites têtes discrètes et souvent redressées. Si elles finissent par se ranger c'est avec une nonchalance, un calme dignes des sardes.

Même si la chaleur est devenue au fil des jours de moins en moins supportable, ce voyage, effectué certes en basse saison, nous laisse de belles images.

# BIG Summary Italy

**Kevin SPEED**

## **Day 11 Friday 10th August 2012**

Gran Sasso d'Italia BIG 778 and return 62km, 5 hour.

This was a highlight of my tour and a pass that I knew would take me the best part of the day. I finished off breakfast rolls 10km on where there are picnic benches and tables After Fonte Cerretto the road dips a bit into a valley then up again after a bend to the left, a curve to the right then on to the road junction and the first sight of the buildings on the top of the Gran Sasso. This was still 10km further. I was overtaken by a group of fast Italian cyclists who told me that the way to the top might be too steep. I may look old and decrepit but there's plenty of energy in me yet! They also told me there was a storm looming over the mountain ahead but what the heck, like Everest glazing you only fit this once. I wasn't coming back again, it was now or never. As it turned out the storm passed over, there was just light rain for a while. I needed air in my tyres and asked a Swedish couple on bikes going the other way as I'd left my pump in the car. He asked me where I was from and pumped my tyres up, so kind. They told me they were cycling in Italy for five weeks – can't beat that! The final part of the climb was a series of hairpins among the rocks but wasn't as steep as warned. On reaching 2130 metres at the top I was at the highest point of my tour – it's all downhill from here. There was a barbecue up here and much drinking of Peroni but I couldn't if I wanted to get down again. I walked into the restaurant and an information area where I found out that during the war Mussolini had

been airlifted to this point for his own safety from Italians who had now joined the Allies and was here for a few weeks before being flown to Germany. The Italians don't make much of this fact up here though. There's no memorial plaques or monuments, not surprising. At 14.00 I made my way back down the pass to the



car in an hour then drove back to Paganica and took the Popoli road through Barisciano, Navelli, Cani to Popoli. I could see why the main road strikes north at Navelli as there is later a long and twisty downhill to Popoli on the minor road past Cani but at Cani itself was a good place to take a photo of a long straight avenue of trees either side of the road and a lone chapel in a field to the right. In Popoli I drove the main road north-east to Scafa then a minor road to the south-east for the second pass of the day in the late afternoon. I parked the car at Roccamorice and cycled 25km (15 miles) through Civita to Blockhaus della Maiella BIG 786 and return, 22km, 2 ½ hours. There was some rain again when I reached the road junction 7km from the top of the pass at a ski resort. I put on my rainwear but it didn't last

long. Up to this point the road was in open country but for the next few kilometres it was in the shelter of trees, but it didn't rain again the remainder of the day.

At la Maietta there is another large car park for ski-sport. From here the road continues in loops, first past a large red building that at first I thought

was the top but a long way to go yet. Then there are a series of TV/radio masts and a gentle humming of the power supply in the wind. From this point there is a low wooden fence on the left the rest of the way then a barrier to stop traffic from going further. The road is now on a ridge with views across both sides. To the left (east) is the Adriatic coast south of Pescara, very clearly defined with many miles of coast in view. I reached a small turning point for cars then a paved path only that goes further along the ridge to a small shrine on a rocky outcrop. After the usual photos it was time to go back down the mountain and freewheeled all the way back to the car

## **Day 16 Wednesday 15th August 2012**

I would never be able to cycle Vesuvius today. I found

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somewhere to stay, or so I thought. I was made very welcome by a pretty Italian girl invited in and was told my room was ready and would I like a drink. This was too friendly! I soon found out they were expecting an Englishman but not me. When I explained I had a bike in the car and was cycling in areas she apologised but directed me to a friend's house. Arriving there, there was a room and then I received a call on this lady's mobile offering me a room at the first port of call and that there had been an error so I drove back again, 2km. back at the first place she was as confused as I was – there had been no such telephone conversation and she rang her boss to see who had called me at the second accommodation. There was no one. This was very confusing. It was now getting dark and I needed to find somewhere quick. I tried another hotel on the lower slopes above Ercalano and nearly got stuck in the narrow approach in total darkness. I did a tight three-point-turn as I didn't find the hotel – wrong track! So headed back for Torre del Greco and parked up just above the town opposite a very large pizzeria restaurant just outside the town, La Roccia al Vesuvio, and intended eating here then sleeping in the car here for night and climbing Vesuvius in the morning. The car parking attendant who also guarded the parked cars for the restaurant told me it would be too dangerous to do this – I could end up with damage to the car. He asked me to park in his area if I was eating then move on for my own safety as the restaurant closed at 02.00. I explained my predicament and he found me a hotel in Torre del Greco. A girl assistant would drive up to the restaurant to meet me and I would follow her back to the hotel. This was well beyond the call of duty but

I could see that it would have been impossible to find this place as there were so many turnings for the 10km or so leading to the hotel on the waterfront. the car was safely locked away behind a five metre high electric fence and gates and I was finally in a room in the Hotel Casa Rossa, Via Mortelle for €60 at 01.30, really tired after an eventful and stressful day.



### Day 17 Thursday 16th August 2012

Car left at the hotel on the waterfront in Torre del Greco and cycled to the top of the road at Vesuvio BIG 794 and return 3.5 hours. Directions: Start in Torre del Greco, along road Comune di Torre del Greco, Viale Castelluccio becomes Via Vittoria Veneto then Via Gugliemomarconi, under autostrada becomes Via Enrico de Nicola then right fork to Via Vesuvio, Via Osservatorio, Contrada Osservatorio. 24km return. On the way up I passed the restaurant where I ate the previous night then later the Rotunda restaurant and reached the rotunda cylindrical stone where the road from Ercalano joins then the real climb begins. I was attempting this early in the day at 09.00 and reached there at midday. While

climbing there were not too many tourist buses passing so had the road almost to myself which was fantastic. There's a turning off to the left further up for a panoramic viewpoint. I took this for a 3km diversion but I could see just as well from the top of the road later. I was surprised to see so many cars and coaches up there. Some had passed me of course but didn't expect that many.

Maybe many came up from Ercalano. Ruth and I once walked all the way down the volcano a few years ago and down to Ercalano and back to Sorrento on the train as we were staying there. On the way we saw many pot holed rocks that were lava. I was reminded of this when I saw so many of them again on the way up now. The whole landscape is otherworldly, especially alongside the higher part of the road where whole areas are dust bowls of lava fields. When I reached the top I was aware of being stared at by many bemused tourists but I knew that I had by far the greater experience having cycled here rather than sitting in a steamy coach with other sweaty bodies. I had only my own sweaty body to contend with! I locked the bike up at the footpath entrance to the mountain and had a look round

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the stalls surrounding the dusty car/coach park. I bought a lava magnet for Ruth and had a celebrity beer from a stall. Back to the gate I took a few photos and heard a girl say to her boyfriend in English, "Crazy these Italians cycling up here" So I asked her to take my photo with my bike and told her to be careful as not everybody up here is Italian. I didn't go through the gate for the walkway to the top as we've been before in recent years and was quite happy to slowly bike back down and take in the views. I collected some pieces of lava from a couple of lava fields, virgin stuff as the coach parties don't stop here. They now have pride of place at home. From here back down to Torre del Greco and the car.

### Day 22 Tuesday 21st August 2012

From Melito di Porto Salvo to Monte Alto Cocuzza BIG 810 and return is 136km (85 miles) and took 9 ½ hours to achieve. It was a crowning glory of the Italian climbs and because of distance the only climb of the day. It's further than the BIG route to the top by an additional 32km, the BIG route description being: from Reggio Calabria at the Lido, roundabout to the left, take third turn off Via Saverio Voclara, left on to Via Treviso, take second left on to Via Cappuccinelli, left on to Via Salita Cappuccinelli (start) then Via Borgo Larizza, right then



left to Secondo Tronco Via Reggio Campi to Terreti , Straonni, SS183. Take a right off this later to the top. 104km return. Leaving the car at the hotel I cycled north inland at 08.00 after a good breakfast. The route up to Bagaladi is a bit untidy but not too steep and reached there at 10.00. The streets have evidence of a poorer existence but soon all this was left behind in a series of hairpins to the upper valley. The view down from Mont Sant Angelo is worth the climb. It took me a further 3 hours to reach the road junction over the Valico Pass for the climb to Monte Alto Cocuzza but the remaining 18km were easy in comparison. It was a relief to see the road on the left coming up from Reggio Calabria so knew I was very near to my turn off to the mountain. I had climbed over 1300 metres from the coast and there remained 600 metres from the road junction where there were many parked cars. There were many cyclists along the upper route having left their cars at the junction. Also here are horses and carts for transporting people along this stretch of road. In a bit less than 2 hours I reached the top of the pass. The lower section is a continuous climb but the last few kilometres are ups and downs. It's an inglorious end at a group of tents to the left where it's possible to buy drinks and burgers. I bought a celebration Peroni beer and asked if one would take my

photo in front of the wooden name board of the pass on the other side of the road. He obliged and asked me where I was from – di dove sei. I said to him Manchester and he replied "ah, Mancini!" being completely ignorant of football I thought

it was the Italian name for Manchester! They invited me into the tent for spaghetti and wine. Very kind I thought but I had to be on my way but they insisted. I accepted their generous offer and saw it as a celebration of reaching my grande finale! From there it took me a couple of hours to get off the mountain as quickly as possible and return to Melito because I had to come back over with the car and wanted to reach the top before dark. I achieved it – just. Down the other side through Sant Eufemia on the shorter route and to the coast at Bagnara it was now dark. I decided to see how far north I could drive before I became too tired. I didn't go for a hotel but slept in the car much further north. I should have taken the autostrada because I had more confusion at Melito late in the evening. Traffic was being diverted around the back streets because there was a carnival happening along the main street. I followed other cars and passed along small roads through San Giovanni and Francica. I saw an indication near here for the autostrada so took it. I'm not certain where I joined this but may have been at Serre. From there I stayed on the autostrada and went north hell for leather to see how far north I could get before reigning in for the night. I kept going until I reached Lagonegro just inland from Sapri at about 02.00. thoroughly exhausted and not daring to go further in case I get sleepy and lose concentration I found a lay-by that was away from the autostrada and the noise and where I could kip down for the night. Reggio Calabria to Naples is 300 miles and I was near enough halfway and no more cycling I would be your average tourist tomorrow for one day.

# HET BEEST GETEMD:

een woensdag in juli tussen OVARO en SUTRIO.

**Dirk VISSERS**

OVARO, Italië, woensdag 25 juli 2012. De klok op het witte kerkje van dit Italiaanse dorp wijst 11u45 aan. Voor mij is het vijf voor twaalf. Ik pieker er al een half jaar over, hoe moet ik in godsnaam de Monte Zoncolan overleven zonder af te stappen? Nu ik een andere fiets heb (zonder triple) maar wel met een bergverzet van 34/28, nog altijd groter dan een mountainbike versnelling, hoe ....?

Woensdag 25 juli 2012, 8u20: Sillian- Oost Tirol. De fietsen worden op de wagen geladen. Via het kleine Lesachtal is het eventjes rijden naar de top van de Plockenpas, een overgangsbberg tussen Oostenrijk en Italië van slechts 1360 meter hoogte. De weg



draait en keert, straks toch maar terugkeren via Lienz en de B100? Een laatste lange tunnel kondigt de top aan van het vertrekpunt. Boven op de Plockenpas lijkt het wel uitgestorven op deze bewolkte doch droge juli dag. De regenwolken dreigen,

voorlopig zonder erg. De eerste winkels openen hun deuren terwijl we ons klaarmaken, fietsmakker Maarten is er ook bij. Alles mee? Een tocht van iets meer dan 80km en 2400 hoogtemeters wacht op ons. Ik verkies zonder zonnebril te rijden wat uitzonderlijk is. De vele tunnels en galerijen die op ons wachten is daar de reden voor. We dalen af en duiken Italië binnen richting Paluzza. Na 16km bereiken we de vallei en in Cercivento rijden we richting Ravascletto. De weg stijgt, eerst geleidelijk, later tot 12%. Een stevige overgangscol dus. Boven zien we de wegwijzer naar de Monte Crostis. Vorig jaar in de Giro d'Italia schrapte de organisatie deze col uit de rit, vanwege te gevaarlijke afdaling .... na de dood van Wouter Weylandt een week daarvoor. De afdaling die wij nu

voorgescheteld krijgen richting Val Pesarina is gelukkig breed en lekker snel. Maarten is zoals steeds eerst beneden en wacht me op bij een muur waar de vorig jaar gestorven wielrenner wordt geëerd met een opschrift. Het is tegelijk ontroerend en

vol respect hoe de Italianen Wouter Weylandt herdenken.

De brede vallei van de S355 brengt ons snel in Ovaro. De hartslag en adrenaline gaat plotsklaps de hoogte in. Hier moet het zijn! Vrij snel staat daar links aangegeven: "Monte Zoncolan". We stoppen even om dit bord op de gevoelige plaat vast te leggen en Maarten besluit gedurende de klim aan mijn zijde te blijven en foto's te nemen, we zijn er klaar voor!! Vrij snel gaat de meter boven de 10%, nu al? Even later passeren we het witte kerkje van Ovaro en komen we in Liariis waar de beroemde bocht naar rechts de klim verder aangeeft. Hier is het 500 meter vlak wanneer we het dorp doorrijden. Even later begint de "Strade de Monte Zoncolan", nog 8,5km! Vanaf nu is het menens, steeds trappend op de 34/28 en doseren is de boodschap. De snelheid daalt tussen de 6 en 8km/u, de procentagemeter gaat niet meer onder de 13%. In elke bocht wordt een bekende Giro winnaar in de picture gezet, mooi! Bartali, Coppi, Gimondi, Merckx, Hinault, Indurain .....

De eerste echte supersteile strook van bijna 20% overleven we wonderwel. Met afwisseling komen we uit het zadel en dat gaat goed. Het voorwiel "danst" alleen maar als we het stuur in het midden vastnemen, een "Sagannetje" doe je best niet op deze klim! De grootste kunst bestaat erin de fiets onder controle te houden. Een zeer goeie conditie is een tweede vereiste om boven te geraken, we weten het zeker: dit is niet voor iedereen weggelegd! De klim stijgt letterlijk de hemel in, een tweede zeer steil stuk kondigt zich aan tussen machtige

rotsformaties, we hijsen ons omhoog en daar staat Pantani strategisch op het volgende bord. Even later is het ergste voorbij en rijden we door drie smalle (en bijna vlakke, 6%) onverlichte tunnels. De finale ziet er opnieuw zwaar uit en slingert via schitterende bochten door de Alpenweiden. Ineens is daar de top, Maarten is even versneld en staat klaar voor de actiefoto. We've made it! Een klein vreugdekreetje mag er best wel af.

De top is een echte pas, want na enkele meters gaat het ook weer bergaf. Er is niets te zien, enkel een monument dat de pashoogte aangeeft. Hoe kan een Giro karavaan hier arriveren, vraag ik me af? Uitgebreid nemen we even de tijd om onze prestatie met enkele mensen te delen via de GSM en eet ik mijn pistoletjes op. Zalig! Ik droom al snel van een tweede beklimming binnen enkele jaren. Het was



zwaar, maar dat maakt het ook uitzonderlijk mooi.

Afdalen doen we richting Sutrio, de eerste kilometers erg steil, later breed en overzichtelijk. Via de brede vallei vatten we de Plockenpas aan, mijn 98ste BIG beklimming. Niet meer dan 6% stijgt deze doorgangscol, een

makkie. De laatste kilometers zijn mooi in bochten omhoog. Boven drinken we nog iets en stappen dan de wagen in, op naar de verdiende taart en koffie in ons hotel!



# My 16th BIG.

**Michal FULKA**

The Godfather No. 88

drmfulka@gmail.com

I'm a BIG member with the number 2889, suggesting that I'm among the lovers of riding on the BIG's came pretty late (2010). I don't have a lot of time on account of the performance of the duties and, therefore, my performances to match .... but when I find a bit of time, so I will deliver for a climbing the top, even by himself. So it was in one's rainy day - 27.9.2012. I wanted to have a celebration of the Czech tourist Club on the occasion of the 80. the Cottage of Girová in the Czech Republic, in the nears three-borders (Czech-Poland-Slovakia), which is not far from the Polish BIG top Przelencz Salmopolska (828).

I wanted to take this BIG as part of meeting BIG Tatras, to which I also signed up for 2012, but my illness and subsequent operation of the heart in June it would not let



me (too bad). That's why I have it made up for at least the following.

The car I have exported to Ustroń and then on bike through the Wisla and Malinka to the Bialy Krzyż. The whole way it was raining, but the drive to me well and I don't sweat.

At the top was not even a live soul, all are buried from the

rain. Not me or who take a picture. I had to close down my bike several feet in front of me, and I placed it round the camera. Therefore, I am in the photo without the bike. Downhill down the Wisla I go slowly, because of the rain.

I look forward to more BIG's.





# Tatras 2012

François CANDAU

The annual meeting happened in 2012 in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. The annual meeting found our group in Vrchlabi, Praded (CZ) and Habovka (SK). The bigs climbed were : 836. Vrbatova Bouda - 827. Przel'ecz Okraj - 837. Spindlerova Bouda - 838. Sùchy Vrch - 839. Cevernohorske Sedlo- 840. Pradíd - 826. Przehyba - 843. Tatliakovo Jazero - 844. Sedlo Certovica - 828. Przel'ecz Salmopolska - 829. Przel'ecz Krowiarki - 830. Glódowka - 845. Slieszky Dom - 846. Martinske Hole.

An excellent summary showing the special atmosphere, convivial but a little separated and dispatched into small groups due to the distances between the different bigs, is just written afterwards in french language by François Candau.

## Report of the official BIG Meeting in Tatras (July 2012)

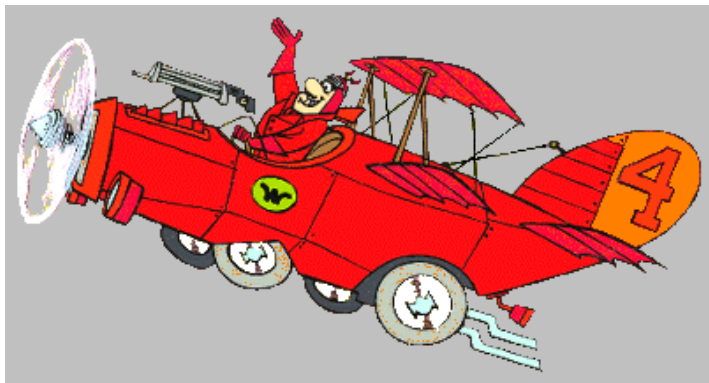
You wonder how the BIG Meeting was ? Every day reminded me this cartoon from Hanna Barbara that I loved when I was a kid. It is called Wacky Races (Les fous du volant in French).



Often leading the race were the evil François CANDAU and Bernard FROGNEUX, writing some messages on the asphalt, on friends' car or making some sneaky tricks with shoes. But they were also useful because their blue car ahead of the race always indicated the foot of the first BIG of the day.

Just behind those two usually arrived either the NOTTEN brothers as shown opposite, either Mrs and Mr Marc SEGUY, a brilliant newcomer in the BIG meetings. Jürgen RECKAUS was also in that part of the race.

We were not surprised to see then the arrival of Win VAN ELS in his red VW Van. We called him "le régional de l'étape" as



he had already climbed all those BIGs and just came for pleasure of sharing the meeting with us and gave his advices.



In the leading group were also Roland SCHUYER and Steven PRANGER. Those two were also often the first ones back to the hotel for the evening Pivo (beer in CZ or SK).

In the middle of the pack, some others typical characters :

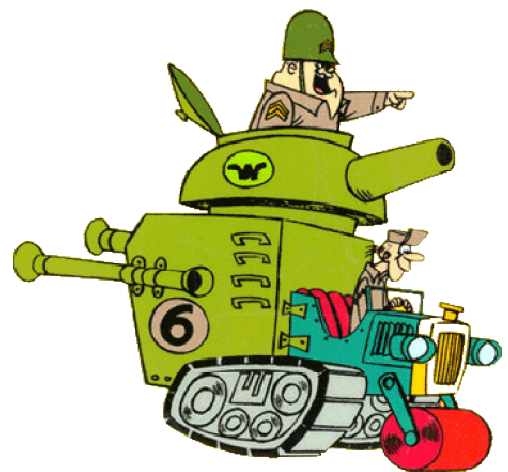
Xavier RUTTEN and Luc WILLEM ready to attack any percentages for a beer at the Gasthaus on the top.



Achim JOHN and Dieter POHL, the German team.

Heiko LINNERT and Vaclav KLICNIK, a very speedy team in the climbs

We also had some unusual competitors :

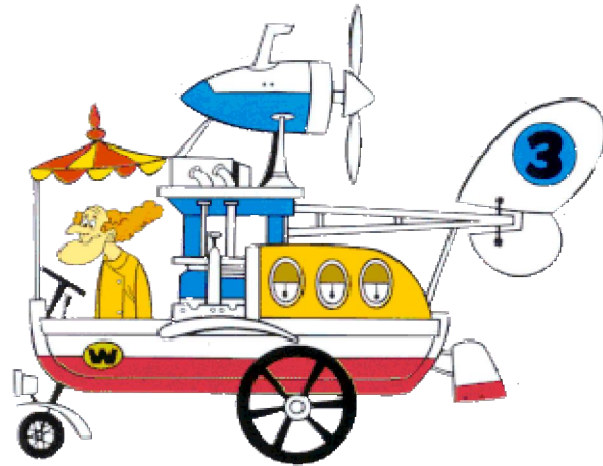


The very charming Julie (Rastislav SASIK's wife) in charge of the photo report,



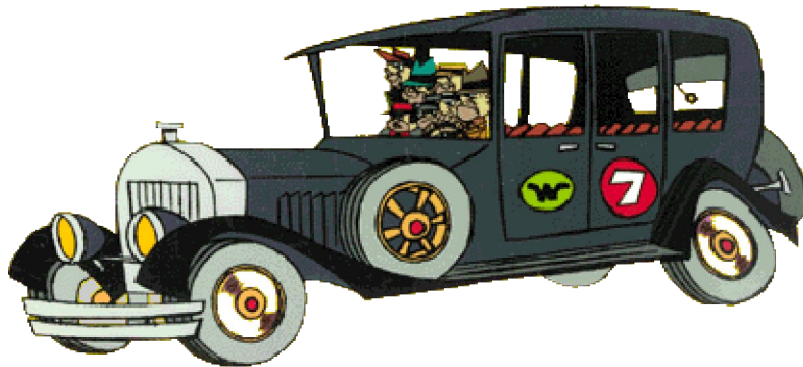
the talkative Axel JANSEN always proposing a long tour around the BIGs

and the incredible Professor Dirk BUSCHMANN (Anja's partner) studying butterflies and flowers around while pedalling hard.



In the race also : Gianni SOLENNI, Jean Luc MATTE and Luigi SPINA both very efficient with their camping car (sorry no more pictures left)

At last, at the end of the caravan was the black hired rescue car of Al Daniel GOBERT and his gang (Kevin SPEED, Pavel VANIS, Jerry NILSON, Fredrik GRANLUND).



The following day was just another episode of the serie, with different roads, different BIGs, different adventures but the same happy mess.

“A B.I.G meeting is the lonely place where the fools of the world have the right to meet themselves without being purchased by the police”. Daniel Gobert.

François CANDAU



# Meeting 2012 in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia

**Roland SCHUYER**  
the Netherlands

## Monday, July 2

To me this Meeting started in my home village Dwingeloo in the north-east of the Netherlands. This day I drove 800 kilometers to the Erzgebirge in former East Germany, just south of Chemnitz. Although the two Germanies formed one country many years ago, there are clear differences. For example; the roads are more narrow and windy and much steeper. The Erzgebirge looks a bit like Sauerland with agriculture and forests, but the mountains are way higher and steeper. Due to the eastern location it also will be colder during winter. You also find some interesting names of cities like Johanngeorgenstadt and Annaberg-Buchenholz. On my to-do list were Auersberg (1018 m) and Fichtelberg (1214 m). Auersberg is not an exceptional climb, only the last few kilometers are demanding (up to 14%). While I was taking a rest on top (ofcourse this mountain has a tower), I saw 2 cyclists coming up. I recognized them both: Bernard Frogneux (B) and François Candau (F). After a short meeting (it was 16.45 hour) we

split because we all wanted to do another climb. Weather was changing rapidly and just after the start of the Fichtelberg climb, rain came pouring down and even thunder and lightning. I climbed the west side of Fichtelberg over a beautiful road through the forest (Tellerhäuserweg), but the summit was less interesting; a kind of ski resort. Because of the inferno at the top it became too dangerous and I decided to descent quickly and go to my hotel near Schwarzenberg.

## Tuesday, July 3

Next morning I received a text message of François; he and Bernard were planning to climb Winterbergstrasse and after that one of the first 3 climbs of the Meeting. That was also my plan, so some hours later we all met at the parking in Schmilka (131 m) along the river Elbe, in an area called Saksischer Schweiz. Together we climbed the, partially unpaved, Winterbergstrasse (556 m) of which the road regularly came close to the Czech border. After descending this mountain we crossed the Czech border and it was directly clear to me that this was a country with a different language. Or navigation systems helped us to get in time to the hotel in Vrchlabi Krkonoše or

Riesengebirge) near the Polish border. After registration in the hotel we went by car to Svoboda nad Upou (415 m); foot of Przelecz Okraj (= Okraj Pass). In a heavy thunderstorm ("I've never been so demotivated to start a BIG" François said) we've climbed the 17 kilometers to Przelecz Okraj (1046 m). Not at all a difficult climb and the top was situated in Poland. By doing this the first official climb of the Meeting became a fact! We all were satisfied but very, very wet.

In the hotel many members had already arrived and old friendships could be renewed and new ones made. Here I met my roommate for the days to come: Steven. It always gives a great feeling to see how easy the different nationalities mix: language is no barrier at all. For an outsider it can be hard to believe that people from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, England, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands are able to find a way to communicate. The atmosphere was good immediately and stayed that way during the Meeting.

## Wednesday, July 4

This first day of the Meeting had 3 climbs on the menu: Vrbatova Bouda, Spindlerova



Bouda and Przelecz Okraj. For François, Bernard and me it were only 2 because we already climbed the Przelecz Okraj. All climbs were situated in the Krkonose National Park at the border of the Czech Republic and Poland. First climb of the day was the Vrbatova Bouda (Bouda = cabin or hut). From Vichova nad Jizerou (406 m) the climb was 22 kilometers long of which the first 14 kilometers had a gradient between 2 and 4%. The last 10 were of a different kind and took a lot more effort to overcome; the average gradient was somewhere around 8%. But the pavement was terrible with lots of potholes and gravel. Unfortunately at the summit (1395 m) it was cold and we couldn't really enjoy the views caused by fog. A snack, a drink, some pictures and going downhill to a warmer environment. Despite a flat tire downhill went fine. In the afternoon I've climbed Spindlerova Bouda alone (most of the others were climbing the Okraj). The first 10 kilometers from the hotel (540 m) till Spindlerov Mlyn, were easy. Spindlerov Mlyn was busy of tourists and this little town is well-known because of Franz Kafka (here he wrote in 1926 his, unfinished, novel 'Das Schloss'), mining and forestry and the source of the river Elbe (in Czech: Pramen Labe) is nearby. The route went right through the crowded center of this town, but once outside the town it was nice and quiet. Nature was overwhelming: fast flowing rivers, vast forests and rugged mountains. The pavement was very good, maybe due to the modern ski resort at summit. From Spindlerov Mlyn to the top (at 1238 m) it was a 10 kilometer climb and this time with lots of great views. This climb was also a milestone to me: my 200th BIG! I've climbed this BIG in honor of my good

friend Mauro Repetti. For the occasion I wore the Maglia Rosa ('Pink Jersey') he gave me in 2010: it's a special gift because I received this jersey a few hours before my father died. At the top a young Czech guy took some pictures of me and I went downhill soon. The last 10 kilometers of the downhill were very wet, but afterwards my bike could dry in the garage and I could enjoy a hot shower (followed by at least 2 beers: for each BIG one beer).

### Thursday, July 5

Besides 3 BIGs there were also a lot of kilometers by car at the program. We left Krkonose National Park and headed about 200 kilometers southeastern to the Jeseniky region in northeast Moravskoslezsky. The first climb was Suchy Vrch (977 m) from Cervena Voda (538 m). Despite the altitude of this mountain is moderate, it was towering over the landscape and you can see it from far away. Luckily it now was sunny and about 25 degrees. This climb was 11 kilometers long and the gradient was somewhere between 4 and 7%. For a cyclist with my physique (1.86 m tall and en 90 kg weight) gradients like these are good to be climbed. To me it's like American Peter Clifford wrote in de U.I.C. Bolletino nr 10: "I have a body more suited to playing American Football than for road cycling". For cyclists with our physique cycling gradients over 8% are a major task: gravity is pulling heavily on our bodies and our muscle power cannot compensate that fully. From the start to just before the top I've climbed together with Wim van Els (with 712 BIGs Wim is the best ranked Dutchman in the Challenge). Wim is a 'flyweight' cyclist and loves steep climbs. De Suchy Vrch wasn't steep enough to him. At

the top of Suchy Vrch, ornamented with a huge tower, was a party going on and because of that, this was the most cozy summit of this Meeting. The next climb of the day was the Cervenohorske Sedlo (1013 m). Temperature had risen to about 30 degrees and for a Dutchman that's quiet hot. In Loucna nad Desnou (515 m) Steven Pranger and I had lunch; local goulash soup, bread and Cola. With sign language and the help of a local who spoke some English and German, we could order this meal and to be honest: it tasted great. After lunch we started the 10 kilometer of a not too difficult climb with good pavement. The temperature was killing and the goulash soup wasn't helping either. I was glad when I reached the top, but the day wasn't over yet. The last climb, Praded (1492 m), was still waiting for us. The starting point was in Karlovice (493 m) and from there it was a 25 kilometer climb to the top. The landscape, during the first 14 kilometer, was beautiful: farms, small rivers with people bathing in them, cattle and forests. The gradient till Karlova Studanka (788 m) wasn't too bad (2 to 6%). In Karlova Studanka that friendly gradient changed to 10 and 12% and the pavement consisted of cobbles. The last 9 kilometer the gradient was about 7 to 8% (average) and the landscape changed quickly from green meadows and cows to rocky mountains with abysses and enormous views. Just below the bare summit (also having a huge tower) the gradient was shortly 15%. At the summit it was very windy and far more cold than at lower altitudes, but that was compensated by the great views around. It was great to sit down and enjoy the vastness of the area; for somebody from

the flat country of the Netherlands this was an exceptional experience. The hotel was a typical modern ski hotel (Sporthotel Kurzovni at 1330 m, just below the summit of Praded), and had all the luxury you could imagine. Our bikes had a nice place behind the Reception. Diner and some Czech beer (500 cc each) tasted well (to all of us). During the night we were treated to a beautiful spectacle; lightning over the mountains of the Jeseniky region. Together with our roommates for that night, brothers Jean-Pierre and Peter Notten, we enjoyed this show.

### Friday, July 6

The weather was lovely: sunny and clear skies. Breakfast was early because we had a trip to Poland ahead. From Praded to Wisla (Pl) it was a 170 kilometer trip through a beautiful hilly landscape and through Eastern European cities as the university town of Opava or the industrial city of Ostrava (the third largest city of the Czech Republic). At the entrance of Poland it became clear to me that the Polish language differs a lot from the Czech language: the writing and sound are different. The cars were parked near the famous ski jump of Wisla (507 m) in the Beskid Slaski area. Even during summer this ski jump is used for practice and competition. Departing from Wisla it was a 15 kilometer climb to the top of Przelec Salmopolska (934 m); the first climb of the Meeting which was totally situated in Poland. Again it was scorching hot, that means well over 30 degrees. Because of an intestinal problem and the high temperatures to me the climb wasn't easy at all. At the top Steven and I had a drink with Ratislav Sasik (SK), his friend Julie (from Argentina) and Juergen

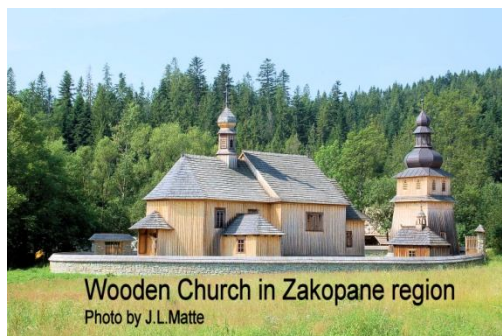
Reckhaus (D). We decided to drive to Vrutky (SK) and to have lunch there before starting the climb to Martinske Hole/Krizava. In a hardrock cafe in Vrutky (394 m) we had a great lunch (Ratislav had a huge pile of grilled chicken wings to be eaten; were these wings his secret for climbing so good?), but we had to be modest because of the climb to come; the famous Martinske Hole/Krizava (1460 m). This climb is situated in a mountain range, west of the Tatras, called the Mala Fatra (= small Fatra). The outside temperature had risen to 35 degrees and de 15 kilometer long climb was steep. The first kilometers the pavement wasn't too bad; some gravel but no potholes. But, nearer to the top it became worse and worse. After 5 kilometers of struggling we encountered Wim van Els who was descending already and, as always, he spoke some encouraging words: "It's only 10 kilometers to the top!" And with a big smile he continued his downhill. Beyond Martinske Hole to the top it was terrible. A difficult combination of bad pavement and a steep gradient (12% and more). Because of the low ascending speed and I became sick (a pity of the nice lunch) the climb took me about 2 hours. The views at the top were breathtaking: in the foreground the valley with Vrutky and Martin and in the background the peaks of the Tatras (Tatry). Going downhill was strenuous because of the continuous hard braking. We

encountered a lot of colleagues on their way to the top like Daniel Gobert, Luigi Spina, Gianni Solenni, Jean-Luc Matte, Ratislav Sasik, Kevin Speed, Luc Willem, Xavier Rutten, Jerry Nilsson. At the foot Julie was waiting for her friend Ratislav and we told her that we met him just before the top, so that he was getting downhill at that very moment and be with her in a matter of 30 minutes.

From Vrutky to the hotel in Habovka (Julianin Dvor) was an 80 kilometer drive. It was a very tasteful hotel, slightly with a classic touch, with spacious and airy rooms and a good restaurant. Because it was Friday so during diner we were treated to a local music group dressed in costumes. We couldn't understand the songs because of the foreign language but we couldn't hear each other either; the music was very loud so conversation was out of the question. The last colleagues arrived at 21.00 hours; tired and with sunburned faces. Anja von Heydebreck (D) and Dirk Buschmann (D) didn't get to the hotel by car, but they travelled from Vrchlabi (CZ) to Martin (SK) by night train. They climbed Martinske Hole/Krizava and came by bicycle to Habovka. A very good achievement, chapeau!

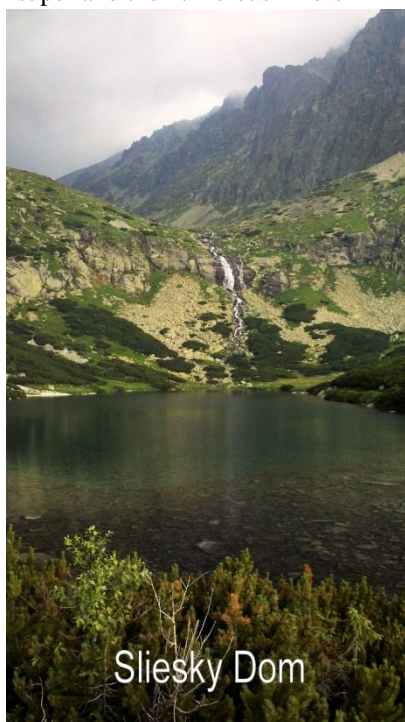
### Saturday, July 7.

The Saturday had 3 climbs on the program, but not all of us really climbed those 3 BIGs. There was a group with amongst others Wim, Anja, Dirk, Axel Jansen (B) who made a tour starting in Habovka and containing 2 BIGs. The Notten brothers did, with a very tight planning, 5 climbs. Steven and I did 2, the third one was Przehyba (PL) and was to far away so it took to many hours by car. Also this climb was for a larger part not paved and we didn't like that. We started the



Wooden Church in Zakopane region  
Photo by J.L.Matte

day with the climb of Przeleczy Krowiarki (1018 m) in Poland. A nice and not too heavy climb (max 8%) and 8 kilometers long. The starting point was at 700 m in Zubrzyca Gorna (PL). The road was crowded with BIG cyclists and that makes cycling a lot more sociable. Of course it was Jean Luc Matte (B) who was strategically posted with his camera to take the kind of pictures for which he's known; great action shots. After lunch the second climb of the day was Taliakova Jazero (1375 m). The starting point was at the parking of our hotel in Habovka (710 m) and we headed in the direction of Zuberec for a 17 kilometer climb. A very nice road mainly through a pinewood and with a gradient somewhere between 2 and 6% and to be honest; it was more often 2 to 3% than 6%. Just before the village of Zverovka (1029 m), just after the bridge, we turned to the right (south). About 1 kilometer the gradient was gradually, but for the last 3½ kilometers the road became very steep with averages over 10 and 11% and a maximum of over 14%. The pavement was super and the numerous hikers



made room for us to pass them without any problems. This climb ended near a refuge annex a restaurant (Tatliakova chata), where we, like many Slovaks, took a rest and some time to eat and drink. The views on the surrounding mountain ranges were phenomenal. The lake (Jazero) we didn't visit. Going downhill was great: a more or less straight road with a smooth surface and a high gradient gave us a dazzling speed. I even reached the 90 km/h mark (an advantage of being heavy and as a motorcyclist I'm used to high speeds)

We returned in our hotel just before dinner time. Some of the members arrived at 21.30 hour; they had a really long day with more climbs and kilometers by car.

### Sunday, July 8

The official last day of the Meeting had arrived with 3 climbs to do; 1 in Poland and 2 in Slovakia. First climb of the day was Glowdowska near Zakopane (PL). It was Sunday so lots of Polish people went to church and the building style of the churches (and houses) was very distinct for this region (JL Matte took a great picture showing the style). From Poronin (735 m), just east of Zakopane, to Glowdowska (1145 m) wasn't the most difficult climb, but still 11 kilometers long. The views on the Tatras were really impressive but unfortunately it was difficult to capture it in a photo. Nice detail: 1 week after our visit to Glowdowska of the 6th stage of the Tour de Pologne (Tour of Poland or Wyścig Dookoła Polski). In fact the finish was in Bukowina Tatrzanska some kilometers below the top. After this climb we left Poland for the last time, to continue in Slovakia for the last 2 climbs. Sliesky Dom (1670 m) was the next one. Starting point was in Tatranska

Polianka (994 m) and this climb was pretty steep, but great because of the rugged environment. With 'steep' I mean averages of 9,7% 12,1% 12,1% 8,1% and 11,2%. The pavement was sometimes very poor but our speed was slow so we had plenty of time to evade potholes. On the top there was an uninspiring hotel, but far more interesting were the waterfall and the lake in a scenery of storm clouds and mountains. The views to the south were almost even impressive and you could see for about 100 kilometers in the direction of Hungary. Because it was chilly and thunder clouds gathered over our heads, we started the descent soon. During downhill we met a lot of members. We nodded our heads to greet them, no waving this time because we needed both our hands on the handlebar and brakes. The really last climb of this Meeting was Certovica Sedlo (1238 m) with the start in the village of Kral'ova Lehota (657 m). This climb was situated in the region called the Small Tatras (Nizke Tatry), but despite it's called small, the highest peak is 2048 m of altitude (I don't call that small). This climb also had long start with many kilometers (about 9) of a low gradient between 1 and 4%. Only the last 8 kilometers were between 5 and 8%. This mountain range had broad valleys and was more open than the (High) Tatras. At 16.00 hours a group of Hungarians, lead by Gabor Kreisci, arrived at the mountain pass: they cycled all the way from Hungary (the city of Salgotarjan) to meet BIG members and contribute to the meeting. A ride of 165 kilometers, with 4 mountain passes and 2677 hm. Super job of those guys (György Domonkos, György Kiss, Gabor Vince and Gabor Kreisci) and it is so good to see

this major effort of them just to meet fellow BIG members. Great!

Downhill went in high speed at 52\*12 and the moment we arrived near the car, the climbs of this Meeting were behind us. Steven and I talked about the result, took something to drink and eat and headed to the hotel (one hour drive). In Habovka it was cleaning the bikes, taking a shower, and start packing. In the dusk we had a great dinner and did a lot of chatting with our friends.

### Monday, July 9

After saying good bye to the fellow cyclists I headed for Germany; Bayerischer Eisenstein (D). Along a B-road I travelled to Zilina (where I could have a last glimpse of Martinske Hole) and from there to the Czech border. In the Czech Republic I followed the route to Olomouc, Brno, Prague (Praha) and Pilsen (Plzen). About 16.00 hours I entered Germany. Shortly after check in in my hotel in Lam (525 m) I was already on my bike cycling the Grosser Arber (with 1131 meter altitude the highest peak of the Bayerischer Eisenstein). A beautiful, but irregular, climb; the first part, till Lohberghuette (589 m), was almost flat. From there the gradient was going up firmly. After about 11 km I reached at a sort of plateau with great views. And amongst others Schwarzriegel (the climb of next day) was clearly visible. After this plateau there was a downhill of about 2 kilometers followed by a climb of 4 kilometers with a gradient up to 8%. The highest point wasn't too impressive; simply the highest point of the road to Bodenmais. The return was the same as the climb but then the other way

around. In total it was a 49 kilometer trip. After a day of travelling 750 kilometer by car and 49 kilometer by bike, dinner tasted great and I slept like a baby

### Tuesday, July 10

Breakfast was abundant (like always in Germany) but I didn't eat too much because I had to climb Schwarzriegel (1078 m). Weather was great: about 12 degrees at the start (but raising to 25 degrees) and sunny. Starting in Furth im Wald (394 m) the first part (about 10 km) wasn't interesting at all (we better skip that part from our website). Just before the small village of Rimbach there was the turn off from S2140/S2161 southward to Schwarzriegel. The character of the climb changed immediately and was far more interesting. Soon the gradient was 10% followed by a couple of hundred meters of 18% with a maximum of just over 19%. After that steep part the road smoothed for some kilometers. But, don't be fooled by that easy part; just below the top it became steep

(17%) again. A suggestion: the refuge is a better place to be than the radar stations. After a fast downhill I reached my car and at that moment cycling mountains was over for this year. Near the car I changed my clothes, drank and ate something to be ready for the 880 kilometer through Germany to the Netherlands. Late in the afternoon I crossed the Dutch border and the temperature dropped dramatically and in my home village (Dwingeloo, 10 m) it was 13 degrees; 22 degrees lower than in Slovakia.

### Finally

It was a really great experience to cycle mountains in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. These 3 countries and their people made a good impression on me. Despite the language barrier travelling was easy: the main roads are very good, people are polite and helpful, it's clean and tidy and prizes are very moderate. Last but not least: the nature is wonderful and imposing. I recommend this area warmly to all mountain cyclists.

Lots of gratitude to my friends of the Meeting (and forever): Fredrik Granlund, Jerry Nilson, Francois Candau, Bernard Frogneux, Axel Jansen, Pavel Vanis, Kevin Speed, Marc & Marie Seguy, Steven Pranger, Jean-Pierre Notten, Peter Notten, Wim van Els, Dirk Buschmann, Anja von Heydebreck, Ratislav Sasik, Julie, Juergen Reckhaus, Luc Willem, Xavier Rutten, Daniel Gobert, Heiko Linnert, Vaclav Klicnik, Luigi Spina, Achim John, Dieter Pohl, Pavel Slopovsky, Gianni Solenni, Jean-Luc & Fabienne Matte (hopefully I didn't forget someone. If so my deepest apologies.





# Annual meeting 2012

**Kevin SPEED**

**Sunday 1st July 2012**

Holmes Chapel to Namur

08.43 train from Crewe to London. 12.57 Eurostar train to Brussels, arriving at 16.08 then local train to Namur. Arrived in Namur in the afternoon and met on the station by Dan and Natalie who had parked on the road at the back of the station then met me above the platforms at 18.00. I had mentioned in a text that I would be in a red jacket and that the bike was in a large red and black zipper bag. They took me along to his mother's house at 47 Avenue Arthur Proces to the north west of the city centre. I would sleep here for two nights in the empty house. His mother had died earlier in the year and he was in the process of renovating the house in order to sell it. The house still had all the furniture and there was a single bed in a small room that I could use and he gave me a key. I could have a shower but there was only cold water. Dan explained my location in the city on a map and indicated shops and eating places then left me to my own devices so that I could explore. Later I cycled left out of the house and found a small restaurant on Chaussée Louvain and had burger and chips, parking the bike inside the restaurant. From there I biked down the hill then back up the quiet road and a steep hill to the house again. From there I walked down into the city centre and along Rue de Fer / Rue de l'Ange to La Sambre river and up through the woods to discover La Citadelle from the north after a pleasant walk along the northern river bank at Rue des Brasseurs. I explored the outer walls and the point where the

battle took place, the high wall of the fortress and description of the former gun emplacements. From there over the top and down to the south bank of the small river to its confluence with La Meuse then south along the west bank to

shower the eager crowds with free gifts galore. Following this are the cars that give announcements of how far the tour is away, who the leading riders are and any news of the day that would be of interest. Next came a group of low



the youth hostel where I had stayed back in 1980 – just to relive memories. I had a drink there and watched a World Cup match – forgotten which teams writing this seven months later! From there, after a few Duvels, made my way back through the city and up the hill back to the house at 11.00 and slept soundly.

**Monday 2nd July 2012**

Namur and the Tour de France  
The Tour de France will be cycling through Namur this afternoon. I walked down to the city at 08.30 and had Macdonalds breakfast €2.75 and read the local paper. That morning I did the obligatory sightseeing tour around the city centre looking at the Place d'Armes, the river embankment walks and the Citadel. I walked up from La Sambre at Ponte de L'Évéché and through the woods to the top. The leading promotion cars went through first at 1.00pm. People on board

flying helicopters from the direction of the Meuse and to the east. That's where the riders were coming from as they raced along the north bank. The leading cyclists raced through at 2.30pm at an incredible speed on the uphill climb followed a few minutes later by the peleton mass. I watched Le Tour pass through at the bends at the top of Le Citadelle at the junction of Chemin Romagnesi and Route Marveilleuse ( The marvellous route?). At 3.00 followed the crowds down the marvellous route and to the Meuse River and wandered along the west bank into the city. Too many videos taken of the Tour de France passing through at The Citadel so bought another memory card for my camera from Photo Hall in Namur at €9.99. later I walked back to the house and went for the bike and cycled 4 circuits of Le Citadelle, following the route of the tour and also further across to Avenue Jean Ler and

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Avenue Marie d'Artois to explore Château de Namur, many photos. From there back to the city streets and took in the nightlife around Rue St Jean and back to the house for 10.00pm to have an early night as Dan would collect me at 05.00 in the morning for our long drive to Prague.

### Tuesday 3rd July 2012

Namur to Vrchlabi

Dan called at 05.00, we loaded up my bike and the one pannier and drove me back to his house in Belgrade on the western side of Namur where Natalie gave us breakfast of ham and eggs. I paid my dues for the hire of the peoples carrier we needed for four bikes and he drove out heading for the German border at 06.00. Dan had hired a VW van that could seat nine persons but we were only five fortunately. There was space for four bikes at the rear of the van in the hatchback. The van hire was €400, the fuel estimate for 3000km of travel and back to Namur was €300, a total of €700. As we were picking the others up in Prague I agreed to share the cost with Dan and paid €250. The others would pay €70 each. It was a long trip and a good idea for Dan and I to share the driving. Surely it was much to far for him to drive alone, his original intention. There was too great a risk of lack of concentration at the wheel over such a long distance. Our route was along the motorway A15 to Leige then A3 to Aachen, Cologne, Limburg, Frankfurt, Wurtzburg, Bamberg, north of Bayreuth, over the Czech border to Cheb, Karlovy Vary and to Prague. We collected Pavel Panis in the outskirts of Prague near the airport, followed by Jerry Nilsen and Fredrik Granlund at the place they were staying elsewhere in Prague. It was interesting to see some of the villages just to the west of Prague as we carefully

picked our way along minor roads. Dan had arranged to meet at a road/rail /river point just north of the city so this meant having to take the lanes close to the airport. As we neared Prague we had to negotiate the movement of trams and also be careful of roadworks so were glad to be off the main street and into the quiet suburbs but still had to wait for them as they were walking back from the city. Time was going fast and we really wanted to get away as soon as possible as we still had another 110 kilometres to reach Vrchlabi where we were staying for the next two nights. Our route was the motorway to Mlada Boleslav then east to Jicin, Nova Paka to Vrchlabi. The distance from Namur to Prague is 850km (530 miles) and we had planned to arrive in Prague between 4.00 and 5.00pm. Because of delays in Prague it was 7.00pm when we arrived at Hotel Albis. Most of the others were there already. We all unpacked, changed, washed and were ready for our meal followed by Saris beer to relax to later. It was so good to catch up on old friends such as Wim, Francois , Bernard and Jurgen.

### Wednesday 4th July 2012

Krknose Tour

Vrchlabi to Vrbatova Bouda, Przel'ecz Okraj and Spindlerova Bouda Vrbatova Bouda, BIG number 836, 1395 metres

The first pass of the tour starts at Jilemnice (or Starkenbach in German) 6km to the west of Vrchlabi. We all bundled our bikes into our vehicles – some rode the 6km. We parked at a dusty car park just before the roundabout for the road to the pass striking north from here. The road is a gradual ascent to within 5km from the road summit and it was foggy at the top. I took the usual photos up there of the buildings almost

hidden in the fog. There was certainly no scenery to take photos of. The ascent was on a good road though woods. The weather was dry on the whole, just a smattering of rain part way down to Vrchlabi. Jerry accompanied me for some distance up but as he was on a stronger gear he couldn't keep up with my slowness so after a few kilometres he rode ahead to join the others. At the top Fredrick, Jerry and I took photos in the mist at a signpost that looks something like a man-made cactus tree! The top was along a track just off to the left from the road which ends abruptly, an old wooden building on the left marks the spot. We rode on for approx 500 metres to the top in even thicker fog then descended back to the cars. We were out of the mist at the first ski resort below the pass so took more photos here. I cycled with Jerry part way down but naturally he soon wanted to speed on ahead. I was the last one back but Dan, Pavel, etc weren't waiting too long – besides I was taking in the scenery!

Pomezni Boudy, Przelec Okraj, BIG number 827, 1046 metres

Bikes back in the peoples carrier at Jilemnice Dan drives through Vrchlabi to Svoboda Nad Upou to the east however we took a wrong turning at Rudnik as we were confused by roadworks and lack of direction indicators – not only that but the satellite navigation being very clever and sophisticated took into account the roadworks and directed us south through Hostinne (Arnau) instead of the direct road. It was interesting to see the white buildings at Trutnov on the way though. From Svoboda just north of here we park up at a green area by a river bridge then all ride together following the stream on the right through wooded country then take a right turn

where I started to lag behind on the steeper section here and ride alone part way. Dan was good enough to wait for me later and we rode on together for some distance. The road climb to the pass starts at this point on the road to the right then 3km and another right heading north. I arrived at the top of the pass sooner than expected as I thought I had to take a right for the last 7km. Most of the group were waiting for me at the top and assured me they hadn't been waiting long. Just kind words and an understatement surely! On the way up near the top there's an open clearing and this was only the start of the bends, first one to the right. The road ends just before the Polish border where we stopped to take photos at the frontier sign. From there all back down the mountain to rejoin the cars except for Jerry who decided to carry on over the pass into Poland and come back over the final pass of the day, the Spindlerova Bouda, from the north side and cycle over to Vrchlabi. He arrived back at midnight or later and had no lights or extra clothing. It had also started raining later in the day so his night ride must have been an ordeal – but we know that Jerry is always positive and would see enjoyment in the agony! Spindlerova Bouda, BIG number 837, 1238 metres  
The bikes were bundled back into the cars at Svoboda and we drove back to Vrchlabi by the more direct route and parked back at the hotel. We took a left out of the hotel to the lowest point a kilometre away at the river bridge. Near this point is the source of the River Elbe. At the river bridge we took a 'U' turn and started cycling the pass, going past the hotel. After a few kilometres the whole group left me behind as I was far too slow! Even so I always arrive even if my timing would be something to be

desired, as they waited for me at the top. The way up is gradual as far as a lake on the right then a little steeper through Spindlerova ski resort. At the top end of the resort the road narrows for the remaining six kilometres to the road summit. The road here is light coloured fine pebble and tarmac and very green short grass on either side. I saw the pile of bikes outside the Czech pub in the mist and called in to tell Dan and the rest of the group that I was continuing on to the top. They would order me a drink. I went as far as a Polish pub in the mist up a wide track for about 500 metres in thick fog to the Polish border where there is a large dated café that needs renovating from its 1950's style. I took some photos in front of the summit nameplate at 1260 metres height as indicated on the side of the café wall then backtracked down the pass for approx one kilometre to where Dan and company were waiting for me in the Czech café for a celebration drink called Saris, at the top of the Czech pass, only a light alcohol but for some reason it took ten minutes to make by the bartender. I rode back down on my own. Because of the fog I was a bit cold but once the lake and ski resort was reached I was under blue sky and warmer weather and enjoyed the descent back to the hotel. I arrived back at 19.40. We all enjoyed a great meal that evening and it was a pleasure to hand Francois back his curtain that I used last year in Corsica – but then I had also used it later in France, Germany and Luxembourg! It had been well travelled so wrapped it carefully and tied it in a blue ribbon and presented him with the 'Grand Order of the Curtain'. I had my own small room and single bed for the two nights at Hotel Albis which was great.

### Thursday 5th July

2012 Jeseniky Tour  
Sùchy Vrch, Cevernohorske Sedlo and Pradid  
We move on from the Krknose to the Jeseniky area. It was good that we sorted out baggage and bikes last night so that we were ready to go as soon as possible after breakfast. Our route was Trutnov, Nachod, Nove Mesto, Rychnov and Zamberk to Cervena Voda for the road climb to Sùchy Vrch.  
Sùchy Vrch, BIG number 838, 977 metres  
We approached Cervana Voda after most of the others and we passed the road junction for the continuation of the route up to Sùchy Vrch and we had to continue to the small town as this is the lowest point of the climb. It was amusing to see so many of the party cycling the other way as we headed for Cervana Voda. We parked the vehicle at a car park to the right of the road just before the town, unloaded and headed off to join the other riders in bright warm sunshine for a change. We were south of the Krknose and in lower ground. From the town to the road junction is a fairly easy gradual rise through an area of short grass and views across the countryside. Taking the right turn where there were many cars parked next to some bright coloured huts, a café there perhaps, and into a more wooded area. The road is narrower with some sections of gravel, fallen twigs and the occasional pothole – a good road for cycling but not for driving. This is the reason why there are so many cars parked at the junction so our only obstacle were the many walkers making their way up or down from the end of the road. At the top are some sizable buildings, a restaurant and TV/radio mast. This was a perfect cycling road and no great distance so most of the group waited at the top so that

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we could take some great group photos. On the way up we waved at Wim, Francois and some others on the way down but most of us stayed a while. There were many people up. Later it was an easy sweeping descent back to Cervana Voda for the drive on to the next climb through Kraliky and followed the rail track through Hanusovice into Jeseník near the Polish border. We all parked up in the town and most of the group pressed on for the next climb but a few of us, Pavel, Fredrik, Jerry and I followed Pavel's suggestion of trying out local beer and sausage from a favourite brewery he knew about. He wasn't too sure of the location so had to ask some locals. It didn't take long for him to find it near the railway line and we enjoyed an hour's relaxation but didn't drink too much! Thoroughly refreshed we cycled on for the next pass. Cevernohorské Sedlo, BIG number 839, 1013 metres I left them there to drink some more but I needed a head start because I knew they would pass me at some stage. I surprised myself how far ahead I got. I stopped to make sure of a turning and just then Wim appeared coming down from the pass and told me to take the right fork but on returning stay to the right and follow the way he was going. My three companions were soon off ahead of me of course! Up through the woods then first Pavel then the other two passed me but by then I was only a few kilometres from the top so Jerry and Fredrik waited for me and we took photos at the top. The top of the pass is in a clearing, an ideal place for posing! We freewheeled down and they went on ahead. I rode alone heading for the next pass however for this one it was a ride between the two, the only occasion on the tour that we had to do this – unless of

course we were really adventurous like Jerry! Praded, BIG number 840, 1492 metres

To reach Praded and our hotel for the night that's a few kilometres below the top of the road at the giant mast, we had to cycle 45 kilometres through Domasov, Bela and Vrbno. This took me four hours with a steep rise from Bela as far as the Karlova Studenka turn off.



At first the road follows a stream through wooded countryside and I passed many wooden houses on the way but soon the road rises through more dense woods to eventually reach a clearing at the top of a pass that I thought just as tough as the previous pass. I thought it would be a doddle but I was glad to reach the top of this unexpected climb then descend to Vrbno. I was conscious of time and wanted to reach the hotel as soon as possible so got a spurt on and passed quickly through Vrbno for the long climb – or so it seems at the end of the day – heading for Praded. The road follows a stream at first but soon begins to rise but on reaching the crossroads for Karlova Studenka slightly to the north the road becomes steeper. There's a large car park to the left here and in

front, barring the remaining section of the road to Praded there's a metal barrier. I asked the way and the attendant smiled and raised the barrier but there was no need really as I could have easily ducked underneath. I was getting really tired as I pressed on along the remaining 19 kilometres to the hotel. It's a great road, pebbly in places and tree lined all the way with conifers. All I could

think about was reaching the hotel and leave the final kilometre section to Praded tower itself until the morning. One of our part in a van stopped to offer me a lift, very kind but no way would I accept a lift having come this far! I politely refused but really wished I could. I reached a hotel on the right where there was a bar outside and would liked to have stopped but it was already 8.00pm. Fortunately it wasn't far - down a short bit to a high valley, to the right then left and a left turn to the Sporthotel Kurzovní where I could see some familiar vehicles parked. I was home for the night! I waited patiently in the reception area while Pavel was busy negotiating the rooms. What I didn't know at the time was that the meal would be delayed as the rooms weren't yet allocated because

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some of the party had to bike back to Jeseník to recover the vehicles and drive back. I was getting really hungry and needed to shower and change but those of us there would have to wait for the others. I placed my bike with many others in a room at the back of the reception, all securely locked later. It was a great relief when the others arrived back and we could be allocated rooms. We enjoyed a fantastic dinner but I could have ate more, not that it was nouvelle cuisine but that I was ravenous! My room was shared with four others but I didn't need earplugs that night, they probably did though!

### Friday 6th July 2012

West Tatras Tour  
Praded, Przel'ecz Salmopolska and Martinske Hole  
Praded, BIG number 840, 1492 metres

I had a good night's sleep but left early on my own at 07.00 and rode the short distance up to Praded tower. The road is so different from lower down where it passes through woods of conifer. The area from the hotel upwards is short weather-beaten bushes and along a narrow gravel road leading up to the tower that's in view most of the way up. It was a brisk morning and bright sunshine and blue sky so the white tower ahead on my approach stood like a bold sentinel on the mountainside. It took me only twenty minutes or so to reach it but I could never have appreciated this yesterday after a long ride. I asked the others and they accepted it was OK to split the climb up, after all it's just the same as resting a while part way up a pass. I took plenty of photos at the top and descended back to the hotel for 08.00 just in time for breakfast. We all set off in the cars an hour later to leave the Czech Republic and cross over first the first of the Slovakia climbs,

first of all though it was a short crossing into Poland for the climb of the unpronounceable Przel'ecz Salmopolska. For this we drove through Bruntal, Opava, Ostrava, Cieszyn and Ustron to Wisla and parked up off the road opposite a café /bar in Wisla. We stopped off in Ostrava for me to buy some sun tan cream but I wish I never mentioned it as it set us back more than an hour. Pavel was having a field day around the supermarket and at one point we lost Dan – he was in there somewhere! Eventually after ice creams and bottles of Coke – it was such a warm day – we were on our way again and heading for the Polish border. The only visible sign at the frontier was the welcoming sign into Poland then we continued on through and eventually to Wisla. Przel'ecz Salmopolska, BIG number 828, 934 metres From Wisla where we left the car next to a Polski sklep we rode the pass through woods to the top where we stopped for a while at an outside café at the top on the left and drank coke for energy and a few photos of a small group of us. I honestly can't remember detail of the pass writing this in January 2013, should have done this before now! I remember riding up through woods and an artificial ski-lift on the left on the way down, emerging from a short tunnel and catching up with the others waiting at the vehicle for the onward trip to the next pass over the border in Slovakia. A few of us gathered at the café / bar later at the foot of the pass later and had a drink then we piled back into the cars for the next pass – Slovakia here we come! Martinske Hole, BIG number 846, 1460 metres We drove from Wisla through Itebna, Jablunkov and over the border at Purasovci, down through Cadca, Zilina to Vrutky just north of Martin.

We parked up at a small car park just opposite a bar (which we frequented later!) and rode easy road through Vrutky until we reached a first hairpin leading off to the right then up through pleasant wooded countryside to reach the height of Velka Luka at the top of the road at Martinske Hole. At the top are TV radio masts and a red metal gate barring the way. Dan and I arrived together but shortly after I believe it was Luigi – I know he was Italian – we took photos of our conquest at the barren road summit that wasn't much to speak of except for the view from the top. Down to the foot of the pass and I thought Dan needed a beer and he looked as exhausted as I was. Jerry stood there in an epitome of fitness while Dan drooped over a much needed beer thoroughly exhausted. I remember thinking I'd better take the wheel of the car when we set out again as I didn't want him dropping off to sleep heading for the hotel for the night in Habovka. The route was now east and slightly north to our hotel just before the Polish border. Our route now was south to Martin then Dolny Kubin to a turning off to the right from the main road at Podbiel along the valley Studena Dolina to Habovka. This was at an excellent Hotel, the Julianin Dvor on the north bank of the river with pleasant gardens overlooking this and the valley opposite. A fantastic meal wolfed down by hungry cyclists and a time of relaxation and talk together with Saris beer that's reasonably cheap at €1.50 a bottle followed by an early night in preparation for tomorrow's further adventures. I was glad just to share with Pavel tonight, no snoring heard!

### Saturday 7th July 2012

Polish Tatras Tour  
Przel'ecz Krowiarki, Przehyba and Tatliakovo Jazaro

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After breakfast we were all in the cars heading north again for the Polish border; back down the valley to Podbiel then taking a right on the main road for Trstena and into Poland again through Jablonka to Zubrzka Gorna where we parked up on the left at a rough ground car park by the side of a Polski sklep.

Przel'ecz Krowiarki, BIG number 829, 1018 metres  
From here we assembled the bikes and rode the gradual incline up along the road snaking up through wooded sides and a good surface to the top where there wasn't much to see except for a clearing, some small hotels around and a group of waiting cyclists for the obligatory photos at a stone that commemorates Pope John Paul II and the board that has details of the Przyroda Babiogorski Park Narodowy just behind the wooden fence, not much to speak of really but the road climb to this point was enjoyable. I remember there was a person selling local honey at the top and thinking my mother in law would like some of that but what state would it be in when I finally got it home! It was only a gradual rise most of the way, the steeper section being nearer

to the top. Bazck down to the cars band bundled back into the vehicles for the next pass. Przehyba, BIG number 826, 1191 metres

South to Jablonka, east to Czarny Dunajec and through Nowy Targ where I remember seeing many old communist style apartment blocks in dark grey concrete. It looked a dismal place but I'm sure there were many improvements in recent years. On further east to Kroszenio then north to Gmina then Golkowice Dolne where we left the vehicles parked opposite a café / bar and rode the well wooded bordered road up to the top of the pass and the radio mast. The top was gravelly, in fact the last kilometre was hard going on most of us (except for the die-hard BIGers) walked the bikes through rough stones to the top. Dan collapsed and we enjoyed taking photos! Wheeling them back again, mounting and freewheeling down the better surface back to the car and being real gluttons for punishment we were heading back for Habovka and the final climb of the day. From here the planned route was to go back to Habovka in the cars by the same route through Nowy Targ and Trasena but Pavel

suggested another route that would take us in Slovakia and a parallel road south and back to Habovka, we took his advice. Besides it was good to see some different scenery.

Our route was now Gmina Stary Sacz to the east then to the Slovakian border at Mnisek nad Popradom, the town Stara Lubovna, Spisska Bela, Poprad, Liptovsky Mikulas and the road north along the lake back to Habovka. We saw some of our group cycling along here back to the hotel and were amazed that they had cycled this distance from Przehyba.

Tatliakovo Jazaro, BIG number 843, 1375 metres

Dan and I were the only two that hadn't climbed this last pass today. I'm sure he was tired after that drive. I had shared some of it but he the majority, some 180 kilometres (112 miles). We rested a while then set off together up this last pass in the early evening. South of Habovka we were a little confused as to where the right turn was, Dan asked at a shop then shortly after we met Wim who was coming down from the pass. We now had the correct road for the pass although there was no clear indication from the Habovka / Liptovsky road in Zuberec. The way to it was by a small chapel on the right. It was only 16 kilometres and we had to do it, personally there was no way I was going to travel all the way back here on some future occasion to cycle one pass. It was a pleasant ride up through dense woods and a good surfaced road. It became a little steeper after a few kilometres. I said to Dan as we were both struggling up, "It's a privilege to be suffering alongside the President!" Dan was obviously tiring and behind and I carried on along the road at eight kilometres from Zuberec but this came to an abrupt end at Zverovka. I wasn't sure at the



## BIG Review 2013

time so took some photos thinking this was the top. Dan was soon behind but it was evident the top was further on so we doubled back and took a left and this took us on further until we reached a pole barrier. We passed by this and continued up, past a car park to the pub at the top at Sedlo Zabrad, at the end of the valley enclosed by the hills around and just before the Rakon, the highest point that separated the Slovakian valley from Poland. Here was the Bufet pri Tatiakovom Jazere – but it was closed. I would have bought you a beer Dan but it wasn't to be, even though we both deserved it! I had one lower down at a wooden restaurant on the right by the barrier. I remember the sunset from the lower part of the pass over the thick conifers being a fitting end to a glorious day. Dan was way ahead now but I was enjoying the remaining part of the pass then passed through Zuberec just as the darkness began to set in. We all enjoyed a fabulous meal that evening and we had the pleasure of meeting two members of the club who had come over from Poland that evening to join us at the hotel.

### **Sunday 8th July 2012**

East Tatras Tour

Glodowka, Sliezsky Dom and Sedlo Certovica

Glodowka, BIG number 830, 1145 metres

After breakfast we were all in the cars heading north again for the Polish border; back down the valley to Podbiel then taking a right on the main road to Trstena then headed east through Sucha Hora then south after the border through Witow into Zakopane to Poronin where we parked in a small parking area in front of a Polski sklep. Some of us bought food from here and we asked if it was in order to park while we cycled to Glodowka and we

would buy again afterwards – no problem. The first section of the road passes through the outskirts of the Zakopane area then after a roundabout at Klin where there are touristy market stalls the road to the top enters a wooded area and after a further four kilometres reaches the top that is marked by a small wooden shrine on the left. We stopped here for a group photo-shoot taken by our expert lady photographer who had the job of handling all our cameras. I dawdled on the way down to take in the views over Zakopane as Ruth and I were here three years previously and had walked the ridge of Gubalowka north of the town. I could see that clearly in the distance across the valley. I took a look at the market stalls, mainly clothing, hats, belts and walking poles (er – sticks that is not people!) Back down to the cars where many of the group were buying in the shop using up the zlotys as we wouldn't be coming back into Poland. From here on it was two remaining passes in Slovakia to complete the tour. Sliezsky Dom, BIG number 845, 1670 metres

We drive from Poronin east to Jurgow then south to the Slovakian border north of Podspady, east to Zdiar and south then took a right to Vysoke Tatry. We had a short search for the correct road to Sliezsky Dom and found it slightly to the east of the town at Tatranska Polianka where we parked at a decent car park in front of Hotel Tivoli and opposite a large white building in front of which is a road junction and the brown sign indicating Sliezsky Dom. Behind this are the jagged edges of the High Tatras that looked such a welcoming challenge in the warm sunshine. It's a narrow road and a good surface all the way to the top and the lower part of the road is bordered by short

grass, wild flowers and small stalk like trees for approx five kilometres and a series of road bends to reach a wilder scene on the approach to the hotel and the lake at the top, the Velicke Pleso. Some of the group were already at the top taking in the view at the terrace bar tables. I went for a Saris beer at €0.90 and a sausage at only one euro which wasn't bad. I sat in the covered bar for a while watching part of a football match but not for long as others were waiting down below. Dan had decided to give this one a miss so shouldn't stay up here too long though it was tempting. I wheeled the bike over a rickety wooden footbridge opposite the Horsky Hotel to take some photos at the yellow signpost that indicated the height and name of Sliezsky Dom, the waterfall at the end of the lake and the jagged cliffs of the High Tatras and chatted to some German walkers then headed off back down the pass enjoying the descent to warmer air, sweeping round bends and great views in all directions – back to the car and waiting companions.

Sedlo Certovica, BIG number 844, 1238 metres

We drove west to Tatranska Strba and on to Kralova Lehota where we left the car off the road in a grassy hollow then cycled the final pass of the tour. This is a mountain road bordered with conifers and some good hairpins on the way up. Great views in open countryside and very warm even late in the afternoon. It's scenic all the way to the top of the pass. Dan and I arrived at the top together and sheer coincidence that there at the top we met three Hungarian BIG members who were cycling. I think they came up the other side and had sat with others of our group who were having a drink at the road summit bar on the left as we came up. They



were really pleased to see Dan and can't understand it but they knew who I was – OK those at the bar had told them! We chatted for a while and took photos with them then they returned back down the mountain road to the south. We all had a last celebration drink – or two – or three for an hour then we dispersed back down the way we came north to Kralova Lehota. From there most of the group were going back to the hotel for a second night at Hsabovka but Dan, Jerry, Pavel, Fredrik and I headed west for Prague. We changed and washed at the restaurant/bar then I took the wheel most of the way and we headed away from the mountains for the last time.

### Monday 9th July 2012

Prague to Holmes Chapel  
We drove from Liptovsky area just west of Poprad to Prague, most of it in the dark. I was glad of Pavel's company and interesting talk and searching questions as I drove. Poprad, Liptovsky Mikulas, Martin, Zilina, Sumperk, Hradec Kralove to Prague. We dropped off Pavel first at some lonely spot on the edge of Prague close to his home. He then cycled off and we carried on to where Jerry and Fredrik had stayed previously. They

unpacked and took everything back into the accommodation and would leave from there the following day. Fredrik would travel home to Sweden and Jerry would go to Prague main station and take a train with his bike into Austria and continue his travels. Dan drove to the Czech border then I drove through the night as far as Aachen where Dan took over and drove home to Namur. We planned to arrive back in Namur between 09.00 and 10.00am. The estimated distance was 1300km (812 miles) from the last climb north of Stara Lubovna, so this would take ten hours of driving. When we got back we relaxed at Dan's house for a while after packing my bike in its padded zip bag then we arranged that I would follow him in the hire van back to the rental drop off point, and he would drive his own car. A great idea but another car overtook me at a road junction and I lost sight of his car. I was now on an unknown road and ended up in a small town called Spy. Only my sense of direction got me back to Belgrade but I couldn't find Dan's house. I was on the main road only a short distance away from it. I was getting frantic because I was running out of time to get my train connection

to Brussels to connect with the Eurostar to London. I asked at a garage and they looked in a phone directory and told me to follow as the woman garage attendant drove to the house. Once there I asked Natalie to come with me to the rental place however Dan then appeared, so glad to see him and he had a big grin on his face. He had waited at the road junction but didn't see that I had taken a wrong turning. I should have gone left but instead went right and was on my way to Leige! Dan took the wheel of the hire van and Natalie followed so we could get back again. He dropped it off, signed the papers and we were back. He quickly drove me to the main station and I had only minutes to spare to catch my last possible connection at 15.21, arriving in Brussels at 16.27 for the Eurostar. I only had 30 minutes in Brussels but it was sufficient time. I found the platform right away and relieved as I was in the queue with the others waiting to board. I struggled with the bike in the bag and dumped it in the train, relaxed and slept the whole way to London. The Eurostar left Brussels Midi at 16.56, arriving in London St Pancras at 18.12 I carried the bike and pannier along Euston Road and dumped it on the 19.10, arriving in Crewe at 20.48 and Ruth collected me. The end of a perfect holiday – but those hours in Namur were a bit scary!

1 Polish zloty = 6 Czech Koruna  
Czech Koruna to Slovak Koruna almost on par with 0.98 CZK = 1 SKK  
£0.81 = €1.00. Recently Slovakia recently changed to the euro, 1.00 SKK = €0.033m,  
€1.00 = 4.25 Polish Zloty. €1 = 4.25 Polish Zloty, £1 = 32 CSK or 5.25 Polish Zlot



# PARALLEL CHALLENGE

**KÉKESTETŐ 25X &  
DOBOGÓKŐ 25X**

**THAT IS IRONBIG 50X  
2012**

**Gabor KREICSI**

After the Pannonhalma and Galyatető Ironbig I would like to pass the next Hungarian ironbigs. My target is to accomplish all of Hungarian BIGs with Ironbig.



On the first weekend of 2012 I was on Mátra mountain and climbed the top of the Mátra, Kékestető. The landscape was snowy and the temperature was very low: -4 C. The people wondered at me because everybody were skiing not byking. I had had a big motivation and I climbed with pleasure.



I continued the climbing in wintertime. I think, this is no problem if you have got a good tactics for the clothing. I brought with me a rucksack with many dry and warm clothes in it. On the top I change my clothes during two minutes. However the winter was a good situation because the end of the road (last 4 kms) was closed for the cars. It was open only for the skibuses. Hence the road was very quiet.



When the spring set in I started another Ironbig, Dobogókő. On that time I had five climbings to the Kékestető. Dobogókő is not far from the house of my mother in low. So I did the climbing from it. The weather was not too warm, but it was no problem for me. So I climbed two different routes since March in parallel.

Sometimes I climbed the Kékestető with MTB on the gravel roads. It was good feeling to be in a quiet, and clear forest without cars. I did the climbings to the Dobogókő on the surfaced road to the last day.

The BIG Day was Kékestető in May. We climbed three times on that day. After the last climbing we lifted our bicycles above our heads.

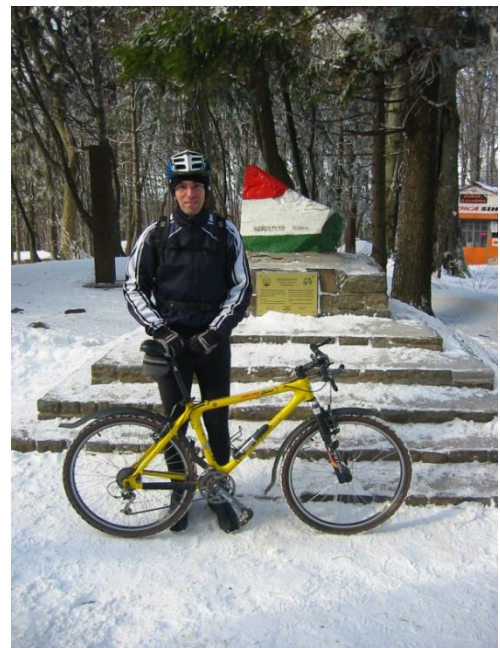
Before June I passed the 25th climbing to the Kékestető. When I reached the top the running race was begun. This was a very nice situation for me.

I continued the climbing of the Dobogókő. My favourite direction was across the wall of Pilisszántó. In August I decided to climb the last three climbing in one day.

This day I climbed twice on the gravel road. Suddenly poured a heavy rain. I found a little service area. After the rain I climbed twice the Dobogókő.

**The two Ironbigs datas were:**  
**Distance: 1528 km**  
**Height difference: 33375 m**  
**Minimum temperature: -40C**  
**Maximum temperature: 370C**  
**The number of climbings with rain: 4/50**

I love the Ironbig challenge! I would like to continue the next Hungarian BIGs, like Felső-Borovnyák and Misina in 2013.



# A Dream that became reality: Cycling on the roof of the world!

**Helmuth DEKKERS**

Two years ago, my wife Patricia landed by chance on the website of "Vlieg en Fiets" or "Fly and Bike" as the English translation is. They offered a cycling trip from Lhasa to Kathmandu via the Friendship Highway. The website also contained some pictures of the turquoise Yamdrok Tso Lake and of the snowcapped Himalaya Mountains. We were both interested and the plan to take this as our next holiday destination was born. The problem we ran across is that the complete cycling trip would be way too tough for Patricia, also a BIG member by the way, and hence she opted for a less tougher version where parts of the ascents would be done by car. This did not appeal to me as in that way I would not be able to claim the passes for the Asian continent as part of Zone 12. So eventually we dropped the idea and that was that. It was only last year when our daughter, who studies medicine, got the news that she could perform a part of her practical training in Nepal and she asked if we would visit her in Nepal. Which made Patricia say: "If we go then I would like to visit Tibet." Which intern made me say: "If we go to Tibet, then I would like to cycle!" So I contacted "Fly and Bike" and checked if they also provided an individual program besides of the group program they offer for the Friendship Highway cycling trip. They didn't. So I searched the Internet and found some companies that might provide a package that was tailored to our needs. I.e. I would cycle, but only the ascents and the descents and flat parts would be covered by car. After some

searching I came in contact with a travel agency called Passaat Verre Reizen (Passaat Distant Travels). A small company that were willing to help out and the owner helped me to come to a package that would fulfill our needs and that would take care of the altitude adjustment. I had many, many questions and all were answered and suggestions went back and forth until we finally settled on a final travel ternary. We would fly to Chengdu in China and spend one night there and the next day visit the Giant Panda breeding center. Which we liked as it was fun to see and hear the lazy Giant Panda's chewing away the bamboo.



From Chengdu we flew to Lijiang, our first step to get accustomed to the height as Lijiang lies on 2600m. Lijiang has a beautiful old town where the Naxi people dance on the main square in their traditional clothes. And little streams run along the middle of the cobbled streets and there are the turning water wheels of course. We also visited the Black Dragon Pool Park. The owner of the guesthouse we stayed at, Eric Yang from The Moon Inn, learned us about pu-ehr tea and Dianhong tea. And I can recommend both kinds of tea to you. But note that you have to

brew the tea totally different than what we are used to here in the west! From Lijiang we moved on to Zhongdian or Shangri-La as it is nowadays also known. And on the way we visited a very tiny part of the Tiger Leaping Gorge. On our way to Zhongdian we saw more and more the Tibetan influence as it used to be the part of the most southeastern area of Tibet before the Chinese invasion of 1950. Zhongdian would be the second step to get used to the height as Zhongdian is at 3300m. I had found a website from a Swiss cyclist (Beat Heim and the website is: <http://www.betzgi.ch/en/>) who had cycled in the Himalaya's amongst others and he described a pass near to Zhongdian. Ideal as a test to see if we would be ready to cycle at altitude. At start Patricia had said she would not come along when I would cycle but over time she agreed that we would rent a 2nd MTB so she could give it a try on the passes that were not so long. And so she accompanied me when we tried for the first time to cycle at altitude to Zhongdian Pass. We rented 2 good MTBs for 300 Yuan (~ 30.00 Euro) for the whole day. And we paid 1000 Yuan bale as we did not want to leave our passports behind. I had taken the waypoints from the Swiss cyclist and had programmed these into my GPS. The map I had taken from Open Street Map (<http://garmin.openstreetmap.nl/>), tick the box for manual selection and then select the parts of the map you want and it will be mailed to the email address you filled in. Dutch manual on: <http://www.gps-info.nl/tips-trucs/openstreetmap/>) as I did not have a map that covered the

part of China nor Tibet or Nepal that we visited. This map served us very well! So based on the GPS indications we cycled out of Zhongdian as the foot of the pass is just outside Zhongdian and we started to cycle from 3294m. Traffic in Zhongdian was busy, noisy and smelly! Outside Zhongdian, traffic got less but the trucks still produced a lot of smelly exhaust fumes when they passed us by :- ( It took 15km or so before the road got nice and quiet and we could appreciate the nice sunny weather and the cycling. We saw Yaks in the rocky, barren fields with their calves and nature took over from men (no houses). Nice! The ascent towards the pass is 22.5km long and on our way up we also noticed a small stupa made out of stones and Mani stones. Mani stones are stones where a mantra has been engraved in like for instance: Om mani padme hum. This is the most well-known mantra. We reached the top of the pass at 3576m but the waypoint I had from the Swiss cyclist indicated it was a little further away still. I should have trusted on the fact that we saw prayer flags above the pass as when we cycled further the road only went down.

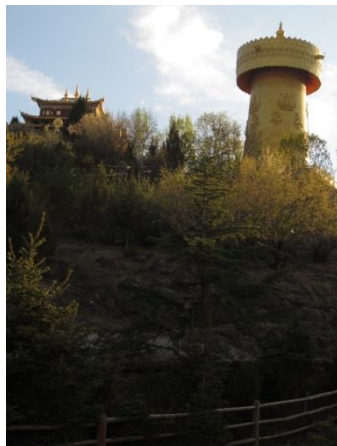
**Foto Zongdian Pass**



And since the BIG meeting in Oberstdorf, I now know that the top of the pass is where the road has reached the highest point. I.e. just before the road goes down again ;- ) So the climb was not too tough as over the 22.5km we gained 282m. On average just 1.25%. When looking closer to the profile we can distinguish 2 parts. The 1st part is 16.22km long and then we gained just 89m (0.55% on average). The

second part is steeper and is 6.14km long and 194 altimeters need to be gained (3.15% on average). Yeah, I know, it's still not very demanding but remember that we are cycling above 3200m here! And it was good to find out how our bodies coped with cycling at an altitude. We did not encounter any problems. Except for some dogs that chased us when we descended. But we increased speed, as dogs here can have rabies (so get the injections), and that solved that problem also. In the afternoon we visited the Gompa (temple fortification) that is located on the top of hill in the old town and next to it is a gigantic prayer wheel, 24m tall. One of the biggest prayer wheels in the world. And it took at least 8 people to get it rotating clockwise to spread the prayers.

**Foto Gompa & Giant Prayer Wheel**



There was also a nice stupa in the town with prayer flags hanging down from the top and many small prayer wheels in the base.

**Foto Stupa**



Zhongdian is a nice town well worth a visit.

The next day we flew to Lhasa. We were very lucky that we had received a permit for Tibet while we were in Zhongdian as from one day to another the rules of the Chinese government changed and it was only allowed to enter Tibet in groups of 5 people with the same nationality. We were among the last ones who were allowed to enter Tibet with just 2 persons. In Lhasa our driver (Jambel) and guide (Dhundup) welcomed us by putting a Khata (white scarf) around our neck. They would accompany us for 13 days when we would travel through Tibet via the Friendship Highway from Lhasa to Kathmandu in Nepal. We first spend 3 days in Lhasa at 3600m and visited the Potala and Norbulinka palaces of the Dalai Lamas.

**Foto Potala Palace**



And the Jokhang temple, the spiritual heart of Tibet as many pilgrims come to it. And we visited the Deprung and Sera monasteries. We cycled the last 2km to the Deprung monastery which have an average gradient of 7.2%. And even that felt OK at 3600m! Again a good indication. Note that the MTBs we had were arranged via the traveling agency in The Netherlands already. So after 3 days we left Lhasa and got going on the Friendship Highway (FHW). I had bought a book called "Himalaya by bike" (from Laura Stone) that describes 7 routes in detail with maps and profiles and 1 in text and one of these detailed routes is the FHW from Lhasa to Kathmandu. I had read about the blue Buddha 25km outside Lhasa and so we visited this place before we drove another 60km to the foot of the first pass called Kampa La. La is the Tibetan word for Pass. And Kampa La is one of the bigger

passes on the FHW as the height difference is 1186m and with a length of 23.8km this results in an average gradient of 5.84%.

Laura Stone writes that passes in the Himalaya are never that steep as the old busses and old trucks that are used in Tibet also need to climb them :-). It was warm and sunny so before I started cycling I used enough sun burn cream to avoid a sun burn as that is easy to get when it is sunny at this altitude. So I cycled in shorts and with short sleeves and it went extremely well. On the flatter parts I even could put the chain on the middle cog in the front and increase my speed. On the way up I saw yaks and people who passed me by hung out the window to encourage me or to take pictures of this strange person who took a bike instead of a car to get up. The views on the way up are not that special as Tibet is rather barren. It's only when you arrive at the pass, greeted by many prayer flags, when a fantastic view is offered on the turquoise colored Yamdrok Tso lake.

**Foto Tamdrok Tso Lake**



I realized that this was the highest point I ever reached by bike. In Peru I cycle up to the Portichuelo de Llanganuco pass and though I did not reach the pass I managed to cycle up to 4,440m. The summit of Kampa La is at 4,773m and I had to ask someone else to take a picture as Patricia had gone to the Yamdrok Tso lake to walk there with our guide. So I called them and then descended downwards to the lake. I seem to have passed them at as some

stage they came driving next to me. We stopped at the first available place where we had our lunch. Our guide arranged for every "biking" day a lunch box with some bread, a hardboiled egg, a piece of fried chicken, an apple and something to drink. The content depended on what he could get his hands on in the different villages we stayed. The lunch tasted good after the exercise and when ready we drove along the lake shore to our next stop: Nagartse. There was only one hotel that looked good in Nagartse but they refused free admission for our guide and driver and hence we decided not to stay there but take a very simple hotel together. No shower nor running water in the room. There was however a thermos bottle filled with warm water. The toilet was outside and one had to flush by taking water from a large barrel and pour it into the French toilet. I might have done too much on the climb as I felt a mild headache and I did not fancy dinner (though I did eat something). The classical symptoms that

point to altitude sickness. Nagartse is situated at an altitude of 4,452m and that also has an impact of course. There are some simple rules to obey to prevent altitude sickness:  
1) Take the time to get used to the altitude (we did that by going to 4452m via Lijiang at 2300m (stayed 1 day) drove in one day to Zhongdian at 3300m (stayed 1 day) and then flew to Lhasa at 3600m (stayed 3 days).

- 2) Drink enough as the altitude tends to dehydrate the body. We knew this from the time we were in Peru and where our guide kept insisting us to drink. So we drank a lot of tea in Tibet and I took water along whenever I cycled.
- 3) Take it easy. I.e. don't do too much.
- 4) The altitude of the place where one sleeps in the evening should not be more than 300m higher than where one started when being above 3000m. Note that it's OK to cross a pass with a greater height difference as long as the overnight fulfills the above requirement.

It's these last 2 rules that I did not adhere to as we gained 852m that day and I had cycled up Kampa La as fast as I could. My body indicated clearly that I was overdoing it. There is not much to say about Nagartse. There is no reason to go there but in our ternary it was to most convenient stay over. The next day I had planned to cycle Karo La and Simi La. But I again did not fancy eating something. I had a vegetable soup for breakfast just so I had

eaten something. Patricia did not want me to cycle. But I wanted to try first to see how it would feel before I would give up. And I indicated that I would quit if it did not feel good. The foot of Karo La is in Nagartse so that's easy. Patricia would also cycle this pass as it's not a very tough pass. The first 23km you only gain 346m and the average gradient is just 1.5%. Some 8km outside Nagartse the road starts to follow a small

river. Winds coming from the glaciers are funneled into the valley and hence it's a cold ascent even though the sky was clear. I borrowed my Gore-Tex jacket to Patricia and took her loose arm sleeves to keep my arms warm. This ascent provides superb views on the snowy peaks of Jetung Chusang (6,242m) and Jansang Lhamo (6,324m) and due to the low gradient the cycling went fine and my slight headache did not increase. It was cold though as Patricia cycles slower than me and I could not get warm from the cycling. The last 6.2km have an average gradient of 4.68% but the ascent really starts when the road turns away from river up to the pass after 26km. We were glad that we finally saw the colorful prayer flags that mark the Karo La pass at 5046m so we could get in to the warm car. I even enjoyed my lunch and the fried chicken tasted great. We also enjoyed the stunning view on the glacier that comes down from Nojin Kungtang (7,190m) and almost reaches the road.

**Foto Glacier Nojin Kungtang**



Ok, on to Simi La. This is a tiny pass that is just 1.7km long so it's good I started cycling earlier. The temperatures were better here and though I started with the arm sleeves on it did not take long before I could do without them. In this 1.7km I gained 85m. So again the average gradient is just over 5%. The pass lies at 4361m and is there so the road can bypass an artificial lake that is used as a reservoir for a dam to generate electricity. Again many prayer flags at the top but

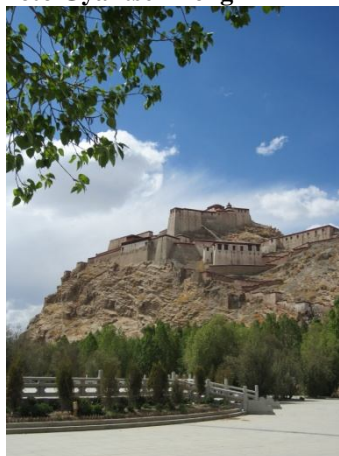
also Tibetans were there trying to sell prayer wheels, prayer flags, etc. And also small square pieces of paper with mantras and a windhorse on it. These are used to throw into the air when you reach the pass and you have to yell: "Tsu, tsu!" It's a ritual to increase your well-being or good luck. As in this way you spread the mantra over the world.

**Foto Simi La lake**



Simi La is just a glitch in the descent towards Gyantse. The Gyantse Dzong (fortress) can be seen from far as it lies on a rock high above the city.

**Foto Gyantse Dzong**



Two other things to visit in Gyantse are the Pelkor Chode monastery and Kumbum. Hence we stayed 1 day in Gyantse. In this monastery you are allowed to take pictures (unlike in the Jokhang Temple or Potala Place) and the price is fair! Unlike other monasteries like Tashilumpo in Shigatse. After the Pelkor Chode monastery we visited the Kumbum. The Kumbum is in fact a three-dimensional mandala. A mandala is used to

focus your thoughts when meditating and it consists of a square with four gates containing a circle with a center point. So picture this as the ground floor and on top of that another mandala has been built that is a little smaller and again and again. And then the top has a stupa like golden structure with the parasol on the top as a protection for the evil ones. The Kumbum is filled with many Buddha's as Kumbum means: One hundred thousand holy images.

**Foto Kumbum**



From Gyantse to Shigatse (the 2nd largest city in Tibet) is not so interesting. As the road is nearly flat. In fact it descends 200m even. Our guide tried to make it a bit interesting by visiting a Tsampa grindery. Here roasted barley is grinded into Tsampa flour which is the basic Tibetan breakfast together with butter-tea. In Shigatse we visited another monastery: Tashilumpo. By now we have seen enough monasteries. You tend to get monastery-tired so to say even though the frescoes of Buddha and the statues are beautiful. We did perform a Kora around Tashilumpo. It's a pilgrimage and meditation by making a walk, clockwise, around a sacred site or object (stupa, monastery). I gave every prayer wheel a spin that we passed and stopped counting them at 3,000. Spinning the prayer wheel is good for your Karma in case you wondered why I spun all of them. From the monastery walls we also saw the Shigatse Dzong. Which is not as nice as the one in

Gyantse. On the square in Shigatse that lies in front of the monastery there is also a bronze statue of a cyclist. Worth a picture of course! OK, time to move on to the next pass: Tra La. This is again a glitch in the road. From Shigatse it's about 27.5km to the top of Tra La at 4041m so you only gain 194m. An average gradient of 0.7%. This is due to the fact that after an initial ascent a short descent followed before the road took us again to the pass. Did you notice the "us"? Yes, we cycled this pass together! OK, on to Lagpa La. Lagpa La starts like Karo La with a more flat piece which is 45km long and this part has an average gradient of just 1.1%. It's only after the 5005km marker (that is 5005km from Beijing) that the ascent really kicks in. Over the last 8.1km we gained 279m to get to the summit at 4538m (still just 3.4%). This pass was the one decorated with an abundance of prayer flags. Really nice!

**Foto Lagpa La**



On our way up we again saw strange transports. Cows side to side on a small pickup truck or a complete family with their stuff packed on a trailer pulled by a tractor-like contraption. Amazing!

**Foto Tractor with people**



From the top we descended to Lhatze. Again just a convenient stop over for us as there is really no other reason to stop in Lhatze. On Patricia's birthday we moved from Lhatze to Shegar. Just outside Lhatze started my climb to the highest pass on the FHW: Gyatso La (5,253m). But first we had to go through yet another police checkpoint. I have not mentioned these but at several places our guide had to show our so called Alien Travel Permit (ATP) to show we were allowed to travel in that part of Tibet. Anyway, on to Gyatso La. It's just over 28km of cycling at 4.44% on average. The road up follows Druwu Chu (river) for most of the distance. I saw people at work on the land and it's amazing to see how much labor is still done by hand. There are some tractors but most of the plowing is done with cows or yaks that are dressed up with red plumes. The first 2/3rd of the climb went good but the last part I had quite some headwind that slowed me down and made me cold also. I had to stop to put on my windproof jacket and gloves. I saw a cloud lingering just above the mountains. It looked so close that I could touch it by just stretching out my hand. I was so glad when after the last turn I saw the prayer flags hanging down from the Quomolangma National Nature preserve sign. This gave new energy, a little though, to cycle the last 1.5km. The last meters a Chinese chap ran along while his mate was taking pictures. Tears came to

my eyes when I cycled below the Quomolangma National Nature preserve sign. I made it, tired but satisfied of course that I reached this highest point of our journey.

**Foto Gyatso La**



Ok, quickly into the car to get warm and to descend to Shegar where I decorated our room with balloons and postcards of friends and family that I had smuggled along for Patricia's birthday. Our guide sang a birthday song in Tibetan after I sung a Dutch birthday song. A nice gesture from our guide. The next day I had my first graveled pass as the FHW has good tarmac but the detour to Everest Base Came (EBC) is all gravel road. Yes, on to Mount Everest! I had found a beautiful picture on the Internet taken from Pang La (pass) showing in front of a blue sky Lhotse & Mount Everest framed by prayer flags above and below. Beautiful! But the chance to catch Mount Everest free of clouds is slim. Well, not to worry, let's first take on Pang La. The graveled road is bumpy and every passing car covers me in dust clouds. But I pushed on of course! As I make my way up I see the hairpins below me as a giant serpent crawling up against the mountain. It's due to the bumpy road and 924 altimeters that need to be covered that the ascent does not come easy and again I was glad to see the prayer flags of Pang La (5,199m). We were really lucky as we had the perfect view on the Mahalangur Himal range with 4 out of the in total 14 eight thousanders against a

blue sky. From left to the right we saw Makalu (8,463m), Lhotse (8,516m), the famous North Face and summit of Mount Everest (8,848m), Gyachung Kang(7,952m) and Cho Oyu (8,201m). It was stunning!

**Foto Pang La**



Mount Everest's North Face is like a magnet it keeps pulling your view. I sat down and enjoyed my lunch together with Patricia. We did not need any words. It was tough to get up and get into the car for the bumpy ride to the Rongbuk Monastery. While we came closer to the Rongbuk monastery Mount Everest filled the view completely. The North Face is huge! I had read about the summit attempt of Irvine and Mallory and hence I could recognize with the naked eye the yellow band and the first, second and third step on the ridge that leads to the summit. I could see how steep the notorious second step is even. The step that plays such an important role in the Irvine and Mallory mystery.

**Foto Everest North Face**



We stayed in the tourist camp with a Tibetan couple who

hosted us in their tent. From there we walked up to the EBC. Well, as far as you are allowed to go that is as even there we had to show our permits. We climbed up a small hillock and got out of breath at that altitude (5,200m). We could imagine how tough it would be for climbers on Everest. The night

was cold but fortunately we had good sleeping bags. In the morning Everest was again the eye catcher. The air was crystal clear and so was the awesome view. Ok, we had to leave and I was able to squeeze in another climb. As soon as we crossed the bridge near to Chosang I started to cycle up to Lamna La (5,086m). This is again a graveled road but even worse than the one that lead up to Pang La. Even the front suspension was not enough and I could have done with a full suspension MTB on this ascent. The front wheel moved to all sides and it was hard to keep going due to this. I could not recall the reasons that I wanted to cycle this pass also. The pass itself is barely marked as a pass. Just some stones and Khatas. But it was good that the marking was there as it did not look like a pass at all as it's located on a plain.

**Foto Lamna La**



On to Tingri which was hard labor but now for our driver.

The end of our Tibetan adventure got into sight now as the next day I had the last 2 passes in Tibet on the program. The road from Tingri to the foot of the first pass is flattish (222m over 66km). The first pass is Lalung La and it's just 11.2km to the summit at 5,015m but this pass and the

one that follows are well known for the strong headwinds. So I started with a jacket, long trousers and gloves even as there was a cold wind in the valley where the Men Chu River flows. The climb is not so hard, 3.8% on average, but due to the headwind it didn't come easy. I thought that by now also the altitude would no longer be a problem. So I had hoped this pass went easier. But the sun was shining and as I went higher the wind was no longer a problem and I could do without the extra clothing. Patricia, our guide and driver were waiting at the pass. Ok, on to the next pass of this double pass: Yarleshung La (5,125m). A 5km descend brought me to the foot and then only 272m have to be gained over 7.6km to get to the last Tibetan pass. On my way up I got a better and better view on the Labuche Himal range. But it's the view from Yarleshung La that is really stunning.

A 180 degree view on snowcapped Himalayan mountain peaks like Labuche Kang (7,637m) and Shishapangma the smallest of all 14 eightthousanders (8,014m). A beautiful and impressive view. This pass is **Foto Yarleshung La**



also being used for sky burials. The Tibetan burial ritual and one can see the remains like clothes of the deceased. Time for the longest descent in the world as we descend from 5,125m down to Dolaghat at 638m over 150km. But we made a stop in Zhangmu (2,320m) first as we needed to cross over via the Friendship bridge to Nepal. When going down, the scenery gets greener and it was only when we were in our hotel in Zhangmu that we heard birds sing that we realized we didn't hear that for the last weeks. Zhangmu is glued to the mountain side and the hairpins that make up the only street it has are jammed with colorful Nepali trucks making their way down to the border. We crossed the Friendship Bridge the next day and had to say goodbye to our Tibetan guide and driver. After a thorough inspection of our luggage by the Chinese soldiers we could pass and we were handed over to a Nepali man who guided us along the Nepali customs and then handed us over to our Nepali driver who drove us over a much worse road (the Chinese part up until the border is a very good road) further down to Dolaghat. I had one more ascent planned. The climb from Dolaghat (638m) up to Dhulikhel (1,502m). So after we had our lunch I got going. I was glad I brought a bandana as this helmet was old and smelly. And the MTB was also not so good. Note that cycling in Nepal also means that you cycle on the left hand side of the road. While I made my way up I was followed by our driver and Patricia.

#### Foto On Dhulikhel



It's so green here after Tibet and so busy also. Much more people and houses everywhere. I was passed by by cars and busses. And the busses are packet with Nepali and even have Nepali on the roof sometimes! I also saw a goat on the roof of a bus :-)

Incredible. Shifting gear was tricky so I only shifted gear on the front but at some stage even that went wrong and the chain got off and stuck between the frame and pedal. I got dirty hands when untangling the chain and putting it back on. It was only when I reached Dhulikhel when I found out that our driver had picked up an extra passenger. Who he did not introduce even. Initially our travel agent had planned that we would stay in Dhulikhel but we had asked to be rebooked to Bhaktapur which was once the capital of Nepal during the great Malla Kingdom until the

second half of the 15th century. This I can recommend to you. Bhaktapur is beautiful and really worth a visit! As we stayed there we could explore the town also after the majority of tourists were gone which is perfect.

Then on to Kathmandu. Kathmandu is chaotic, noisy and full of life. I liked it! As with Bhaktapur, I will not write what you should visit here. But if you are planning to go there then you can always send me a mail (helmuth\_dekkers@hotmail.com) and I will tell you from our experiences what you should see. We did by the way not visit our daughter in Dharan as there was a huge strike there due to the new constitution that should become active. But our daughter came with some difficulties to Kathmandu where we enjoyed some nice days together. Not what we had in mind but we have learned that even when things work out differently that we should accept that and make the best out of it. Overcoming setbacks is good for your karma.

#### Foto Bhaktapur Durbar Square





# Doorfietsen

**Marc PEETERS**, BIG-lid van het eerste uur heeft in 2012 zijn tweede boek uitgebracht.

De opvolger van "Ik fiets, dus ik ben" heet "**Doorfietsen**".

Een boek waarin Marc reisimpressies, interviews en columns bundelt die met zijn grote liefde fietsen te maken hebben.

Hieronder het voorwoord van **Dirk Jan Roeleven** schrijver De Nieuwe Fiets / programmamaker Andere Tijden Sport

*Op de ochtend na de finish van de Vuelta 2009 loop ik licht slingerend met mijn rossonero aan de hand door het centrum van Venlo. De avond tevoren hebben mijn fiets en ik in de Spiegelzaal opgetreden in het voorprogramma van Wilfried de Jong. Ik las voor uit mijn boek De Nieuwe Fiets. Het was mooi, het werd laat.*

*Mijn roodzwarte Italiaanse Cucchiotti werd door Marc Peeters in zijn bespreking van mijn boek voor het blad De Wereldfiets met veel liefde besproken. Hij was de eerste die de ziel van het boek en de ziel van de fiets haarscherp met elkaar combineerde. Verderop in dit boek is zijn relaas te lezen.*

*Terug naar die ochtend in Venlo. Ik passeerde een man met in zijn hand een*

*witte plastic tas. Ik keek opzij en herkende de wereldfietsers Peeters, die ik niet lang tevoren had leren kennen.*

*We voerden een kort gesprek en hij bekeek met aandacht mijn geliefde fiets. Ik dacht bij het afscheid dat ik hem nooit meer zou zien, maar op allerlei beurzen van wereldfietsers en gewone pedalanten troffen we elkaar. Zijn stukken kruisten ook steeds vaker mijn fietspaden. Ik stelde ze op prijs, want hij schrijft zonder opsmuk, origineel en zuiver.*

*Daarom ben ik blij dat dit boek is verschenen met een mooie doorsnee van zijn oeuvre. Een boek dat mij zoveel deugd doet omdat het wars is van eigendunk en een grote variëteit aan onderwerpen en stijlen biedt. Heerlijk boek, nooit vervelend en met lekker veel Italiaans staal in de genen. Voor fietsers en voor hen die dat willen worden.*

*Het fijne is dat er een goede tred in het boek zit.*

*Reisverhalen, maar ook*

*interviews en beschouwingen. Prachtig stuk over Robert Louis Stevenson afgewisseld met een interview met Kristien Hemmerrechts. En voor een lijstjesfetisjist het heerlijkste van al: de Top 10 van Italiaanse cols.*

*Met op 8 de Colle del Nivolet, de berg die ik zó graag op wilde tijdens mijn eenzame tocht van Vilar San Costanzo naar Amsterdam. Maar die gesloten was door sneeuwval. En op 6 de Gavia, een berg die ik van beide kanten ken en die me zo dierbaar is. Heerlijk om te lezen hoe een ander dat beschrijft. En de terechtnummer 1, de Stelvio. De beul op wie je niet boos kan worden.*

*Ik wens de lezer een aantal genotvolle uren toe met dit boek van een Wereldfiets. En vanwege de Italiaanse connectie die we hebben, sluit ik af met de woorden waarmee ik zelf op pad werd gestuurd door mijn Italiaanse hospita: PEDALA!*

