

SZILAGYI Andras



1) What are your feelings reaching the arrival ?

I am really happy. I managed it in the last moment. My legs etc. are getting weaker day by day.

2) Why and how did you begin to cycle ?

My cousin Magdi, who was **three months younger** than me had been riding a bicycle for a few years as a girl ! But as was 13 during the summer vacation I as usual stayed at my grandparents in Ecser. I very well remember even now : it was a pretty hot summer noon. Nobody had been seen around, so I pushed a bicycle out of the shed, where several ones used to stand.

I set in the saddle on the empty street. Better said I started to pedal under the frame, because I was too small, and landed straight in the trench on the opposite side.

Apart from my scare I did not get hurt. So I tried it again.

That was the start my cycling 's "career" over few hundred thousand km.

3) Why and how did you begin the BIG challenge ?

2573 - BERGMANN Peter recommended me to join this movement. We meet in Nagymaros after a kind of amateur cycling event.

Was there someone who motivated you in the beginning ? I followed the www.bigcycling.eu website , who is leading or improving his rank.

5) At which moment did you think : "I'll reach 1000"?

I think it was in October 2016 as I made a round trip on Corse (France).

6) About your score evolution, were there events in your private life that increased or decreased it ?

I tried to work as much as I could daily. So I could take 3-4 weeks holiday in my own business. I have to thank to

my colleagues to cooperate with me.

7) What were the countries where you found more difficulties to cycle ? Because of the dogs : Romania.

8) What are the most beautiful sceneries (landscapes) that you met
That is a very difficult question. For I like the mountains, untouched nature, I found everywhere plenty of beauties. My first spectacular pass was Stelvio , the Dolomites, then hundreds of new ones. But I remember the sun rise in Northeastern Portugal, on La Gomera (Canaries), the tropical rainforest also there. The earlier sceneries are fading, so Scandinavia and Iceland was also special for me as well as Khinaliq in Azerbaijan.



9) Did you often think : "I put my wheels where professional racers put theirs" or "where other BIG members put theirs" ?



Certainly! I even met many profesional racing teams „in action”

I did not meet Jan Ullrich, however I saw a marvellous caricature about him in the Pyrenees in 2010. But in Schwarzwald, I think on 172 - Belchen on the top , I talked to German cyclists. I said I am Hungarian and now cycling "on the wheel prints of Jan Ullrich". Then one of them told me a story. He was climbing a pass while struggling for air. Suddenly a guy arrived to him, asked him are you OK? After the "I am fine" answer he just rushed uphill. It happened so quickly, that he just after realized it was Jan Ullrich.

10) Was there a final competition or race between those at the end who were near the Grail of 1000 ?

Sure ! I followed the website and did my best to reach as many scores a year as I could. I always followed the year s ranking, too.

11) What are your best souvenirs of relationships sharing in the BIG world ? I

have lots of photos I made during my climbs. Where could I see vultures in Hungary? I have now even a vulture

feather in my workroom between Paulo Bettini's and Gino Bartali's photo.

I found a drink bottle of Credit Agricole in 2007 after climbing Col du Galibier. At that time László Bodrogi was member of that team. So it could have been even his bottle.

12) What are your worst souvenirs inside the 1000 ?

On 762 - Passo del Lagadello (incl. San Pellegrino in Alpe) happened I almost arrived to my accommodation as my rear tyre blew up. Frankly said I have not kept this long as a souvenir.

13) The several languages used in the BIG Cycling World : is this an additional interest or a real problem for you ?

Well, I like learning languages, so this motivated me, too. I always tried to learn some words in the local language.

14) Do you think that your kind of passion is very similar to the majority of the other members that you met ?

I think it is similar, however I had now more time to do it.

15) Had you a good feedback inside your country when talking about the BIG ?

Many Hungarian cyclist do not know about the BIG movement. But everyone I talked to about this BIG movement, found it interesting. Two even started it!

16) Do you think that the national Hungarian challenge give an additional interest to your fellow countrymen ?

Sure, this is a very good start to make the EuroBIG or Super BIG.

17) Among your 1000, what are the most difficult ones with the slopes ?

For me all of those are tough where you need a mountain (cross) bike because of the surface is not asphalted. I am climbing mostly standing. That is not possible on gravel or on rocks.

I remember some names out of the recently climbed : Alto de L'Angliru, 786 Blockhaus della Maiella (snow and snow storm on the top), 364 Châlet-hôtel (Refuge) des Cortalets as very difficult.

18) What do your family and friends think about this passion for cycloclimbing in Europe ? First they found a bit unusual though they knew I am cycling a lot. After they get used to it.

19) Do you have any bad or sorry feelings somewhere about all these years used to build your score in BIG ?

No, absolutely I do not!

20) How do you see your future in your cycling practice ?

As I told I am getting really old and weak. However the national challenges for example I am strongly interested in Romania and Czech Republic. You might hear about the WWI when Hungary lost 2/3 of its territory. For example Transylvania completely which alone as big as Hungary now. This part is very interesting for me regarding the people, language, history not mentioned the untouched nature there.

Other interesting tour could be cycling within Hungary along (near) its border.

21) What do you want to say to those who begin the BIG now ?

This BIG movement is for cycling enthusiasts, for passionate cyclists. It is an excellent way to see different landscapes, natures, cultures, historical memories, memorials, different languages apart from the physical challenges.

22) Can you sum up BIG in one short sentence ?

Great physical challenge in cycling through beautiful however very varying scenery and weather conditions.

