

# TOUR DE BOIS - MTB / GRAVEL

## SHAPE INTERNATIONAL CYCLING CLUB



By Josh Kechsull

It appears April Fools came slightly late in 2021 with perfect weather to get out on the bicycle, only to have Mother Nature to surprise us “It’s not spring yet!” as the temperatures plummeted and ushering in a brief snowstorm!

Belgium’s own and the longest running road race “**Ronde van Vlaanderen**” or Tour de Flanders one-day classic road race started out the month with a bang! Mathieu van der Poel, the Dutch National Champion, and the previous year winner came up short, losing to the Danish National Champion Kasper Asgreen by a few meters at an exciting finish!

SHAPE International Cycling Club (SICC) was in the mix with it’s own bike tour, appropriately named: “**Tour de Bois**”

It was the first MTB/Gravel group ride where members and non-members met outside the Ottawa Gate on the first Saturday morning of April to traverse the Bois d’Hanson, Bois de Baudour Bois Brûlé, Bois de Ghlin and Bois de Stambrug.

The riders separated into groups of 4 riders (per COVID restrictions) with riders on mountain bikes and gravel bikes on different routes aimed to reach reach La Mer de Sable bike park near Stambruges.

Everyone in good spirits set out on the 60 kilometer adventure ride through the forests with the “**Luck of the Irish**” PJ Doherty ensuring the event was captured. Hoot and hollers in Italian could be heard from Pino Rapino (SICC President) as well! Regrouping at Mer de Sable, riders ventured to test their skills and courage as the conquered the steep drops and climbs with all the features that the bike park had to offer.

**IT WAS A GREAT TIME FOR THE FIRST OFFICIAL MTB/GRAVEL RIDE OF THE SEASON!**

All SICC activities are designed to be inclusive for all members.

We are affiliated with the Federation Francophone Belge du Cyclotourisme et du VTT (Belgian Francophone Cycling Federation), which means our members are invited to hundreds of events in the local area each year. Club members are also provided insurance through the same organization.

