

THE NEW CYCLING



By Pino Rampini (SICC President)

Few words of introduction of the SHAPE International Cycling Club (SICC), the Club for all SHAPEians!

SICC is a group 2 Activity and was established to encourage a healthy lifestyle within the SHAPE community by riding in locally held and European road and mountain bike “randonées” races as well as triathlon events. SICC seeks to foster positive relationships amongst cyclists and triathletes from all Countries present at SHAPE. In addition, we aim to present SHAPE as a positive fitness model to the local Belgian and European community. The Club is open to road, mountain and triathlon disciplines and is accessible to SHAPE ID card holders only, who are over the age of 17 years and we usually have about 100 members.

Although club members predominantly ride what are known as “road bikes” (aka “racing bikes”), club members also partake in mountain bike riding, riding gravel courses and even triathlons. Anyone of any standard can join and can almost always find someone of a similar standard to ride with (unless

you really are too fast!). The club is not about racing, but some of our members enter cycling races locally and do well.

All our activities are designed to be inclusive for all our members. We are affiliated to the Federation Francophone Belge du Cyclotourisme et du VTT (Belgian Francophone Cycling Federation), which means our members are invited to literally hundreds of events in the local area each year; club members are also provided insurance through the same organisation.

As the weather has slowly improved club members have come out of hibernation and left the turbo trainer behind. Saturday rides have seen increased numbers (although groups are still limited to 4 riders) and even some members out in shorts in February! Its also been a great help that the Belgian professional racing season has restarted in its normal calendar position so there’s plenty of motivation to find some cobbles or Flanders ‘Helligen’ to ride and emulate our professional heroes.

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SEASON AT SHAPE

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There has also been lots of discussion about plans for the next few months and hopefully with some COVID restrictions lifted members might get further afield. Until now the borders have been shut to us so we are looking forward to getting into France, where there are some more significant hills and better roads and many opportunities for full days out on the bike with obligatory stops to explore the local culture (aka bars and cafes).

The beaches of Belgium are within reach of a full days riding. There has been talk of bike packing adventures to Luxembourg and Germany, which could be a single night or multi-day adventures. Some people like to rough it under canvas but others travel light and make maximum use of the credit card!

We will also make maximum use of the lighter evenings. Our regular evening rides and training sessions will be able to restart with short routes to clear the head of the working day. And of course the amateur event calendar will also restart. This will see members emulating the professionals and riding some of the Classic routes around Belgium and the Netherlands, such as Liege-Bastogne-Liege and the Tour of Flanders.

The club also hopes that it will be able to restart its annual pilgrimage to Mallorca in October. The week long training camp is a great way to round off the cycling season (and catch a few last minute rays). Every year the Club is looking forward to leaving the cold and soggy climate of Belgium for a week's training camp in Majorca. This year, for the first time, the Club will use a company specialized in organising training camps in the island with experienced leaders

provided by Mallorca Cycling to lead several groups along the wonderful hills, mountains and fantastic Mediterranean sceneries. As always, the island serves as the destination for European cycling and triathlon teams, with the roads pleasantly full of riders getting in the miles and enjoying mild temperatures and excellent road conditions. The Club has settled from long time an agreement with a rental bike merchant, who had upgraded his fleet this year to include some very nice models but there are also Club members who cannot give up to their "babe" and are bringing their own bike.

We have a website at www.shapecycling.com where you can see some photos of tired people on bikes as well as finding out all about the club and how to join. You can also find us on Facebook (search for SHAPE cycling). All you need to join us is a roadworthy bike, helmet, drinks bottle and some workable legs and lungs: we'll show you the rest.

What could be difficult? Now we look forward to new members joining us once they've settled in. If you are a somewhat fit recreational cyclist, check us out on our website or join us on our forthcoming Wednesday evening newcomers rides that leave the SHAPE gym at 1800 hours starting from mid-April 2021.

The route of this ride is pretty flat and the pace is dictated by the slowest rider; the aim of these rides is to allow newcomers, novices or potential new members to build up confidence of riding in a group and to learn a regular route for future use. These rides are led by an experienced SICC member (Ride Captain) who is responsible for maintaining an acceptable speed for the group and to ensure no one is left behind.