



**In this issue:**

- Message from SICC President.
- Weekly Rides
- Omloop het Nieuwsblad Cyclo
- Amstel Gold 2026
- Mallorca Training Camp

**Message from SICC President.** Wow, it's the end of May already and we're a third of the way through the weekday season - for those that haven't yet joined our evening rides, I strongly encourage you to take the plunge and have a go; you'll be surprised how welcoming the groups are and how much easier it is riding in a group. Moreover, our first social gathering and retro-kit rides is on Thursday 28 May - check the MMT app and our Facebook page for more info.

As you'll see below, members have been very much hitting the spring classics, culminating in a great turnout for our annual flagship ride, Mons-Chimay-Mons organised by the Dragon Audax Mons cycling club on 1 May. Those who rode will testify to our standing in the local community as SHAPIANS and I urge you all to take full advantage of your FFBC membership by joining many more local randonnées advertised through the FFBC webpage [www.velo-liberte.be/calendrier/](http://www.velo-liberte.be/calendrier/)

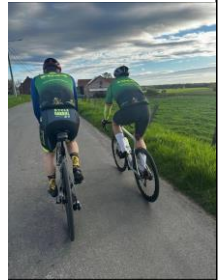
Followers of the MMT app and the FB page will have seen that Donald has added a gravel ride to our itinerary; this is a great addition to the club's offering, with a relaxed pace, the opportunity to explore the many beautiful trails the local area has to offer, and the chance to get muddy in great company! For this season we've separated out the improvers from the newcomers ride and moved to a dedicated slot on Tuesdays now that last season's improvers have become a bit too strong for the newcomers group.

And finally, we're pleased to announce that a new club sponsor, la Brasserie de Borinage, a fantastic local brewery and brasserie in Boussu, has kindly agreed to supply the club with a selection of products (including non-alcoholic) for our social evenings over the course of the season, and for the annual club gathering at SHAPEFEST. The brasserie, alongside Cycles Gabriel by JF, are hosts of the annual Boribike ride, this year on 21 June and advertised on our FB page; participation is encouraged if you're available.

**Weekly Rides:** All weekly club rides are now advertised on the SICC MMT app.

New members check your welcome email for information about how to register to prevent missing an opportunity to ride with the club.

Last season we had some minor issues with club rides so we take this opportunity to remind members the ethos of the club is to support and encourage all members. This includes when mechanicals and punctures occur. We don't leave rider(s) behind until they have confirmed they are happy for us to continue without them. Also, respect the advertised speed of the group ride. We will try to announce a Ride Leader for each ride where possible, who will be a senior member of the club. They are responsible for regulating the speed to that advertised on SICC MMT app. If you've signed up for a ride/group and find that you can't make it at the last minute, please drop a message to the group in MMT - there have been a number of times recently when last minute drop-outs impact other riders who turn up only to find there's no group riding.



The SICC season is underway, with weekly rides designed for all - including gravel rides on Wednesdays (thanks to Donald for organising and leading) - whether you're chasing long climbs, building confidence in a group, or simply looking for a community that celebrates the joy of riding there's a pace, a route, and a group for everyone. Clip in, join the peloton, and see where the season takes you!

**SICC opens the 2026 season in style with Omloop het Nieuwsblad Cyclo:**

Mathew Van der Poel may have won the 81st edition of the Omloop het Nieuwsblad but the SICC members who participated on Sunday 1 March launched our 2026 cycling season off to an amazing start at one of the most emblematic events on the amateur calendar.



With ideal weather for a demanding challenge, from the early hours of the morning, the atmosphere was electric. The faces were smiling, the legs impatient, and discussions were going well around the choice of route: 60, 80 or 120 km, each according to their ambitions and their state of fitness. The SICC group set off with determination, ready to face the mythical difficulties of the course. The Mur de Grammont a short but brutal climb, with irregular cobbles and its slope of more than 20%. Everyone climbs at their own pace, between shortness of breath and fierce willpower. At the top, the faces told everything: the suffering, the pride, and that little thrill of having rolled over a piece of history. Barely enough time to recover when the Bosberg, the last major difficulty, was already present. A more rolling climb, but just as symbolic, where the heavy legs still have to respond and overcoming this last obstacle before the nice descent to Ninove.

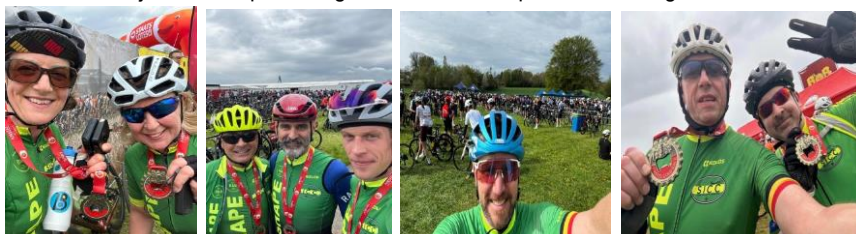


**Amstel Gold** The 2026 Amstel Gold Race is a one-day UCI race that took place on 19 April in the Netherlands. This year was the 60th edition, and it was a great one!

The Amstel Gold Race Sportive is a premier Dutch cycling event held on 18th April, the day before the professional race. It allows amateur cyclists to ride the same challenging hilly roads of South Limburg as the professionals. It offers various routes from 65 to 240 km featuring up to 33 iconic climbs—including the Cauberg, Keutenberg, and Geulhemmerberg. This year 18 SICC riders took on the challenge; all SICC riders finished successfully and chapeau to all that took part.



The ballot for the 2027 Amstel Gold opens in October with ballot places issued in November. The choice of six distances ensure the Amstel Gold sportive is accessible to all cyclists - next year we hope more of our members can join us in experiencing the festival atmosphere, and riding the iconic hills of South Limburg.





## Mallorca Training Camp 2026.

In March SICC held the annual training camp in Mallorca. The aim for 6 days cycling was met with weather perfect for riding our popular routes of Sa Calobra, Cap de Formentor, Col de Reis, and also the iconic SICC ride to Petra for lunch - there are so many iconic routes and mountains we probably needed longer than 6 days. Whether a seasoned club cyclist, new to the club, or someone not confident riding at speed in a group there was a ride that suited. This year we had three new members join us, they agreed to provide their thoughts on the experience.



### Riding Mallorca: A First Timer's Adventure with SICC

As a first-timer, the biggest impression was how *set up* the island is for road cycling. The roads are smooth, drivers are aware, and everywhere you look there are cyclists which makes you feel like home.

Climbing-wise, I was not confident enough, but it turned out to be the best parts. The climbs were long but steady, nothing too punchy, so I can find a rhythm and enjoy it. And the descents were even better!

Riding with the club made a huge difference too. Being one of the least experience members of the group, I was able to gather loads of information from the more experienced riders which improve my riding immediately. There's something about tackling those routes together — the shared suffering on the climbs, regrouping at the top, coffee stops — it just adds a whole other layer to the experience of SICC.



The biggest concern for me was, if I will be able to maintain the pace for the whole week and how to recover quickly, but again with the help from more experience club members I was able to manage it perfectly. No one pushed me too hard and I always had an option for steadier ride or rest day if needed.

Already thinking about going back!

*Tomas Jaunas.*

### The Butchers' Experience

I didn't know what to expect when my wife and I signed up for the SHAPE International Cycling Club's annual training camp in Mallorca. We'd heard the stories—smooth roads, big climbs, and even bigger smiles—but nothing quite prepares you for the moment you roll out with a group of riders who instantly feel like old friends. What followed was a week of sun splashed miles, shared effort, and the kind of cycling that reminds you why two wheels can take you farther than you ever imagined.

### Petra: Where the Island Opens Up

Our first big day took us to Petra, a ride that feels like Mallorca easing you into its rhythm. Rolling terrain, quiet farm roads, and the kind of golden countryside that makes you sit up a little taller in the saddle. The town square café—packed with cyclists from all over Europe—felt like a rite of passage. Coffee, pastries, and the buzz of riders comparing routes set the tone for the week ahead.

### The Orient: A Climb That Finds Your Cadence

Next came the Orient, a climb that winds through forested slopes and opens into sweeping views that seem almost too perfect to be real. It's not the hardest ascent on the island, but it's one of the most rewarding. The group settled into a steady pace, conversations drifting in and out as the road tilted upward. At the top, the valley spread out below us like a postcard, and for the first time I understood why Mallorca is considered cycling's holy ground.



### Sa Calobra: The Mountain That Makes Cyclists

Then came the big one. Sa Calobra. A descent so dramatic it feels like dropping into another world—followed by a climb that demands everything you brought with you. Hairpins stacked like a coiled spring, gradients that test your resolve, and scenery that makes the suffering feel almost poetic. What surprised me most wasn't the difficulty; it was the support. SICC riders cheering each other on, sharing laughs, maybe some tears, and sharing the kind of encouragement that turns a brutal climb into a shared triumph.

### The Lighthouse: A Finale Worth Every Mile

Our final day took us to the lighthouse at Cap de Formentor, a route that feels like riding along the edge of the world. Cliffs plunging into turquoise water, wind sweeping across the ridges, and a road that twists and rolls with cinematic drama. Reaching the lighthouse felt like closing a chapter—one written in sweat, sunlight, and the steady companionship of people who love the ride as much as you do.

### Why You Should Ride With SICC

Mallorca isn't just a cycling destination; it's a playground built for riders who crave challenge and beauty in equal measure. And the SICC trip brings it to life in a way that's welcoming, supportive, and unforgettable. As first-timers, my wife and I found ourselves pushed, encouraged, and inspired every day. We came for the roads, but we'll return for the people.

Mallorca lit the spark, the weekly SICC rides will keep it burning.

*Sarah and Donald Butcher*

