

# *Antwerp Trip 2026*

*Friday 11th - Sunday 13th September*



**It is with great pleasure that** I invite you to join me this September on a bridge weekend in Antwerp. The main event is a Saturday afternoon café drive in the heart of one of Europe's great cities. We will also be welcomed at the Riviera Club, one of Belgium's pre-eminent bridge clubs, and visit Boeckenberg Bridge Club at their modern sports centre.

Non-bridge playing friends, spouses and partners are also welcome. There will be plenty of free time for sightseeing and relaxation and there is an abundance of things to see and do in Antwerp.

Our journey begins at St. Pancras International early on Friday afternoon. We change trains in Brussels and arrive in Antwerp late afternoon. After check-in at our hotel we will be welcomed at the Boeckenberg Club for dinner and bridge. The *Sinjorentocht* Cafe Bridge takes place on Saturday afternoon. The fabulous Riviera Club will host us for Sunday bridge and brunch. Saturday morning, Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon are free time. The Eurostar returns us to London just before 10pm on Sunday evening.

Enquiries and bookings may be made to me Victor Lesk directly by phone on 07804 953460 or by email at [brianplaysbridge@gmail.com](mailto:brianplaysbridge@gmail.com). A booking form may be found at the end of this leaflet. Places are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment.

## **About Antwerp**

Antwerp is Belgium's second city, full of fine buildings and with a rich history. It has been named in the world's top 10 of must-see destinations. It has the second largest harbour in Europe and was the gateway during the era of emigration to the new world. Many of its architectural highlights date from the city's golden era in the 16th and the 17th century.

Notwithstanding the scars left by WWII there is wealth of architecture warranting many return visits. Fine art is also on show at the house of Peter Paul Rubens, who lived in Antwerp during the early 17th century, and at a fascinating museum of printing based in the old factory of the Platijn printing dynasty. There are numerous restaurants and cafés, situated in some of the most attractive surroundings in Europe.

You will hear from the *Sinjoren* - natives of the city - about the distinctive legend of Antwerp's foundation by the mythic hero Brabo, when you meet them over the bridge table at one of the longest running Café Bridge events in the world, the *Sinjorentocht*.

## **The Sinjorentocht - A Café Bridge like no other**

Among the first annual Café Bridge events started in the Netherlands and Belgium in the late 1990's, Antwerp's *Sinjorentocht* has remained one of the most popular - not least as a way to visit the city's many traditional pubs (*kroegentocht* means 'pub crawl') and sample one of Belgium's best-known products.

Lunch is not included, so eat beforehand (chips and mayo are standard) but every player gets a voucher for a drink in each venue - enough for a light *Maes* or *Jupiler* beer but sometimes not a coffee. Say no more.

The *Sinjorentocht*'s weekend scheduling has ensured the event's popularity with working people, and it attracts players from all over northern Europe. Cash prizes are awarded for the best 15 pairs, and 'delicious prizes' for more mediocre performances.

With attendance regularly exceeding 1,000 participants, the organizational effort could be achieved only by our extraordinary hosts.

<https://www.rivierabridgeclub.be/antwerpse-cafe-drive/>

### **The Riviera Bridge Club**

A historic bridge club in a large, elegant suburban clubhouse. Meet the team who organize the *Sinjorentocht*, as well as many other friendly players, over friendly bridge, brunch and drinks. The retiring president Wim Charpentier has been instrumental in arranging our schedule and accommodation, as if he didn't have enough to do. This trip could not have happened without him.

<https://www.rivierabridgeclub.be/>

### **Boeckenberg Bridge Club**

A well-provisioned modern sports club on the outskirts of the city with a large and thriving bridge programme. We are invited for dinner and bridge at their Friday Evening game. An advance opportunity to talk tactics with some of our *Sinjorentocht* opponents.

<https://www.boeckenberg.be/>

### **Accommodation - The Ibis Antwerpen Centrum**

A reliable and comfortable chain hotel situated in the lively Theaterplein. A convenient base for sightseeing and access to the train station.

<https://all.accor.com/hotel/1453/index.nl.shtml>

### **History of the Antwerp Trip**

A group of twelve British players first attended the *Sinjorentocht* in 2009, staying at the Plaza Hotel in Charlottalei and visiting The Royal Squeeze. By 2019 our number had swelled to 120 and a warm relationship had developed between us and the Belgian clubs and players. Our visits were interrupted by Covid and other developments. Now we are back - hooray.

# Trip Itinerary

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## Friday 11th September - Arrival and visit to Boeckenberg Sportcenter

- **1301 St. Pancras International** - Eurostar departure from London
- **1606 Arrive Brussel-Zuid.** Intercity train to Antwerpen-Centraal
- Arrive Antwerp and check in to Hotel Ibis Antwerpen Centrum
- **1800** Coach departs from hotel for Boeckenberg Sportcenter
- **1830 Boeckenberg Bridge Club visit: Supper and bridge drive**
- **2330** Coach transport to hotel.

## Saturday 12th September - Sinjorentocht and Sighting

- Free morning in Antwerp. Hotel breakfast included
- **1000-1100 Registration** for the *Sinjorentocht*
- Free time for lunch
- **1230 Sinjorentocht Café Bridge Drive**
  - 28 hands of bridge
  - Drinks voucher for every player at each of seven locations
  - Cash prizes for placing 1st-15th
  - Delicious prizes for placing 20th, 30th, 40th etc.
- **1900 Awards ceremony** at Zuiderpershuis
- Free evening in Antwerp - restaurants, pubs, jazz.

# Trip Itinerary (continued)

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## Sunday 13th September - visit to Riviera Club and return to London

- **0800** Check out of hotel (luggage room available), breakfast included
- **0830** Coach departs from hotel for Riviera Club
- **0900 Riviera Club visit**
  - Friendly duplicate bridge
  - Traditional Antwerp Brunch
- **1415** Coach to hotel. Free time for sightseeing
- **1820** Recommended departure from Antwerpen-Centraal
- **2056 Departure to London** from Brussel-Zuid Eurostar terminal
- **2157** Arrival at St. Pancras International and end of trip

**Please see next page for price list.**



*Antwerp Cathedral (photo by Rolf Krantz, CC BY-SA 4.0)*

# Prices - valid until 1 July

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## **£490 per person based on shared room occupancy, including:**

- Transport St. Pancras International - Brussel-Zuid on group Eurostar service, standard class
- Outbound and return train tickets Brussel-Zuid - Antwerpen Centraal
- Two nights accommodation, Hotel Ibis Antwerpen Centrum
- Boeckenberg Bridge Club visit
  - Coach transport to and from group hotel
  - Hot meal excluding drinks (cash bar available)
  - Friendly duplicate bridge evening
- Sinjorentocht bridge drive
  - 28 board Café Bridge with cash and delicious prizes
  - €2 - €3 voucher per player per venue, seven venues
- Riviera visit
  - Coach transport to and from group hotel
  - Friendly duplicate bridge game
  - Traditional *Vol-au-vent* brunch excluding drinks (cash bar available)

## **Extras:**

- Single room supplement: £95 extra
- Standard premier rail travel: please enquire (indicative price £50 extra)

## **Discount:**

- Non-bridge player: £65 discount

# Booking Form

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**Please complete and Email a scan or photo to *brianplaysbridge@gmail.com* or sign and send to *Victor Lesk, 40 Claverley Grove, London N3 2DH*.** I will then send an invoice for the trip based on the price list. If posting your form, please notify me when it is in the mail.

Partnership 1 please write names, and circle share or singles

**Name 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name 2** \_\_\_\_\_

*Share / Singles*

Partnership 2 (if applicable)

**Name 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name 2** \_\_\_\_\_

*Share / Singles*

Non-bridge players or partnership 3, use these lines

**Name 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name 2** \_\_\_\_\_

*Share / Singles*

I agree to the T&C below in respect to all participants mentioned on this form

**Signature of principal contact** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Terms and Conditions

- 1. Participants cancel up to and including July 20th: Full refund.**
  - 2. Participants cancel up to and including August 10th: 40% refund.**
  - 3. Bookings transferable to another person if travel class and sleeping arrangements remain unchanged. Otherwise charges may apply.**
  - 4. Organiser cancels: full refund within two weeks.**
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