


Keep Bridge Alive



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### Keep Bridge Alive: Challenges and Opportunities

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## SOCIOLOGY OF BRIDGE RESEARCH

Social interactions of the bridge world

- Characteristics & nature of the game
- Benefits, challenges, motivations
- Barriers to participation, opportunities for skill development, and engagement across the lifecourse
- Social networks: how bridge fosters sense of community
- Well-being and relationships at and away from the table



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## Keep Bridge Alive

shift image of bridge  
increase participation  
ensure future sustainability



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## Keeping Bridge Alive....

Raise awareness of realities of bridge:

- re-brand and grow bridge community

Accessible materials aimed at different audiences:

- **Blog posts, newspaper articles, radio, academic journals**
- **Summary report for Bridge Organisations' websites & policy-makers**
- **Themed articles for bridge magazines & Bridge Winners blog**

Feedback & research ideas welcome = Global KBA Network



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Keep Bridge Alive

Many young people play bridge and compete against each other all over the world



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## Bridge Research So Far

**Project 1: Dynamics and Interactions at the Bridge Table**  
(52 in-depth interviews with elite players)

**Project 2: Bridge and Well-being** (survey 7000 players)  
McDonnell, D., Punch, S. and Small, C. (2017) *Individual Wellbeing and Bridge: An Empirical Analysis*, Aylesbury: EBED.

**Project 3: Gender and Bridge**  
(151 email questionnaire)

**Project 4: Bridge and Schools**  
(interviews with pupils & teachers)

**Project 5: New academic module: Sociology of Sports, Mind Sports and Leisure**



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### Academic Bridge Research Team to Date

- Elizabeth Graham MSc dissertation: *'Intellectual Contests? Gender Inequality and Identity in the Game of Bridge Won the Faculty MSc Dissertation prize of 2015*
- Dr Ashley Rogers: survey work and report. Two articles: gender and bridge and insider/outsider status.
- Charlotte McPherson: *Bridge and Brains – a nature/nurture discussion*
- Jessica Cleary: Comparative literature reviews on chess and mah-jong
- Catherine Pemble: Bridge literature review




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### 'Temperament is everything'

#### Bridge partnerships, identities and emotions

Zoe Russell and Samantha Punch,  
University of Stirling



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### Playing your Life: Impression Management and Strategic Interaction in the game of Bridge



- Interactions at the bridge table based on Goffman's concepts of **strategic interaction** & **impression management**.
- Everyday interaction skills honed by elite players
- Through preparation and partnership, elite players employ **supportive silence**, **disciplined planning** & **reading people strategically** to play

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### Fun, Fights and Failures: Intimate couple relationships and playing bridge

- Using ideas of **doing intimacy** (Morgan, 2013) and ongoing **intimate** relationship work (Jamieson, 2011)
- Negotiation and tension between game worlds and intimate lifeworlds.
- Everyday learned knowledge of the partner is used to sanction, help and hinder play



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### Taking Bridge Seriously?

#### DISCOVER SOCIETY

MEASURED - FACTUAL - CRITICAL



- Online Magazine
- 1500 word article for December 2019 issue
- 'Seriousness' as an academic study combined with practitioner viewpoints
- By Miriam Snellgrove

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#### Enhanced well-being, healthy ageing and social connection: Motivations for playing bridge in the community

Prof Samantha Punch and Elizabeth Graham  
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## Programme of KBA Work

- Phase 1 – publish academic papers and establish the sociology of mind sports as a new area of teaching and research
- Phase 2 – develop a global Keep Bridge Alive network to share best practice and ensure effective use of academic research within the bridge community
- Phase 3 – create accessible resources from the findings for different groups: teachers, parents, employers, policy-makers and children
- Phase 4 – conduct new Keep Bridge Alive research within the bridge community to co-develop solutions to sustaining bridge
- Phase 5 – secure further funding (e.g. from research bodies and health organisations) to roll out KBA solutions and practical projects

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## Challenges: Academia, Policy & Practice

- Difficult to effectively engage such a diverse a group of stakeholders and participants
- Concerns raised
- Time-consuming
- KBA welcomes feedback
  - Bridge Winners – critical, a hard audience to please
- Crowdfunding – hard convincing bridge world first
- Gender: example of cross-cutting issues

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## Challenges: Academia vs Practice

<p><b>Academia:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a conceptual home for bridge - narrow</li> <li>• Understanding new fields of sport/leisure</li> <li>• Using results from papers to feed into policy/practice</li> <li>• Tension of multi allegiances, perspectives and agendas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insider/outsider continuum</li> <li>• Tension between research interests vs. bridge world</li> <li>• ‘ownership of research’ and academic freedom?</li> <li>• Fear of being misrepresented in research</li> <li>• Bridge language &amp; research lang. not always compatible</li> <li>• Research states the obvious</li> </ul>
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## Challenges: Policy Tensions

<p><b>Policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing, health and happiness – how does bridge link to that?</li> <li>• Policies for whom and how implemented?</li> <li>• Access to social policy arenas</li> <li>• Change and impact: measured how?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Policy in the Bridge World</b></p> <p>Bridge organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club committees</li> <li>• NBOs - national</li> <li>• EBL – regional</li> <li>• WBF - global</li> <li>• Politics and logos</li> <li>• Research seen as slow</li> <li>• Reputation</li> </ul>
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## KBA uses research collaboratively to:

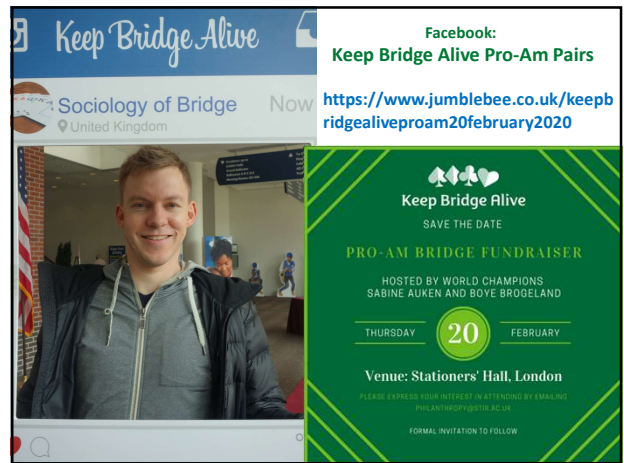
- Promote the social and health benefits of bridge
- Support an intergenerational approach to learning and playing bridge
- Develop bridge in schools, universities, libraries, workplaces and community centres
- Establish resources to support widening access to bridge
- Embed bridge into strategies for combatting social isolation and loneliness

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