

BRIDGE: A
MINDSPORT
FOR ALL



BAMSA NETWORK

MEETING

OSLO, 24 OCTOBER 2019



Bridge: A MindSport For All
Connects People, Challenges Minds

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING 

BAMSA

Bridge: A MindSport for ALL (BAMSA) was formed to enable academics to carry out sociological research and to work collaboratively with bridge organisations. BAMSA has three key goals:

- to transform the image of bridge,
- to encourage more people of all ages to play,
- to ensure the card game continues to thrive.

In order to achieve these goals, BAMSA is establishing a new academic discipline, the sociology of bridge. BAMSA's remit extends beyond the world of academia. The BAMSA network is an inclusive forum of research associates, practitioners (players, teachers, organisers) and policymakers from all over the world. Many of those involved are specialists in their own fields who contribute to the network their insights, experience and expertise. BAMSA is an outward-looking project that values collaboration, communication and impact.



INTRODUCTION

The first meeting of the Keep Bridge Alive (KBA) global network took place in Oslo on 24 October 2019. A few months later, in February 2020, KBA was renamed Bridge: A MindSport for All (BAMSA).

Participating were:

- Kari-Anne Opsal (Norwegian Bridge Federation President)
- Marianne Harding (Norwegian Bridge Federation)
- Allan Livgard (Norwegian Bridge Federation)
- Morten Bilde (Denmark SkoleBridge, virtual)
- Martin Löfgren (Swedish Bridge Association Chair)
- Micke Melander (Swedish Bridge Association),
- Professor Samantha Punch (BAMSA lead, UK)
- Dr Miriam Snellgrove (BAMSA researcher, UK)

The meeting had the following objectives:

- 1) To review current bridge projects;
- 2) To consider what an academic perspective brings to the study of bridge and to discuss plans and developments;
- 3) To map the current bridge environment, outlining the problems and challenges, and noting what data is required; to discuss the role of national bridge organisations in gathering broader views and data;
- 4) To propose improvements and solutions, changes that would benefit the bridge community, opportunities, and how these might be achieved
- 5) To identify future research, taking into account the key societal issues that bridge addresses (of appeal to research funders);
- 6) To discuss how a global network could work, including stakeholder analysis and engagement, the process and key people
- 7) To agree actions and next steps in terms of future meetings

This report is divided into the following sections:

- Country bridge projects
- Academic developments
- Problems and challenges
- Future research (improvements and solutions)
- Global network (actions)
- Appendix

COUNTRY BRIDGE PROJECTS

Norway

This overview is based on the presentation given by Marianne Harding with input from Allan Livgard and Kari-Anne Opsal.

The current setup in Norway is: Federation – Districts – Clubs. There are four employees at Federation level, with 23 Districts and 307 clubs with a 49/51 gender split. They are recruiting 10-14-year-olds and have as many young players as old members but lose them from aged 20 onwards and women especially. Currently top heavy with old players. Many clubs are at a critical level with just three or four tables and unlikely to survive. Clubs are not able to recruit because their members are too old and there aren't enough of them.

For the NBF, administration and organisation of tournaments and international events takes precedence over supporting clubs to recruit and retain members.

The NBF focuses on youth development. In a project managed by Marianne Harding, six schools in the north of Norway are currently running bridge clubs. Parents are involved and teachers have responded positively saying bridge includes children that would otherwise be socially excluded.

There are opportunities to develop youth groups of 15/16 year olds, to train young people to run a club, to be on the board and to become teachers. Likewise, there are opportunities to develop a positive image of bridge and to develop different arenas where bridge is played, for example, bridge classes in school with free pizza.

There is a new university in Oslo (University of Applied Sciences) with a focus on education, child development and the impact of the new curriculum. There may be opportunities to make bridge connections there.

In terms of reach, the NBF is recruiting 10-14-year-olds and have as many young players as old members. However, players tend to lapse from the age of 20 onwards, women especially. NBF membership is currently top heavy with old players. After a beginner's course, 20% might continue, with 80%

dropping off. Research on why they leave is essential. If everyone who did a bridge course and then carried on playing, club membership would thrive.

Particularly underrepresented are people in the 40+ age bracket. Their children have grown up, they have time and money and could start playing bridge, but the NBF is not sure how to attract them. In Norway bridge is associated with an older generation and drinking and smoking in clubs; this image is changing thanks to a moratorium on alcohol at the table.

Modern, social arenas for bridge are needed to attract (a) kids, (b) people who played when younger, and (c) adults, divorcees or empty-nesters. What's needed is a marketing strategy to promote bridge in the media.

The Norwegian government has an initiative towards 'mastering life'. The NBF is working to weave bridge into the initiative by focusing on the ideas of better relations with peers and self-esteem.

The NBF ran a short survey on how people feel when playing bridge. Key words were happiness, excitement, mastery. The challenge is to keep new players feeling positive and enthusiastic about playing the game.

Denmark

This overview is based on notes provided in advance of the meeting by Morten Bilde.

Since 2015 Danish School Bridge (Danske SkoleBridge – DSB) has been working to get bridge into schools in Denmark. Results are positive, and more than 200 schools are involved. The schools like bridge and are happy to bring it into the classroom.

DSB has a network of local representatives throughout Denmark. This has enabled good cooperation with schools and bridge clubs, and successful outcomes. There are now more activities for young players and more youngsters are mixing with new 'older' players in clubs. Young players that have learnt bridge in school are joining clubs and taking part in youth elite competitions.

There are three main challenges.

1. **To find and educate enough teachers.** All the work in schools is done on a volunteer basis, and DSB works closely with the 325 bridge clubs in Denmark.
2. **To embed bridge into the lives of young people as a pastime** and not just as a school activity. Achieving this transition depends not only on the kids, but also on parents and families. It relies on bridge clubs to provide activities for young people, and on the Danish Bridge Federation to run competitions.
3. **To ensure funding.** In recent years DSK has raised DKK500,000-1,000,000 (£50,000-100,000) from private foundations and sponsors. Since 2019 the Danish Bridge Federation has supported DSK. The next step is to lobby government for funding for school bridge from Denmark's national education budget (which funds school chess). This involves providing politicians with evidence to show how bridge impacts on learning skills. This research is available for chess and if equivalent studies were available for bridge, government support would likely follow.

One of the biggest 'failures' of national bridge organisations (NBOs) and the European Bridge League (EBL) and the World Bridge Federation (WBF) is the lack of promotion of bridge outside the bridge-playing community.

The game's lack of profile and absence of digital marketing makes it tough to introduce bridge to the public. It is also one of the reasons why few people join bridge clubs, and why even fewer young people join.

DSB is building a digital platform for promoting bridge, with the first results due in 2020 or 2021. One objective of the platform is to have an overview on the digital steps taken round the world and try to learn from them.

More information: <https://skolebridge.dk/>

Sweden

This overview is based on information from by Martin Löfgren and Micke Melander.

The Swedish Bridge Association (SBA) has 5.5 employees at federation level, 21 districts and 350 clubs. The average age of players in Sweden is 67 years

old and the gender ratio is 55% men 45% women. On beginners courses the ratio is 40% men and 60% women, but retention is a problem. The SBA can recruit 3,000/4,000 members and lose 80% in two years. Players join a beginner's course, learn how to play and then either play at home or with friends; they don't renew their membership and they don't play in a club. To attract club players, the SBA currently provides free introductory membership.

In Sweden in 1998, youth bridge was combined with the federation, and this killed clubs with excessive administration. There are ongoing issues with clubs and the challenge between how bridge should be played and the organising of it.

In May 2018 SBF ran the 30,000 to 2020 campaign. Out of 300 clubs only 15 joined. The idea was to raise awareness of the four cornerstones: recruitment, courses, clubs and transitions, but it was not a great success.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Prof Samantha Punch (University of Stirling) and Dr Miriam Snellgrove (University of Stirling) gave a presentation about KBA and the Sociology of Bridge project (see Appendix for slides). This overview focuses on plans for KBA (renamed BAMSA).

Professor Punch presented an update on academic interest in bridge, inspired by Fine (2015) book on chess. She is keen to work on image and stories of bridge. She would also like to do a baseline survey of the global state of bridge worldwide.

There is currently a collaborative doctoral project under way at the University of Stirling. The research explores the reasons why people play bridge, their motivations and barriers to learning. PhD student, Kevin Judge, has conducted a UK survey of bridge clubs and teachers, and interviews with learners and teachers in Scotland. The project began in 2018 and will run until end of 2021 and links schools, clubs and lifelong learning to issues around transitions

In July 2021 there will be a meeting in Stirling to share the results of the PhD research. Over the next 18 months, Prof Punch will be working towards the event, and deciding the format. She hopes those present will take part.

Prof Punch is planning to relaunch KBA with a new name (yet to be decided). There will be a website with the new project name and the website will have resources for clubs to use, research papers to download, available and possibly country alerts for specific news items that are relevant to that region.

In addition to the PhD research, Prof Punch has data drawn from 52 interviews with top level bridge players: 20 males over 35, 12 females over 35, 12 males under 25 and 8 females under 25.

She is also developing a new academic discipline, the sociology of mind sports, which combines leisure with sports studies. Research generated will be there to help the bridge community.

Specifically in relation to gender, Prof Punch remarked that gendered ideas of play are also caught up in generational notions of gender (for example, older people may refer to the 'ladies' team' instead of the 'women's team'). Although chess has been much studied, there is no research into chess and gender. This may be an opportunity for bridge research. Prof Punch is currently using data relating to gender discrimination in the game to raise awareness regarding new players and why they might be put off. She also believes that small changes at club level can make these environments more welcoming to woman players.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

This section summarises and collates issues raised under general headings. This section refers to general discussions at the meeting as recorded in the minutes and in notes taken by participants.

Age

Considering the average age of players (60-70), there are pros and cons in marketing a game largely played by older people. Bridge's association with

the elderly can deter young people, while at the same time it can be positive: bridge is a game you can play and learn throughout your life, age is no barrier.

Behaviour

If clubs are not seen as social spaces, people stop going. Not everyone is as nice as they initially seem when they start playing. People can be ruthless at the table. Often the verbal responses to new players are so off-putting they never want to come back. Clubs need to find a way to close the gap between new beginners and the older active club members.

Clubs and recruitment

Clubs need to exist without becoming burdened with admin. Many clubs are at a critical level. For small clubs, recruitment is a challenge as there isn't the energy or the knowhow. A club handbook on how to recruit new members is a good first step.

Comparisons with chess

Chess organisations are using the language of social interaction and good citizenship to promote the game. Chess has research that shows it helps concentration. There are differences between bridge and chess: bridge is collective, chatty, social, chess isn't. Bridge needs PR but can't compete with chess, nor shouldn't (avoid negative campaigning). Bridge exists alongside chess and there is potential to recruit chess players to bridge and vice versa. In some countries there is a momentum behind chess. In Norway especially, chess is shown on television. In Sweden chess is almost mandatory in schools. On the other hand, chess has some negative associations, that it is boring, solitary and intellectual, whereas bridge players tend to be social and gregarious.

Competition (digital media)

Bridge is in competition with other forums like the digital, which has the immediacy of success. Young people, in particular, are comfortable in a digital universe.

Cooperation (barriers)

Some clubs are run as businesses, so there may be a reluctance to share knowledge and resources.

Gender

Unseen barriers still exist for women in clubs and at higher levels of the game. Women players are often dependent on men to develop their own skill level. Power, money, success are powerful aphrodisiacs, bridge may be a substitute for other forms of intimacy. People deny there is 'gender discrimination' in bridge but there is evidence for it. Gender myths about bridge are being reproduced and forms of gender discrimination may be leading to problems with recruitment.

Image

If there was clarity as to the message to spread about bridge across different countries, then that could be the basis of a shared project. The way club organisers and influencers describe bridge has an impact on the way it is perceived by people new to the game. Be careful of language that confirms bias. Negative talk is demoralising. Instead, spread positive messages, communicate why so many people love the game. Provide opportunities for engagement. Tell positive stories about bridge and bridge players.

Learning

Older beginners tend not to like to make errors, whereas children are more ready to take risks. Recognising that making mistakes is part of the learning process is a good first step for adult learners. Encourage players to seek to do better, to talk and learn from each other.

Measures of success

Putting a positive case for bridge means measuring success in ways other than simply improving at the game.

National bridge organisations (NBOs)

NBOs have different objectives to balance including organising tournaments, nurturing national players and supporting member clubs to recruit new members and develop existing ones. Successful federations listen and encourage dialogue, canvas opinion through questionnaires, improve governance, create team spirit and community, generate pride in national teams. Preparing funding applications for specific projects are time-consuming and not always successful.

Race

In Sweden there is ethnic and racial discrimination due to the recent influx of migrants. Perhaps bridge could tackle some of those assumptions and stereotypes as a game that is open to all players?

Social v serious

It is not clear which bridge players are the target. Social players and club players, or just club players? (Every member uses resources, asks questions, requires newsletters, so admin increases.) Is the aim to recruit people who play bridge socially and don't want to play competitively? Or should effort go into recruiting juniors rather than focusing on older people?

Teaching & teacher training

Teachers are crucial to demonstrate the competitive elements of the game and to retain members. Needed are better teaching manuals that instruct teachers how to care for new members, address the issue of retention and educate players that card playing is a form psychological warfare. The best teachers are usually not the experienced players; experienced players tend to talk too much, get too involved, over teach. (In a project in Greece non-players were recruited to become bridge teachers.) The right teacher training is important. Teaching bridge to young people is not the same as teaching bridge to adults. Youngsters often benefit from minimum teaching: a 10-minute introduction is enough, then let them play. To convince schools to teach bridge, it is important to demonstrate links to the curriculum plus the social skills gained (better peer relations, better self-esteem). Will a child learn more about maths after one hour of bridge than after a one-hour maths class?

Transitions

There is a difference between beginner classes and tournament play, between the expectations of learners and those of club players. Because the game needs four players it is nearly impossible to have them all playing at the same level in a club setting. The transition from beginner to tournament player, or the shift from playing at school or university to joining a club, these turning points are difficult to manage successfully. Mentors and buddies from among more experienced players can help newer players manage transitions. Handicap systems also help level the playing field for less experienced players.

Young people

Youth camps in Norway and Sweden are successfully bringing young people into the game. A young player from Norway is a bridge prodigy: at eight years old Marcus Hansen Moe won a national simultaneous pairs competition. Young people in particular need reminders to play, for example, text prompts to their mobile phone. By working with youth groups (15-16-year-olds) there are opportunities to train young people to set up and run youth bridge clubs, to be on the board and to become teachers. The existing club environment is not attracting young people. Potentially, larger clubs could create different arenas for youth bridge, spaces where young people will feel comfortable.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This section summarises the research that's needed, drawing on comments made on post-it notes about improvements, solutions and research needs (see Appendix) and other discussion during the meeting.

Educational benefits

Research impact: To provide evidence of benefits to support the case for incorporating bridge into the school curriculum and to lobby government and foundations for funding

What is the link between playing bridge and improving maths skills?
(Consider a controlled experiment, maths lesson versus bridge lesson with before and after tests)

What is the link between playing bridge and concentration? Life skills?
Decision making?

What is the link between playing bridge and an aptitude for learning? Do young people that play bridge learn more or have better retention or both?

Why is playing bridge a good way for young people to learn skills and develop them?

Does age make a difference to outcomes? (eg 10-12 or 14-16)

What role do parents and child advisory groups play in enabling positive outcomes?

What is the impact of computer games on the take up of bridge?

How much does time influence participation? (eg shortage of)

Notes:

- 1. Funding required for randomised control trials for bridge and a PhD would be £65,000 (more in Norway); results might not give the 'right' answer*
- 2. The research process itself will encourage engagement and forge links with young people, parents, teachers, schools, youth leaders, youth clubs*

Recruitment & marketing

Research impact: To provide evidence about the positive impact of bridge, transitions, barriers and enablers, to support marketing strategies to attract more people and to maintain participation over time

What is the link between playing bridge and learning abilities in the elderly?

What is the link between bridge and social connection, life skills and mental health?

What is the link between bridge and life expectancy? Do bridge players live longer or better or happier lives?

Is there a link between playing bridge, emotions and how you feel? (eg, the 'bridge feeling')

Why do some players stay in the bridge community and why do some leave?

What are the key success factors for forming a popular/successful bridge club and factors that guarantee failure?

To what extent does the image of bridge help or hinder efforts to recruit more players?

What is the role of bridge workers? (eg teachers, organisers)

GLOBAL NETWORK

The meeting discussed the ways in which the network could develop.

Research

Network members have a role in:

- developing theory and thinking processes
- assessing the feasibility of potential research projects (scope of qualitative and quantitative research)
- helping generate survey data

Common goals

Relationships between BAMSA and its network members need to be based on mutual understanding; listening and learning; acknowledging commonalities and differences; recognising shared goals and opposing goals

Stakeholders

A wider range of stakeholders is envisaged:

- Academics/administrators/politicians
- ‘Insiders’: volunteers: bridge workers-teachers/ ‘fire souls’
- ‘Outsiders’: children/schools, governing bodies, local authorities, parents (for juniors), grandparents

Note: Be strategic! Pick strategic people for the network, not just administrators. For the network to be useful, people who are involved in recruiting and teaching are needed

Memorandum of Understanding

The meeting agreed to continue to expand the network and deepen collaboration.

General objectives of the network:

- Administrative goals / statutes (structure will be agreed after 10 February 2020)
- Networking opportunities for members
- Self-financing
- Video meetings
- Document sharing
- Reminders

- Research (identify research needs and apply research findings in different ways)
- A pool of resources (problems/knowledge)
- Best practice case studies
- NBO seminar
- Sharing ideas, borrowing ideas

Actions

- Share focus groups and interviews from Northern Ireland's bridge in schools project which may be useful for Norway
- Send request to Swedish Bridge Federation for a financial contribution towards KBA
- Discuss a possible research project with the Norwegian Bridge Federation, targeted on a specific project that would meet the NBF's needs
- Put out feelers to other NBOs, for example, in Netherlands and France, which are trying to do similar work but with different budgets: test the approach at the EBL seminar in Prague on 1 February 2020. KAO will write to the EBL with an outline KBA presentation

APPENDIX

Agenda

Keep Bridge Alive Global Network: Developing International Collaborations

Oslo 24th October 2019

Participants: Kari-Anne Opsal (Norway), Marianne Harding (Norway), Allan Livgard (Norway), Morten Bilde (Denmark tbc), Micke Melander (Sweden tbc), Professor Samantha Punch (UK), Dr Miriam Snellgrove (KBA researcher, UK),

9.30 start

- **Introductions** (all)
- **Presentations** and discussion of Bridge work currently undertaken by Norway, Scotland, Denmark and Sweden (all).

11.00-.11.15 Short break

- **Keep Bridge Alive update:** what does an academic perspective bring to the study of bridge? Plans, perspectives and future developments (Sam & Miriam)
- **Mapping out the current bridge environment:** What are the problems and challenges? What data is required? (possible use of NBOs to gather broader views and data).

13.00-13.45 Lunch break

- **Improvements and solutions:** What changes would be beneficial for the bridge community – what would we like it to be like? Potential opportunities and how might those be achieved?
- **What future research would be useful?** What are the key societal issues that bridge addresses (of appeal to research funders)?

15.30-.15.45 Short break

- **Network discussion:** How and in what way would a global KBA network work? (including stakeholder analysis and engagement plan)
- **Next steps:** What needs to be done? Future meetings/workshops. (all)
- AOB

Slides

Keep Bridge Alive presentation (Prof Samantha Punch & Dr Miriam Snellgrove)

Keep Bridge Alive

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Sociology of Bridge: Update to the Global Keep Bridge Alive Network

Prof Samantha Punch
s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk
& Dr Miriam Snellgrove
Miriam.snellgrove2@stir.ac.uk
October 2019

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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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2

Bridge Community: What is it?

The 'bridge world': community where members share goals and interests

"history, rules, practices, emotions, status, power, organization and boundaries... a community that is meaningful... that provides a social order" (Fine, 2015: 2)

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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

- 52 in-depth interviews with elite players (Europe, UK & US)
 - On average 2 hours: wide range of themes & topics
- Insights into the bridge world
 - partnerships, team dynamics
 - benefits, skills
 - 20 male / 12 female over 35
 - 12 male / 8 female under 35

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Project 2: EBED/Stirling survey



- Individuals who play bridge have higher levels of overall wellbeing than those who do not play

McDonnell, D., Punch, S. and Small, C. (2017) *Individual Wellbeing and Bridge: An Empirical Analysis*, Aylesbury: English Bridge Education & Development (EBED), <http://www.ebedcio.org.uk/health-wellbeing-research>

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Project 3: Gender and Bridge

From 52 elite interviews:

- Views of women's bridge, and gender differences
- Why, at the top of the game, are men more successful in terms of winning more prestigious events?

Qualitative email survey:

150 responses - 84 male and 67 female players

18-75 years: club, tournament, international & pro players

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Project 4: Bridge and Schools

Research Question: *What helps and hinders learning for children in primary and secondary schools?*

- benefits and challenges of teaching bridge in schools in Northern Ireland (in the curriculum)
- perceptions of skills gained through bridge
- focus group and individual interviews with teachers, pupils and parents

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Mind Sports and Leisure Communities: The Case Study of Bridge

Place, Belonging & Identity Module

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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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3 year PhD in Bridge


Bridging the Gap: An Exploration of Transitions in Play through the Lifecourse

Kevin Judge - 1 yr in

Why do people participate in bridge and what are the motivations and barriers for learning to play?

Transitions into learning & from lessons to clubs

www.sociologyofbridge.wordpress.com



Funded by EBED, UK and Irish Bridge Unions, and the University of Stirling

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**NEW UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING
BRIDGE CLUB**

Up for a new challenge? Like games? Email: kevin.judge@stir.ac.uk

Learn the world's best card game from the best in Scotland!

Give Bridge a Go
5.30 - 7.30pm - Thurs 14th & 19th September
Location - PGR Zone (3rd floor of library)

8 Bridge Lessons for Autumn
FREE for University Bridge Club Members
5.30-7.30pm - Thursdays from 14th October
Location - PGR Zone (3rd floor of library)

All ages welcome - join us!
<https://www.stirling.ac.uk/development/clubmembers/for-afrey/856/>
En: email: kevin.judge@stir.ac.uk or see below
(Don't forget to bring your club card and your membership card)
Enquiries: kevin.judge@stir.ac.uk

I like playing bridge as I like the competitive and social aspects of the game. I have always enjoyed and enjoyed playing and I hope to play more often in the future. I have enjoyed playing and I hope to play more often in the future.
Gloria Watson, 1970s



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**Lessons Learned at Bridge Lessons:
A Sociological Exploration of the new University of
Stirling Bridge Club, Scotland**





Judge, K. & Punch, S. (2019) 'Lessons Learned at Bridge Lessons: A Sociological Exploration of the new University of Stirling Bridge Club, Scotland' SPARK, Issue 5. Available at: <https://spark.stir.ac.uk/issues/issues/>



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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 bridge





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Taking Bridge Seriously?

DISCOVER SOCIETY • Online Magazine
MEASURED - FACTUAL - CRITICAL



- 1500 word article to be submitted 15th November for December 2019 issue
- 'Seriousness' as an academic study combined with practitioner viewpoints



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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
s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk

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Social Connection and the Bridge Community

I really like the bridge world, and the life and the social part and the game. I think just everything together. (Marion Michielson, under 35, The Netherlands)

Bridge has been incredible to me. I have friends all over the world... Bridge players are a great group of people. So diverse. By and large very intelligent people. (Jeff Meckstroth, over 35, US)



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Well it's the social part. Bridge has taken me around the world and still takes me around the world. It opens doors for me that I otherwise would never have gone through and I'm meeting people that I otherwise would never have met which I think is exciting. [...] You feel like you have friends all over the world and wherever you go you know somebody. (Sabine Auken, over 35, Germany)










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**Bridge and Healthy Ageing:
Well-being, Mental Stimulation and Social Connection**

- "...bridge fosters connection and a sense of community." (Galbraith et al., 2018: 10)
- Healthy ageing: a lifelong process optimising opportunities and preserving health and physical, social and mental wellness, independence, quality of life and enhancing successful life-course transitions (Peel et al., 2004)
- Leisure: concentration, stimulation, and active involvement in personally meaningful experiences (Ashworth et al., 2016)



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Social isolation and loneliness

- Almost 1/5 of the UK population in the UK often or always feel lonely (British Red Cross & Kantar Public, 2016)
 - negative impacts on health and wellbeing similar to those experienced by chronic long-term conditions
- 'Leisure can be a resource for healthy aging and self-managing their chronic health condition' (Hutchinson and Nimrod, 2012: 41).
- Social connection through quality relationships = satisfying and longer life (Marotta & Reid, 2015)

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Appealing Features of the Multi-faceted, Ever-evolving card Game

- well-being: pleasure, enjoyment, meaning, sociability, happiness, opportunity and satisfaction
- time, effort, dedication and commitment = mental stimulation, skill development, competition, recognition and success
- intrinsic motivation: self-expression and self-satisfaction
- socialising & belonging to the 'bridge world' may help combat social isolation and loneliness

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**"If you Keep Bridge Alive,
it will do the same for you"**
(David Burn)

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