

A Survey of Bridge Players in Lockdown

Put together by:

Valdie Poter – Acting Chairman of Essex County Bridge Association, Chairman, Chelmsford Bridge Club,
Essex Club Player

Cathryn Fox – EBU Executive Working Group (Technology), English Bridge School Advisory Council (IT),
Secretary, Essex Selection Committee, Committee Member Chelmsford Bridge Club, Essex Club Player

Paul Meyer – Committee Member of Essex Disciplinary Committee, Essex Club player,

A Survey of Bridge Players in Lockdown

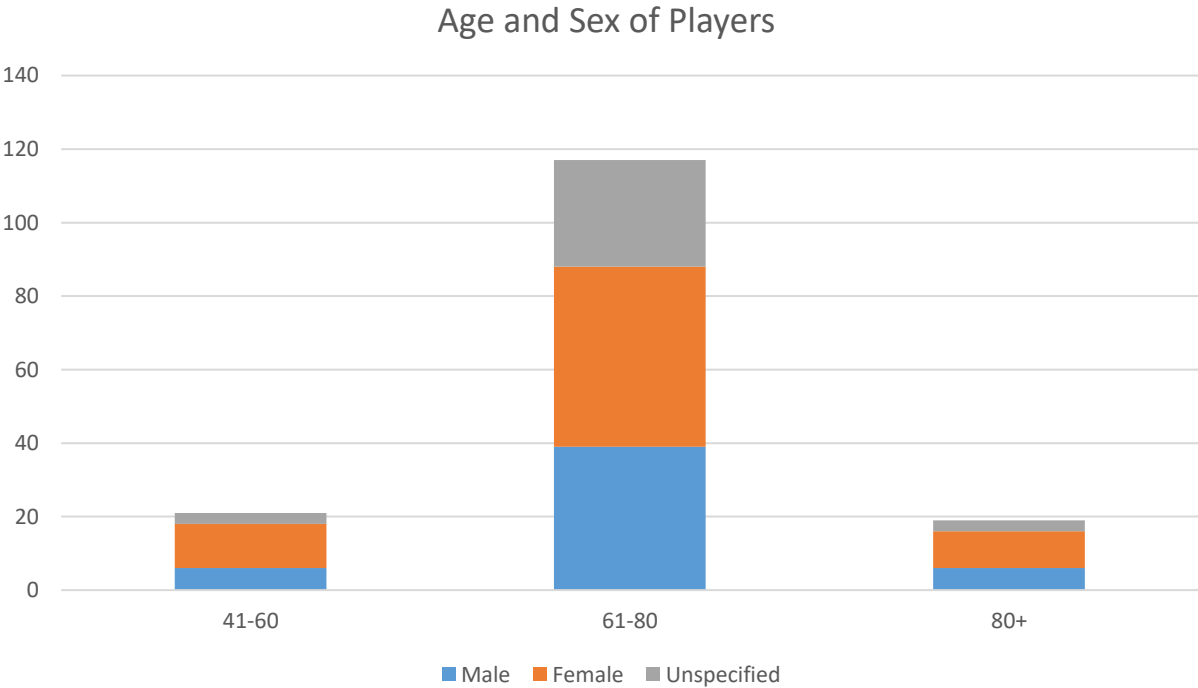
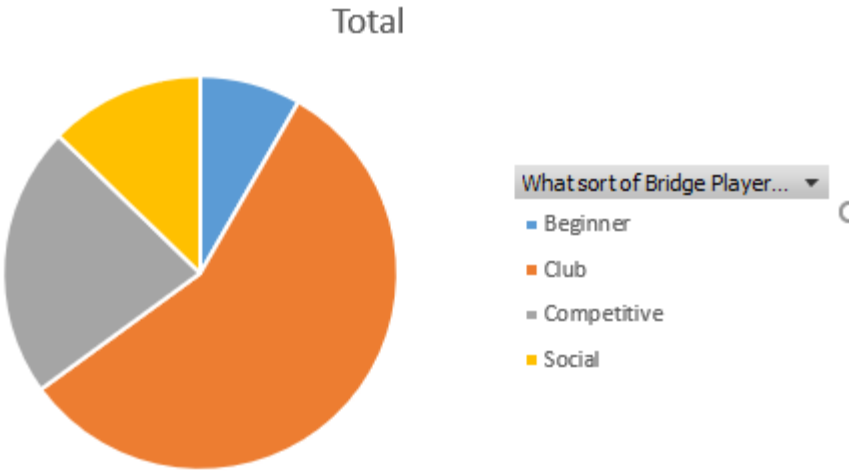
- Has Bridge supported well being and mental health in Lockdown?
- Have the skills acquired to play Bridge on-line had positive effects elsewhere?
- Has playing Bridge on-line made new social relationships possible which would not possible in the face to face world?
- How has Lockdown and playing on-line changed views and behaviour on how to play in the future?





Bridge supported well being and mental health in Lockdown?

Survey of Cross Section of Bridge Players.





How often have you played in Lockdown

- 85% of responders played at least weekly in Lockdown. 96% female and 69% male.
- 6% have not played at all in Lockdown. Bridge was an important/main social interaction prior to Lockdown
- People who play nearly every day in Lockdown:
 - Social – 25%
 - Competitive/Club players - 39.5%
 - **Female – 39.4% of all woman**
 - **Male – 23.5% of all men**
 - 41-60 year olds – 38.1%
 - 61-80 year olds – 35.0%
 - 80+ year olds – 26.3%



Played Not At All or Sporadically

Every single person would recommend Bridge to others.

All rated their enjoyment of the game as “100%”, “High”, “Very enjoyable”

My retired life is centred on golf and bridge. In lockdown this has changed to walking, TV and cribbage with my support bubble and reading.

I miss it a lot as it was my only means of social contact.

... last year I stopped playing, but once we went into this further lockdown I decided enough was enough we were obviously not going to be back to normal anytime soon, so I needed to master the online experience. Wish I had started playing online last April. It would have vastly enhanced my 2020.

I've read a few newspaper articles, and had the odd session on BBO. On--line bridge doesn't suit me as my computer mouse is not great.

Don't play much,

Missed the contact with other players and friends



Played Regularly

Bridge has been a lifesaver in lockdown as I'm an addict without it I might have lost my mind!!!

I live alone and love to play bridge, I had never really played online before but thoroughly enjoy playing competitively and so have enjoyed BBO ...

It has relieved the boredom

A real help and stimulus

It has been a Godsend - living alone it has helped keep my sanity

Been amazing

Bridge has been the brightness on a cloudy day

Has helped me develop a better routine in these difficult times

It has been a life saver. I especially enjoy Real Bridge

Would not have survived without it! I am not a reader and don't watch much TV so on-line bridge, even though I have been doing on-line bridge for a while, has been great

Life saver!! It has really helped with lockdown Something to look forward to

It has been a primary focus and consequently a lifesaver. When I hear everyone going on about how difficult their life is I look somewhat surprised because my days have been busy

it has been a saviour

Filled a void



Bridge supported well being and mental health in Lockdown?

YES

- Clearly it has been a life saver for those who have played and those who haven't played have missed the game.



Have the skills acquired to play Bridge on-line had positive effects elsewhere?

Joanna is in her 80s and had barely used a computer except to check her emails on her IPAD. At first she was amongst the many who swore they would never play Bridge on a Computer. Then, after patient guidance from her daughter she learnt to play on-line and to use Zoom and Teams to chat to friends.

With a daughter in an America and unable to see her son and many of a her grandchildren, she has now enjoyed family interaction on Zoom, including a virtual dinner place on Christmas Day and quizzes.

Now as the expert, she has helped many of her Bridge friends to play on-line.



Have the skills acquired to play Bridge on-line had positive effects elsewhere?

YES

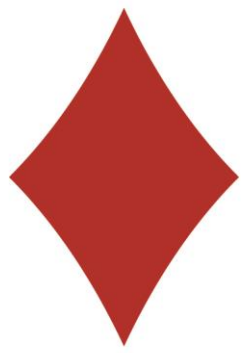
Huge increase in confidence in using technology across every aspect of life including:

Socialising with friends and talking to family.

Learning skills that have helped with work.

Shopping on-line

Learning to use a Mouse or Pen with a Laptop or Tablet.



Has playing Bridge on-line made new social relationships possible which would not possible in the face to face world?

Geography has become less important:

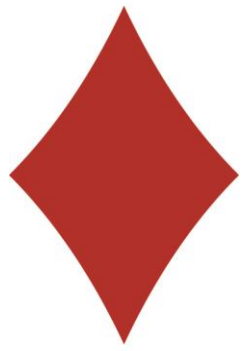
Jordan

Jordan had lived in Spain for 16 years before returning to England. Based in Essex, she now plays with her partner, Paul, who play from his home in Southern Spain in a Manchester-based EBU competition every Thursday night. This allows a good bridge partnership and friendship to survive. Around once a year Paul returns to the UK and Jordan goes to Spain. The reunion is helped as regular play means they haven't forgotten their system.

Vicky

Vicky has played Bridge for many years but is now wheel chair bound and had been unable to play at a club for the last 3 years. Now she is back playing five times a week, four duplicate and one social. Talking to her friends, all of them expect on-line bridge to become the norm in future especially for evening and winter play.

Bridge in Lockdown has made her feel "alive" again. She is unable to go back to Face to Face.



Has playing Bridge on-line made new social relationships possible which would not possible in the face to face world?

YES

It defies Geography

Keeps Bridge going for those with mobility issues

Keeps Bridge going for those with disabilities supported by the accessibility features on computers

Keeps Bridge alive for those with contagious and serious illness who would be unable to meet face to face



How has Lockdown and playing on-line changed views and behaviour on how to play in the future?

It is advanced the use and acceptance of technology in Bridge. This can only accelerate as technology develops.

A large cohort of Bridge players who had never thought to play on-line will now always play on-line.

In particular to avoid:

- Travel
- Late nights
- Bad weather
- Spreading germs
- Sharing disability or health issues

Teaching Bridge is supported by on-line facilities.

In lockdown, learners are almost immediately playing casually on-line between lessons rather than waiting for the week to pass.

Freedom from Travel means:

Matches can span a greater area

Youth and other select groups can aggregate cross area



Summary

- Bridge has supported well being and mental health in Lockdown?
- Bridge players are much more comfortable with technology in all aspects of life as a result of playing Bridge on-line
- On-line Bridge has allowed for social relationships and social contact which would have been difficult face to face
- Lockdown and playing on-line means Bridge play has lots more options in the future. It has opened a new world to very, many people.