



EBED – Universities

Pancakes, graduate placements, friendships and the Beer Card – the benefits of university bridge

UNIVERSITIES have always been a hotbed of bridge, with many players – whether future internationals or just ‘social’ players – learning to play and developing their game. Participation is lower than at its peak thirty or forty years ago, but there are still active bridge clubs on UK campuses, with many people discovering their love for the game while at university.

We asked current and recent students to share their experiences of university bridge, and tell us why they believe it can still be a popular part of modern student life.

A friend taught me and some friends how to play in my first year at university. It turned out to be rather addictive. I then went along to lessons run by the university bridge club. They were free which was fantastic! I now regularly play at my university club and against other universities.

I love the challenge, but it is not all serious. I also play more relaxed games of bridge at the pub. Bridge has been a great way to meet people who I may not have otherwise met. I have become friends with many of these people, and I even met my boyfriend while playing bridge.

I would recommend the university bridge club to anyone who would like a challenge, is looking for some fun and would like to meet some really interesting and like-minded people. **Rosie Buckland, Oxford**

I learnt to play before university and have enjoyed playing here as it has allowed me to meet like-minded people

It has provided a challenging way to stretch myself beyond my academic studies, and I always look forward to playing weekly at the university society.

The social side is something that is often

overlooked – people rarely think of the bridge sessions held in pubs or in punts. As well as this, The Beer Card* (see page 65 online) offers an excellent opportunity to gain free drinks from your partner (I have won half a gallon of beer in an afternoon) – if that's not an incentive to play I don't know what is! **Peter Banks, Oxford**

Having never played bridge before I came across the stall at Freshers' week. I wasn't particularly enticed, but I'd been advised to try everything. At the time I wasn't sure I'd go to the taster session but thankfully I did! A few months in and I was addicted; what's better than meeting with friends in the pub, having some food and drinks and playing some cards? Two years later and I'm representing the University in the Portland Bowl. What a proud moment it was to come second. Four people who would otherwise never have met, coming together through a mutual love of bridge, spending a weekend in London doing what they do best.

In May I was at an assessment day for a graduate job, and the presentation I gave about bridge was the highlight; it was the deciding factor in me being offered the job! So a lifelong skill, a whole group of friends and a job! **Mitchell Dytham, Manchester**

English Bridge Education and Development hopes to encourage more young people to play bridge, and wants to enable university clubs and local bridge clubs to work together to help increase participation at both clubs. If you would like to develop university bridge in your area, or cultivate a link between a university club and a local ‘town’ club, contact info@ebedcio.org.uk

More students discuss their love affair with bridge, see online, page 65



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I became involved with my university's team because I love playing bridge, but I never imagined I would make such good friends or have so much fun.

The president of the society has sought to recruit new members by novel ideas, such as 'give it a go bridge' and 'bridge on tour', where we travel around locations at the university playing bridge. And my favourite part about playing bridge at university is that the society is extremely inclusive and leads to great friendships!

On the social side, Durham University Bridge Society has hosted several competitions, giving members a chance to meet and play with other university teams. We have experienced 'Pancake Bridge', held on Shrove Tuesday where we made pancakes together and enjoyed them over a round of bridge, 'Christmas Meal Bridge' and are looking forward to 'Formal Bridge' – this is where all the members are invited to one of Durham University's colleges for a formal meal, not forgetting to mention '24-hour Bridge'!

Lauren Davey, Durham

Learning to play bridge has been a very enjoyable and social experience. Not only have I become part of a friendly and welcoming community, but I have been taught from scratch by approachable, advanced players who have given me the confidence to continue playing bridge at a local club during vacations. I am grateful to my university club for the opportunity and encouragement to learn bridge and to play regularly.

Sophie Mitchell, Cambridge

I played most weeks at a lovely bridge club in Birmingham during my first year of study.

Bridge lets you hone some skills which are incredibly useful for other aspects of your life. If there's a bridge club or society which is associated with your university, I'd wholeheartedly recommend joining it; I regret that I didn't have the opportunity to do so myself – the bridge society in the Students' Union closed a few years before I arrived.

Rob Sassoon, Birmingham □

* The Beer Card – In basic terms, if you win the final trick with the 7 of Diamonds everyone at the table should buy you a drink.



Cambridge B win the 2015 Portland Bowl
Freddie Illingworth, Kyle Lam, Stefan David,
Toby Nonnenmacher, Michael Alishaw (and
Helen Holmes, not pictured)