

BINGO LINK

The only magazine produced for the Bingo Industry

Issue 57 Spring 2002

Good game:
Paul Talboys has the latest news



Meet and greet:
Countdown to the AGM



Viva Las Vegas!
Alan does us proud

Budd - 'Decision Day' Approaches

By Edward Fennell

With the imminent publication of the Government Paper on the future of gaming, there has been plenty of speculation – not to mention newspaper articles and TV coverage – on what the Government has in mind.

The smart money, it seems, backs the view that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport will endorse a considerable proportion, but not all of

the recommendations in the Budd Report (which was published last year by the Gambling Review Body). The devil, as they say, will lie very much in the detail.

There has been particular media interest in the possibility that seaside towns – such as Blackpool and Brighton – will be transformed by the development of 'resort casinos', which will provide a focus for the whole spectrum of gaming, from slot machines through to betting and bingo. For areas suffering from the economic doldrums it is claimed that

the Budd proposals could change their prospects for ever (although whether Blackpool will ever be quite the same as Atlantic City, as some pundits predict, is open to question).

Without question there are plenty of useful proposals in Budd. For example, its recommendations on keeping the gaming world crime-free are welcome and sensible (although most of the criminal activity concerns highlighted by Budd do not involve bingo). And its ideas for the development of online gambling (i.e. via the internet)



seem to be in line with what the public wants.

But when it comes to bingo, it looks as if the Review Body has been swayed heavily by commercial rather than social concerns. There are those in the industry who want unfettered access to every single aspect of gaming. The deregulation envisaged by

Budd could bring considerable benefits for a number of parties, but the price paid by other gaming outlets and the communities of which they are a part could be higher than originally envisaged.

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www.bingo-association.co.uk

Bingo in the News

The final quarter of 2001 was a bumper period for bingo in the media.

While national coverage may have been quite low, regional coverage for all three months, especially October, was high.

Regional papers play an important part in the promotion of bingo, especially the recruitment of new members to clubs, and keeping in regular contact with your local paper can pay dividends in terms of coverage.

Much of the coverage achieved in the regional

press focuses on stories of winners, which is why The National Bingo Game provides regional PR support (01438 718500) for member clubs when they have a National Bingo Game winner.

Press Hits			
Number of stories	Oct	Nov	Dec
National Papers	8	10	3
Consumer Magazines	2	6	2
Regional Papers	250	157	146
TOTAL	260	173	151

Gala Depot of the Year



Staff at Leisure Link's depot in Washington, Tyne & Wear, have scooped the 'Depot of the Year' title in a contest organised by Gala Clubs.

Leisure Link supplies Gala's clubs and casinos throughout the UK with a wide range of AWP's and club machines. Each year, Gala bosses select the depot that has provided the best customer service, communication and customer care to its outlets.

The Washington depot supplies nine Gala clubs and

two casinos in its region and its 75 staff came out top, beating off Leisure Link's 19 other depots.

General manager, Rob Mercer, was presented with the trophy and certificate by Lee Hartford of Gala Clubs. A colour television was provided for the depot's staff room and a DVD player and two watches will be raffled among the staff.

Lee Hartford praised the excellent teamwork and said that the award was testament to the dedication of Rob and his staff.



Left to right: From Gala: Lee Hartford – senior machines manager and James Travers – regional machine manager. From Leisure Link: Stuart Armstrong – corporate account manager and Rob Mercer – Washington depot general manager

Accepting the award, Rob Mercer said: "We're delighted to have won. The staff at Washington work hard to ensure that Gala Clubs, like our other customers, receive excellent service at all times."



Twelve bottles of Royal Gold to be won! see page 10

The National Game

Quarterly News and Update from Chief Executive, Paul Talboys.

2002 has got off to a busy start for the National Game. With tests for the new prize zone software successfully completed, we



were able to implement this important new development on 18 March. This has been good news for players, who have seen their opportunities to win increase three fold!

Sunday 28 April is an important date in the NBG calendar, as this will see us all playing another Big Game, for prize money up to £500,000. Two weeks in advance of this, our new national television campaign breaks, which will also be supported by national press advertising. I am also pleased to be able to tell you that Caller of the Year 2002 will be getting underway shortly, so support your callers and let's make this year's event even bigger and more fun than the last one.

The National Bingo Game website continues to see increased numbers of online visitors and has recently had a press centre added. The site enables visitors to find a club close to them and register to become a member online. The submitted application is then sent to the chosen club by e-mail and delivered through the club's National Bingo Game terminal.

National Bingo Game: Key Statistics

Total Prize money since the game began	£677,103,742
Total Prize money played for in 2001	£50,176,626
Total Prize money played for in 2002 to date	£9,735,573

Biggest Games for 2001

Sunday 25 March with ticket sales of	859,989
Sunday 23 December with ticket sales of	832,467

Biggest Games for 2002

Sunday 10 March with ticket sales of	856,689
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www.gamcare.org.uk

GamCare's website is up and running for advice and information on all aspects of the social impact of gambling and associated issues, including topics such as news and events; publications and research; education and training; help and advice; young people and counselling.

GamCare is committed to promoting responsible attitudes to gambling and to working for the provision of proper care for those who have been harmed by a gambling dependency.

Operating as a charity, it does not wish to restrict the choices or opportunities of either businesses or players, but to provide care and support. The GamCare site can be found at: www.gamcare.org.uk



Aiming for the million

Mention a million these days and it's a fair bet that Chris Tarrant will spring to mind.

For that reason, the host of 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' was enlisted to formally receive the bingo industry's latest donation to the Macmillan Cancer Relief fund. It wasn't quite a million – £375,000 to be exact – but it was a hefty sum towards the one million pounds that The Bingo Association has pledged to raise for Macmillan Cancer Relief over a three-year period. The start of the campaign in 2000 netted £257,000, bringing the total raised to date to £632,000.

Judy Beard, Director of Fundraising for Macmillan

Cancer Relief, said, "We are delighted with the fantastic sum given to us by the generosity of bingo players.

The Bingo Association members have shown us tremendous support over the past two years and we are very grateful. The money they raise helps to support Macmillan's Patients Grants programme, which offers essential financial aid for people who need help to

meet the extra costs of living with cancer. We are also delighted that The Bingo Association is continuing to support us in 2002."

A series of awards presentations have been held around the country to celebrate various clubs' outstanding fund-raising efforts, both in terms of most money raised by a club in a region and most money raised per head in a region.

Clubs raising the Most Money per Region

Scotland: Gala Kilmarnock	£6,377
Northern England: Gala Gateshead	£4,200
Midlands: Gala Fenton	£5,321
London and the South East: Beacon Bingo, Cricklewood	£7,000
North West and North Wales: The Empire, Blackpool	£2,137
Wales and South West England: Judges Hall, Tonypandy	£2,360



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Budd - 'Decision Day' Approaches



By Edward Fennell

Under the heading of what the review calls 'extending choice for adult gamblers', the Budd report is looking to end many of the restrictions on where gaming can take place, and on services and entertainment that can take place around it.

Under the current rules there are clear distinctions between the different types of gambling venue. Casinos, betting shops and bingo halls have a different atmosphere and ambience

and offer distinctly different experiences.

Under the new proposals, the classifications of the various premises will be retained, but casinos in particular will be permitted to extend their range, and to offer mixed gambling activities.

Hence, these new proposed mega-casinos would be able to offer a full array of table games, bingo, betting and gaming machines (although the number of these may be controlled) together with alcohol and live entertainment.

This liberalisation works, however, primarily in one direction. In fact, the overall tone of Budd favours the integrated gambling facilities

that are within the reach only of the larger enterprises, to the possible detriment of smaller outlets, which have a strong neighbourhood dimension to their activities.

It will not be permitted for bingo premises, for example, to offer betting. The recommendations also introduce the possibility of banning TEDs (effectively an electronic bingo card) in bingo clubs.

That said, there is a lot of sense, as Budd points out, in pubs and clubs which offer prizes of £1,000 (or more) a week on bingo and other equal chance gaming being brought within the regulatory regime of the Gambling Commission. It would also be beneficial not

to impose any restriction on the frequency of multiple bingo games.

Above all, though, it is important that 'roll-overs' – which have contributed so much to the success of the National Lottery – should also be permitted to bingo.

Without roll-overs, bingo will be at a significant disadvantage and there will be no chance of a level playing field. The Government *must* take this reform on board.

And in case anyone asks, "But what about the National Lottery's good causes?" it is important to remember that the National Lottery has no monopoly on good causes, who receive their funding through a variety of ways.

It also has to be borne in mind that the National Lottery also has an interest in Budd, and is currently seeking to offer even bigger prizes.

Yet this surely runs counter to the interest of good causes in that more and bigger prizes means less money to good causes. It's a simple formula.

How the Government reacts to Budd will shape the development of the industry for years ahead. It is important, both for the future of bingo and the enjoyment of its customers, that it makes the right decisions for consumers, businesses and society at large.

Edward Fennell is a leading commentator, writing for the Times and others.

Since this article was written the Government has published a White Paper in response to the Budd report, details of which can be found at www.bingo-association.co.uk

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Appointments

Leisure Link has appointed David Purvis as sales director for gaming. The company currently supplies more than 6,500 AWP machines across the Gala Clubs estate and David will be responsible for the company's machine business in this area.

He is looking forward to the challenges presented by his new position and to working closely with people in the industry.

Rank Group Gaming Division has a new senior database marketing manager in the shape of John Hill, late of De Vere Hotels and Leisure.



Reporting to head of marketing, Jackie Abraham, John will head up a team of six working across Mecca Bingo and Grosvenor Casinos.

John said: "I am looking forward to implementing Rank's direct marketing programme. Potential changes in gaming legislation could liberate the market enormously giving us opportunities to communicate with our customers at an exciting level."

Rank have also appointed David Bryan direct marketing manager for Mecca Bingo and he will be a

Taking up the challenge: David Purvis, the new sales director for Leisure Link, is looking forward to his future with the company

member of John's team. David has been with the company for 18 months and previously worked for Littlewoods.

WCRS has retained the Mecca Bingo advertising account. The decision comes as Mecca prepares a programme of increased integrated marketing activity, which aims to recruit new members and reactivate those who have lapsed.

Emma Hancock of **WCRS** said the agency is thrilled to be re-appointed while Nigel Sibley, commercial director of Rank Group Gaming Division, said advertising would continue to play a key role in business growth for the future.

Deregulation

By The Bingo Association's Bill Andrews

The Deregulation (Bingo and Other Gaming) Order 2002 came into force on 29 March 2002. It brings into effect three changes to legislation for which the Bingo Association has long been campaigning:

- The removal of the requirement to give the licensing authority 14 days notice of changes to charges;
- The removal of the limitation on the number of prizes in a game of multiple bingo; and
- The right for licensed bingo clubs to install both Jackpot machines and AWP machines at the same time.

These measures bring a further easing of the constraints on the licensed bingo industry and it is hoped they are indicative of further liberalising measures in the Government's follow-up to the Budd Report. Many of Budd's recommendations for bingo have been well received by the industry but some do not sit well with the majority of Association members. By the time this issue of *Bingo Link* is published, the Government's proposals are likely to be known and the industry will be able to judge the success of its representations.

Another hot topic for BA members has been the recently announced changes to fees for licences and certificates. These show substantial percentage increases over last year's fees, only one of which stayed in single figures. Chairman, Sir Peter Fry, said 'These increases will bring to bear a greater burden of operation for all our members, and makes it all the more necessary that bingo obtains the maximum advantage from the Budd recommendations. Some may view this move as a forerunner to soften the blow of hefty increases that will doubtless follow under the Gaming Commission.'

Full details of the fees, and more information about the deregulation measures, can be found on the Bingo Association website at www.bingo-association.co.uk

Annual General Meeting 2002

From the Bingo Association

The Bingo Association and the National Bingo Game Association Limited will be holding their respective AGMs on the same day for the first time this year. The respective meetings will be held separately to process the business of the day and will then combine for presentations from four guest speakers.

The change in format, with the absence of the usual exhibition, has presented the opportunity for some exciting guest speakers to address those attending:

JOHN GREENWAY MP

MP for Ryedale and Opposition Front Bench Spokesman on Culture, Media and Sport.

RT HON RICHARD CABORN MP

Minister of State (and Minister for Sport) Member of Parliament for Sheffield Central.

ANDREW BURNETT

Director of Gaming Research at Merrill Lynch. Currently working on developing Merrill Lynch's research into new electronic gaming, hotel and tour operating platforms. Andrew has published numerous investment papers and is the author of *Bet The World*, which sets out a structured methodology for appraising online gambling companies.

SUSANNAH FITZGERALD QC

Currently a practising barrister, specialising in gaming, liquor, betting, public entertainment licensing and lottery law, Susannah has



represented many leading companies operating in these areas. A writer and broadcaster, on both television and radio, her expertise has been used to draft submissions to the Government on changes to the Liquor and Public Entertainment Licensing and Gaming laws.

The venue, 1 Great George Street, London, is just off Parliament Square. A drinks

reception is being held between 6pm and 8pm the evening before at the County Hall Marriott Hotel, just over Westminster Bridge. Further details of the event and preferential rates for the Marriott Hotel can be found on the Bingo Association website at www.bingo-association.co.uk or by telephoning 01582 860921.



BACTA and Budd – Game On!

By Chris Murphy, editor, Coinslot International

The past few months have stood out as a turbulent juncture in BACTA's history. With the Budd Report came a set of recommendations that offered much in the way of progress for the gambling industry, yet always at a price for certain sectors such as the seaside, working men's clubs, pubs and licensed gaming centres.

At the time of writing this column, BACTA was still awaiting a formal response to the Budd Report by the DCMS. Much hinged on the association's *Game On!* campaign, which drew support from all sections of the business who sought to achieve a level playing field from Sir

Alan's recommendations. Launched at the BACTA Convention last year, the campaign ploughed on with several related events both at ATEI in London and Amuse UK in London.

Throughout this remarkable effort, the industry was galvanised into action and hundreds of MPs were contacted by BACTA members. Local authorities, the Tourist Board and other trade associations were also brought into the frame as the association strove to highlight some of the more damaging aspects of Budd. Recent months have also brought into stark relief the need for social responsibility across each sector of the gambling business.

BACTA and The Bingo Association have worked closely with one another to play their part in ensuring that the Gambling Trust got off the ground.

Of importance to BACTA is the fact that the bingo industry has adopted a more questioning stance to some aspects of the Budd Report rather than blindly accepting the package as a whole.

Looking ahead, BACTA and the coin-op industry must now concentrate on what the DCMS has to say about the Report. They must also focus on the way forward in ensuring that whatever recommendations make it into legislation are not to the detriment of the business per se.



Bingo to the Rescue

Bingo club staff are renowned for 'horsing around' in support of a good cause so we couldn't resist an appeal from The Wellington Farm Rescue in Devon. This charity is dedicated to rescuing unwanted and ill-treated horses and is looking at ways to raise money to continue the good work.

They are trying to acquire bingo equipment to use in their local village hall to raise funds and have contacted us to prevail upon your good nature. If you have any unwanted equipment cluttering up your store room that you think they could use and are prepared to donate to the charity, they would be delighted to hear from you.

The contact is Ian Atwell. His telephone number is 01404 831885.

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Name change Just says it all!

A name change for industry favourite Just Jewellery to Just Everything Limited is more than appropriate for a company who can now boast to supply just about everything!

Adding to the company's portfolio already familiar to bingo clubs is a new line of sports-related items featuring all the top brands in this market including Nike, Adidas and Umbro.

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The British are Coming! Caller of the Year, Alan Stockdale calls a game Vegas style!



Bingo Caller of the Year Alan Stockdale, from the Gala Club in Carlisle, has been kept busy during his first three months of office. The King of the Callers started his reign with a flurry of newspaper, radio and TV interviews. When Alan and his wife Beth returned home the day after the competition final, they discovered that he had become a living legend in Carlisle.

"It was just fantastic," said Alan. "People who weren't even Gala customers were coming up to me in the street to give me their congratulations. Border TV had run a piece about my win on the local news programme, and *bang* – I was a celebrity!

"The whole area had been down in the dumps for months due to the horror of the foot and mouth outbreak – and people had almost forgotten how to smile. My good

news was just the ticket to get everyone beaming again.'

Alan and Beth have just returned from a week in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, which was part of Alan's prize for winning the competition. "It was the holiday of a lifetime," enthused Alan. "Beth and I have been married for nearly six years but had never got around to having a honeymoon, so we decided to push the boat out, and make this the trip of our dreams.

"Our holiday started with four incredible days in Los Angeles! The organisers had given us our choice of accommodation, and we picked the stylish and elegant Roosevelt Hotel in the heart of Hollywood: a regular venue for glittering movie star parties. We arrived at 7am LA time but didn't want to waste a single minute of our four days and immediately rushed up Hollywood

Boulevard to see the famous Mann's Chinese Theatre. Later in the day we found ourselves rubbing shoulders with mountains of celebrities arriving for a Britney Spears premiere. We thought, 'WOW – this really is Hollywood!' After a brief rest, we

entertainment at BB King's blues club.

By Thursday, a major shopping trip was called for, so we ventured into downtown LA, via the Mexican and Chinese quarters, where the day was spent in pursuit of some

Everything in America makes you think you are in another world

decided to head for Venice Beach and spent the rest of the day strolling around the beach front and paddling in the Pacific!

"On day two, we took a time trip back to being a couple of kids with a visit to Universal Studios theme park, and then decided to be adults again for a great evening's

elusive bargains.

"Friday saw us flying into Las Vegas. That place is unbelievable! Don Carrier, the editor of the *Bingo Bugle*, picked us up at the airport and whisked us to the Suncoast Casino, off 'The Strip', for my big bingo calling debut. We were greeted by huge posters in the

features



Clockwise from left: A view of Las Vegas at night – a time when everyone comes out to play; Alan with the Caller of the Year award Las Vegas Showgirls; the main strip in the heart of the city; Alan lets his hair down on his days off



foyer, saying 'THE BRITISH ARE COMING' with details of when I would be appearing!

"The Suncoast's bingo room is spacious and comfortable and can seat around 800 players. I was amazed to see that they use ball blowing machines to select the numbers and learning to use it was a little daunting. The staff were all really friendly and looking forward to having some fun with me that evening. As we started the session, I found all my old jokes having a brand new audience – which was most satisfying!

"Everything about America makes you think you are in another world and bingo was no different. The game is called very slowly – about one number every 15 seconds – and the players play between 10 and 40 books at once. The atmosphere is very relaxed compared to the more intense quality of the game we play at home. However, one thing doesn't

change – bingo is still a great way to meet up with old mates, make new friends and socialise.

Refreshments were free and single sets of books were priced from \$4 to \$15 for the same game – with the prize money entirely dependant on the price paid for the book. Purchasing the cheapest set won \$150 per game, but if you had bought the most expensive set, winning the same game would net you \$1,000

"I was really surprised to learn that the casino didn't expect the bingo room to make a profit. They offer bingo simply as a tool to bring in the customers, who will then go on to play the other games and fruit machines during the hour-long intervals between games.

"I'd advise anyone heading for Vegas on holiday to take some time and explore the streets off 'The Strip' for the community casinos, where they will find a great game of bingo with good prize money.

"Saturday morning saw us chasing those bargains again, in an out of town shopping mall. We spent the afternoon sightseeing, wandering from one glittering casino to another, with our mouths wide open! Sunday

was the highlight of our trip – a special treat we had planned and booked before we left home: a helicopter flight over the Grand Canyon, followed by lunch at a working cowboy ranch, and a trail ride out into Arizona! Those of you who know me, will know that I'm 'larger than life', in more ways than one, but they found a big strong horse, large enough to carry even me! What a fantastic trip. It is something we will remember for the rest of our lives."

Beth and Alan will never forget the warm welcome extended to them by everyone they met in the States, especially Don Carrier of *Bingo Bugle* and Lyn Brown, manager of the Suncoast Casino, who did everything possible to help make their trip a holiday of a lifetime.



If you fancy yourself as 2002's Caller of the Year and being in with a chance to win a trip like this, give Gloria Pattinson a call on 020 8310 5086 to receive your entry forms.

Forty Years at Mecca

Vic Wilson retired at the end of last year after serving 40 years with Mecca Bingo in Surrey.



Vic Wilson started his long career in the industry back in 1961, at what was then the Top Rank Club. The building had previously been a Gaumont British Cinema, and Vic was there the night it opened for bingo.

During most of his time in the industry he had been the main stage caller, but he has spent his last few years as a customer service manager.

On his retirement night a bumper crowd turned up for a cabaret party to see Vic off in style. A large group of friends, as well as managers past and present, joined him on the big night. Guests included Lou Small, ex-managing director of Rank, and the Very Reverend John Petty, retired dean of Coventry Cathedral.

Danny Connolly, regional manager from Mecca Bingo, presented Vic with a certificate marking his 40 years of long service. His retirement gift of a golf power caddy will be put to good use pursuing his passion for golf.

"Vic will be sorely missed," said Rosehill general manager Mark Stroud, "by both staff and members at the club."



Left to right: Vip Perera, auditor, Terry Connolly, general manager, Mark Stroud, general manager, John Campbell, general manager, Vic Wilson, Tony Williamson, regional technical executive, Danny Connolly, regional manager, Andrew Smith, general manager, Tony Smith, marketplace manager, and John Campion, head of administration, gaming.

Wide-Area Innovation from ECM



ECM Systems have announced the latest addition to their successful 'Version 5' software for mechanised cash bingo (MCB) systems. Wide Area MCB (WAMCB) is now possible using the new module for the SRCe – the industry-standard MCB control system. Utilising the well-proven Digital Link System (DLS), ECM have brought link capability to cash bingo. DLS is currently capable of networking up to 16 clubs for games via the SRCe in each club.

Further developments are planned to increase this limit to 64 clubs and beyond. Successful trials of the system have been in operation for some time, generating prizes of more than £1,000 per game.

Paul Whitbread, ECM's Managing Director, said, "This is an exciting development of Cash Bingo games, founded on ECM's established reputation for wide area gaming networks.

I believe WAMCB will be a huge new opportunity for operators to provide a new dimension to existing prize and party games."

Other new developments from ECM include the introduction of Link games to their hand-held 'ticket minder', TED. The ability to play 'house' games on TED has been warmly received by players and operators alike. "Enhancing TED with the ability to play link games will provide players with greater choice in how they play bingo," commented Derek Westcott, ECM's Operations Director.

ECM have also developed a touch-screen gaming engine called the 'eBox'. Primarily targeted at Gaming applications including bingo, roulette and other table games, the eBox offers interfaces to coin & note acceptors, card readers and the usual flexible networking capabilities of ECM products.

Club Class Jackpot

The legality of jackpot machines alongside AWP's has brought exciting new opportunities to the bingo market for machine suppliers, and Bell-Fruit Games consider themselves particularly well-placed with proven products ready to go.

CLUB CLASS and GRAND CASINO have been developed with the big £500/£1,000 jackpot in mind, and are perfect for the four £500 machines now allowed in bingo clubs. Like the traditional lo-tech machines, they are based on simple gameplay and are therefore accessible to all types of players; yet are different enough to provide a contrast to the usual fare.

Win with Wash & Go!

We've teamed up with Wash & Go to give one lucky club the chance to win five 'no-fuss' Wash & Go bathroom sets to offer as free game prizes.

The sets consist of a luxury bathrobe, two hand towels and a duffle bag containing two bottles of shampoo.

To be in with a chance of winning, write the name and address of your club on a postcard and send to Rosemarie Teece, editor, *Bingo Link*, The Bingo Association, Lexham House, 75 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1JF. Closing date for entries is 30 May 2002, and the first postcard drawn after that date will win the prizes.

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Pop that cork!

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Poire Mousseux to give away. For a chance to win a bottle please send your name, address and daytime telephone number on a postcard to: R. Teece, Editor, Bingo Link,

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Closing date for entries is 30 May 2002.
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BJs Luxury Bingo **Support management required**

Bjs Luxury bingo Clubs, part of the Shipley organisation, have recently opened a superb modern new build club in Reading. Due to the success of this new project we need to strengthen our management team. If you are currently working in the industry and frustrated in your current position contact us now! You know you have the confidence and skills to succeed but nobody recognises your potential. This go-ahead company can give you the opportunity to progress.

Write in the first instance with a brief c.v. to:
Peter Williams, Shipley Bingo, Windermere Road, Leigh, Lancs WN7 1BR

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ensured a seamless presentation of this landmark event. Congratulations to all who took part in making this the biggest National Bingo Game ever!



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