A draft of the first part of a new Gambling Bill was published by the Government just before Parliament’s summer recess. The document sets out the primary objectives of the new legislation – to keep crime out of gambling; to ensure that gambling is conducted fairly and openly; and to protect children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited. It also focuses on the formation, the role and the powers of the Gambling Commission, which is to be the industry’s regulator and will also have important licensing and advisory functions. The work of the Gambling Commission is absolutely central to the new legislative regime since it will be responsible for issuing two of the three licences (operating and personal) needed in gambling establishments and for giving guidance to the issuing of the third (premises). In addition, in its role as regulator, it will have the power to issue codes of practice and policy statements so as to ensure best practice. Presumably, this is why that part of the Bill dealing with the Commission has been issued in advance of the rest. When the draft bill is published in its entirely it will undergo prelegislative scrutiny by a specially convened joint committee of members from both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. John Greenway, the former Opposition Front Bench Spokesman on gambling who has supported bingo issues on previous occasions, will chair the Committee, which is required to report back to Parliament by early April 2004. Adopting this process of prelegislative scrutiny may help to avoid some of the problems that can be experienced in moving bills through to acts (law). The recent Licensing Bill is one such example of just how time consuming this process of batting back and forth can be. However, it also means that it will be the second half of the 2003/4 session, at the very earliest, before the Gambling Bill proper can be introduced into Parliament and there is no guarantee that this time frame will not be delayed. Most industry insiders take the view that a new Act will not be legally effective until during 2006 at the earliest.

Summer has been a busy time for the Association, following the publication of a consultation document on reform of Amusement Machine Licence Duty (AMLD) in July. With the consultation ending on 6 October, August and September have seen a series of meetings with Customs, plus regional Association meetings to seek the views of members before finalising a written response. Despite the closing date of 6 October it is likely that detailed discussions will continue beyond this, since possible reform raises complex issues affecting the entire gaming sector.

For bingo operators, coming so soon after the announcement of a gross profit tax (GPT) for bingo, a clear concern has been the possibility that the limited benefits of the new bingo tax will be eroded by a change in machine taxation. The Association highlighted this concern in discussions on bingo GPT with Customs and Excise. However, it became evident very early in the consultation process that machine taxation presents a far more complicated situation than bingo or betting duty, and that finding common ground across gaming sectors will prove difficult. The Government’s motivation for seeking reform is that they regarded a licence-based system as outdated and inflexible, and that a regime where the effective rate of tax was the same for all those operating machines would be more desirable. While this has been their starting point, it is likely to become increasingly unclear as to how such a single rate regime could be devised and implemented in such a way that no one group was penalised at the expense of another. The Association considered a range of gross profits options for machines, in addition to reviewing the current regime and the possibility of reforming it to address the Government’s concerns. The options considered were:

- A flat rate GPT across all machines, regardless of location
- Flat rates by machine type, regardless of location
- A flat rate for machines by sector (bingo, betting etc).

The principal difficulty with any machine GPT system will be identifying a rate that does not unfairly penalise any group of operators and in doing so provide a clear advantage to another. Most of these options act to redistribute the tax burden across the sector as a whole, in a way that is felt to be more unfair than any inequalities that exist in the current system. Now that the initial consultation period has ended, a clearer picture of the views of other industry sectors should emerge, which will highlight the need for further discussions with Customs and Excise.
This autumn looks set to be a very busy period for bingo in the public eye. Having kicked off with the BBC comedy Eyes Down, we are already into a period of television presence with the current round of advertising from the NBGA, which runs through to early November. This latest campaign sees the first airing of our new roller coaster ad, the third in the series using the heartbeat visual and sound. Press advertising will also be used in the run up to our next Big Game on Sunday 26 October and will be in key weekly magazines as you read this.

The 26 October is not only notable for being our next Big Game, but also it will be the last day of the current tax regime and Bingo Duty. On 27 October the new Gross Profit Tax (GPT) will be become operational. This acronym is unlikely to fade into the background quickly as it is also being considered in relation to machine duty, which will ensure that industry taxation, through whatever channel, will remain a hot topic for some time.

Looking ahead to the end of the year we will be having another Big Game the Sunday before Christmas (21 December 2003). Despite this only being its third year it already feels almost traditional. There will be a programme of support for the game, details of which I will share with you closer to the time.

As this is the last issue of the year I want to thank all NBGA members and Bingo Link readers for their support in 2003 and I look forward to working with you all in 2004.

### National Bingo Game: key statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total prize money since the game began</td>
<td>£761,156,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total prize money played for in 2002</td>
<td>£51,350,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total prize money played for in 2003 to date</td>
<td>£31,753,859</td>
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</table>

### Biggest games for 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ticket sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 30 April</td>
<td>940,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 28 May</td>
<td>915,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Biggest games for 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ticket sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 27 April</td>
<td>825,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 26 January</td>
<td>795,373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bingo in the news

With much debate on issues of bingo taxation, April, May and June proved to be very good months for bingo in the news. Also there were a number of National Game winners who had interesting stories to tell and were prepared to do so, in addition to which our £950,000 winner from December 2002, Paula Young, was featured.

The West Midlands saw the most bingo media coverage in April, by quite a few points. In May the North West caught the bingo buzz and in June Scotland got busy.

### Number of press hits by month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer magazines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic media</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>National papers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional dailies/weeklies</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soap Genius 2003 winner

New interactive gaming channel Fancy a Flutter, with the help of Mecca Bingo, launched a competition to find the UK’s Soap Genius for 2003. Hosted by the queen of soap herself, Julie Goodyear, aka Bet Lynch, four heats were held up and down the country in Mecca bingo clubs to test members’ knowledge of television soaps. The heat winners then went forward to the final, held at the Hard Rock Cafe in London on Wednesday 2 August. Julie Goodyear crowned the winner and presented a cheque for £5,000.

Members from Wandsworth, Manchester Hyde Road, Oldbury and Bristol were the quartet who made up the final, which consisted of three specialist rounds of questions from everybody’s favourite soaps.

The winner was 18-year-old James Tyrell, a member of Mecca Hyde Road, who answered half of the questions quicker than the other finalists. Having just finished his A-levels he plans to use the money to travel to Africa to work with Aids children.

A spokesman for the contest commented, ‘It’s great to see something good come out of all the time and effort put in to make this event a success.’
Playing a round for charity

The Bingo Association Golf Society’s annual Golf Day, held on 8 July at the De Vere Herons’ Reach hotel in Blackpool, was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

In excess of 60 players entered both the morning and afternoon competitions for a great day’s golf. Unlike previous years, the weather held, allowing all the golfers to get round without wearing their waterproofs! After dinner, David Hawkes, President of the Golfing Society, presented the trophies and prizes to the proud recipients.

Afterwards he said, ‘I am delighted that everyone has had such a splendid day. We have enjoyed some good golf and great sportsmanship. I would like to thank all those who provided sponsorship and prizes. Without their generosity and support the Golf Day would not be so successful. I would also like to invite anyone who plays golf to join us next year.’

The Bingo Association’s nominated charity for 2003, Breakthrough Breast Cancer, also proved to be a winner, receiving a fantastic donation from the event. ECM Systems, which sponsored the Hole in One Prize of £250, agreed that as it had not been won they would round the figure up to £500 and donate it to Bingo for Breakthrough.

G Mintel is offering Association members an exclusive 10 per cent discount on the Bingo, Leisure Intelligence, 2003 report. If you would like to take advantage of this offer or discuss the contents of the report, please contact Niki Dolan on 020 7606 6000 or email leisure@mintel.com.

New report finds people staking more at bingo

The latest research report from Mintel International claims that while fewer people are playing bingo, those who do have been spending more and more money on their pastime.

Loyal bingo players keep putting more money into the game. In 1998, players were spending an average of £13.50 gross (£11.63 net) during a bingo session. Today, they’re spending more than £19 gross. Most of that money is going towards bingo games, but players are also willing to pay for related entertainment, with one third of this total spent on gaming machines, food and beverages.

Bingo is more popular among those with more free time – fewer than one third of players work full time and two thirds don’t have any children living with them. Bingo attracts players of all ages, with older players attending more often and younger players spending more money. Most bingo players are married and the game is more popular among women than men.

According to Mintel, deregulation is the key to increasing bingo’s popularity. A sensible level of taxation will put bingo on a level playing field with other types of gambling. Draws such as larger winnings, rollover prizes and a greater variety of games will attract more punters. Fortunately, further deregulation is expected to occur during 2004.

Camera winners

In the last issue of Bingo Link we offered readers the chance to win one of 10 mini digital cameras, kindly provided by our friends at PMS International. The lucky winners of these neat little gadgets are:

Sam Hare, Regent Bingo, Spalding; John Downs, Cosmo Leisure Group, Stalybridge; Rob Brown, Gala Bingo, Scunthorpe; Terry Connelly, Mecca Bingo, Brighton; Ian Scott, Crown Bingo, Redcar; Lizzie Bottomley, Empire Bingo Club, Blackpool; Paul Holland, Top Ten Bingo, Barrow In Furness; J Nisbet, Rio Bingo, Kirkcaldy; Lee Rothery, Mecca Bingo, Bridgewater; Sharronne Jones, Flutters Bingo, Hinckley.
Pink is the colour and bingo is the game!

With a record 378 clubs already signed up to support Bingo for Breakthrough, 2003 looks certain to be another fantastic fundraising year for The Bingo Association and its members. The support has been truly amazing, with more clubs set to support Breakthrough than any previously nominated charity.

As October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, clubs will be putting on the glitz by stocking Breakthrough’s sparkly pink ribbons. Be sure to wear yours, particularly during the fundraising week (18-24 October) and for any press shots – it’s a simple way to help raise awareness among your members and the public.

Fun and frolics...

As part of Bingo for Breakthrough, participants are planning all kinds of exciting activities. The National Game office will be entering the pink spirit, with Office Manager Beryl Boreham, a name known to many, agreeing to have a hot pink rinse, conditional on obtaining £1,000 in sponsorship! We look forward to sharing the before and after photographs with you in the next issue.

The sky is the limit for high-flying daredevils at Gala Cambridge, Gala Brighton and Gala Kings Lynn, who have all expressed an interest in doing a tandem skydive for Breakthrough (see page 4 of your Fundraising & Information pack for more details). Don’t forget to let us have photographs and the inside stories on your pink exploits so that we can publish some in the next issue.

Win your very own Nelly!

As part of Bingo for Breakthrough we have one large and one small cuddly pink elephant, both answering to the name of Nelly, to give away. If you would like the chance to provide a good home for either of them, please complete the Bingo Link competition entry form or put your club name and personal details on a postcard, and send it to the following address:

Nelly Competition, Bingo Link, Lexham House, 75 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds LU6 1JF

All entries must be received by 29 November 2003. Winners will be notified in writing.

Just Everything Ltd imports, exports and distributes a wide range of non-food goods, specialising in homewares, electrical goods, watches, jewellery, bedding and textiles, products for the home and garden, toys and Christmas lighting – plus much more.

The company offers a full customer service, with a nationwide team of reps available to visit bingo clubs and show new samples, since the ability to see and touch new products is always useful. Alternatively, Just Everything can send information about new lines and offers via email.

Cabinets enabling clubs to display upcoming promotions and stamper cards can also be supplied, on the condition that these units are used solely for Just Everything products. The company can also provide small orders to customers for AWP machines, as well as door giveaways and stamper cards.

With 24-hour delivery, Just Everything’s service is second to none. It will replace or credit any faulty goods, the quality and prices are extremely competitive and because the company supplies an extensive array of high street and multiple retailers, it has its finger on the pulse with regards to new lines and ideas.

When it comes to range, service, price and ability to adapt to changes in the marketplace, Just Everything Ltd is one of the leading names in bingo supply.
King Solomons launches online bingo game

Following the success of King Solomons online casino, the group has now launched its new online bingo game. The game, which went live at the beginning of July, has already attracted over 6,000 players and has paid out more than £250,000 in prizes.

Dominic Mansour, the Operations Manager for the King Solomons Group, admits that bingo is fast becoming one of his most popular games. He said, ‘Our bingo site has only been up and running for a few months and already we’ve had a record number of visitors. Our chat rooms are especially popular among our roomies in creating the social aspect of the game.

“We’ve had players from all over the world playing the same game in their own currency. It is not an uncommon situation to find a Texan chatting with an Aussie over a cup of coffee while playing bingo together.’

The multi-player game operates 24 hours a day, with a new game starting every two minutes. You can play from as little as 10p a card or up to £1 for the more daring. Dominic went on to say that he has noticed an increase in younger players now coming online: ‘The majority of our players are women between the ages of 35-54 but many younger women are also cottoning on. Young women enjoy the thrill of the game but don’t want to venture into a bingo hall – so this is the perfect alternative.’

New Carlton Club another step closer

Carlton Clubs members are another step closer to getting their new state-of-the-art bingo club in Inverness. Following a public inquiry into the company’s plan to build a new club on the outskirts of the Highland capital, outline planning permission has been granted for the £5 million project. However, local councillors are still raising objections.

The Reporter on the public inquiry, Karen Heywood, concluded that the proposed club met with the local area plan and would not add to traffic congestion, as councillors had claimed. She also referred to the fact that bingo has an important place in the community. Despite these valid points it seems that Highland councillors remain to be convinced.

Carlton Clubs Managing Director Peter Perrins said, ‘We are delighted for our members at the Reporter’s decision and we are pressing ahead to finalise detailed plans. But we are also bemused that the Council still wants to hold things up. ‘Our members deserve and have a right to expect the modern facilities we have planned. As a company that’s been based in Inverness for 68 years and has its headquarters here, we have long wanted to invest in our home city. We will continue to pursue that goal – bringing a state-of-the-art facility to the heart of the Highlands.’

The new 850-seat, flat-floor bingo club will make access for all easier and allow the company to create facilities for the disabled that will exceed the standards set out in the Government’s new Disabilities Act. The planned premises will also incorporate a licensed bar and bistro, with staff and associated office facilities, as well as many 21st-century amenities for the 4,000 regular players in Inverness.

Carlton’s problems underline the Bingo Association’s concerns over the proposed new gambling legislation, which seeks to give local authorities much greater powers in relation to bingo.
Struggle for a better deal goes on

The initial Budget announcement on GPT was not what many expected, or what the industry had been led to expect. In response to this the ‘Fair Shout For Bingo’ campaign took shape, providing a vehicle which all parties could get behind.

The initial stage of the campaign was to provide all UK MPs with a background brief providing details of exactly how this decision would impact on the industry and its players. Following this a further 256 MPs, who have all previously expressed an interest in and/or supported bingo, were contacted to ask for their support and requested to pick up this issue on behalf of their constituents.

As a result of our campaign, Stephen O’Brien MP, official Opposition Spokesperson on excise duties, put down an amendment at the second reading of the Finance Bill on 14 May. He was supported by a number of other members, including John Greenway, the then Opposition Spokesperson on gambling.

National and regional press were also provided with a brief that helped explain this complicated situation. It was shared, too, with a number of editors of key public affairs websites. ePolitix.com published the brief as a news item on its home page on Tuesday 13 May and raised the matter as a discussion topic among its online members, which include Treasury staff.

This concerted lobbying campaign during May, leading to negotiations throughout June, resulted in the industry securing Treasury agreement to laying an amendment to the Finance Bill. This amendment removed the double taxation impact of both VAT and bingo duty being levied on par fee income.

The reforms fall short of what the industry is seeking but, nonetheless, provide some stimulus for improving the product. The new duty regime will take effect from Monday 27 October 2003, with regional meetings on implementation having taken place during September.
Gala gets touch-screen gaming

It’s been a busy couple of months for ECM Systems, with the completion of an important project at Gala Scunthorpe involving the installation of 76 e-Box touch-screen gaming terminals.

When Bingo Link saw the pictures, we decided to find out more about what is clearly a very exciting product. We spoke to ECM’s Marketing Manager, Paul Jordan, who explained: ‘e-Box is the biggest thing to hit bingo since MCB. We designed it to be totally flexible. It supports stand-alone, pari-mutuel, and wide area gaming on one open platform. Back-of-house accounting, cash-box auditing and player tracking are all built in and, crucially, it’s ready for the anticipated changes to the UK’s gaming laws because it can deliver virtually any type of game – from bingo to roulette.’

All well and good, but what do the players think about it? Rob Brown, General Manager at Gala Scunthorpe, is very pleased. ‘We’re very excited to be testing this new technology. My members have been looking forward to playing it for weeks and, listening to the feedback from our preview sessions, we think it has lots of potential.’

With the changes that are expected to follow from the Budd Report, operators will be looking for systems that give them the flexibility they will need to benefit from a deregulated gaming industry. As well as more choice, deregulation is sure to bring added competition and it is those operators providing the most pleasant gaming environment and the best variety of games who will prosper. Jim Moss of ECM Systems, who is the project’s manager, explained part of the philosophy behind e-Box: ‘It’s there to enable operators to move forward and we already have a host of features and functions to add to the system over the next few months. Its modern look is designed to attract a new generation of players, while offering a new option for established “season ticket holders” who want to expand the range of games they play. It does its job very well, and older customers and players with disabilities have quickly warmed to it. In fact, although it was built with the future in mind, as a platform from which to exploit changes in gaming legislation, it’s already proving a strong profit generator.’

‘We’d like to invite readers of Bingo Link to come and see for themselves what e-Box can do for them and how we can tailor it to suit the operator’s club and players.’

Contact ECM Systems on 01964 672000.
NRMi and Mojogo take to the air

NRMi, the interactive division of Network Resource Management (NRM), has joined forces with leading online bookmaker UKBetting plc to offer a package of fixed odds games that exploit the latest mobile phone technology – Java

The package, which includes bingo, slots, poker and blackjack, goes by the name Mojogo and is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK. The games were launched to UKBetting’s Totalbet.com customer base during September and will shortly form part of the suite of betting applications that it is able to offer network operators. David Annat, Content Director of UKBetting plc, said, ‘A number of companies are looking to offer games, but these are really stunning in usability and entertainment value. This partnership combines both our and NRMI’s strengths and we are certainly one of the first to market with these new applications.’

While NRM continues to lead the UK in the field of wide-area gaming, going mobile presented a unique set of challenges for NRMI, not least of which was security. Steve Slough, Operations Director of NRM and Managing Director of NRMI, believed his company’s experience in this area was invaluable: ‘As Mojogo offers real-time, over-air game play and associated online account management, security is paramount. NRMI’s experience in handling large transactions for The National Game was a great help, and the guys in the development department did a terrific job using the latest encryption technology.’

As an interactive medium, there’s clearly a direct parallel with existing online games running under a UK Bookmaker’s Permit. However, Mojogo differs by virtue of the fact that it doesn’t immediately compete for the same players. Instead, the wireless games are aimed at leveraging established online gaming brands in order for operators to reach a new, emerging marketplace – one which is truly impulse driven and anything but connected to the online ‘wired world’.

NRMi and Mojogo take to the air

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Helping You To Accomplish Great Things
Recent research conducted for Top Ten Bingo Clubs by Elaine Quigley, psychologist and Chairman of the British Institute of Graphologists, has helped reveal some interesting types of bingo player.

The character analysis was done by assessing the marks made by players on their cards at 16 clubs in the Top Ten group. Elaine, who specialises in analysing doodles, found that:

- **Dabbers**, who use a special felt-tip pen to make a colourful blob, are orderly and like to have things firmly in their place.
- **Scribblers**, either from left to right or up and down, are independent and like to get their own way.
- **Circlers**, who draw a ring round each number called, are 'people' people and love to socialise.
- **Strikers**, who put one diagonal mark through the number, are decisive, no-nonsense folk.
- **Crossers** are thorough.
- **Boxers**, who completely fill in the box containing the number, are very intense and committed.
- **Underscorers**, who draw a line under the number, are emphatic and like to make their views known.
- **Tickers**, who neatly check off each number, are impatient and want to get on with things.
- **Memorisers**, who make a mental note of each number called but make no mark on their ticket, are very focussed and prefer to concentrate on one thing at a time.
- **Mixers**, who use more than one method of marking the numbers, love variety and trying new things.

Of the 1,200 players who took part in the survey, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) were Mixers. After them came Dabbers (17 per cent), Scribblers (17 per cent), Circlers (16 per cent) and Strikers (15 per cent), followed by a few Crossers (five per cent), Boxers (two per cent), Underscorers (two per cent) and Tickers (one per cent). The final one per cent didn’t mark their tickets at all – they just remembered all the numbers called!

These Memorisers are not creatures of habit, though, with 82 per cent opting to sit anywhere in their club. At the other end of the scale, in keeping with their decisive nature, more than 77 per cent of the Strikers make for the same seat at every bingo session.

No matter how they mark their cards, more than half of those who took part in the survey said they play bingo between once and three times a week – with the exception of the Tickers. Nearly 40 per cent of them ticked away meticulously between four and six times a week and another 25 per cent more than six times – well ahead of any other group.

Bruce Roberts, Managing Director of Top Ten Bingo, Britain’s fourth largest group of bingo clubs, said, ‘I’ve always been fascinated by the way different people mark their tickets. We thought it would be fun to take a closer look at our customers’ preferences.’ When asked how he marked his tickets Bruce confirmed that he was an Underscorer.
There is certainly no shortage of choice when it comes to prizes, but as with most sectors there is always the demand from customers for ‘something new’ or ‘something a bit different’. Earlier this year Bingo Link reported that branded merchandise was proving a strong draw as it brought extra perceived quality to the value of the prize. Bingo Link talked to some of the industry’s leading suppliers to see if this remained true and what they would put in Santa’s swag bag.

Just Everything
Just Everything has been supplying the bingo industry for over 12 years and has continued to grow its product range, which now features over 1,500 stock items. These include watches, jewellery, homewares, electrical items, bedding and towels, lighting – the list goes on and on.

National Sales Director for Leisure, Jonathan Brownleader says, ‘We have made every effort to find new lines and continue to excite customers with new ideas. This is such an important part of our work, especially as most clubs see the same people every week, every month, every year. Having such a selection gives our customers a huge advantage as it allows them to continually offer their customers something that has not been seen or done before.’

As the festive season is still some two months away and this is the last issue of Bingo Link in 2003, we thought it would be timely to have a look at what’s happening out there in the world of prizes and plushies SWAG for Santa’s sack

Edward Thompson Group
Edward Thompson Group is a well-known name to most in the bingo industry. It provides many vital supplies and is one of the biggest manufacturers of bingo tickets in the world. A recent addition to the range of services and materials it offers has been the introduction of a Promotional Gift Division. According to Ken Bevis, Manager of Matchmakers Division, this expansion is a direct response to customer demands and the company can supply a full range of gifts, from diaries to branded electrical goods. It has also developed a range of limited edition gift baskets to satisfy bingo operators’ needs for flexible gifts/prizes. However, Bingo Link’s favourite is the bingo ticket clipboard, designed to hold your strips of six and help keep you in order.

The Promotional Gifts Division is currently relocating from its base in the centre of Sunderland to a purpose-built factory and showroom at the Group’s site in Grangetown.

PMS International
PMS International is possibly the largest prize supplier in the UK. It also runs operations and sources products for a number of UK high street chains. We asked PR/Advertising Manager John Howard what changes PMS had noticed in the past nine months. ‘The big change is the requirement in the bingo industry for electrical goods,’ he says. ‘So we have created a small separate brand name, called From seasonal soft toys to quality household items, electrical goods and even full-sized chocolate footballs, suppliers of prizes to the bingo industry are constantly thinking of new ways to keep their customers satisfied.'
feature

KINSA, expressly for the purpose of selling electrical goods. Rather than having one item as a top seller, clubs are tending to buy five or six items from the same stable, offering a collection of electrical goods as a prize, eg toaster, kettle and mixer or fryer, steamer and iron. Despite this, PMS told us that soft toys (plush) remain its top overall seller into bingo.

**Ace**

Based in Doncaster, Ace is a relative newcomer to the bingo industry, but continues to deliver some unforgettable characters. This Christmas is no different with the company’s popular seasonal bears. Bingo Link caught up with Managing Director Andrew Hempsall to find out what developments he has noticed in the market.

‘Having been in the plush industry for nearly 10 years, I have seen the swing to licensed product and am now watching it go back to quality generic product. We have had a tremendous response to our Halloween range earlier this year and have sold over 80 per cent of stock due to arrive. The other change that we have noticed is the ever-increasing advanced order times. Businesses are planning a long way ahead. Over 50 per cent of our Christmas stock is already sold and we are now looking at Valentine’s Day and beyond. Andrew continues, ‘The advantage to us and our customers of such planning is that we have time to create and produce truly unique characters.’

**Hemingways**

Always popular with customers and their taste buds, if not their waistlines, is confectionery. As with most goods, providing the quality is up to par it is bound to please. Hemingways is one of the UK’s leading wholesalers of quality confectionery.

Andrew Johnson, Joint Managing Director, told us about an exciting new venture with Cadbury called Cadbury Gifts Direct. ‘We have worked with Cadbury for over 30 years and are operating this service jointly with them. The focus is on chocolate-based items you would not normally find on the high street, eg full-sized chocolate footballs and rugby balls. We will also be working on some exclusives, which will only be available to Hemingways. ‘Bingo Link readers can try this new service at a 15 per cent discount. Just telephone 0845 600 3113 and quote promotional code HMS2003. We are sure that the novelty of such items in chocolate is going to be a winner with club customers.’

Hemingways works with a huge range of manufacturers in addition to Cadbury, including Nestlé and KP. However, it also offers the ultimate alternative for the picky customer – vouchers. Through Voucher Express, customers can purchase any one of over 20 high street store vouchers at wholesale prices. In addition, and certainly popular with bingo operators, there is the Choice Gift Voucher, a multi-option voucher that can be redeemed across a wide range of store chains including Boots, Comet, Littlewoods and JJB Sports. Clearly the demand for electrical goods is the biggest single trend to emerge in the past nine months. However, soft toys still remain a perennial favourite, especially when there is no shortage of cute new cuddly characters to choose from. I wonder if the next trend will be electrical plushies?

Contact numbers
- ACE 01302 884357
- Edward Thompson Group 0191 514 4199
- Just Everything 01606 351333
- Hemingways 01765 607050
- PMS International 01268 505050

For more information contact Chris Shipley Coincheck Electronics Ltd Borwick Drive Grovehill Beverley East Yorkshire HU17 0HQ 01482 863711 info@coincheck.com www.coincheck.com

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e-box embodies the lessons learned in 30 years of experience in gaming technology to deliver tangible results in your operation. Its modern look is designed to attract a new generation of players, and it has a real “play me” factor that makes people want to try it — and once they do, they want to keep playing.

For total flexibility, e-box enables you to play games from all top developers, while content management facilities allow complete control over games offered to players at specific times.

e-box’s enclosure allows for custom design to suit your decor and is adaptable to any location, from bar to lounge to your main bingo floor.

e-box can help give you a marketing edge by delivering promotional messages directly to your players. It takes care of back-of-house accounting, cash-box auditing and player tracking — generating information you can use to help improve your business.

Gaming’s moving forward — DON’T GET LEFT BEHIND
Call us now to find out more.

October 27th is getting closer...

Are you ready for Gross Profit Tax (GPT)? Do you know how to maximise your revenue under the new regulations? Are you familiar with the audit requirements?

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  - Limit VAT liability and make use of £25 cash prizes on prize bingo
- Enhancements to your Linked MCB operation
- A host of further benefits

Version 6 is the essential tool for the club manager who wants to succeed under the new regulations, but time’s running out to get it installed before the changeover date.

Act now. Call your usual supplier for more information on Version 6 for the SRCe from ECM.

INNOVATION IN GAMING TECHNOLOGY

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