**Doing a Big Number!**

With all the exciting developments for the National Game in forthcoming months, clubs should be looking to do a big promotion number for players. NBGA member clubs can be a part of up to three promotions: Afternoon Delight, the Big Number and Bingo Bonkers.

First off the starting blocks is Afternoon Delight, which goes live on 18 July and promotes the launch of afternoon National Games, Monday to Friday.

By now, participating clubs have received their point of sale. Tickets are £1 for six, and with an estimated total prize of £20,000, it will certainly brighten up players’ afternoons!

Next is the Big Number, which goes live 9 September with in-club promotions from two weeks before. Every Friday night from 9 September, the National Game Zone prizes will be replaced by the Big Number, and players should focus on 46. A bonus pot of around £100,000 – created from Zone prizes and an increased ticket price – will be available to share between each player who wins their in-club prize in 46 numbers or less. As the number of winners will vary each week, individual prizes will also vary.

**Winning numbers**

The exact number of winners – and their prize – will only be known when the National Game results are announced.

To support this exciting development there will be table talkers, shelf wobblers and posters. Every club will also receive a supply of Big Number promotional leaflets (which are the same size as a strip of six tickets) to be given away with tickets sold in the two weeks prior to 9 September. These leaflets explain the Big Number and offer players the chance to win one of over 1,500 cash prizes, ranging from £4.60 to £460. To win, players must correctly answer three questions about the winning numbers.

The exact number of winners – and their prize – will only be known when the National Game results are announced.

**The AGMs 2005**

With the Gambling Bill having been diluted into what is now the Gambling Act, Association members were encouraged to assess a new set of challenges during their recent AGM at QE2 Conference Centre, London, on 9 June.

A high profile gathering of speakers and panelists ensured that delegates at the 2005 AGMs enjoyed an insightful event with useful information and straight talking from the policy makers. The prestigious QE2 Conference Centre played host to Gaming Board CEO Jenny Williams and Rank’s David Boden. Also in attendance was Peter Reynolds, the Director of Fundraising and Communications at Breakthrough Breast Cancer – The Bingo.

Gaming Board chairman Peter Dean, Policy Action Ltd’s Lucy Cronin, Tony Coles of law firm Jeffrey Green Russell, DCMS Head of Gaming David Fitzgerald, Gaming Board CEO Jenny Williams and Rank’s David Boden. Also in attendance was Peter Reynolds, the Director of Fundraising and Communications at Breakthrough Breast Cancer – The Bingo.

Continued on Page 16

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**No butts**

New laws on smoking

**Bingo gets The Big Tick**

Association’s award for excellence

**Prizes**

Christmas gift roundup

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Sign up to win one of four great prizes! see page 9
The National Game
Quarterly news and update from Chief Executive, Paul Talboys

As July draws to a close and summer gets into full swing, I’m increasingly aware that the first half of 2005 is over, and the excitement of Ground Shaker is becoming a distant memory. But the remainder of the year looks set to be action-packed as current changes and future plans swing into action.

First up are a series of changes to The National Game, starting with the advent of afternoon National Games Monday to Friday on Monday, 18 July. It’s reassuring to see the support these additional games have received throughout the industry and they look set to offer a daily prize fund in the region of £25,000. Next on the calendar are changes to ticket prices and Friday night’s game with the Big Number starting in September.

In October, clubs can go Bingo Bonkers with a Million Pound month of Sundays. All these changes are detailed in ‘Doing a Big Number’, our cover story, but players should be directed to the quarterly news and update from Chief Executive, Paul Talboys.

I hope you all enjoy your summer and I look forward to working with you to deliver these exciting developments in The National Game.

National Bingo Game: key statistics
Total Prize Money since the game began £840,049,167
Total Prize Money played for in 2004 £30,703,875
Total Prize Money played for in 2005 to 31 May £22,046,386

Biggest games for 2004
Saturday 8 May with ticket sales of £1,180,644
Saturday 17 April with ticket sales of £962,292

Biggest game to date for 2005
Saturday 23 April with ticket sales of £1,069,458

A Diamond Award for Gala Group
Gala Group has won two awards at The Institute of Direct Marketing Business Performance Awards. The first for Data Information Integration and the second, the Diamond Award. The Diamond Award – the top award of the evening – recognises the total business achievement of strategic direct and interactive marketing programmes.

Companies shortlisted this year were:
• BT
• Cancer Research UK
• Classic FM
• Department for Work and Pensions
• Friends Reunited
• The Gala Group
• Royal Marsden Hospital
• Telewest

Gala’s work with agency Perspectiv has produced the Impact System, which has proven to be a valuable and unique direct marketing tool. Alistair Logan, Group Direct Marketing Manager at Gala, was present to collect both awards at the ceremony on 10 May at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in London.

Bingo in the news
Following a relatively quiet period in the final quarter of 2004, 2005 started off exceptionally busy, peaking in February. This was helped by a higher than normal number of National Game winners agreeing to full publicity. Club staff play an important part in encouraging players to agree to publicity, and many concerns have been minimised by the availability of full PR support from the National Game.

Encouraging players to work with National/Regional PR – and not to take any press enquiry themselves – greatly reduces the chance of any adverse publicity for winners. The busiest regions for coverage have been the Northern Region (13%), the North East Region (11%) and Scotland (15%), for each month respectively. The NBGA offers support at regional and national levels for helping to manage the media, and works with players and clubs to promote bingo.

National Game Regional PR contact: Georgina Palmer 01438 718500.

National Game National PR Agency: Beattie Communications 020 7053 6000.

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The Biggest Show in Gaming – G2E

The Global Gaming Expo (G2E) is now in its fifth successful year and continues to grow, offering visitors from all over the world better reasons than ever to pay it – and arguably the best-known gambling destination in the world – a visit.

In addition to the show, which takes place this year on 13-15 September, there will also be a training and seminar day on 12 September. While many of these seminar programmes deal with local (US) issues, a broad number of them will address topics and issues that are globally relevant. In addition to the general areas of the show there are also a number of special pavilions, each dealing with a specific issue or area of business. Making a return for its third year is the Bingo Pavilion, and one of particular interest – as the issue of smoking gathers greater momentum (see our story on legislation on Page 8) – is the Air Quality Pavilion.

Don’t miss out on the fun and games at this year’s Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas

Legislation update

As anticipated, the Gambling Bill was passed before the General Election, but only after significant changes to the casino section. These were pushed through by the Opposition, whose support was necessary for the Bill to complete all its stages in time. There will now only be one trial resort casino, although Tessa Jowell has suggested that the Government may attempt to increase this number at some point in the future.

The Government has recently announced that the first group of regulations under the Gambling Act will be laid before Parliament before the summer recess, setting up the Gambling Commission to replace the Gaming Board in October. The DCMS is still considering, and will consult on, future dates for regulations bringing in other measures, likely to include removal of the 24-hour rule. The target for completing the overall programme of work needed to bring the Act fully into force is autumn 2007.

The Association will now begin discussions with the Gaming Board (which will form the basis for the Gambling Commission) about the numerous codes of practice which will emerge under the Act. These will be based on existing voluntary industry codes. There are also a large number of regulations needed to provide much of the important detail to the Act, and the industry will be actively tracking these, and providing comment where appropriate.

Association members have already expressed concern that there are no plans to conduct a triennial review of machine stake and prize limits, which would ordinarily have taken place before now. It is likely that this will be a concern for all gaming sectors, and ways of addressing this will be discussed with other trade bodies in the coming weeks.

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Bingo For Breakthrough – an award-winning campaign

Bingo for Breakthrough 2004 has raised just under £600,000, which is a record-breaking amount of money. In addition to this feat, the industry's commitment to cause-related marketing and charity fundraising has been formally recognised at the highest level by Business in the Community (BITC) with the award of the prestigious ‘Big Tick’.

Established in 1998, the Big Tick is awarded to companies and organisations that are able to demonstrate a high standard of excellence in the way they organise and integrate their responsible business practices, and show a positive impact both on society and on the business. As a result of the originality, the outstanding success and the benefits gained by everyone involved in Bingo for Breakthrough, Business in the Community has recognised The Bingo Association and participating operators as leaders in responsible business practice. This is a fantastic and well-deserved result for the industry, which has worked tirelessly to make Bingo for Breakthrough a major success. The award was formally announced in The Financial Times on 6 June and presented to Sir Peter Fry at the award presentation.

The Association on 13 June. Participating operators will now be able to display the Big Tick logo on their letterhead and marketing materials. All operators who participated in Bingo for Breakthrough 2004 are encouraged to make use of the Big Tick. For more information, contact Laura Jones, Bingo for Breakthrough Executive, on 020 7025 2493.

More good news...

Of the 200-plus companies obtaining a Big Tick award, a limited number are selected for consideration for the ‘Cause Related Marketing Award for Excellence 2005’. The Bingo Association, along with five other companies, including Vodafone and Debenhams, were successfully shortlisted. Steven Baldwin of The Bingo Association and Laurie Boult of Breakthrough Breast Cancer presented the industry’s achievements to the Business in the Community judging panel on 18 March.

At the time of going to press, the final results were yet to be announced at a gala dinner at London’s Royal Albert Hall on 5 July. However, as you read this, the final results will be known! Whatever the outcome, the Bingo Industry should be exceedingly proud to have been recognised by such a prestigious programme. To be keeping company with such organisations as HSBC and Vodafone will certainly encourage many in the community and politics to see the bingo industry in a different light.

For more information about the awards – and who has now won – visit www.crm.org.uk

Hollie the Hippo – our new mascot

It's back, bigger and pinker than ever! Following the fantastic results of 2004, Bingo for Breakthrough is now forging ahead for the third year. Your support is vital to the success of this award-winning fundraising campaign, as well as the key to its future success. The campaign returns with a bang during Breast Cancer Awareness Month on 24 October, and will run until 30 October.

In 2003 – the first year of Bingo for Breakthrough – you raised a fantastic £414,000, and then went on to smash this total by raising a phenomenal £600,000 in 2004! Thanks to your fabulous efforts and endless enthusiasm, the campaign has now achieved the £1million mark, which is truly fantastic!

For 2005, the new pink mascot is Hollie the Hippo. All-new limited-edition Hollie the Hippo pink dabbers will also be available – to add a further touch of pink to your club. These dabbers are an easy way for you and your customers to contribute to B4B, as the purchase price of the dabbers already includes the donation. This means that once you have sold them, there is no fiddly accounting to do – you simply recoup the cost of the dabbers, knowing that a donation has already gone to Bingo for Breakthrough. There are also re-designed T-shirts and a surprise product to replace the pink wigs. We know that many of you became attached to these, but Breakthrough have something new for you this year – so keep your eyes peeled!

Commitment forms will be sent out shortly, followed by order forms for this year’s materials. To avoid confusion, please note that all items can be ordered through Breakthrough this year. For more information, or if you have any specific queries on this year’s event please telephone Laura Jones at Breakthrough on 020 7025 2493. Many of you will know Laura from last year’s event, and the good news is that she will be looking after all the clubs this year.

Join Laura Jones and Hollie the Hippo (above) and make 2005 another record-breaking year!
Launch of the e-Box

Bingo innovators ECM Systems are celebrating two notable successes with their electronic gaming system, e-Box.

The first, an installation of 80 e-Box terminals at the Mecca Bingo Club in Wood Green, North London has been well received by players, staff and club management (see Page 9 for the full story). The electronic touch-screen terminals allow players to take part in the full bingo programme, including paper and mechanised cash bingo (MCB) games.

ECM is also celebrating the formal launch of the e-Box product for Gala, at the operator’s Scunthorpe club. Nearly two years in development, Scunthorpe’s e-Box system is now complete and was ready for the final step of adding the National Game – the industry’s flagship big-money game – in June. Gala and ECM are keen to develop the “Bingo Wizard” concept beyond the Scunthorpe trial, and to take the product to other clubs in the Gala estate.

At the same time, ECM is moving forward with its portable electronic bingo terminal – TED. ECM’s sales manager, Jim Moss, is preparing for a busy year. ‘This “virtual admission” factor is proving powerful wherever we install TED. With TED, even installation is free. The full integration with club RNG and book sales systems makes TED the obvious choice for operators taking a first step into electronic bingo.’

Meanwhile, ECM has kept a close eye on the regulatory changes that will present opportunities and challenges for the industry. The company is currently working on a new “i-Series” range, which will update and build on the strengths of its MCB and control systems. The new range is set to introduce several new concepts to the bingo market.
Swag!

The challenge to find new and exciting prizes and door gifts is never more pressing than in the autumn months and the run-up to Christmas. But don’t fret – there are many companies that work tirelessly to offer novel and contemporary gifts throughout the year. Bingo Link contacted four of the best to find out what’s hot in 2005, and if the best is yet to come...

**PMS International**
First port of call had to be PMS International, one of the largest suppliers of toys in the UK, who were responsible for creating Bingo for Breakthrough’s Bobbie the Bingo Bear in 2004. We caught up with Ian Mottershead, who has worked with the bingo industry for many years.

‘2004 was a busy year for PMS, and the trend for greater quality and diversity in gifts – which so many operators were demanding – has continued in 2005.

‘In the run-up to Christmas, we found that bingo customers were no longer willing to accept run-of-the-mill door gifts. To meet the demand for quality and diversity from customers, bingo operators wanted superior-quality goods with a high perceived value. Merchandise associated with blockbuster movies and current TV shows tended to be in demand – the bigger the movie, the bigger the demand. [You can win PMS’s Madagascar star Marty the Zebra, pictured below, in our competition on Page 9]. PMS has responded, and at a competitive price, through our sister companies Ethos and Gosh. Ethos supply high-quality high street kitchenware; Gosh supply high-quality toys, including Forever Friends and Bang on The Door merchandise.

Players see these items at retail outlets, and this enforces the prize’s value-for-money message.

‘This year’s Christmas range will be the best ever. We are producing a bingo Christmas cracker – a starter pack for new or existing members – containing a key ring, membership wallet, Christmas hat and dabber... and it will fit everyone’s budget.’

**ACE**
In recent years ACE has gained a reputation for plush, unbranded offerings for all occasions and promotions. For this year’s Bingo for Breakthrough campaign, ACE created Hollie the Hippo [see page 4]. We spoke to ACE’s Andrew Hempsall.

‘Quality has been key to our success, with high street quality product at a price that’s attractive to the bingo industry. We now offer our lines in presentation baskets at competitive prices. We are also moving away from the term “swag”, as we no longer feel it reflects the quality of the products.

‘Historically we have focused on the creation of appealing characters for both our own range and customer exclusives. However, we recently signed a distribution agreement for Coca Cola, Lizzie McGuire, King Kong and many others.

‘We have some great new characters for Halloween [see their Frankenstein toy, below] and Christmas, and will be offering a wider range of plastic toys, such as remote control cars. With a firm focus on design, quality, presentation and price, we are working with bingo operators to produce appealing and unique items.’

**Just Everything**
In search of the ultimate prize or door gift, operators have considered just about everything! Which is why this company is so aptly named. Leon Summers gave us the low-down.

‘While key demand is still focused on branded electrical goods, housewares, toys, gifts and household goods, we’ve also seen increased demand for better quality, better packaging and higher perceived gift quality.

‘In the past 18 months we’ve met these demands, offering exclusive items, in our own-label packaging, with gifts aimed at keeping customers coming back to clubs. For example, our Just Casa four-piece dinner set uses collector cards – so players build a 16-piece set over a four-week period.

‘This Christmas we have a Xmas Bumper Pack filled with cards, wrapping paper & tags, tinsel, a pen set, baubles, Christmas crackers and fairy lights. We have also created a novelty skiing, flipping reindeer [see Page 9] – it’s a great display item.

‘We’ve also developed a brand new remote control toy for our Boys & Toys range, called Aquacar [pictured below]. This remote control vehicle will go on land and water, and we think it will be a top seller for Christmas.’

**Edward Thompson**
One of the most well-known names in the UK bingo and promotions industry is Edward Thompson. A relative newcomer to gifts and prizes, their wealth of experience in bingo and promotions puts them in a very informed position. Chris Garnty shares his views with Bingo Link.

‘In readiness for Christmas, we’ve increased our range of plush, and the popularity of our fibre-optic lines last year has led us to offer a more varied selection including Christmas trees, ornaments [such as their one pictured below] and musical animations.

‘We have also produced a catalogue of Christmas decorations and party novelties so we can provide everything for a club’s Christmas party.

‘Operators on the prize and gift front want more choice and better quality that is value driven. However, this appears to apply to the traditional gift areas of plush, electrical goods homewares and toys. So, while players want better quality, their preference remains constant – albeit with the requirement of the thrill of the new.’
New Stars for Mecca

Mecca’s own entertainers, The Mecca Stars, are always given a warm welcome when they perform around the country. Earlier this year the search began for some new stars to join the troupe.

The gruelling selection process took place in February and resulted in no less than nine fabulously talented singers joining The Mecca Stars. During the two auditions, each entrant performed three pre-selected songs from a range of 1960s and 1970s hits.

Blue Coat to caller
Each performer was judged on their stage presence, voice, appearance, movement and confidence. Due to the nature of the job it’s also important that all of them are good team players.

Successful applicant Jamie Butler, Main Stage Caller from Mecca Penistone Road, Sheffield, says, ‘When I found out that I’d been selected I was over the moon! It was such a relief as the audition process had been very nerve-wracking.

‘It’s funny because I used to be a Blue Coat and am now a main stage caller, so it’s not as if I’m not used to performing in front of people. I’m really looking forward to our first show. It will be the first time we’ve all performed together and I’m planning to really enjoy the experience.’
No ifs, no buts, smoking is out of favour

Once considered a sociable habit, smoking is now seen as anti-social – to the extent that legislation is being drawn up against it. Many countries have laws making smoking illegal in public spaces. So what does it mean for clubs?

Efforts to promote a smoke-free lifestyle started in Singapore in the 1970s. Canada, parts of the USA and Australia, and most recently Ireland (March 2004), have all put anti-smoking legislation in place. Meanwhile, Scotland will introduce laws enforcing a total ban on smoking in public spaces by spring next year. Such is the significance of this issue that the World Health Organisation unanimously adopted an anti-smoking treaty in 2003.

As the details of the Scottish legislation are resolved and the issue debated in both the English Parliament and Welsh Assembly, it is clear that smoking legislation for England is not so much a matter of if, but when. After observing the implementation of legislation in Ireland, the Government will be watching its impact very carefully in Scotland and looking for steers and indicators as to the form that such legislation should take in England. The aim of anti-smoking groups and the Government is a complete ban on smoking in enclosed places to:

- Reduce passive smoking deaths
- Reduce the number of current smokers
- Encourage people to give up
- Improve welfare of non-smokers
- Create long-term conditions that will prevent future generations from starting to smoke.

Implications of a ban

While there is a wealth of statistical information that attempts to demonstrate the potential impact of new legislation on businesses and the economy, much of the analysis is ‘broad brush’ and not specific to individual sectors. It’s possible to claim a variety of gains and losses arising from a ban, yet difficult to support them. In making its final decision, the Government will not only be listening to businesses and the health service, but to the general public, 73% of whom – as identified by a BBC survey – are in favour of a ban.

‘The Public Health White Paper’, which covers smoking legislation was published in November 2004 and aims to see a ban in England in place by 2008. While many think the final destination is clear (a total ban on smoking in public spaces), the route by which individual sectors get there is not. In Scotland a universal ban will be implemented, which is held to be equally fair (or unfair) to all sectors as they move forward. However, it has been suggested that in England some sectors and businesses may be granted exemptions, at least during a transition period. This is to minimise the negative impact of smoking legislation and allow greater time for investment and change. However, it would also clearly give those with exemption status a competitive advantage during any transition period, which would not ordinarily have been present. This type of unfair outcome should not be the by-product of legislation concerned with the nation’s health.

But should this be the case, the Association will argue for bingo to be one of the sectors with exemption. Smoking among bingo players is almost twice the national average, so there is a strong case to be argued.

Bill calls house after 41 years

Club manager Bill Richardson from Top Ten Darlington started his bingo career in 1964 as a part-time doorman. Some 41 years later Bill decided to retire from the job he loves most. He called it a day on 23 May.

Bill, now 71, had worked in the shipbuilding industry for 29 years when he started supplementing his income doing part-time work at Mason’s bingo club in Southwick. As shipbuilding went into decline, his employers asked for volunteers to leave – Bill decided to bite the bullet and stick to bingo.

Before long he was on the road to becoming a manager. He moved to Consett, then Durham and finally Darlington. In 2000, his late wife was taken ill and he more or less retired – but he was then asked to come back, shortly before the Mason organisation was bought by Top Ten.

Bill says, ‘I shall be sorry to leave bingo, but I’ve got plenty to keep me occupied. I still play table tennis once a week, I’m involved with church activities and I have three teenage grandchildren to help me stay young at heart.’

Bingo Link would like to thank Bill for all the years he spent working for bingo, and wish him all the best in his retirement.
Players at Mecca Bingo Wood Green have taken their bingo skills to the next level with the introduction of Electronic Bingo. The North London club is the first in the South of England to offer customers so much choice in how they play their favourite game.

Presented as a separate area within the club, the electronic bingo facilities consist of 80 ‘Mecca Pods’ situated in the raised lounge area. As the area is still part of the main club, players can hear the caller in the normal way, alongside people playing at traditional bingo tables. The touch screen system enables customers to play up to 75 tickets at a time, as opposed to the usual six. They can also be played using one of the specially designed dabbers. It’s really exciting to see bingo move up a gear and offer more than the traditional paper game that everyone knows and loves,’ says Damian Smith, the General Manager at Mecca Wood Green. ‘The customers have been really excited by the new facilities and very keen to have a go. The majority have been using the interactive “How to Play” demo, and others have been through it with staff. Overall, the new facilities have been very well received, and the customer feedback has been fantastic!’

The Electronic Lounge at Mecca Bingo Wood Green offers members a new way to play

**21st Century Bingo**

**Competition Gifts Galore!**

After previewing some of the great gift ideas available for winter (see Page 6), we are able to offer Bingo Link readers the chance to win one of four great prizes. Take off on an early Christmas adventure with the Flipping Reindeer (pictured) from Just Everything; deck the halls with fibre-optic Christmas treelights from Edward Thompson; start a talking zoo with Madagascar stars Alex the Lion and Marty the Zebra from PMS International; or find a new cuddly bedfellow in the Sleepy Bear from ACE. Simply complete the competition entry form supplied with this issue, or send your name, club name, club address and the prize you would like to be entered for on a postcard to:

Gifts Galore Competition Bingo Link, Lexham House 75 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds. LU6 1JF

All entries must be received by 27 August.

To see other gifts from these companies, turn to Page 6.

**Just Everything Ltd**, importers, and distributors of promotional goods to the licensed gaming industry.

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![Just Everything Brands]
Ground Shaker 2005

The whirlwind of Ground Shaker 2005 has passed, but it certainly left its mark, with bingo’s biggest ever prize draw

National Game ticket sales experienced a surge similar to last year but without the dent that was experienced in rising ticket sales during week two of the 2004 draws.

National Game Chief Executive Paul Talboys explains: ‘The earlier start date of Ground Shaker 2005 was certainly the right choice, avoiding bad winter weather and early summer heat waves, both of which traditionally keep players out of clubs.’

Production of materials for this year’s promotion was considerably more complex, as every participating club was provided with different draw numbers for each week. However, this also maximised in-club excitement during the live draws. Many of the problems experienced with the delivery of materials in 2004 were avoided, although a promotion of this scale is never completely free from such issues. Follow up research with club managers and players is currently being carried out.

Winning clubs

Player enthusiasm for Ground Shaker remained high, although, as might be expected from a second outing of the promotion, not as great as in 2004. Research into exact customer views will be formally tracked to give a clearer indication of players’ reactions, and whether a new promotion would be preferred to a Ground Shaker repeat.

The key change this year was the introduction of Shaker Plus: nine winners week one, 11 winners week two, nine winners week three and 100 winners week four. This new mechanic created 129 extra winners overall. Many also agreed to publicity, which helped increase local coverage for Ground Shaker.

This year’s winning clubs were Carlton Tivoli (Edinburgh), New Majestic Bingo (Ormesby, Middlesborough), and Gala (Warrington), with the big million going to one of the biggest clubs in the country, Mecca Forge in Glasgow. It is a safe bet that players in these clubs will be keen to see a repeat of Ground Shaker.

Week 1: Carlton Tivoli, Edinburgh

Club manager Dawn O’Donnell, tells how the 98 players in the club went ‘absolutely crazy’ as they watched their numbers being drawn and realised they’d get over £1,000 each. Dawn said, ‘We say everyone at Carlton is a winner – and they certainly were the first night of Ground Shaker! I stayed up all night planning the party we’d have to give out the 98 cheques – £1,020.40 each. I was over the moon to see my customers’ happy faces.’
Week 2: New Majestic Bingo, Ormesby
The 620 members in on the night certainly saw their numbers come up. Assistant club manager Bob Manwaring couldn’t believe it when the final number – 81 – was drawn. ‘It was the most exciting thing I’ve ever seen in 18 years of bingo. The tension built as our numbers came out, then the whole club erupted as 81 was called!’

Nigel Hartland, the club’s general manager said: ‘Last year…we missed out on the £100,000 Ground Shaker draw by just one number. This year, we made sure we got the job done! It was the first Ground Shaker to be won in the North East.’

Week 3: Gala Warrington
Over 400 players called ‘house’, and Dave Robinson, the assistant club manager said: ‘There was an incredible atmosphere that night. I am so pleased that I was part of it. We kept our fingers crossed for another win on the big £1m game but we’re happy with one of the three £100,000 shares!’

Week 4: Mecca Forge, Glasgow
Mecca Forge in Glasgow’s east end scooped the million, netting each of the 1,200 players about £830 each. General Manager Billy MacLeod said, ‘The cheers of 60,000 fans at Celtic Park were more than matched by the 1,200 people in the Forge. I’ve never heard anything like it in my life. The whole club screamed in unison as soon as they realised we’d won. I tried to calm them down to check the card and they cheered every number again! Where have you ever been where every person is a winner and so happy? It was magic.’

As well as three £100,000 winning clubs, Ground Shaker also gave 129 Shaker Plus £1,000 prizes to individual players across the country.

And the best dressed clubs...
Awards go to Gala, Salford; Gala, Wolverhampton and Buckingham, Huyton. Each club won a staff party. Well done and thanks for your support.

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Week 2: New Majestic Bingo, Ormesby
The 620 members in on the night certainly saw their numbers come up. Assistant club manager Bob Manwaring couldn’t believe it when the final number – 81 – was drawn. ‘It was the most exciting thing I’ve ever seen in 18 years of bingo. The tension built as our numbers came out, then the whole club erupted as 81 was called!’

Nigel Hartland, the club’s general manager said: ‘Last year…we missed out on the £100,000 Ground Shaker draw by just one number. This year, we made sure we got the job done! It was the first Ground Shaker to be won in the North East.’

Week 3: Gala Warrington
Over 400 players called ‘house’, and Dave Robinson, the assistant club manager said: ‘There was an incredible atmosphere that night. I am so pleased that I was part of it. We kept our fingers crossed for another win on the big £1m game but we’re happy with one of the three £100,000 shares!’

Week 4: Mecca Forge, Glasgow
Mecca Forge in Glasgow’s east end scooped the million, netting each of the 1,200 players about £830 each. General Manager Billy MacLeod said, ‘The cheers of 60,000 fans at Celtic Park were more than matched by the 1,200 people in the Forge. I’ve never heard anything like it in my life. The whole club screamed in unison as soon as they realised we’d won. I tried to calm them down to check the card and they cheered every number again! Where have you ever been where every person is a winner and so happy? It was magic.’

As well as three £100,000 winning clubs, Ground Shaker also gave 129 Shaker Plus £1,000 prizes to individual players across the country.

And the best dressed clubs...
Awards go to Gala, Salford; Gala, Wolverhampton and Buckingham, Huyton. Each club won a staff party. Well done and thanks for your support.

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The company believes that their new product offers the best of both worlds, with benefits to the operator and player alike. For more information call 0191 564 5014 or email robert.walker@edward-thompson.com.
As the search for Caller of the Year 2005 gets underway, our current title holder Mandy Gargan has just returned from her Las Vegas prize trip. Mandy and her husband Tyrone enjoyed a trip of a lifetime – and here are the pictures to prove it.

First call was a stop at the Suncoast Casino on 7 May, when Mandy did a star turn as guest caller. Manager Lyn Brown and her regular bingo players gave Mandy a warm welcome (pictured below right). They also met with Dan Carrier, the editor of American title Bingo Bugle and guest judge for Caller 2004, who showed them around some of Vegas’s great sites.

If you are a main stage caller and can see yourself in Mandy’s shoes – so to speak – then don’t forget this year’s Caller of the Year competition. For details call Gloria Pattinson on 020 8310 5086.

The competition winners from Issue 69 were: Nichola Arthur Top Ten, Neath; Janet March Shipley’s, Redditch; M Jackson Gala, Bognor Regis; Carl White Mecca, Reading

Thank you to everyone who sent in entry forms and a big thank you to ACE for providing the prizes. ACE are producing this year's Bingo for Breakthrough prize, Hollie the Hippo (see Page 4). She will be the prize in our October Bingo Link competition.

Mandy Gargan, 2004 Caller of the Year, shows her hand in Vegas (top left); stepping into line at the Suncoast Casino (left) with Manager Lyn Brown and her regular players; our star caller sets her sights on Hollywood (above)
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Carlton Bingo announce Beechwood plans

Carlton Bingo has announced that the new multimillion pound Bingo venue on Inverness’ Beechwood development will be opened this year. Multibuild, a specialist Bingo contractor has been awarded the contract to complete the internal fit out. Carlton also announced the appointment of Gary Byrne as general manager of the new facility.

Announcing the news, Brian King, Operations Director with Carlton Bingo said, ‘We are delighted to announce that our Beechwood facility is due to open in autumn this year. We have worked hard to get to this stage and are now more than halfway through the development. ‘There is a lot of support for bingo in the area and I know our players are looking forward to the facilities which will be on offer at Beechwood.’

Gary Byrne, the new General Manager at Beechwood adds, ‘Our players have been looking forward to this news – as there has been so much talk about when we will be able to open the doors.

‘It is great to finally get the go-ahead. The facilities that will be on offer should really be something else. We’ll have the latest in Bingo gaming equipment and unrivalled comfort levels too.’

promotion and reveal ‘46s’ in the answer scratch panels.

The final NBGA promotion this autumn takes place in October and invites players to go ‘Bingo Bonkers’. For each of four consecutive Sundays, starting Sunday, 9 October, the National Game will be offering a prize of a quarter of a million pounds – a very good reason for players to go Bingo Bonkers. Point of sale – including table talkers, posters, shelf wobblers and reception stands – will be delivered in August. Participating clubs will also be given mailing pieces to help recruit new players or reactivate lapsed members. This promotion will also be supported by national PR and advertising in women’s weekly press.

Bingo Bonkers final week is also Bingo for Breakthrough week (see Page 4) – yet another reason for players to make a date for bingo.

All of these promotions are featured in the July Issue of Eyes Down, so encourage players to take a copy to read for further information and more opportunities to win prizes.
Industry in reflective mood at 2005 AGMs

Continued from Page 1

Association’s nominated charity. He gave delegates an update on the charity’s latest activities.

Early in the proceedings, attention was focused on the Gaming Board’s Peter Dean, who offered an outline of how the board will make the transition to a fully-fledged Gambling Commission. Anyone anticipating a detailed chronology of legislative changes, however, was disappointed, as Dean could only generalise about timing and schedules.

A change in procedure

But there was confirmation from the chairman that the badly needed review of stakes and prizes would not be on the cards until the new Commission is fully up and running. Speaking positively about the thorny issues of licensing and codes of practice, Dean remarked that, while he could not predict the exact nature of the details, he was confident they would not be a cause for concern. He said: ‘I would be surprised if, when they eventually emerge, the bingo industry found them unduly harsh or onerous.’

He concluded by saying, ‘I would like to congratulate the Bingo Association on the way it has represented the industry. It cannot be easy to hold in balance the needs and aspirations of such a diverse group of operators.’

Providing an interesting European slant on the bingo industry was Lucy Cronin of Policy Action Ltd. Her underlying message to Association members was that gaming, including bingo, is definitely ‘on the radar’ of the European Union’s policy makers. They are taking an interest, she remarked, and need to be kept informed of issues affecting the industry. Her key piece of advice was to be aware of any developments and respond.

Tony Coles of law firm Jeffrey Green Russell added weight to current industry fears that the changes in licensing procedures could be problematic for the bingo industry. He warned that the move from the ‘apolitical environment of the magistrates to the political environment of the local authority’ would bring new pressures to bear on the system.

The panel session in the afternoon was short on controversy – with the exception of some calls from the floor for the bingo industry to toughen up its image and aim for a position at the harder end of the gambling spectrum.

DCMS’s David Fitzgerald acknowledged the remarks, but pointed out that pursuing this would inevitably lead to tougher controls on bingo and a more punitive tax regime.

In summary, the 2005 AGM was – as expected at this time – a quieter event.
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