Need for change provides central theme for Association AGM

Bingo may be down, but it is certainly not out. That was the view expressed politically and by industry analysts at the Association’s Conference and AGM 2008. As anticipated, there were plenty of controversial talking points for delegates to mull over during this year’s event. Having endured torrid trading in the wake of the smoking ban, witnessed the removal of Section 21 games and felt the more negative impacts of the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005, with its attendant restraints and demands, the industry may well have been looking for some hard and fast answers to several major problems, including double taxation.

If the presence of gambling minister Gerry Sutcliffe was intended to fill in some of those worrying blanks, the end result will have left many delegates significantly short of answers. His address was very much of the ‘play it safe’ variety, allowing stakeholders a glimmer of hope that some form of legislative relief was forthcoming. But thanks to pre-election purdah, there was no tangible detail of what shape that relief would take or, indeed, when it would be implemented.

He told delegates: ‘I’m not in a position today to say how I intend to proceed and what I’m proposing to do, but I am clear on the way ahead. ‘Unfortunately, convention dictates that I must first tell Parliament what I intend to do and so I will shortly be making a written statement to the House of Commons setting out the next steps. And I’m sorry that it’s not been possible to make an earlier announcement. It will be in the next few weeks I’m happy to say. ‘And in relation to the local elections – we’re not allowed to make announcements in that period, but I intend to make that announcement as quickly as possible. So I hope that it will be positive news because I don’t believe the future of bingo is all doom and gloom.’

Despite the Minister’s declaration that the announcement would be made in ‘the next few weeks’, it was, in fact, just over seven weeks before he was free to make the announcement.

The conference also afforded an ideal opportunity for Gambling Commission chairman Brian Pomeroy to get acquainted with bingo stakeholders. Addressing continued on page 17

It’s a world record – and that’s official!

Following Christine Bradfield’s record-breaking win on the National Bingo Game of more than £1.1 million, the NBGA thought that it might be a world record and contacted Guinness World Records to check.

The process takes up to three months while Guinness officials check details and look for information. At the beginning of May the NBGA received its answer – YES.

There was no record of a bigger win having been made on a game of bingo and a certificate recorded Christine and the National Game’s world record.

However, since Christine’s win the NBGA has made another millionaire – Soraya Lowell – who’s win on Easter Sunday in Lanarkshire was larger than Christine’s at just under £1.2 million! The NBGA is having the records amended and expects to receive a new certificate shortly reflecting Soraya’s win.

Minister Gerry Sutcliffe at the AGM
The National Game
Quarterly news and update from Chief Executive Paul Talboys

More winners, more millionaires

We are already halfway through 2008 and what a year it has been so far.

Under the new format National Bingo Game that was introduced on 20 January we have made two millionaires and seen hundreds of lucky players win their in-club jackpots.

We have given away £3,923,674 on the National Platinum Jackpot and more than £876,000 on the in-club jackpots, all in addition to National, Regional and in-house prizes! All of which has delivered more winners more often and in doing so has created record amounts of publicity, including appearances on the all-important breakfast television programmes.

As we move through the summer, traditionally a quieter trading period for bingo, plans are already being made to deliver a new format National Bingo game in September, which will create
even more winners even more often, in addition to added excitement for players around game delivery.

As the majority of you will be aware, Gala clubs have decided not to participate in the National Bingo Game after 31 August this year, instead focusing on their own jackpot based game, Hi5.

While we are sorry to see Gala leave the game, all the move will affect prize money, we are looking forward to being able to offer an exciting and ever-evolving game that continues to regularly deliver life-changing sums of money.

On top of which it will continue to be THE National Bingo Game, which is well established and enjoyed by players young and old. Gala will remain a member of The Bingo Association.
The National Bingo Game will also be ringing the changes for Bingo Caller of the Year.

The competition has remained focused on National Bingo Game callers, but actually aims to celebrate ALL professional callers. In remaining so firmly focused on this select group we miss out on the talent and showmanship of callers working online and on television.

As the bingo industry evolves and changes we must ensure that this awards ceremony keeps pace and continues to provide a focus for all that is great about bingo and the media, whether played in-club, online or via TV.

It is hoped that the 2009 event will be back bigger and better.

I wish you all a pleasant summer and look forward to continuing our work on delivering The National Bingo Game.

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**National Bingo Game: key statistics**

- Total prize money since the game began: £3,963,696,137
- Total prize money for 2008 until 12 June: £13,019,291

**Biggest games for 2007**

- Thursday 28 June with ticket sales of: 816,300
- Sunday 2 May with ticket sales of: 795,642

**Biggest game to date for 2008**

- Sunday 2 March with ticket sales of: 752,538

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Bingo in the media

Media coverage in 2007 ended the year up on 2006, due in part to increased lobbying and business coverage of the issues facing the industry (tax, machines, new legislation). It is reassuring to note that 2008 has got off to a flying start, driven primarily by consumer coverage of big winners on the National Bingo Game. Such has been interest in the two largest winners, each claiming more than £1 million, that they were featured on breakfast time TV. The key interest was the people behind the wins, as both players shared their wins with a ‘bingo buddy’.

While the total number of clippings for the quarter is down, the circulation total for the period is more than double the 2007 figure (38,000,000), at 90,000,000 million, ensuring that we have reached a much bigger audience in 2008. The continued industry lobbying over double taxation and government policies adversely affecting the industry has continued to boost coverage and in doing so helped to ensure that these important issues remain on the media and political agendas.

In January, Scotland and the North East region were the two top performers, each delivering 12 per cent of coverage. In February, the West Midlands took the honours, delivering 17 per cent, while in March, Southern region took first place with 11 per cent.

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**Number of press hits by month**

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<th>Month</th>
<th>January</th>
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Quarterly total: 435 Year to date: 435

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National Bingo Game Regional Press Office: 01438 718500
National Bingo Game National Press Team: 020 7553 3700

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Gala Coral Group has adopted Sue Ryder Care as its group charity for 2008-2009. The charity focuses on the provision of expert, compassionate care and support for people living with serious illnesses and conditions, and their families.

Gala Coral drew up a shortlist of four charities, which all 20,000 employees in the group were then invited to vote on. Sue Ryder Care was the most popular choice.

Dr Colin Morgan, group corporate responsibility manager of Gala Coral Group, said: ‘We are absolutely delighted and proud that Sue Ryder Care was chosen by our employees to be our group charity. We really believe that we can support Sue Ryder Care in the work that it does – we know these are key issues for many of our customers.’

The key objectives of the relationship are to raise £1 million and to support an awareness-raising campaign for Sue Ryder Care and the work it does with a range of illnesses including cancer, multiple sclerosis, stroke, motor neurone disease, Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease, brain injury and dementia.

Eric Grounds, director of fundraising at Sue Ryder Care, said: ‘All of us at Sue Ryder Care are absolutely thrilled about our new partnership with Gala Coral Group. We really do look forward to working together.’

Gala will continue its support of the Bingo Association charity event Bingo For Breakthrough, as well as work done by clubs locally.

Could you take on Anne Robinson?

Do you have what it takes to face the ‘Queen of Mean’?

Previous champion Bingo Caller of the Year Alan Stockdale did in 2002, when he went up against the infamous Anne Robinson on The Weakest link took a good pasting.

Looking back at the experience Alan said: ‘I have still not decided whether I was lucky or unlucky to be invited to take part and face the intimidating Anne Robinson! Luckily for me an ex-car salesman called Bob had a tight perm and under interrogation admitted to plucking his eyebrows. He caught the full force of her venom did poor Bob. I made it to the final three, but my time was up. I clearly remember my exit though – “Alan, failed actor from Carlisle, you are the weakest link. Goodbye!”’

The BBC is looking for more gluttons for punishment to take part in the show and test their mettle on air. There is the chance to win up to £10,000 and the racing certainty that it will be an experience to remember.

Contestants must be over 18. For more information and an application form call 0900 10 200 22 or email weakestlink@bbc.co.uk

Please note if telephoning that calls from a BT landline cost 60p, other operators may vary. Calls from mobiles may be considerably higher.
Bingo for Breakthrough 2008 is back by popular demand! This year’s fun-packed week of fundraising will take place between 19 to 25 October. So there’s no time like the present to get planning some hair-raising fundraising ideas to help Breakthrough raise vital funds.

We know that the vast majority of clubs also support other causes and charities throughout the year, which is great and just goes to show how generous and community spirited players across the UK are, but we would ask you to set aside some time to continue your club’s much needed support for B4B. We couldn’t do it without you!

This year TV star Michelle Collins has agreed to help support and promote Bingo for Breakthrough and will be adding a touch of glamour to the fundraising campaign.

Michelle said: “I’m delighted to be supporting Bingo for Breakthrough 2008. It’s a unique event that continues to receive a huge amount of support as well as raising a massive amount of money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer. I’m amazed by all the creative and fun ways that clubs find to raise funds and I’m looking forward to a fun-filled, action-packed Bingo for Breakthrough Week. I’m sure that with your support, the campaign will be a great success once again and help Breakthrough take one step closer towards its vision of a future free from the fear of breast cancer.”

We have developed an exciting new fundraising pack, filled with new FREE materials to add a splash of pink to your club and to make raising money more fun and easier than ever.

In addition to the sparkling pink pin badges, we are also introducing a second NEW till point product or door gift. Following the theme of this year’s cuddly toy mascot the door gift or till product is a fabulous Kevin the Koala keyring. Once again we are sure that your customers will find Kevin, in all his guises, irresistible.

In addition to all the lovely free fundraising materials, clubs can take fundraising to a new level by buying the 2008 NEW look pink dabber, the NEW pink tinsel wig, Bingo for Breakthrough themed T-shirts and Kevin the koala himself. Kevin is available in two new sizes.

Your continued support for Bingo for Breakthrough Week is so important because this year, more than 44,000 women in the UK will be diagnosed with breast cancer – accounting for nearly one in three of all cancers in women. As shocking as this fact is, more women than ever are now surviving breast cancer due to better awareness, screening and treatments, and none of this would be possible without your help.

With more than 70 per cent of bingo club customers being female, this is an extremely important cause for your club to continue to support.

Please phone Paul at Breakthrough on 020 7025 2493 or email bingo@breakthrough.org.uk for more information on how your club can get involved this October.

Good luck!
Scratch card ad extinguished

Earlier this year, the National Lottery ran a heavyweight television advertising campaign for a scratch card product entitled ‘Flaming Hot Bingo’. The ad depicted an elderly lady on a mobility scooter approaching a bingo club that was closed, and upon realising this the lady ‘tuts’ and moves on.

The ad then cuts to the same lady, having undergone a makeover, on a souped-up mobility scooter, cruising along a Miami-style seaside promenade. The voiceover promotes the scratch card as a way to improve your lot.

The ad clearly denigrated club bingo and its players, portraying a club that looked as though it was permanently closed and a player who was elderly, poorly dressed and not fully mobile. Such a portrayal was misleading in implying that traditional bingo clubs were closed, or closing, and that club bingo is for the less affluent elderly.

All in all, rather a poor piece of advertising and all the more offensive in light of the issues currently facing the bingo industry and the fact that the National Lottery is afforded a preferential position with regard to how it may advertise. A position it appears to be lauding, with alarming regularity and scant regard for social responsibility. The fact that the Lottery is not required to contribute to the Responsibility in Gambling Trust (RIGT) is unfathomable.

The powers that be do not recognise the Lottery as gambling and as such have absolved it of a substantial number of the onerous regulatory requirements that the rest of the industry must adhere to. Camelot’s claim that it supports good causes is not a reasonable justification for its isolated regulatory position. This becomes ever more so, as the Lottery pursues increasingly commercial themes and lines of operation, as exemplified through scratch cards. The Lottery has moved from once a week to multiple daily draws, with add-on games and ancillary products.

The Association reviewed the advertisement, referencing appropriate codes, and lodged a complaint with the ASA on the following grounds:

- Misleading advertising
- Denigration
- Comparative advertising
- Harmful or negative stereotypes.

The Association provided a detailed commentary in order to make its case clear. In addition, an objection was also raised in writing with Camelot, which responded claiming that the advertisement was just and that it was highly regulated.

The initial response from the ASA said that it would not be upholding the complaint and would be submitting the report to the ASA Council. The report reflected a substantial amount of the flimsy rationale put forward by the Lottery, very little of the argument submitted by The Association and ignored some issues it had raised, failing to respond to them.

The Association submitted a written representation to the ASA Council. The submission re-iterated the points made in the original complaint and added further comment on the investigators’ report.

The ASA Council has upheld the Association’s complaint stating that the ad breached CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 5.1 (Misleading advertising), 5.4.3 (Denigration) and 5.4.6 (Comparative advertising). The result is that the advertisement may not be used again in its current format, however, as the ad is now no longer being aired this is not going to correct the damage done.

The Association is pleased that its complaint has been upheld by the Council. However, it has concerns over the process in place, the way that codes are interpreted and the length of time it takes to obtain a ruling. The current process allows advertising that is clearly in breach of codes to remain on air.

The new freedom to advertise afforded to the gambling industry, under the Gambling Act 2005 is not the liberty that it may first appear. Bingo has been able to advertise since 1996. However, all sections of the gambling industry are experiencing a great challenge to produce promotional material that does not breach any one or more of the restrictions that now apply.

The inconsistency in the way that codes have been interpreted and applied is confusing. Even allowing for the challenges and learning process resulting from the implementation of new ‘rules’ the current advertising regulatory landscape is anything but a level playing field for those trying to operate within it.

Unless, it would appear you are the National Lottery.

New London show launched

An alternative London show has been announced for January 2009 by Intergame. The InterGame Expo will take place from Monday 26 to Wednesday 28 January at the Ibis Hotel, which is within ten minutes’ walk of Earls Court, the home of ATEI.

The Expo is designed as a ‘no frills’ exhibition, responding to exhibitor demands for a modestly-priced event. For more details, visit www.intergameonline.com/expo

Major change for ICE and ICEi

Clarion Gaming, which runs ICE, ICEi and ATEI, has announced major changes to the 2009 January shows, which will see the entire ground floor of both Earls Court 1 and 2 re-branded as the ‘International Gaming Expo’. In a parallel move, the Amusement Trades Exhibition International (ATEI) will be hosted in the self-contained upper level of the hall with its own exclusive entry and exit points. For more details, visit www.atei-exhibition.com and www.clariongaming.com
A new crime reporting scheme called SIRCS has been launched by the founder of Count Me Out, the national scheme to help addicted gamblers.

Count Me Out exists to help vulnerable children and adults who are addicted to, harmed or exploited by gambling globally. It works by encouraging them to exclude themselves from gambling and taking social responsibility.

The Count Me Out project was founded by Gary Pettengell in May 2007 to help land-based gaming operators comply with the new UK Gambling Act 2005 and help people addicted to gambling.

It allows vulnerable people to obtain self-exclusion forms from the internet and support agencies and to submit these forms via a designated, responsible person such as a doctor, solicitor or counsellor. This enables them to self-exclude without having to enter a gambling premises to either obtain or submit their agreement forms.

It provides a central, national database of self-excluded individuals, which enables information to be legally shared between operators.

Count Me Out will receive all the proceeds from SIRCS.

SIRCS, which stands for Secure Incident Reporting Community Engagement System, is a system that allows for whole communities to be involved in incident reporting, from the public, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, housing estates, shops and crime reduction partnerships, through to education departments, the police and other emergency services.

It is an easy-to-use, secure, network-based application designed to help communities effectively tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. It enables the fast and easy identification of suspects and offenders and allows users to quickly and easily record and share information on a range of issues such as theft, criminal damage, truancy and fly-tipping.

SIRCS hopes to revolutionise the way communities, individuals and crime-fighting groups such as the police share information on crime and disorder.

The scheme already has the support of one regional partnership.

Gary Pettengell, creator of SIRCS and founder of Count Me Out and MachineGuard-UK, said: ‘This project is very exciting for me. For many years I have been involved in community engagement and partnership projects but none on a scale as large as this. SIRCS has the ability to become the most successful crime management tool available anywhere today and I am especially proud to have personally developed a scheme whereby all the proceeds will be going to help problem gamblers, their families and local communities.’

The Count Me Out national self-exclusion scheme has been running on a version of SIRCS since August 2007 and MachineGuard has been using the system very successfully since October 2007.

It is expected that proceeds from SIRCS will gradually allow membership costs of Count Me Out to reduce and eventually end so that operators will benefit from belonging to a nationwide self-exclusion scheme at no cost. Gary Pettengell said: ‘Numerous operators have told me that they would participate in a national self-exclusion scheme if it was paid for through their licence fee or similar source. By giving all my profits from SIRCS to Count Me Out I feel I am showing my commitment to the industry in that I am serious about making a difference to problem gamblers and their families. I hope that operators do their bit by promoting SIRCS to not only their local police and crime reduction partnerships but also to their local authority.’

For more information, visit www.sircs.org.uk, www.machineguarduk.com or www.countmeout.org.uk

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**New crime reporting scheme backs Count Me Out**

**G2E is back and more important than ever**

Global Gaming Expo (G2E) 2008 is expected to draw more than 30,000 gaming executives, buyers and industry professionals to Las Vegas in November.

This year’s event takes place between 18 and 20 November at the Las Vegas Convention Center with the G2E Training & Development Institute, the G2E Leadership Academy and the all-new Casino Design being held on 17 November.

To mirror the importance and growth of non-gaming amenities within the industry, G2E 2008 will spotlight the retail and entertainment sectors of gaming and debut two new specialty events – Entertainment Arena at G2E and Retail Promenade at G2E. These events will join the expanded F&B at G2E, the only food and beverage event for the gaming industry, in the North Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center. By grouping these non-gaming amenities together, visitors will have the opportunity to think about and see what lies beyond the gaming floor.

The educational offerings at G2E continue to grow. The conference will feature four new conference tracks dedicated to casino design, finance, racino, and retail.

Industry experts will share insights and trend information about these subjects and how they play a critical role in the gaming industry today.

With 750-plus exhibitors, more than 140 conference sessions, daily networking events and all of Las Vegas—G2E is certainly an event to recon with. For more information about G2E 2008 and to register for Early Bird and Group Discounts, go to www.globalgamingexpo.com
Mecca Bingo has joined forces with charity Whizz-Kidz to Mecca Wheel Difference to disabled children and young people in 2008.

Mecca clubs and online players around the UK will be hoping to raise £250,000 over the year-long partnership to support disabled children and help young people become more independent, through providing vital mobility equipment and wheelchair skills training.

Commenting on the launch of the partnership, Simon Wykes, managing director of Mecca Bingo, said: ‘Mecca Bingo is delighted to partner with Whizz-Kidz for 2008. We are looking forward to raising money to buy equipment, including powered wheelchairs that will give the children the fun and freedom they deserve.

‘Mecca clubs are at the heart of their local communities and we know our members and staff will have a lot of fun helping to make a difference, transforming the lives of young people and their families.’

Graham Kelly, director of fundraising at Whizz-Kidz, added: ‘We are thrilled that Mecca Bingo has chosen to support us – we believe the partnership will bring local people even closer together as they support disabled children to be more independent.

‘With around 70,000 kids nationally in need of vital mobility equipment, everyone will know someone in their community or family that could benefit from our work. So get fundraising and help Mecca Wheel Difference!’

It costs Whizz-Kidz an average of £9,000 to assess and provide a child with the right mobility equipment at the right time – and meet their individual needs. This includes qualified therapist support and wheelchair skills training to ensure children get the most from their equipment and learn essential road safety skills.

To find out more and help move a life forward, visit www.whizz-kidz.org.uk
G2E'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT.
NOW WITH MORE RETURN AND FAR LESS INVESTMENT.

MAXIMIZE YOUR R.O.I. WITH A SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR ATTENDEES OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

There's never been a better time to attend gaming's most important event. With the weak U.S. dollar, a strong Euro and a special G2E discount for attendees outside of the U.S. when you register for G2E 2008, a trip to Las Vegas has never made more sense for your bottom line. Come see the future of gaming with 750+ exhibitors and all-new breakthroughs, insights, 150+ cutting-edge conference sessions from the biggest names in the business, unmatched networking, and so much more! To learn more about this special offer and travel and hotel deals email dpress@globalgamingexpo.com.

For more information, go to www.globalgamingexpo.com.

NOVEMBER 18-20, 2008—LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER
NOVEMBER 17—G2E TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
NOVEMBER 17—G2E LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
NOVEMBER 17—CASINO DESIGN—NEW!

global.gaming.expo
An American Gaming Association Event
Organized by Reed Exhibitions

www.globalgamingexpo.com
It is pleasing to be able to bring the bingo industry some good news in these challenging times, which comes as a result of a successful battle about the rates assessments of bingo halls.

The impact of the ban on smoking in public places is well known to all bingo operators. It has hit admission numbers, revenue and the all-important ‘bottom line’. Gerald Eve, the Bingo Association’s retained rating adviser, made appeals seeking reductions in the rating assessments of our clients’ clubs effective from the dates when the bans came into force – 26 March 2006 in Scotland, 2 April 2007 in Wales and 1 July 2007 in England.

So far as clubs in England and Wales are concerned, the appeals were all rejected by the Government’s Valuation Office Agency (VOA). It claimed that rating law does not permit the smoking ban to be reflected in rating valuations, other than when undertaking a general rates revaluation (the next one due in April 2010). Our advice, supported by counsel, was that the ban should be reflected and the two leading operators, Gala Coral and Mecca Bingo, agreed to pool their efforts to challenge the VOA’s approach.

Word of warning
Test cases were set down for hearing at the Valuation Tribunal but shortly before they were heard, the VOA reconsidered its position and decided not to contest the cases. As a result, the appeals made seeking reduced assessments will be treated as valid, as will any future appeals submitted by those who have not yet appealed.

Having won the argument on the validity of smoking ban appeals, it should also prove possible to achieve additional savings following the changes to gaming regulations in September 2007, including the loss of Section 21 machines. In respect of both the smoking ban and S21 related appeals, it will be necessary to carefully consider the trading profile for each club in order to negotiate the lowest possible rates assessments. A word of caution though – there are some clubs whose assessments are currently too low and operators will need to be sure that seeking reductions due to smoking ban and S21 changes does not alert the VOA to any previous under-valuation.

The rate situation is not quite so advanced in Scotland despite the smoking ban arriving a year earlier. The initial 2005 revaluation assessments for Scottish bingo clubs have not yet been agreed with the local assessors. Any reductions that can be achieved will last until 1 April 2010 when all bingo clubs will be revalued along with all other non-domestic properties. The 2010 assessments will be based upon rental values and trading circumstances as at April 2008 and therefore should reflect the industry downturn.

Alternative uses
Many modern flat floor bingo clubs are now far too large for the business they are capable of generating today. The Chancellor’s refusal to reform ‘double taxation’ continues to pile on pressure. It is hardly surprising that operators have closed clubs, scaled back investment and all but eliminated the acquisition of new ones.

Operators are thinking about alternative uses for spare space, but such alternatives are rather limited given the leasehold nature of the industry’s modern flat floor estate. It is against this fragile background that we are not forecasting growth in rateable values between 2005 and 2010 for the bingo industry. The financial results of the forthcoming months will indicate whether falls in assessment should be expected.

Visit www.geraldeve.com to download Gerald Eve’s 2010 rating revaluation impact study.

Jerry Schurder, head of rating at Gerald Eve, chartered surveyors and property consultants, reports on some good news

The rate of rates

Turbo Touch Pro
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Mechanized Cash Bonus Games Wireless Play Portrait or Landscape view 10.4 inch or 7.5 Touchscreens

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Sales: 001-415-370-0929 Office: 001-510-562-8900
www.pacific-gaming.com
The smoking ban – 12 months on in England

Smoke Free England is officially one year old and follows in the footsteps of Wales (14 months) and Scotland (two years-plus).

The impact of the legislation was always expected to hit bingo harder than many other sectors, due to the high proportion of smokers in the licensed bingo customer base.

Despite this, the industry was, and remains, fully committed to the aims of the legislation, which supports a healthier population.

The impact of implementation has cost the industry dearly, but has resulted in a more supportive environment for them to quit smoking.

Official statistics collected by the Information Centre for Health and Social Care show an unprecedented increase in demand for local NHS stop smoking services in the months preceding and immediately following the introduction of smoke-free legislation in England.

The key results show:

- Nearly 234,060 people quit smoking with the help of local NHS Stop Smoking Services between April and December 2007.
- More than half of the 462,690 who used the service reported that they were still smoke-free at their four-week follow-up.
- This is a 22 per cent increase in the number of successful quitters and a 23 per cent increase in the number of people setting a quit date through local NHS Stop Smoking Services compared to the same period in 2006/07.

Smokefree compliance

Since 1 July 2007, local authorities have continued with their compliance-building work, carrying out enforcement inspections based on risk and, where possible, combined with other regulatory inspections to reduce burdens on businesses.

The Department of Health has commissioned the Local Government Analysis and Research organisation (LGAR) to collect data from local authorities on their smoke-free compliance inspections carried out since 1 July 2007.

In the first nine months of the legislation, local authorities inspected a total of 390,148 premises and 63,532 vehicles required under the law to be smoke-free, and found:

- 98.2 per cent were smoke-free, complying with the requirements of the law.
- 87.2 per cent were displaying the correct no-smoking signage.
- Smoke-free compliance has remained consistently high since inspections began, while compliance with signage requirements has steadily increased as a result of compliance building activity by local authorities.

Over the nine months since 1 July 2007, data shows little regional variation in the smoke-free compliance rate, ranging from 97.7 per cent in the North West and South West to 98.7 per cent in the North East. Signage compliance ranged from 84.1 per cent in the South West to 92.7 per cent in the North East.

During the nine months from July 2007 to March 2008 there were:

- 49 fixed penalty notices issued and eight court hearings for signage offences.
- 477 fixed penalty notices issued and eight court hearings for the offence of individuals smoking in a smoke-free premises or vehicle.
- 19 court hearings for the offence of failing to prevent smoking in a smoke-free premises or vehicle (fixed penalty notices are not available for this offence).

The latest compliance report is available to download at www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/files / dhs01_03_smokefree_report _period_8_v1.pdf

Smoke-free England compliance line

Members of the public can call the smoke-free compliance line on 0800 587 1667 to report possible breaches of the law. This information is passed to local authorities to follow up as appropriate. The compliance line received a total of 7,173 calls in the nine months from July 2007 to March 2008, resulting in 2,163 alleged breaches being passed to local authorities.

The majority of calls were received in the first month and quickly declined to around 20 calls a day, with an average of five or six alleged breaches being passed to local authorities each day. This downward trend in call rates suggests that compliance levels are high.

The discrepancy between the total number of calls made and those passed on to local councils is due to the fact that some calls did not contain details of any alleged breach of the legislation or in some cases incomplete data was supplied, which meant the report could not be correctly matched to a local authority. There have also been some calls to the compliance line seeking information.

Clearly, the legislation is being policed thoroughly, both through official channels and through the opportunity for individuals to report breaches, with these breaches being acted upon.
YOU’VE NEVER SEEN BINGO NUMBERS THIS BIG!

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What's more, as each of the handheld devices is essentially a state-of-the-art touchpad computer, our technology is also pretty big - combining the very latest expertise with our constant forward-thinking upgrades.

In short, we are the only company that can give your customers the "big screen" interactive experience. But that doesn't mean big prices. We think you’ll be pleasantly surprised by what big value our systems can be...

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• Big in variety  • Big in value
• Big in content  • Big in entertainment

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Steve Rice – Head of UK Operations.

T 020 7395 1510  •  M 07962 611729  •  E srice@timeplay.com
The third annual online bingo summit took place in London on 17 and 18 June and what a difference a year makes! The inaugural summit in 2006 was a small and low-key affair, as online bingo was just starting to really take off. Last year saw greater numbers attend, but it was 2008 in which conference organiser, Bullet Business, put the event on the map with an ambitious programme of presenters.

The two-day programme offered a broad range of speakers on specialist subjects, covering everything from legal issues to developing markets, via technology and customer retention. The event was crowned by a dinner and awards ceremony, compered by champion bingo caller Peter Lewis. Running throughout the event was a small exhibition, which included vendors Virtue Fusion, Boss Media, Entraction, Net Net, Play’n’Go and Games Marketing.

Proceedings got under way with an introduction from Event Chairman Phil Fraser, founder of Which Bingo, and saw the first part of the morning given over to four leading operators giving their views and thoughts on the 12 months ahead. This was followed by a session on emerging trends, led by Parlay Entertainment Senior Vice-president Peter Trinz.

A coffee break and a chance to network was followed by two case study presentations, the first by Simon Collins, from Cashcade/Foxy Bingo, exploring the route from TV remote to PC mouse, followed by Irene Gahan, from Rehab Bingo, providing a view of the Irish market.

Lunch was an enjoyable and noisy affair, as colleagues caught up and new alliances were forged, leading seamlessly into a section titled ‘Online Bingo Speed Networking’.

No, delegates were not all sat at laptops and virtually herded into a bingo chat room. The talk was an opportunity for those attending to scan the delegate list and seek introductions to those they wished to meet.

Staying with the chat theme, the next formal session explored chat room moderation, followed by an exploration of affiliate management and innovation, with panel members from Income Access, Crown Bingo, Bingo Base, Loquax and Bingo.org.uk.

Winners:

**Best portal:** WhichBingo

**Best newcomer:** PaddyPower

**Best Affiliate program:** Income Access

**Online Bingo Software:** Parlay

**Best Marketing:** Foxy

**Innovation:** Parlay/ bingo bets

**Best operator:** Foxy

Surfing straight to the top – third Annual Online Bingo Summit

Immediately before the afternoon coffee and networking break, Sky Bet’s Head of Bingo, Stuart McArthy, gave an informative and thought-provoking presentation on the crossover between online and iTV. This was particularly timely in light of the then recent launch of ITV’s free play TV bingo programme.

This new and free-to-play show follows quickly on the heels of Bingo Lotto’s failure and raises questions around whether people really want to play bingo this way and questions the show’s long-term aim. McArthy observed that it could be a means by which to collect data and players for ITV’s online game and if so ITV was well placed to harness the power of television directly into online. Such
a model would also be viable for Sky, but no hints were made at this time.

Day one was brought to a close with a cocktail reception, before dinner where the Online Awards were announced by veteran champion bingo caller Peter Lewis.

There were one or two tight heads for day two as Phil Fraser kicked the day off. Day two offered a less operationally focused schedule, with the morning exploring market consolidation and understanding customers, while the afternoon addressed the broader regulatory framework and future market development.

The online gaming licences, tax and regulatory panel saw representatives from BLP Partners, Harris Hagan, Campbell Hooper and Tarlo Lyons put forth their views on UK regulation and take questions from the floor. There was a clear and consistent message from all panelists that remote gaming operators would be wise to ensure they remain remote in respect of the UK for quite some time. The regulatory and tax structures do not make it efficient for operators to be based onshore and in view of the debacle the government has faced with drafting and implementation of the new Gambling Act, there is unlikely to be an appetite for substantive further change any time soon.

A more practical issue was that of advertising. Having been afforded this new freedom under the 2005 Act, codes and conditions were making it increasingly difficult for operators to take advantage of this without falling foul of the Advertising Standards Authority.

The panel were asked for their view on the fact that the National Lottery was currently allowed to reside outside these restrictions and as such is not considered gambling – ‘ludicrous’ and ‘ridiculous’ were the two most popular responses, as all felt that the Lottery was quite clearly gambling, regardless of whether it supported good causes or not, and as such should be subject to the same regulation and restrictions as other gambling products.

The legal theme continued after a break, exploring online gambling laws across Europe, leading into the last session, which provided a detailed market focus on Scandinavia.

It is clear from the increase in attendance and programme scope that online bingo is rapidly coming of age as this event becomes ever more popular and professional in its presentation. We look forward to 2009!

**GAMBLING COMMISSION**

**Birmingham**

**Managing Regulatory Risk**

**National Compliance Manager Bingo and Remote Gambling**

C.£45,000 pa (more may be available for an exceptional candidate)

The Gambling Commission is the non-departmental public body established to facilitate, implement and enforce the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005. The Commission is empowered to safeguard the public interest by keeping crime out of gambling, protecting children and vulnerable people, and ensuring the open and transparent operation of the gambling industry.

We are now seeking to recruit a National Compliance Manager for the bingo industry following the departure of the previous holder of the post to a senior compliance role within the industry.

Key functions of this role include becoming the Commission’s in-house lead advisor on non remote bingo and supporting the Commission’s remote work to ensure large scale gambling operators comply with the Gambling Act’s provisions, liaison with the relevant trade bodies including the Bingo Association and assisting the Commission’s policy team to develop regulatory policy in this area.

For this role, you must have an excellent knowledge of the bingo industry and how gambling legislation and the wider regulatory framework impacts on the bingo industry. It is also essential that you have outstanding communication and influencing skills, plus the ability to build effective working relationships with senior managers within the gambling industry. Some knowledge of e-business and relevant technical standards is desirable.

In return we offer you a range of benefits including the opportunity to join the Civil Service pension arrangements.

For further information and details on how to apply please visit the ‘Careers’ section of our website www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk Alternatively, if you do not have access to the Internet please call 0121 230 6500.

Closing date: 25 July 2008.

Please note: This position will require you to undergo security clearance.
Parlay Entertainment and Chartwell Technology have made an agreement to launch an online bingo network that use elements of both partners’ products.

The result will be an internet platform that combines Parlay’s front-end bingo product with Chartwell’s back-end administration system, with both parties also contributing a variety of slots and other soft games to the platform.

The European-facing network will be based in Malta and managed by Chartwell.

Scott White, president and CEO of Parlay Entertainment, said: ‘This is a huge win for licencees and bingo players alike. By combining the strengths of Parlay’s industry-leading bingo games with Chartwell’s advanced administration system and network operations expertise, we’re creating a very compelling bingo network solution. Player excitement will grow exponentially as bingo sites pool their liquidity to create bigger games, huge jackpots and lively communities.’

Darold H Parken, president and CEO of Chartwell, said: ‘The respective strengths of Chartwell and Parlay are a perfect fit, so it’s natural for us to work together to build a new European bingo network. Online bingo continues to reach new heights in the UK and Europe and we’re excited to become serious players in the bingo business under our relationship with Parlay and the Bingo Nexus brand.’
**Site** | **Software** | **Network**
--- | --- | ---
Bingomania.co.uk | Parlay | Stand-alone
Bingorania.co.uk | Parlay | Stand-alone
Bings.co.uk | Parlay | Stand-alone
Big Heart Bingo | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Bingo Boogle.co.uk | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Bingo Tonic | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Gardening Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
MagicFM Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Mother and Baby Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
New Woman Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Top Sante Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Winingo | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Yours Bingo (Emap) | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
PaddyPowerBingo | Parlay | TGN (The Gaming Network)
Kiwi Bingo.co.uk | Playtech | Playtech BingoLand Network
Ruby Bingo.co.uk | Playtech | Playtech BingoLand Network
Mapalabingo | Playtech | Playtech BingoLand Network
BlackpoolBingo.co.uk | Proprietary Software | Stand-alone
Gala Bingo.co.uk | Proprietary Software | Stand-alone
Bingo Rooms | ProWager Systems | BingoRoom Network
Bingo Today | ProWager Systems | BingoRoom Network
Bingo101 | ProWager Systems | BingoRoom Network
Daily Star Bingo | ProWager Systems | BingoRoom Network
UK Bingo Room | ProWager Systems | BingoRoom Network
Free Bingo.co.uk | ProWager Systems | Stand-alone
bingo UK | QuadCard Entertainment | Stand-alone
Sun Bingo | Tombola | Sun/News of the World Network*
NOTWbingo | Tombola | Sun/News of the World Network*
Bingo Loopys.co.uk | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Crazy Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Crown Bingo.com | Virtue Fusion | bb network
BingoGo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Simply Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Easy Odds Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Gems Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Scott Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Jackpot Bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
321bingo | Virtue Fusion | bb network
Blue Square Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Mecca Games | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Mecca Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Ladbrokes Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
River Belle Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Jackpot City | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
William Hill Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Bet365 | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Take A Break Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Vernons Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Bingo Crazy | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Sky Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Virtue Fusion Network
Bona Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Fruit Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Carlton Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Capito Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Buckingham Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Beach Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Bgl® Gaming | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Corin Bing | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Arnett Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Loo Leisure | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network
Flutters Bingo | Virtue Fusion | Bonanza Network

**KEY COMPANIES IN ONLINE BINGO**
- virtuefusion.com | Virtue Fusion
- Bingo Networks | Bingo Networks Alderney
- bb networks | Better Bingo Network
- ParlayGroup.com | Parlay Entertainment
- stminver.com | St Minver
- thegamingnetwork.com | The Gaming Network
- playtech.com | Playtech
- chartwellgames.com | Chartwell Technology Inc
- bingotek.com | Bingotek
- gamesyscorporate.com | Gamesys
- aquagaming.com | Aqua Gaming

This guide is not a definitive list of bingo sites but aims to show key sites and indicate the software on which they operate. Information is correct to the best of our knowledge but please notify us of any omissions or errors.

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**European i-Gaming Congress 2008**

Clarion Gaming, organiser of the European iGaming Congress & Expo (EiG), has announced an exceptional keynote speaker line-up for EiG 2008, featuring leading experts from both in and outside of the gaming industry.

Speakers will give presentations on a variety of topical issues surrounding the online gaming space, including technology, economics, media, branding and player experience.

EiG is renowned for playing host to the industry’s most valuable gathering and providing the best platform for learning, debate and networking.

This year’s conference looks set to be no exception with seven of the gaming world’s leading CEOs, including Jim Ryan of PartyGaming, Jez San of PKR and Mor Weizer of Playtech, providing insights during the three-day conference and exhibition.

EiG will take place between 23 to 25 September 2008.

For more details of the programme and registration, visit www.eigexpo.com
## Legislation update

**CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

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**PEOPLE 1st**

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**ABBREVIATIONS FOR TABLE ABOVE**

G.C. Gambling Commission
DCMS Department for Culture Media and Sport
C.A.P. Committee for Advertising Practice
DoH Department of Health
W. Ass. Welsh Assembly
G.A.2005 Gambling Act 2005
H.A.2005 Health Act 2005
D.C.A. Department for Constitutional Affairs
S.E. Scottish Executive
H.M.T Treasury

For further information, visit the Bingo Association website at www.bingo-association.co.uk
The DCMS delivers

Hopes had been raised, dashed, and raised again in respect of an announcement from the DCMS on B3 machines. The issue is just one of a number of areas that have been holding back bingo and is a key plank in the Association’s lobbying activities. Although an impending announcement had been rumoured several times, it appears that last gasp lobbying by other sectors was being addressed.

More than 50 days past the Minister’s speech at the AGM in April, any chances of an announcement before the summer recess looked unlikely and gave rise to concerted media activity from the Association. However, on Wednesday, 25 June the much-promised announcement was made by Minister Gerry Sutcliffe, who did indeed make good on the comments he had delivered at the Association AGM.

‘In recent months I have received a range of representations from trade bodies in the gambling industry seeking changes to the regulatory regime for gaming machines established by the Gambling Act 2005 (the Act), and implemented by secondary legislation from 1 September 2007.

‘A number of honourable members have expressed support for the campaigns led by the Bingo Association and the British Amusement Catering Trades Association (BACTA), I wish now to report to the House the government’s response.’

The Minister then proceeded to address a number of issues and sector concerns starting with Section 16 and 21 machines, stating that ‘there seems little value in prolonging the debate now. The current legal position is beyond doubt’. He went on to mention that principal trade bodies, including the Association and BACTA, had played a full role throughout the passage the Gambling Act, before going on to specifically talk about bingo.

The Minister stated: ‘I have concluded that there is strong evidence that the situation in the bingo industry has been particularly acute. Between 31 March 2004 and 31 March 2007 the number of bingo clubs operating fell from 696 to 634. A further 37 clubs closed during 2007/08.

‘Colleagues in the House will recognise that bingo clubs fulfilled an important social function in many communities. The 2007 Henley Report, commissioned by the Bingo Association, found that for many people, especially older and retired women, bingo is the main or sole leisure pursuit outside of the home. Despite the range of deregulatory measures that we have already introduced to assist the industry, it is clear the future of bingo clubs in many communities is under threat.

‘I am persuaded that a number of other special circumstances apply to bingo. These include the fact that under the industry’s business model there is high demand for machines during short periods of the day, which may impair the fair and open conduct of gambling.

‘I have also noted two additional points made by the Bingo Association that:

- while in recognition of the enhanced social responsibilities imposed by the Act, casinos, betting shops and adult gaming centres (AGCs) received an enhanced gaming machine entitlement, bingo halls retained the same machine entitlement as under the Gaming Act 1968; and,

- bingo halls provide a softer gambling environment in which gaming machines are ancillary to bingo.

‘The Bingo Association has argued that, to help arrest the decline, the number of Category B3 machines (£1 maximum stake, £500 maximum prize), which bingo halls are permitted should increase from four currently to as many as 16. In my view this goes too far. An increase of this proportion would be inconsistent with the precautionary approach that the government has taken to gambling regulation.

‘Nevertheless, I am persuaded that the situation facing the bingo industry is sufficiently grave, and the circumstances surrounding bingo sufficiently distinct, to justify considering whether a smaller increase might be appropriate without jeopardising our principal priority, which remains to protect the public.

‘For this reason, I have decided to consult on a proposal to increase to eight the number of Category B3 machines which bingo clubs may offer. This enhanced entitlement will only apply to bingo halls which operate a strict over 18s entry policy. If, in the light of public consultation we decide to proceed, we will bring forward the necessary Order. This will be for Parliament to approve by means of an affirmative resolution.’

In addition to this measure the Minister also announced the re-instatement of the triennial review that grew up under custom and practice under the old Act and raised concern over the potential conflict on multiple licensing of sites. Calls for reform by BACTA were firmly rebuffed on the grounds that there had been ‘little in the way of convincing evidence submitted’.

This much-needed revision to the Gambling Act addresses the loss of machines that bingo clubs suffered when it was implemented in September 2007 and will restore bingo clubs’ entitlement to levels before the Act took effect.

The proposed measures will provide all bingo clubs – large and small – with the opportunity to restore customers in the range of machines they have previously enjoyed, enabling clubs to more readily respond to the challenging trading environment and the inequity of the double tax burden that remains in place for bingo and continues to threaten the future of clubs in the UK.

Speaking on behalf of The Bingo Association, Chief Executive Paul Talboys said: ‘The announcement marks the end of a long and frustrating wait, but the Minister has been supportive and sympathetic to the industry’s situation throughout, and we are grateful for the fact that he has clearly listened to our case.

‘We believe the announcement will go some way to addressing the adverse position bingo operates under and will help to ensure that bingo remains part of the social and leisure landscape in the UK.

‘Naturally, our hope is that this can be implemented as soon as practicably possible, as the future of many clubs depends upon it.’
Commission seeks new compliance expert for bingo

by John Travers, Communications Manager, Gambling Commission

The Gambling Commission is seeking to appoint a National Compliance Manager for Bingo (see p13).

The appointee will join a team of National Compliance Managers at the Commission’s head office in Birmingham following the recent departure of the previous postholder who has taken a senior compliance role within the bingo industry.

There are National Compliance Managers for each industry sector. The bingo role is centred on being the lead adviser to the Commission on compliance issues on bingo. National Compliance Managers also carry out formal compliance visits to larger operators and provide advice to the industry on the regulatory regime. The postholder will ensure the Commission keeps pace with the impact of new technology in the bingo sector. The Commission expects operators to carry out their own regulatory risk assessments, but the National Compliance Manager also has a part to play in the necessary and constructive debate with the industry on questions of compliance.

This role will involve a great deal of interaction with the Bingo Association. Nick Tofiluk, the Commission’s Director of Operations, said: ‘We have a constructive and co-operative relationship with the bingo industry, not least through the Association and the new National Compliance Manager for Bingo will be expected to build on this.

‘We’re looking for someone who understands the industry and has extensive experience of dealing with businesses, public and regulatory agencies, in an advisory capacity. They’ll also need the ability to interpret and apply legal provisions to complex situations and to understand the role of risk focused regulatory work while being a first-class communicator,’ he added.

Subscribe to Bingo Link

Subscription to Bingo Link is free for those who work in the gaming and leisure industry.

If you would like to receive your own personal copy, please complete this form and send it to: Bingo Link, Lexham House, 75 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1JF.

Alternatively, you can subscribe from the website at www.bingo-association.co.uk or by emailing your full name, company name and full postal address including post/zip code to bingolink@bingo-association.co.uk

Title
Name/Initial
Surname
Company name
Company address
Town
County/state
Post/zip code
Country
Nature of business

EUBINGO appoints new president

EUBINGO, the Federation of European Bingo Associations, has appointed Javier Franch Cardona of Spain, president of the Spanish Association of Bingo Entrepreneurs CEJ, as president of the federation, for a two-year term.

He replaces outgoing president Sir Peter Fry, who is chairman of The Bingo Association. Sir Peter takes up the vice-presidency.

Thanking Sir Peter Fry for his unstinting dedication to the federation over the past two years, Javier Franch Cardona said he looked forward to continuing the solid work done by the federation on behalf of its members.

During the federation’s AGM, a common position on online gambling and a code of conduct on responsible gambling were agreed. The Federation also confirmed its commitment for the establishment of a European Social Dialogue table for gambling, and agreed on the continuous monitoring of developments in gaming regulation, on involvement at EU level on a potential gambling directive and on recruitment of new member associations from other member states.

‘2008-2010 look set to present the bingo sector with very specific challenges, not least in the form of continued smoking bans, providing for responsible gaming and competition from other forms of gaming – we at EUBINGO look forward to these challenges,’ said Javier Franch Cardona.

Sir Peter Fry and the new president, Javier Franch Cardona

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