

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF GAMBLING NEWSLETTER
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Papers

Page

Rachel Dixey: Bingo - 'The only place to go'	1
Nigel Payne: Cable TV and Betting	8
Recent Developments	13
Literary Gamblers (3)	15
Update	16
Gambling periodicals	18
Notices	19

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The Society for the Study of Gambling was formed in 1977 to provide a forum for those concerned with research into gambling, to promote its scientific study especially as far as the psychological, social and economic aspects are concerned, and to inform and educate the public about these matters.

The membership of the Society is drawn from a wide circle of people who have an interest in various aspects of gambling. They range from social workers and psychiatrists who deal with 'compulsive gamblers', to members of the gambling industry. It is a condition of the Society that there should be freedom of opinion and practice among its members so that the Society does not take any particular stance in relation to gambling.

The Society holds regular scientific meetings which have, so far, always taken place in London. Further information concerning the Society can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.

Papers are reproduced in the Newsletter as a record of the Society's proceedings and are not subject to scrutiny by referees. Their appearance here is not intended as an alternative to publication in a learned journal. Any of the standard reference systems is acceptable.

BINGO: 'THE ONLY PLACE TO GO'

Rachel Dixey*

My research hoped to remedy two deficiencies; firstly, there was little research into women's leisure, and secondly little was known about who plays bingo and why. Roughly following these two areas, I divided the research into two: the first half, a community study, was carried out in Armley, Leeds, to find out how people, particularly women, spend their leisure time, what women actually mean by 'leisure', and how women's leisure relates to the rest of their lives. The second half of the study was an extensive, nationwide survey of bingo players; in total 7,166 questionnaires were completed, in bingo clubs from Edinburgh to Brighton at 80 different sessions in bingo clubs. Thirty-one questions, on such things as how much money is spent, how often bingo is played, etc., were asked.

The first task, however, was to draw together the published statistics on bingo playing, mainly from the Gaming Board, Target Group Index, General Household Survey, and a few other studies. There was not a large number of statistics which were useful - the Gaming Board collects interesting but limited statistics, the TGI is interested mainly in consumer behaviour, etc., so there was a data gap.

The second task was to read the literature, in the area of leisure studies, community studies, women's studies and studies of gambling. I was interested primarily not in bingo as a form of gambling but in bingo as part of the leisure lives of working class women, as the statistics showed that bingo, at least in commercial clubs, was overwhelmingly a woman's game and a working class game. After reading the literature, I found that general theories about gambling behaviour didn't produce satisfactory explanations for the importance of gambling to sub-groups of the population. Such theories tended to treat non-gamblers as though they were significantly different from gamblers, to treat all forms of gambling as though they were alike, and didn't explain the social form that gambling took. The emphasis in the literature on the psychology of gambling meant that the situational determinants of behaviour were not analysed and neither was the availability or prominence of gambling outlets taken into consideration. It seemed that the focus on individual behaviour and on those for whom gambling is a

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problem had obscured the ways in which regular, small-scale gambling fitted into the class culture of particular communities.

In other words, pathological explanations could not fully account for the six million who play bingo regularly. Yet these are the types of explanation found in the popular press, echoing Chaucer's theme of the fourteenth century ('Gaming is the mother of all lies, And of deceit and Cursed villainies'). The Glasgow Evening Times wrote in 1980,

It (bingo) is a world of deceit and ruin, when the prayed for 'big win' is worshipped... And where nothing is sacred if it can be sold for betting money.

In the early 1960s the Soviet paper Izvestia described the bingo boom as a 'national catastrophe', and the Times called it a 'cretinous pastime'.

Without spending too much time describing bingo, one can make four summarizing points:

- 1 It was the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act which allowed bingo to 'take off'.
- 2 Large numbers of people play; daily attendance is approximately 412,000; 85% of players in commercial bingo clubs are women.
- 3 It is a profitable business, dominated by a small number of large companies which also have other leisure interests. The large companies are concerned however, by a relative decline in bingo playing.
- 4 The Gaming Board has a large say in the form bingo takes. It wishes to emphasise the social side of the game, to keep it firmly separated from hard gaming, and to develop it as a neighbourly game played for small stakes.

This may imply that bingo was new, and in some respects it was. However, it is possible to see bingo as representing an historical continuity in terms of:

- a working class female gambling; women are certainly not new to gambling - various authors have commented how betting increased particularly among women in the first world war.
- b The commercial provision of leisure; dating from, for example, the 1884 establishment of Mecca, when working class games and pastimes had been restructured by urbanization and industrialization and people became consumers, not producers, of leisure.
- c The game itself is not new. Forms of games with numbers go back at least to the sixteenth century. The way in which games are structured reflects the society in which they're found, thus in our capitalist society bingo is structured to produce profit.

We can therefore understand bingo as part of an historical continuity, but of course, bingo did take off in a very big way in the 1960s. We can, I believe, locate the explanation for its take off in these factors:

- 1 The nature of women's roles, particularly that of 'housewife', and the nature of housework.
- 2 The form of the working class community and the nature of working class relationships.
- 3 The control of leisure provision.

To take the last point first, it's essential when we're thinking about leisure to remember that, although we equate leisure with freedom of choice, free time, lack of constraint, etc., this can produce a false picture. People don't have a range of leisure options to choose from: people make decisions from within the constraints under which they live.

Stan Parker in 1976 made the point that people who are exploited at work may find it difficult to avoid being exploited in their leisure. It is logical since the same power structures exist in both spheres. This simple logic rarely provides the starting point for the discussion of leisure. However, it is fairly obvious that those sections of society with limited economic and political power are no more 'free' to choose their leisure activities than they are to choose their housing, jobs, incomes, types of medical treatment, education, etc.

Leisure choices are constrained not only by lack of economic and political power and by what is thought appropriate for each sex, class and age group, but also by the leisure industry, which shapes demand and can restructure or close facilities without reference to the served community.

Returning to the first point, housework has become more isolated - isolation has been described as one of the main ways in which women experience oppression in the 1980s. That housework is work yet is not 'counted' by society as work, provides a central contradiction in the lives of women. Not only does it undervalue and minimize what women do, but it throws up ambiguities in relation to leisure in a society where leisure is seen as a reward for work. Housework means:

- 1 Women are always 'on call' - work time blurs into leisure time and women want activities outside the home so that they can really get away from work.
- 2 Women's total role means that they feel they can't take off too much time so they need activities which are not too time consuming.
- 3 Women can't commit themselves to regular activities (e.g. evening classes) if they have young children so they require flexible activities.

- 4 women's leisure spending is the first to be hit in hard times, so cheap activities are needed.
- 5 women's leisure has to be acceptable to husbands.

It is argued that bingo successfully overcomes these constraints, and also fits in with working class patterns of sociability, my second point above.

The working class community has undergone enormous changes in the past thirty years. The most visible signs of change are the vast rehousing schemes which in the 1960s disrupted the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the community by moving families out to new housing estates or to high-rise flats. Although it is now realized that it is far better to rebuild on the same sites, the physical restructuring resulted in a reduction of semi-public space, leaving just the private space of the house and the totally public space of the wider community. The semi-public space, in which interaction within the neighbourhood community took place, was lacking. The street life, the wash-house, the corner shop were missed, particularly by who are still excluded from the masculine semi-public space of the pub, except when accompanied by other men.

At the simplest level, therefore, it can be argued that the bingo club provided the right kind of setting for the non-intimate companionship which characterizes the working class community. During the course of the research bingo was often referred to as the only place where women can walk in on their own and feel comfortable. It was often described as 'the only place to go':

I've got these kids and I've nowhere else to go. It's the only thing I get to do.

There certainly was a dearth of activities in the community, and particularly of those where women felt able to go of their own:

I know I'm not going to get accosted by a perfect stranger... a lot of women think the same because you get a lot of women going in on their own... you can drink and you can have a laugh and you're safe...

Apart from being the 'only' thing to do, players found it difficult to articulate the reasons for playing. Reasons centred on social contact and winning, but priority could not be given to either:

I'm not here to win really: if I win, good enough, but I'm here for the company and relaxation.

The elderly in particular use the club as a point of contact, often their only point of contact, with other people. Younger women tended to discuss their involvement in

bingo in negative terms, as a need to get out of the house, 'for a bit of sanity,' away from the kids.

Although 61% of the bingo players in the community study did regard bingo as gambling, it is not seen in the same way as betting or playing on the one-armed bandit:

They can turn round and say they've lost £12 (playing on a one-armed bandit), well there's no way I can lose £12 sitting here.

The minority who play the fruit machines are regarded as the gamblers; women who spend a lot on them and on mechanized cash bingo are heavily criticised, in the same way that non-bingo players criticise bingo players. (In the national survey 26% played on the fruit machines and 38% played mechanized cash bingo or other interval games.)

For most players, bingo is not a gamble, in fact the same amount is spent each session; the outlay is known and is not exceeded. The cost of bingo is not off-set against winnings, but rather, against the cost of other activities.

There are far too many figures in the research report to mention many here. However, to report a few:

- 47% of the women in the community study sample play bingo, either in working men's clubs, or commercial clubs, or social clubs, etc;
- of the national survey (7,166 respondents) 84% were women, and 70% came from households where the main breadwinner was in manual work;
- 1.2% came from households where the main breadwinner was in a professional occupation (compared with 16% in the general population);
- 95% of players play at least once a week, 77% twice a week;
- 75% play on the same night or nights of the week;
- usual amount spent is £3 per session; 2.6% spend more than £10 per session, with the biggest spenders those in the 36-45 age group and in non-manual occupations;
- 32% of players are retired, 25% housewives, 36% employed and 6% unemployed.

Although people usually go to bingo on the same nights each week and the session begins and ends at a certain time, there is a large amount of flexibility afforded to players. It is possible to vary the frequency of playing, the choice

of companions and level of interaction outside the club. whilst there is flexibility and the possibility of limited and casual commitment, bingo is also an immense ritual, with a great deal of routine behaviour. The game itself is a routine which, rather than resisting, people use to create their own precise routines to fit. The older players in particular arrive at a certain time each week, and 76% of the players said they always like to sit in the same seat. Having one's 'own' seat allows greater control over choice of neighbours.

The research suggests that bingo clubs provide, for a minority of players, their only source of companionship. This minority comprises mainly older players who do not belong to the church or other organizations and who do not see family members on a regular basis. However, the bingo club was used to arrange meetings with family members. Comments from elderly people, such as 'Bingo is my lifeline', 'It's the only thing which keeps me going', were frequently heard. It can be suggested that the bingo club provides a valuable social network in an age when other social and caring networks have failed.

It is not only for the elderly, who would otherwise be lonely, that bingo clubs fill a 'genuine social need' (to quote the Royal Commission on Gambling). For women of all ages the bingo club provides a largely female environment where women can chat about what concerns them, and where the sexual innuendo (jokes directed at the male caller for example) is under their control and, in contrast to everyday experience, not directed at them.

It is easy, when players themselves emphasise aspects of bingo such as companionship and having a night out, to forget the game itself. It can be suggested that the popularity of a game of pure chance arises from the fact that it requires no skill, there can be no criticism for failing to win and neither can one's confidence be undermined, because the result had nothing to do with one's own efforts.

I'll finish off with the final paragraphs from the report:

The significance of bingo lies not in the game itself - a simple game of calling out numbers and ticking them off, with a prize to the first person to tick off all the numbers. Rather, bingo is a cypher to which different groups attach meaning and content. To members of the middle and upper classes it may still be pernicious, symbolic of the decadence and apocalyptic powers of popular culture.

To the Government, bingo represents a substantial source of revenue. Further, it can be argued that bingo saves the Government expenditure on community care. Bingo provides a living for large numbers of people, not only for the businessmen who own Britain's 1,600 clubs and their 2,019 managers, but also for the several tens of thousands of staff employed.

To the players, bingo is an unremarkable fact of life, a home from home, an invaluable source of companionship, a refuge which offers excitement. It is not surprising that 84% of players are women, given the options bestowed on them by virtue of their gender and class. The future of bingo is dependent not only on changes in the leisure market and in the state of the economy but also on changes in the allocation of gender roles. For the present, bingo is an activity adopted and fashioned within the limitations of an imposed structure by those not in an economically, politically or socially dominant position. Bingo is used to give expression and meaning to that position; it is also a most important means of coming to terms with that position and making it more attractive.

The full report is available from the author (address above) at £8.00.

CABLE TV AND BETTING

Nigel Payne*

Recent Landmarks in Cable TV in UK

Pilot schemes authorised in March 1981 - feature film service by subscription offered to approximately 250,000 homes.

February 1982: Cabinet Committee Report recommending enquiry.

October 1982: Hunt Report published, recommending rapid development of Cable for television and home services.

April 1983: Government White Paper published which in the main endorsed findings of Lord Hunt.

Existing cable operators entitled to offer commercial cable services to an anticipated 1.8 million homes in total.

First eleven franchise applications announced in the last week of November 1983, maximum homes per application is 100,000.

Cable Authority to be set up by mid-1984.

Franchise areas to be increased to 500,000 homes per application - new franchises awarded. It is anticipated that by 1988 only 8% of the approximately 20 million homes in the UK will be linked to Cable Television, which will rise to 11% by 1990.

From the foregoing it can be seen that despite Government pressure in the early days we are now in a period of 'limbo'. The Cable and Broadcasts Bill is not yet law; nor is the Telecommunications Bill. There is therefore no Cable Authority and none of the eleven franchises have their licence to operate.

Additionally the capital allowance situation is far from satisfactory and major questions are being asked, particularly by those with major risk capital.

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In a recent research survey a somewhat pessimistic appraisal suggested that the number of homes cabled in the UK could actually be less in 1990 than in 1980, with old systems disappearing and new systems slow to take up.

The UK racing scene

In the UK there are 59 racecourses (compared with 3 in New York State). These 59 racecourses staged 990 fixtures in 1983, an average of just under 17 per course. (In the US a track would run a minimum of 100 days in a year.) Of these 59 courses, 16 are contracted to either ITV or BBC for regular TV coverage and some of the others have ad hoc coverage. Racing receives over 300 hours of broadcast TV coverage per annum - far, far more than any other country in the world.

Racecourses are in the main, unprofitable; some impoverished and privately supported, while racing is now almost entirely run for the benefit of the off course bookmaker, a phenomenon unique to the UK.

In 1983 the betting turnover was well in excess of £3,000 million, the major share of which was taken in the 11,000 UK betting shops. There is an 8% tax to the Treasury (none of which goes to racing) and a levy on betting of around 0.9%, which yielded approximately £19 million in 1983. This is collected by the Horserace Betting Levy Board and redistributed to racing to cover security services, prize money, daily grants and loans for capital expenditure.

This extraordinary situation is unlike anywhere else in the world. In the majority of countries, the main betting is 'on track' or via a totalisator which is operated in conjunction with the track. The yield to track or its controlling group would be around 6% of turnover. Three weeks ago Churchill Downs handled \$5.5 million on the Kentucky Derby - some return to the track!

Such is the predicament of the English racecourse. And yet we are in a thriving industry with wealthy breeders throughout the world, top trainers running highly profitable enterprises, major bookmaking groups returning regular record profits. On the other hand we see stable lads threatening a strike to get wages above £80 per week and racecourses relying on subsidy to race and being told when and at what time to race.

Cable TV and racing

For us in racing, Cable TV offers a new and exciting challenge:

Facing is in need of new sources of income.

Existing television contractors are cutting back on coverage because of low racing audience ratings relative to other programming. Cable television is seen as the viable alternative and one regularly promoted via the national press.

The TV rights paid to a racecourse are fairly minimal as a percentage of the total cost. The audience is regular but not large in advertising rating terms (up to 1 million mid-week). It is also male, older and 'down market' and in a recent survey in the Yorkshire and North East area racing was listed as only the thirteenth most popular sport on TV. With such a hard-core, selective audience a pay TV cable service is the logical answer.

Racing is an all-year round sport, a 'National' sport, and one regularly promoted via the national press.

Betting opportunities exist now - shops or credit - and will develop via interactive facilities in the late 1980s.

There is considerable overseas interest in satellite transmission.

Racing is ready for cable and is negotiating with operators and channel providers. Racing can provide its own high quality product at one-fifth the cost of network outside broadcast.

What has to be determined?

- 1 Will the racing industry, and primarily racecourses, benefit from cable TV income?
- 2 Does the public want such a service? (It is presumably better to have those wanting something, paying, than having it available to all, most of whom do not want it.)
- 3 What is the potential for interactive betting?
- 4 Will the bookmakers pay a fair price for the produce, particularly if TV reception is finally allowed in betting shops? (The enabling Bill to amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act is currently in its final parliamentary stages.)
- 5 What will be the significance of satellite broadcasting, bearing in mind that a great percentage of UK homes will

never be able to receive cable TV?

The situation elsewhere

In Europe the coverage and growth of Cable TV varies greatly. In countries such as Holland and Belgium most TV is via cable, though merely network channels at present. Privately-owned commercial cable opportunities currently exist however, in Norway, Austria, Switzerland and recently Holland and Germany. There could be opportunities here for income for UK racecourses, both in terms of the individual and the betting shops. However this would appear some way away.

In the US and Canada, Cable is big business with some 50% (40 million) homes being in receipt of Cable TV. Racing is run state by state, apart from three states in which there is no off track betting. Therefore, to place a bet you must visit the track. One state racetrack is permitted to bet on another's racing, which is telecast live by satellite. I referred to the Kentucky Derby and the \$5.5 million handled by Churchill Downs. It is staggering to note that a further \$14.5 million was wagered elsewhere in the state: \$6 million in New York's betting shops, the remaining \$8.5 million at other tracks.

Whilst racing in the States is the major spectator sport in terms of attendance, the TV (network and cable) coverage is very small, the US being besotted with football and baseball.

Racing and betting is big business but the structure and motivation is quite different.

Conclusions

Cable TV will, in my view, finally develop successfully.

Direct broadcasting by satellite will be an essential complementary service.

Racing is an ideal live programme source.

Socially it appears more acceptable that those who want to watch should pay for the privilege.

Provided no one section of the industry is too greedy, benefits should accrue to everyone: with more income to the racecourse, admission charges will become less significant, the course will be able to apply basic marketing techniques and hopefully attract back the missing crowds.

This would result in an ideal mix: viewers at home paying to watch, as a result of which the cost of a days racing at the course should fall, thereby attracting more people to the sport.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

David Miers*

Readers may be interested in some recent legislative developments affecting gambling and in reports from agencies responsible for different gambling outlets. We hope to include this as a regular item in the Newsletter.

1 The Lotteries (Amendment) Act 1984

Lottery legislation has for many years been framed so as to control and regulate lotteries in Great Britain and to prevent the importation of advertising material, notices or tickets relating to foreign lotteries. The legislation also prohibited the export by British promoters and publishers of lottery tickets and associated material to the promoters of foreign lotteries; in particular of the kind of specialised security printing required for national lotteries. The Royal Commission on Gambling (1978, Cmnd. 7200) concluded that this prohibition (which dates back to 1823) was an 'unnecessary hindrance' to Britain's export trade in this area, and recommended its removal (paras. 12.200-12.201). In opening up a potential export market for a section of British printing industry, the Bill, which was sponsored by Lord Irving of Dartford, was welcomed by the government. The Act came into force on June 12, 1984. See generally Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, vol. 443, cols. 904-906, 910-913 (July 14, 1983).

2 Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act 1984

In legalising off-track betting in 1960 the government's policy was to permit, but not to encourage, such behaviour. The statutory controls have allowed licensed betting offices to provide only those facilities that are minimally required to place and collect upon an informed bet, and have restricted the signs and notices that may be displayed within and without the premises. Both the spartan interior of a betting office and the complexity of the restrictions on advertisements have been criticised, not only by the betting industry. The Royal Commission on Gambling (1978; Cmnd. 7200) recommended changes to both sets of controls (paras. 7.42-7.59). Supporting the Bill, which was sponsored by Sir Ian Gilmour M.P., the government was also mindful of suggestions that the prohibition, for example, of television and of vending machines for non-alcoholic drinks had contributed to an increase in illegal betting in places providing such facilities.

*Dr D Miers (see page ii for address)

Section 1 gives powers to the Secretary of State to permit certain facilities, such as televised races and vending machines dispensing tea or coffee, to be provided on the premises. There will be widespread consultation by the Home Office before any orders are laid before Parliament.

The Act came into force on August 26, 1984. See generally Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, vol. 451, cols. 1072-1085 (10 May, 1984).

3 Amusement Machines Bill 1984

This was an unsuccessful attempt to introduce further controls over access to, the ambience of, and the number of A.W.P. (Amusements with Prizes) machines in amusement arcades. It was inspired by concern about the direct involvement of juveniles in A.W.P. machine gaming, and by associated social costs. See Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, vol. 445, cols. 769-787 (30 November, 1983); vol. 446, cols. 696-706 (20 December, 1983); vol. 449, cols. 701-722 (13 March, 1984) and vol. 450, cols. 871-876 (5 April, 1984).

4 The Report of the Gaming Board for Great Britain 1983 (9 July, 1984; House of Commons paper No. 496, [4.65) shows that in 1982-83:

(1) The total drop in the 119 casinos in Great Britain was £1,218 million of which £894 million (73.4%) was taken in the 20 London casinos. This is an increase over the previous year owing to the gaining of 'a relatively small number of high staking players from abroad' (para. 21).

(2) The amount staked on bingo was £492.79 million (an increase of 5.12% over 1981-82).

(3) The number of gaming machine licences was:

- | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------|
| (a) jackpot machines | 40,200 | (1981-82: 43,000) |
| (clubs only) | | |
| (b) A.W.P. machines | 119,400 | (1981-82:126,700) |
| (pubs, cafes,
arcades,
and fairs) | | |

Maximum prizes for A.W.P. machines were also increased to £1.50 for a monetary prize and £3.00 for a non-monetary prize with effect from February 6, 1984 (see Gaming Act [variation of Monetary Limits] Order 1983 S.I. 1983 No. 1750 [in Scotland No. 1954]).

LITERARY GAMBLERS: (3) Massey

His lips trembled almost imperceptibly; his hands, too, a little: and to calm himself he opened the writing-desk, spread out a sheet of thin greyish paper covered with a mass of printed figures and began to scan them attentively for the twentieth time this trip at least.

with his elbows propped, his head between his hands, he seemed to lose himself in the study of an abstruse problem in mathematics. It was the list of the winning numbers from the last drawing of the great lottery which had been the one inspiring fact of so many years of his existence. The conception of a life deprived of that periodical sheet of paper had slipped away from him entirely, as another man, according to his nature, would not have been able to conceive a world without fresh air, without activity, or without affection. A great pile of flimsy sheets had been growing for years in his desk, while the Sofala, driven by the faithful Jack, wore out her boilers in tramping up and down the straits, from cape to cape, from river to river, from bay to bay; accumulating by that hard labour of an overworked, starved ship the blackened mass of these documents. Massey kept them under lock and key like a treasure. There was in them, as in the experience of life, the fascination of hope, the excitement of a half-penetrated mystery, the longing of a half-satisfied desire.

For days together, on a trip, he would shut himself up in his berth with them: the thump of the toiling engines pulsed in his ear; and he would weary his brain poring over the rows of disconnected figures, bewildering by their senseless sequence, resembling the hazards of destiny itself. He nourished a conviction that there must be some logic lurking somewhere in the results of chance. He thought he had seen its very form. His head swam; his limbs ached; he puffed at his pipe mechanically; a contemplative stupor would soothe the fretfulness of his temper, like the passive bodily quietude procured by a drug, while the intellect remains tensely on the stretch. Nine, nine, nought, four, two. He made a note. The next winning number of the great prize was forty-seven thousand and five. These numbers of course would have to be avoided in the future when writing to Manila for the tickets. He mumbled, pencil in hand ... 'and five. Hm...hm.' He wetted his finger: the papers rustled. Ha! But what's this? Three years ago, in the September drawing, it was number nine, nought, four, two that took the first prize. Most remarkable. There was a hint there of a definite rule! He was afraid of missing some recondite principle in the overwhelming wealth of his material. What could it be? and for half an hour he would remain dead still, bent low over the desk, without twitching

a muscle. At his back the whole berth would be thick with a heavy body of smoke, as if a bomb had burst in there, unnoticed, unheard...

The incertitude of chance gave him no concern, since he had somehow arrived at the conviction that, in the course of years, every number was bound to have its winning turn. It was simply a matter of time and of taking as many tickets as he could afford for every drawing. He generally took rather more; all the earnings of the ship went that way, and also the wages he allowed himself as chief engineer...

He imagined himself walking about the streets of Hull (he knew their gutters well as a boy) with his pockets full of sovereigns. He would buy himself a house; his married sisters, their husbands, his old workshop chums, would render him infinite homage. There would be nothing to think of. His word would be law.

Joseph Conrad, The End of the Tether, Penguin, 1975, pp116-119

UPDATE

'Illusion of control: effects of participation and involvement', The Journal of Psychology, (1984), 117, pp 47-52, Robert Ladouceur, Marie Mayrand et al, Ecole de Psychologie, Universite Laval, Quebec, Canada G1K 7P4

Among the various theories for the acquisition and retention of gambling behavior, that of the illusion of control states that in a situation involving chance people behave as they would in a situation involving skills: they perceive a certain amount of personal control over the outcome of the events. The present research examined the effect of participation and involvement as determinants of illusory control. The subject or the experimenter threw the dice (active versus passive participation). Involvement was measured by the amount of money bet: a constant amount, a variable bet, or no money at all. Analysis revealed no significant differences among active and passive groups. These results cast doubt on the value of the illusion, of control for explaining the acquisition and/or maintenance of gambling behaviour.

'Evaluation of the "Illusion of Control": type of feedback, outcome sequence, and number of trials among regular and occasional gamblers', The Journal of Psychology, (1984), 117, pp 37-46, Robert Ladouceur and Marie Mayrand (for address, see above)

Within the framework of Langer's theory of the 'illusion of control', three experiments were conducted in order to clarify factors affecting the acquisition and maintenance of gambling behavior. The first evaluated the effect of partial and continuous feedback on the perception of control in different sequences of the outcomes. The second assessed the type of feedback and the number of trials as facilitating factors of the illusion of control. The third used regular gamblers in order to evaluate the effect of sequence of outcomes. The results indicate that subjects generally did not report an illusion of control towards the experimental task. These conclusions do not replicate Langer's findings which showed that under certain conditions subjects attribute to their personal skills the outcomes of the risky task of gambling.

The joint conference of the National Association of Off-Track Betting (NAOTB) and the National Association of Gaming Attorneys (NAGA). held March 8-10 at the Cable Beach Hotel & Casino, Nassau, The Bahamas, proved to be a sounding board for both legalized sports betting and the benefits of a uniform worldwide gaming regulatory environment

The conference got off to an unusually poetic start. Robert W. Green, chairman and managing director of Mecca Bookmakers, London, supplied his own caffeine substitute with some early-morning rhymed couplets on British sports betting. On the natural proclivity of people - and, particularly, British people - to bet, Green quipped:

"...Is this outrageous, improper,
in any way wrong?

Or is it just human behavior all
along?

We know the answer. we know
the way;

We legalize it, tax it, and insist
no fair play...

In England this betting grows
larger each year.

With all sports catered for,
there's nothing to fear.

We bet on what poem wins the
literary price.

To the extent of Maggie
Thatcher's majority size.

We lay odds on a White Christ-

mas and the British Grand Prix.

But draw the line at smoke puffs
from the Holy See... "

But all is not kippers and toast in British sports betting. Green went on to add. He said that Great Britain's sports betting legislation, introduced in 1961, is now badly obsolete; a major restriction expected to be lifted soon is the ban on television in betting shops. In the future, Green anticipates a public information display system that would provide moment-to-moment updated information through a mainframe computer to as many as 500 branch offices.

May 1984/Gaming Business Magazine

GAMBLING PERIODICALS (1)

Gambling Business Magazine

This is the first in a series introducing readers to publications relating to gambling.

Gaming Business

FEATURES:

Gallup/GB Survey..... 4

The second Gallup Organization/Gaming Business survey explores national attitudes and behavior concerning legalized gambling. In this first part of a two-part series, survey results debunk some of the more well-entrenched myths about the racetrack. Also: A look at the future of betting parlors and other wagering outlets.

NASL Conference 10

Growls against the AT&T break-up and spiraling on-line terminal costs notwithstanding, North American lottery directors came up with a more-than rosy picture of their industry at their 13th annual meeting. Also:

Ask the computer..... 75

Random select lotto is gobbling up an ever-larger share of North American lotto play.

OTB: Parrying against the political thrust 18

It's New York OTB president Harry McCabe Vs. New York State Comptroller Ned Regan in the "Who's-right-about-OTB?" title bout. Whoever wins, the six regional corporations remain inviting targets for political attack. Also: The fate of Freehold and a racing statistic spotcheck.

Slimming corporate fat..20

Part two of a management casebook describes different methods of skimming off management layers and maximizing a small staff.

Alabama horse racing...26

There was jubilation among the proponents when Birmingham, AL Voters gave the nod to horse racing in their district.

vol. 5, no 7

Aristocrat prepares For AC31

With charges dropped against its chairman on its native soil, Aristocrat, the Australian-made slot machine, is gearing up for a delayed entry into the Atlantic City market.

The bunny's out at the Playboy 54

The conversion of the Playboy to the Atlantis completes Elsinore's takeover of its Atlantic City hotel-cosine. Also: A gourmet/gourmand paradise at the Sands.

Tote chart 62

The GB guide to North American lottery horse and greyhound track and jai-alai totalisator contracts. Plus a new addition: Who's got the concessions. Also:

VLT chart addendum 76

COMMENTS:

The search for a magic marketing concept32

By Alec Boatman

Can the 'Sport of Kings' learn from its peen 46

By Saul Leonard

On the perils of TV racing coverage 52

By Herb Goldstein

That's gaming entertainment.. 64

By Rick Kogan

The Last Word: on Nevada Lt. Gov. Robert A. Cashell..... 82

By Guy Shipler

DEPARTMENTS:

Editorial3

Lotteries in the News17

Gaming Industry News 27

Gaming People57

Calendar 58

Movers & Shaken 60

Keeping Up..... 77



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NOTICES

THE SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON GAMBLING AND RISK TAKING

The Conference will be held at:

BALLY'S PARK PLACE HOTEL CASINO
ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY
DECEMBER 9, 10, 11 and 12, 1984

The importance of commercial gambling as an economic, political and social force has increased steadily over the past decade. Numerous jurisdictions, in the United States and abroad, have chosen to legalize various forms of gambling for a variety of reasons, including the generation of tax revenues, the revitalization of otherwise declining economic regions, the provision of an activity for which there is strong public demand, and as competition with illegal forms of gambling. Gaming industries, whether operated by the public sector or by the private sector, have grown in size, in sophistication, and in general acceptance during this period of expanded legalization.

As the presence of gambling in society becomes more pronounced, the need for understanding all the social, economic, political and psychological ramifications of gambling becomes more apparent. The major purpose of the Sixth National Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking is to provide a gathering place and a forum where individuals interested in some of the various facets of gambling can come together and share the results of their research, present one another with their beliefs and opinions, and in general, broaden the level of understanding about the many challenges gambling presents to society.

The Conference is purposefully intended to be eclectic in nature. Noting that the gambling business is not like most other businesses, there is good reason for those who have developed an expertise in one aspect of how gambling affects the social environment to learn more about how it affects other areas. Thus, the Sixth National Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking will offer more than 100 research papers and more than 40 sessions on a wide variety of topics which apply to the general subject of gambling.

THE PROGRAM

The Conference, which will run from Sunday afternoon until Wednesday early afternoon, will have a total of 11 symposium sessions and 28 paper sessions over the four days. Each symposium session will address an issue of importance or general interest, and will involve the participation of a number of experts on that particular issue. The symposium topics are:

- I. PERSPECTIVES ON STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE REGULATORY PROCESS: VIEWS OF CURRENT AND FORMER REGULATORS
- II. COMPULSIVE GAMBLING AND THE FAMILY
- III. GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN COMMERCIAL GAMBLING
- IV. LOTTERY MANIA: WHERE WILL IT END?
- V. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND THE GAMING INDUSTRY
- VI. ORGANIZED LABOR AND THE CASINO GAMING INDUSTRY
- VII. REVITALIZATION OF ATLANTIC CITY: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES
- VIII. ESTIMATING THE POTENTIAL FOR VIDEO LOTTERY MARKETS
- IX. FUTURE GAMING GROWTH IN ATLANTIC CITY AND NEVADA
- X. THE POTENTIAL FOR A NATIONAL CASINO GAMING MARKET
- XI. THE USE OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL IN THE CASINO INDUSTRY

The 28 paper sessions, each of which is composed of three or four professional papers on the topic under consideration, cover a wide multitude of topics. There are seven paper sessions covering topics related to the mathematical and quantitative analysis of gambling games and events, including handicapping, speculation, sports betting, and theoretical analysis; there are two sessions on blackjack; there are four sessions on social and psychological aspects of gambling behavior; there are four sessions on political, economic, legal, and public policy issues dealing with gambling; there are five sessions on analyzing and dealing with the problem gambler; there are three sessions dealing with management and marketing issues unique to the gaming industry; there are two sessions addressing international dimensions of commercial gambling; and there is one session covering gambling and the humanities. In all, there are well over 100 professional papers that will be presented at the Conference.

Paper sessions and symposium sessions will run concurrently for the four days of the Conference, but they have been scheduled in a manner to minimize time conflicts in subject matter that will be presented. For additional information on the Conference Schedule, write the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada Reno, Reno, Nevada 89557.

PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS

The collected papers of the Sixth National Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking will be published by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research following the Conference in Proceedings Volumes, as was done following the Fifth National Conference in 1981. Additional information on the CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS can be acquired by writing the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada Reno, Reno, Nevada 89557.