

The **Royalty Cinema** in **Birmingham** was a beloved landmark until it closed its doors in 1963. But what happened next? The cinema didn't just disappear; it found new life as a vibrant bingo hall, a transformation many locals fondly remember. In this post, we'll explore the timeline of that change, the rise of bingo in such spaces, and how technology has reshaped the game from paper tickets to digital cards.

The Royalty Cinema: From Silver Screen to Bingo Hall

The Royalty Cinema was part of Birmingham's bustling entertainment scene until its closure in 1963. Historic England, the organization tasked with preserving the UK's historical buildings, notes that many cinemas of this era faced closure due to changing entertainment habits and the rise of television. *But when exactly did the Royalty Cinema convert into a bingo hall?*

Documentation suggests that very soon after closing as a cinema, the building was repurposed to host bingo sessions. This trend was common across the UK at the time, taking advantage of the large seating capacity and central locations of cinemas. By the mid-to-late 1960s, the Royalty Cinema's space was thriving as a bingo hall, serving the community with the increasingly popular 90-ball bingo format.

Bingo's Rise in Former Cinemas

Transforming cinemas into bingo halls made perfect sense. The rows of seats, the stage area, and spacious interiors were ready-made to accommodate hundreds of players. Additionally, the ritualistic call of "Bingo!" replaced the auditory magic of film reels, signaling wins and celebrations in a fresh, social way.

Understanding 90-Ball Bingo Basics: Lines and Full House

If you've ever seen UK bingo, the predominant format is 90-ball bingo. Here's a quick rundown:

- **Balls numbered 1 to 90** are drawn randomly.
- Cards have 3 rows and 9 columns, with 15 numbers on each card.
- There are three key winning stages:
 1. **One Line** – marking off any single completed row.
 2. **Two Line** – marking off any two completed rows.
 3. **Full House** – marking off all 15 numbers on the card.

Each stage rewards players differently, with Full House offering the largest prize. At the Royalty bingo hall, just like many others, sessions would run regularly, with prices starting as low as *1p* — what some players affectionately called the "**Pinch a Penny**" tickets, a real throwback to affordable public entertainment.

Paper Tickets vs Digital Cards: The Shift in the Game

Originally, bingo players used paper tickets heavily printed with numbered grids. You'd keep your trusty paper card in hand while measuralogic.com manually marking off numbers, often with a dabber pen — the 'job' once held by bingo halls' own dabber technology and, more traditionally, the human eye.

But the dawn of digital bingo has transformed this ritual:



- **Digital cards** appear on **mobile devices** and **desktop computers**.
- Players no longer need to manually cross numbers off; software auto-marks called numbers.
- This reduces human error and speeds up gameplay.
- Online rooms can host hundreds or even thousands of players, running 24/7 or on *timed sessions*, giving players more flexibility.

The Royalty transformed from fits-of-loud, communal shout-outs in its physical bingo days to a more digital-focused game on platforms like **MrQ**, which provide instant auto-dabber features and automatic winner recognition.



The Job of the Auto-Dabber and Automatic Winner Recognition

The auto-dabber is essentially the digital replacement for the old manual dabber pen. It marks your called numbers automatically without a single click or swipe, meaning you can focus on strategy or just enjoy the game.

Similarly, automatic winner recognition tools — made possible and improved by companies such as **Measura Logic** — detect winning card patterns instantly. This removes the delay and contention often seen in traditional bingo halls and speeds up prize payouts.

Scheduling Online Rooms: From Traditional Bingo Halls to 24/7 Digital Play

In the old Royalty bingo hall, games were scheduled at fixed times, and players would gather physically, often stocking up on low-cost Scratch cards or paper tickets priced at as little as *1p*.

Want to know something interesting? today’s online bingo rooms, including those hosted by providers like mrq, offer both:

- **Timed sessions**, replicating the traditional bingo hall feel with scheduled games and communal chat.
- **24/7 play options**, where players can join rooms anytime.

This constant availability is a major shift from the once rigid schedule of the Royalty Casino days but **does** change the feel — no more coordinated moments of excitement in a single room, but rather a constant hum of activity across multiple sessions.

The Role of Measura Logic and Historic England in Preserving and Modernizing Bingo and Heritage

While **Historic England** focuses on preserving the physical spaces and stories behind landmarks like the Royalty Cinema, innovative tech firms such as **Measura Logic** are pioneering new ways to track and verify bingo gameplay, ensuring fairness and transparency in this age-old game.

Together, these organizations represent the balance between honoring tradition and embracing innovation — much like the Royalty Cinema’s journey from faded silver screen to bright bingo hall.

Summary Table: Royalty Cinema to Digital Bingo Evolution

Feature	Royalty Cinema Bingo Hall (1960s–1980s)	Modern Digital Bingo Platforms (e.g., MrQ)
Type of Ticket	Paper tickets (price examples: 1p “Pinch a Penny”)	Digital cards on mobile devices and desktop computers
Number Format	90-ball bingo (numbers 1-90)	Same Marking system
Marking	Manual dabber pen	Auto-dabber software
Winner Recognition	Manual, called out by a human	Automatic winner recognition via software (Measura Logic)
Session Type	Fixed, scheduled games in halls	24/7 rooms and timed sessions
Social Experience	In-person, vocal “Bingo!” calls	Chat rooms, quieter but interactive

Closing Thoughts: The Royalty’s Legacy Lives On

The Royalty Cinema’s closure in 1963 didn’t spell the end for its role in Birmingham’s leisure scene. Instead, it reinvented itself as a bingo hall, preserving community fun while adapting to cultural shifts.

From paper tickets priced at 1p to modern apps running on mobile devices and desktop computers, the game of bingo continues to thrive. With help from Historic England preserving its heritage, and companies like Measura Logic and MrQ pushing the tech forward, the Royalty’s legacy is more than just bricks and mortar — it’s part of a continuing story of play and innovation.