

Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the AITS

Present.

D.A. Coster Marlow
G. Widdowson Halesowen
R.T. Beazley Stratford-upon-Avon
B.R. & P.D. Youings Barnstaple
B.E. Alton Nottingham
J.M. Edwards Hanley
R.W. Brown Cupar, Fife
D. Simmonds Bedford
J. Reynolds Hollingsworth, Birmingham
G. Lando Croydon
D.C. Higgins Bristol
A.L. Darbey Cardiff

Apologies for absence.

J. Hardcastle Wilmslow
W.H. Smith Birchalls of Blackpool
H. Hughson McKenzie Lilley Newcastle-upon-Tyne
F.C. Benton Manchester
A. Brown Darlington
Peter Ross Arundel
J. Lloyd Aberystwyth
A. Stewart MacDonald's of Edinburgh
F. Tranter Bath

Also present in advisory/publicity capacity:

J. Barber Ben Wade/ Charatan
C.R. McConnell Robert McConnell
Mrs. M. Thaine Editor 'Tobacco'
D. Deeson 'Retail Tobacconist'

The chair was taken by Mr. Darbey who welcomed all those who were attending and gave a list of all those who apologised for their unavoidable absence, but expressed a wish to be at least kept in touch with developments.

A discussion was held on the various points as enumerated in the initial invitation and it was generally agreed that there was sufficient scope for deeper investigation of many ideas aired. The lack of agenda, or Secretary, means that these minutes may be incomplete but are intended as the basis for a report to the next meeting.

It was realised that we could well represent a very great buying section of the trade. For full efficiency all members must support the buying policy as much as possible, although there would be no hint of compulsion. It is hoped to avoid bulk buying with the necessity of central warehousing, but consideration must be given to the possibility that this might be especially beneficial when importing directly. Although no such organisation should be set up at once it was considered essential we find a competent secretary/officer outside our ranks as soon as possible. Cost to be as low as possible as the full nature of the job will not emerge for a while. Many methods of improving terms under which we trade were discussed and certain guide lines have emerged and will be followed up not only by the officers but also by any member with an advantageous contact with a supplier and all such details to be kept confidential to members.

Main conclusions and Lines of Action.

1. It was considered that we needed to form both an Association and also a limited liability company which would trade independently.
2. Membership of the Association of Independent Tobacco Specialists would be by invitation only. Applications for Membership could be considered and would be vetted before an
3. Invitation was extended. It is considered that membership shall be confined to one per locality; that at least 75% turnover shall be in tobacco associated products; a wide range of products be offered; expert advice be available and the shop exude the indefinable aura of a "tobacconist". As membership is a personal matter it is essential that if a business changes hands or character we retain the right to call for resignation. It was agreed that the membership fee for the year to 31st December 1976 be £10.00, and then reviewed in the light of

experience.

4. Subject to approval of the name by Companies House, it was decided to form Independent Tobacco Specialists Limited. Shares would be held by full members of the Association only on the basis of £100.00 per member. Shares can only be sold back to the Board who will undertake to buy. Initially four Directors are appointed; Messrs Darbey, Higgins, Lando and Simmonds.

5. Associate Membership of the Association is to be offered to various suppliers who might wish to promote the ideas we seek to propagate. A list was composed of firms considered suitable for an initial approach, and this covers pipe-makers, lighter manufactures and importers, cigar dealers, specialist tobacco, cigarette and snuff manufacturers, also pipe and lighter repairers.

6. The aim is to hold quarterly meetings. This year it is intended to meet again in May and September. At the meetings various articles will be produced for evaluation by members and the placing of orders. On May 4th it is hoped that draft Articles of Association and Rules may be discussed. It was also proposed that perhaps 'presentations' of particular interest might be given, but it was not agreed to proceed with this at present.

7. It was agreed that a common catalogue, if supported by enough suppliers to a sufficient extent, would be a good thing. As a first step it was agreed to seek estimates of cost.

8. All members were asked to consider a suitable logo/badge for our use and also a brand name which we could use exclusive for merchandise. Ideas to be considered at the next meeting.

9. Thought was to be given to the production of a quarterly bulletin to incorporate the vital events of each meeting for the benefit of those unable to attend. This would again depend on the extent of secretarial employment.

10. The three original conveners of the meeting reported that they had arranged to attend the Frankfurt Fair later in the month and would use the opportunity to investigate possibilities of acting as direct

importers of suitable lines. They would report back to the next meeting without in any way having involved the Association.

11. The four Directors of the yet unformed Association undertook to report back on all major points to the meeting on the 4th May. However, it was also agreed that the strength and success of the Association would depend on the commitment of all members who all undertook to do all they could to advance the general aims of opportunity.

The meeting concluded at 10 minutes after 5.0 pm.

At the meeting on May 5th 1976 the following officers were elected.

Chairman A.L. Darbey, Vice Chairman G. Lando, Secretary D.C. Higgins, Treasurer G.Widdowson.

Executive Members D. Simmonds, D.A. Coster (Membership) and R.T. Beazley (Catalogue).