THE ANTI-COUNTERFEITING GROUP

The Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG) was established in 1980 and with no shareholders to answer to, it has continued to make the fight against counterfeits its absolute focus. Any profits are reinvested to deliver a wider variety of services that benefit the 3,200+ brands it represents, in a diverse mix of market sectors.

ACG is the go-to anti-counterfeiting organisation for brands and is internationally respected for its involvement in fighting this menacing global trade. It works with government and enforcement decision-makers, providing skills and information gathered from members to help drive effective policy, strategies and better targeted enforcement. ACG has a unique heritage in fighting counterfeiting and its successes are clearly evidenced. It will continue to build key alliances to protect its members, consumers and the economy.

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LETTER FROM PHIL LEWIS

Arriving as Director General last year, was a tremendous honour. However, following Alison Statham, who had done so much to develop ACG over 13 years, filled me with some trepidation. Alison was the ACG stalwart and building on her legacy is a real challenge.

Since arriving, my belief that no single organisation or even country can defeat counterfeiting has intensified. So, ACG will be doing all we can to build even stronger alliances on the ground to drive greater levels of awareness and protection.

We will continue to work alongside key allies such as the IPO, our sister anti-counterfeiting associations across the world and the EUIPO (Observatory on IP Infringements). We are also working with Europol, Interpol, WCO and the European Commission and supporting the OECD on essential studies. Moreover, we have started collaborating with UNICRI on developing a system to identify criminal sources and transport links.

Our intelligence coordinator and our active membership have enabled us to take a leading role in intelligence led actions against some of the UK’s most notorious markets and online traders. These actions have generated hundreds of investigations and successful operations across the UK and together with key partners we have also developed an initiative to reduce the availability of fakes on social media.

The UK has a unique legacy in fighting counterfeiting and my aim over the next year is to use wider ranges of information and intelligence to build even more compelling narratives, understanding and cooperation.

Finally, my thanks to the ACG Secretariat team. Small in numbers, but they punch well above their weight.

In conclusion, I hope you will all take heart when reading this Annual Report that everyone within ACG is making a difference.

Phil Lewis, ACG Director General
**THE FACTS**

- **Involved in 70 raid actions across UK**
- **Nearly 300 pieces of intelligence shared with partner agencies**
- **95% of members felt they were at the heart of everything ACG does**
- **640 enforcement officers trained**
- **100% of members would recommend ACG membership**
- **200+ enforcement officers registered with ACG**
- **230+ published counterfeiting news and press releases**
- **Well over 100,000 counterfeit goods seized**
- **50+ ACG member and law enforcement investigations developed**
- **98% of members were satisfied with the service received**
- **46 events delivered**
- **220+ queries answered from members and stakeholders**
ENGAGEMENT

“COMMITTED TO BEING AT THE CENTRE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST THE MALICIOUS IMPACT OF COUNTERFEITING”

UK PARTNERS
- Alliance for IP
- All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG’s)
- British Brands Group
- Chartered Institute of Trading Standards (CTSI)
- Home Office
- Intellectual Property Office (IPO)
- IP Awareness Network (IPAN)
- IP Crime Group (IPCG)
- Minister for Intellectual Property
- National Markets Group/Real Deal
- Scottish Anti-Illlicit Trade Group (SAITG)

EUROPEAN PARTNERS
- ABAC-BAAN (Belgium)
- AIM (European Brands Association)
- ANDEMA (Spain)
- APM (Germany)
- EUIPO (European IP Office)/EU Observatory
- European Commission
- Europol
- INDICAM (Italy)
- REACT
- SACG (Sweden)
- UNIFAB (France)

LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS
- Association of Chief TS Officers (ACTSO)
- Border Force
- Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN)
- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- National Crime Agency (NCA)
- National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)
- National Trading Standards (NTS)
- National TS e-Crime Team (NTSeCT)
- National TS Intelligence Team (NTSIT)
- Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF)
- Police IP Crime Unit (PIPCU)
- United Nations Inter-Regional Crime Institute (UNICRI)

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS
- Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting & Piracy (BASCAP)
- Global Anti-Counterfeiting Group (GACG)
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- Interpol
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT)
- United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
- World Customs Organisation (WCO)
- World IP Organisation (WIPO)
Influencing and Persuading

ACG is successfully building and developing relationships to raise greater levels of understanding in government.

The IPO invited ACG to join a panel of public and private sector bodies for a series of New Deal Sector Roundtables aimed at improving the performance of e-platforms in combating infringing content online. The Platform Roundtables have introduced an operational work matrix to help drive best practice. Members have played a strong part in highlighting issues.

The European Commission held a consultation to establish a world-wide Counterfeit and Piracy Watch-List that identified marketplaces outside the EU where counterfeiting, piracy or other forms of intellectual property abuse are common practice. ACG fed into the consultation on behalf of members, to encourage operators and owners to crack down on this growing abuse.

ACG furthered its manifesto call for action on government, the creation of a centralised national IP centre that would mitigate some of the key threats posed by IP crime and bolster dwindling law enforcement resources. A working group was established by the IP Crime Group to research and discuss the proposal.

In letters to Ministers, the IPO and EU Commission, ACG has provided advice and highlighted issues that could challenge UK IP protection and enforcement following BREXIT. Subjects were as wide as; the Irish Border problem, Customs and enforcement cooperation, the Unified Patent Court and future treaties and agreements with countries outside the EU.

Working alongside the Alliance for IP, ACG has provided views to Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Ministers on Industrial strategy and the Digital Single Market. Additionally, ACG regularly highlights challenges being faced by members in areas such as BREXIT and IP enforcement.

ACG members were invited to meet eBay, Facebook, Amazon and Alibaba to learn more about their proactive takedown measures, brand protection tools and new features and functionality soon to be launched. Rights holders also voiced the issues they face when tackling products infringing IP rights on e-commerce platforms and social media.
The Independent Inspector of Borders’ team were keen to meet with ACG during their inspection of Border Force’s work at key Postal Hubs. ACG provided data and information about how the hubs are currently being managed and as a result the Inspector expressed extreme interest in building greater partnerships and cooperation.

Before brands realised the impact of new GDPR policies, ACG had raised its concerns about the potential danger of stakeholders being barred from accessing WHOIS data. Margot James, Minister for the Digital and Creative Industries thanked ACG for highlighting the issue and pressed ICANN to develop an access model for users with a legitimate purpose.

The ACG is an active member of the PIPCU Partnership Group which was set up to help advise and drive effective enforcement strategies and actions on the ground.

Building technologies to assist enforcement is a key issue and focus for the Observatory. The Enforcement Database (EDB) system is linked to COPIS (an EU Customs’ system) and used by enforcement authorities across Europe. ACG was given access to EDB and is now using it to add an extra channel to its intelligence coordination work.

At a meeting with Tom Duke, UK IP Attaché to China, ACG raised some of the key issues faced by members in China. Threshold amounts for criminal cases, seizure and destruction of equipment and customs checks on trains travelling from China into Europe (China’s One Belt One Road) were of significant interest.

Bringing together representatives from industry, law enforcement and government the IP Crime Group drives the national strategy to tackle IP crime. ACG is part of the group, alongside Trading Standards, Border Force, HMRC, IPO, PIPCU, Crown Prosecution Service and others to discuss collaborative initiatives, successes and best practice.

The ACG is an active member of the PIPCU Partnership Group which was set up to help advise and drive effective enforcement strategies and actions on the ground.
> Westminster TS led raid actions were supported by ACG and members at two large retail stores on Oxford Street in London. An estimated 1,000 counterfeit and potentially unsafe products were seized.

> A West Midlands Police led operation in partnership with Birmingham TS and supported by ACG led to the contents of eight 20-foot storage containers being seized including counterfeit clothing, footwear, cosmetics and cigarettes.

> An Eltham residential property was raided by Greenwich TS and the Metropolitan Police, alongside ACG and members. Around 3,000 counterfeit goods were seized, along with £5,000 cash.

> Isle of Wight TS developed an investigation, supported by ACG, into a Facebook trader on the island. The raid action led to a seizure of over 1,000 counterfeit products which impacted on more than 20 individual brands.

> A multi-agency raid action at Great Ducie Street, Manchester involved ACG and members, as well as Manchester TS, Manchester Council, Immigration Service, HMRC and Greater Manchester Police. An eight-shop complex, housed in the large multi-floor commercial premises was targeted. Two 40-foot containers were filled with seized counterfeit goods.

> Camden raid actions concentrated on the continuing trade of counterfeit goods in the area and involved ACG, members, TS, Metropolitan Police, IPO and other agencies. Tens of thousands of counterfeit items were removed from the high street shops and local market stalls. A three-day action was filmed by the BBC for a Channel 5 documentary.

> OP BEORMA is an NMG/NTS initiative which targets travelling criminals operating across the UK, supplying traders selling online and at market sites. ACG worked closely with the OP BEORMA coordinator and other partners, gathering historic and current intelligence. This has enabled multiple pro-active investigations and raid actions involving ACG, IPO, NTS teams and other industry bodies.

> Raids on commercial premises in Southall attended by Ealing TS and ACG members led to the recovery of over 7,000 counterfeit items, largely telephone accessories, batteries and unsafe goods.

> Counterfeit goods worth €50,000 were seized at Fairyhouse Market in County Meath, Ireland. ACG members joined a Gardaí and Revenue Customs Officers led raid operation to remove fake sportswear, handbags, watches, clothing and accessories.

> Three retail shops in Queensway, London were raided by Westminster TS with ACG
support. Over 1,500 items were identified as counterfeit such as clothing, mobile phone accessories and electrical products.

> **OP STRANGEWAYS** brought together multiple agencies to mitigate the threat of counterfeits in the Cheetham Hill area. Manchester City Council (MCC) and Greater Manchester Police relied on ACG to coordinate test purchases and bring brand members to raid actions on commercial premises made subject to Section 146, Law of Property Act notices. ACG also supported the closure orders issued under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014.

> **OP CAYMAN** was developed by ACG and Camden TS following numerous raid actions and the seizure of thousands of counterfeit products. Intelligence collected from these actions helped develop a new strategy which aims to reduce the availability of counterfeits in Camden and surrounding London boroughs, identify storage locations, key offenders and organised crime group involvement.

> **Nine Elms Market** was raided following the submission of intelligence reports by ACG. Wandsworth TS, Police, Immigration Service, brand representatives and ACG attended the raid, targeting ten stalls selling a large amount of counterfeit goods. Over 2,000 items were seized, with a street value of £100,000.
RAISING AWARENESS

“WORKING TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS BY EXPOSING HOW COUNTERFEITS ARE DAMAGING ECONOMIES, DESTROYING JOBS AND THREATENING CONSUMERS”

Announced ACG award winners for Excellence in Anti-Counterfeiting to recognise individuals and teams tackling this illicit crime with creativity, ingenuity and passion

Launched a video outlining activities, initiatives and successes aimed at protecting business, consumers and society from counterfeit goods

Hosted an IP Enforcement Knowledge Day to introduce the PIPCU team to brands and share best practice in protecting IP rights

Bolstered enforcement work in London by presenting to Metropolitan Police Local Organised Crime Advisors on all aspects of IP Crime including legislation, practical application and partnership working

Distributed publications, reports, briefing notes, bulletins, research papers, news articles, press releases and links to stories related to counterfeiting and IP crime

Educated Border Force officers on identifying genuine and counterfeit products at training events in Heathrow and Gatwick airports and at Felixstowe and Tilbury ports

Invited enforcement officers to Roadshows in Manchester, Glasgow, Cheltenham and London to provide an opportunity to meet the brands face-to-face

Supported a Football Against Fakes event by giving a presentation on the future for IP and exhibiting alongside football clubs with an ACG Spot the Fake competition

Presented at IP training days for London TS, Manchester TS and Welsh Heads of Trading Standards on collaborative approaches adopted by ACG in reducing the availability of counterfeits
Invited members to Westminster for an Alliance for IP event that incorporated a presentation by the Minister for IP, drinks with parliamentarians and face-to-face meeting with local MPs.

Took part in a series of freight training courses, attended by UK Border Force officers learning about IP and the procedure for identifying and seizing counterfeit goods.

Trained West Midlands Police officers on relevant IP legislation and its application, as well as the impact of IP crime and links to other serious crimes and activities.

Sponsored an exam award to celebrate the highest scoring TS officer for the CTSI IP module and presented the winner with a glass plaque and cheque.

Provided free Brand Protection training to explore a broad range of disciplines including: law enforcement, protecting a brand internationally, defending a brand online and intelligence management.

Explored effective ways of sharing intelligence and building strategies to mitigate the risks of counterfeiting in Asia and the UK at a joint ACG/ACACAP workshop.

Exhibited genuine and counterfeit goods at the Home Office to highlight this illicit trade to senior Border Force executives.

Attended the CTSI Symposium in Nottingham to exhibit and meet professionals from across the consumer protection community.

Organised roundtable meetings with Facebook, eBay, Amazon and Alibaba to provide members with an opportunity to discuss difficulties in tackling counterfeits on the social media and e-commerce platforms.

Appeared on BBC1 News to highlight a national problem of counterfeit goods being openly sold in homes, markets and retail units across the UK.

Warned consumers about buying fakes over the Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping period by sharing posters, images and press release with members and enforcement partners.

Explained to University of Essex students studying Luxury Product and Brand Management, the issues facing brands in preventing potentially unsafe, poor quality counterfeits reaching consumers.
A council governance structure allows ACG to respond to members’ needs, while it grows as an organisation.

**ACG Council**

- **Shelley Duggan** Chair
  Director and Associate General Counsel and the Global Brand Protection Leader (Procter & Gamble)

- **Thomas Parrott** Vice-chair
  Vice-President and Managing Director of UK Operations (Beachbody UK)

- **Ahassim Rashid**
  VP, Anti-Piracy Counsel, EMEA (Warner Bros. Entertainment UK Ltd)

- **Chloe Long**
  Director, EMEA & Global Online Brand Protection (MICHAEL KORS) and Chair of ACG’s Consumer Brands Group

- **Nicola Consterdine**
  IP Protection Manager, Strategic Planning Department (Epson Europe BV)

- **Mark Bearfoot**
  Legal Director, Brand Protection (Tommy Hilfiger Europe BV)

- **Sheila Henderson**
  Chief Intellectual Property Counsel (Richemont International Ltd)
GOVERNANCE
The ACG has a team of dedicated Council members who are elected annually by the membership, to determine and oversee the direction, financial strength and performance of the Group. Specialist ACG groups and committees are also in place for members to join.

ACG Council meet regularly and currently includes seven full members, who bring a broad, cross-section of skills and experience to help guide and direct ACG activities.

CONSUMER BRANDS GROUP
plays an important role within the ACG. The Group exchanges sector intelligence, shares information and resources in UK law enforcement, cooperates with and trains enforcement officers, liaises with authorities on the ground, develops brand guidance and participates in wider ACG campaigns and initiatives.

The Consumer Brands Group is chaired by Chloe Long, MICHAEL KORS and it is an active group that meets twice a year.

Three working groups have been created within the Consumer Brands Group, to focus on specific issues experienced by members and bring together experts in physical counterfeiting, policy and online counterfeiting.

These working groups share experience and best practice with the wider membership. Market sector focus groups have also been formed to address problems that are specific to that sector.

POLICY WORKING GROUP
has been developing valuable insights and data, sharing expertise and informing and influencing public policy and legislation. Members have focused on issues relating to the Irish border, China’s One Belt One Road and Customs seizures.

PHYSICAL WORKING GROUP
chaired by Mike Thomas, Superdry Plc has gathered information on physical threats impacting members and identified prevention, enforcement and disruption strategies that are tackling shops and market stalls, parcel depots and fulfilment houses.

ONLINE COUNTERFEITING WORKING GROUP
chaired by Sophie Edgerton, Coty Inc, the Group discussed takedown issues, agreed best practice and investigated online traders selling counterfeit products through websites, social media and e-commerce channels.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY
The ACG is a leading, not-for-profit trade association and represents more than 3,000 brands and over 660 intellectual property professionals in 30+ countries. Its primary purpose is to combat counterfeiting and piracy, one of today’s most insidious and menacing transnational crimes.

As a group built on membership, the ACG works relentlessly to ensure members remain at the heart of decision-making and initiatives. Membership is open to: manufacturers, distributors and retailers; law firms, barristers’ chambers, trade mark attorneys and patent agents; and suppliers of brand protection and technology services.

ACG’s solid membership base enjoy benefits and services that strengthen and enhance brand protection strategies and help support ACG in its work to change public perception and expose counterfeiting as a sinister crime that damages economies, destroys jobs and increasingly threatens the health and safety of consumers.
WHAT’S NEXT?

“THANKS FOR A REALLY GOOD 2018 AND ALL THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED... WE’VE GOT A HUGE CHALLENGE AHEAD. GLAD OF YOUR SUPPORT”

> Host a major illicit trade and counterfeiting workshop that will start to probe evolving supply chains and develop tools and actions designed to disrupt

> Develop and deliver free brand protection training to cover a broad range of disciplines and related skills

> Facilitate more brand protection training for tools such as Amazon’s Brand Registry and Facebook’s Commerce and Ads IP Tool

> Host IP Roadshows in Newcastle, Belfast, the Midlands and London to raise awareness within enforcement

> Continue supporting enforcement operations including; OP STRANGEWAYS, BEORMA, SUN, JASPER, CAYMAN, BIG BEN and PISA

> Run ACG member-only workshops on specific enforcement techniques, legal issues and investigations

> Work with the IPO on a new piece of research into counterfeit goods and consumer attitudes towards those counterfeit goods.

> Continue sharing intelligence and best practise through ACG’s Policy, Physical and Online Counterfeiting Working Groups

> Provide IP awareness training for Border Force Officers at more ports and airports

> Celebrate World IP Day by exhibiting at the Home Office

> Deliver a workshop to address counterfeiting issues and challenges faced by brands with manufacturing or trading interests in Asia

> Attend PIPCU Partnership meetings to review performance and reporting methodologies

> Join the EUIPO Screening Committee and assess candidate applications for positions on the EUIPO observatory expert groups

> Deliver another great Conference that provides vital guidance and insights

> Attend the CTSI Symposium and Exhibition for TS officers in Brighton

> Take part in further enforcement raid actions in and around the UK

> Accept the invitation to be joint lead at the online market roundtables, where most of the issues relate to platform responses to take down product counterfeits sold online

> Work with the Alliance for IP to highlight concerns about the impact of the global growth of counterfeiting and piracy and increase awareness at Government levels

> Develop and deliver new benefits and services for ACG members to enjoy and continue to grow membership