

# Making my Mark in the rumour mill

**A**fter a successful run of 36 consecutive months Neil Thomas has decided to take a break from his BIGGA in Focus article. I'd like to thank Neil for his contributions over the last three years and look forward to including the regular forays into the magazine which he has promised me on issues about which he feels particularly strongly.

I have no intention of following Neil's format but felt the chance to offer up a few "MacCallumisms" via an Editor's column was just too good to miss.

May I begin by wishing you all the very best for the new year – a year which sees BIGGA reaching double figures. I had considered using the "Showbiz" good luck line "Break a Leg" but in light of the new Health and Safety legislation I would probably be sued for inciting recklessness.

At the tail end of last year I was part of the BIGGA Road Shows which appeared at both Sketchley Grange and Cannington College and had the chance to speak about my role as Editor of your magazine. I described how the magazine is put together and was able to answer some of the often-voiced criticisms – too many adverts, not enough colour etc.

We all found it an extremely rewarding exercise because, with a chance to speak directly to members, we were able to give an insight into what we actually do on a day-to-day basis. We were also able to allay some of the misconceptions which people have about BIGGA Headquarters – that there is an army of people working on every aspect of BIGGA business and that staff have whims administered to by hand picked Geisha Girls paid for out of membership funds.

An exaggeration, I

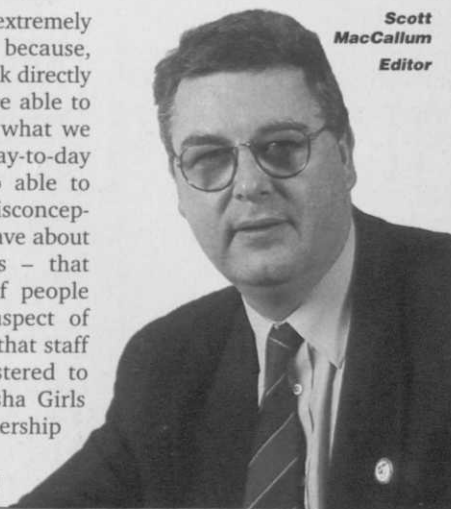
can regretfully assure you. A genuine example, however, is how people who visit Aldwark Manor are shocked by the cramped nature of the offices. They had assumed, or been told, that staff worked in the building which is actually Aldwark Manor Hotel.

The industry, presumably because it is small and close knit, is certainly prone to rumour, and extended games of "Chinese Whispers".

Even I, in the relatively short time I've been with BIGGA, have had a starring role in one such rumour. I learned, third, or perhaps even fourth hand, that I'd left the Association and was working in Germany! Unfortunately I didn't learn how well I was supposed to be doing. Perhaps it was a case of "Auf Wiedersehen Pet" ... but I'm afraid I wouldn't make much of a brickie!

The true story is always available from those at the centre of the rumour and the key to avoiding such cases, however amusing, is just to give a call. People are more than happy to provide the facts to allow you to pass informed judgment and opinion and not just add more spice to the rumour mill.

Scott  
MacCallum  
Editor



The recent high winds in the north east of England caused mayhem at Matfen Hall. Winds of over 90 miles per hour caused severe damage and one of the casualties was a oak tree which was over 200 years old on the 13th hole. Also the 4th and 7th holes were hit with large branches breaking off.

## Private health plan offers advantages to BIGGA members

Thirty five million people bought a pair of glasses last year. Nearly 30 million people went to the dentist and had to pay for their treatment. Seven million people will go to hospital this year for more than one night and 24 million will go as an out-patient for day surgery.

That's nearly 100 million people Westfield could help. And they are not the only people. Westfield Health Scheme provides 18 benefits covering many aspects of health care.

Even with the NHS much of today's health care has to be paid for, sight tests, glasses and contact lenses can be very expensive. The cost of dental treatment has risen significantly over the last year. Many of us now play hard and work hard, the incidence of sporting injuries rise every year and often result in physiotherapy, osteopathy or chiropractic treatment. Many people are turning to treatments such as acupuncture instead of traditional therapies. The cost of a new addition to the family can put a severe strain on the family budget.

Contributors to Westfield are secure in the knowledge that they have the cover to help pay for these often unexpected medical expenses. For just 65p, £1.20,

£1.80 or £2.50 per week you too could enjoy the peace of mind that membership of Westfield brings.

In particular, please note that Westfield will waive the initial waiting period for BIGGA members (except for pregnancy related claims).

Take time out to read the brochure in this month's edition of *Greenkeeper International*.

## Ransomes' profits up

Ransomes has announced worldwide sales of £186.4 million for the latest 12 month period. It marks a rise from £180.2m from the similar period in 1995. Pre-tax profits advanced from £9.2 million to £12.8.

Ransomes' commercial division, which includes Ransomes, Cushman and Ryan, increased sales and maintained margins, a goal achieved by a tight cost control and improved efficiencies resulting from better manufacturing practices.

Operating profits for the division were £20.8m on sales of £143.1m.