

Making my Mark in the rumour mill

After 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

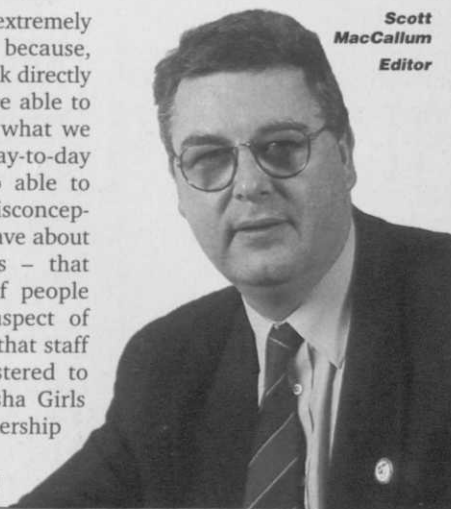
can regretfully assure you. A genuine example, however, is how people who visit Aldwark Manor are shocked by the cramped nature of the offices. They had assumed, or been told, that staff worked in the building which is actually Aldwark Manor Hotel.

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.

Scots get set for conference

The Scottish Region will hold its highly successful annual one day Conference in the Isle of Skye Hotel, Perth, on Tuesday, March 4.

The Region has brought together a group of speakers to cover some of the most topical subjects being dealt with by greenkeepers at the moment.

From Dumfries and County GC, the immediate Past Captain, Derek Ross, will try to bridge the divide between the committee and the greenkeeper.

Carol Borthwick, of Elmwood College, will look at training and

education towards 2000.

Possibly the best educated greenkeeper in Scotland, Ian McMillan, Balbirnie Park, with a different slant on the history of greenkeeping. Note the word different.

From the deep south, but a Scotsman at heart, Billy McMillan, Wildwood Country Club, will emphasize the need to keep greenkeeping simple.

More and more courses are waking up to the fact that trees can be an asset, whether by new planting or by spending more

money and time on caring for those already there. Andrew Vaughan, of Eamonn Wall and Co will encourage people "to see the wood from the trees".

Disease! That awful word. After 1996, one of the worst remembered in Scotland, any advice we can get on the subject is welcome and one of the country's leading experts, Dr Brian Clifford, of the Aberystwyth Sports Turf Research Association, will give advice on this dreaded subject.

As we get nearer the year 2000,

many more courses will reach or have passed their centenary and with the realisation that many greens built 100 years ago are not standing up to today's wear and tear Dr James Snow, the National Director of the USGA Green Section, will talk about the search for the perfect green construction and possibly how greenkeepers in Scotland can change their greens to stand up to the next 100 years.

It should be a great day and application forms will be sent out later this month.



To mark the sale of the 1000th Toro Greensmaster sold by the Toro dealers in Scotland, A M Russell Ltd a presentation was held at Scotsturf '96. The Edinburgh-based firm has been selling Toro for nearly 30 years and brought together one of the first Greensmasters it had supplied, to Sandyhills Golf Club, Glasgow along with the 1000th new Greensmaster, a

Russells hit their 1000th

3200-D, purchased by one of the premier courses in Scotland, Hags Castle Golf Club in Glasgow. Hags Castle and Toro representatives pictured at the champagne celebration are (from

left to right) John Gray, Deputy Course Manager, sitting on the 1000th machine; William Kelly, First Assistant; Robert McLerie, Course Manager; Graham Dale, Managing Director of Toro UK distributors Lely UK; Alistair McRobert, A M Russell's Area Manager, and Brian Goudie, Managing Director, of A M Russell Ltd; and John MacIntyre, Assistant Greenkeeper.

Mill Ride boost for greenkeeping



Mill Ride Golf Club in Ascot has become the first individual golf club in the country to make a donation to BIGGA's Education and Development Fund. The Club, at

which Master Greenkeeper and former Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Gordon Irvine, pictured, is General Manager, has donated £1,000 to the Fund.

"We are absolutely delighted that Mill Ride has made this extremely generous donation," said Neil Thomas, BIGGA's Executive Director.

"In making the donation it

shows that the club recognises the importance of greenkeeper education and the benefits that it brings in ensuring that golf courses are maintained to the highest possible standard.

"On behalf of everyone who will ultimately benefit from this donation may I thank the Directors of Mill Ride for their generosity."

The need for a club stamp explained

Many of you have been ringing Aldwark to ask why, if your club does not pay your subscription, you still need your renewal form to be stamped by your club. The need for a stamp was introduced partly at the request of sections and partly as a result of problems that had occurred in 1996. The necessity for the club stamp is to protect our greenkeeper members from non greenkeepers who would seek, by deception or omission, to obtain a membership card simply to play golf. While all new members are now referred to the section, it would not be possible from an administrative point of view to refer all renewing members to the section. The club stamp was deemed to be the easiest way to verify employment.

If the club does not have a stamp, a letterhead or compliments slip signed by the Club Secretary or General Manager will be accepted. Any member experiencing a particular difficulty in having his or her form stamped, should write to Janet Adamson at Aldwark Manor.

FACT: EXPRESS DUAL GRINDING SYSTEM IS QUICK!

Trade gears up for 1997

Ransomes has made two new appointments within its commercial sales division serving professional grass and turf machinery dealers, customers and end-users throughout the United Kingdom.

Paul Gardiner has been appointed Area Sales Manager with responsibility for the south and south-west of England and all of Wales.

Technically experienced with a sound engineering background, Paul will be assisted on dealer and customer visits, when necessary, by Ransomes' Southern Area Demonstrator, Mark Poppleton.

The second new Ransomes appointment is Michael Stewart, who joins the company as northern area demonstrator.

Based near Hexham, Northumberland, Michael trained as a greenkeeper before starting his own grass-cutting contract business.

There's a new sales team for **SISIS**. Following the retirement of Sales Director Arthur Harrison, Ian Camp has been appointed General Sales Manager with overall responsibility for world-wide sales. Ian is widely known to SISIS customers throughout the UK and overseas and his global sales experience pre-dates his SISIS years, now into double figures.

Keith Vertigan has been appointed UK Sales Manager supported by the 15-strong, SISIS direct sales force. Keith has been Northern Regional Manager for five years following a period in charge of SISIS in Scotland. He has been with SISIS for 25 years during which time he has covered most parts of the UK as well as representing the Company at overseas events.

David Harrison has been appointed Export Sales Manager. David has 20 year's service with SISIS and has already travelled



Paul Gardiner, left and Michael Stewart of Ransomes



The SISIS team: Peter McGuckian, David Harrison, Ian Camp and Keith Vertigan

the world extensively as Sales Demonstrator, prior to which he exploited his artistic talents by producing SISIS Operating Manual drawings.

Peter McGuckian as Sales Office Manager, remains responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the Sales Office, ensuring the provision of essential back-up and administration, increasingly utilising the technological advances expected by customers of today and tomorrow.

Mommersteeg International has restructured its amenity and sports grass seeds sales team and strengthened the operation with the appointment of Mark Rayner.

Mark joins the company as amenity seeds specialist responsible for the north west of England, the West Midlands and Wales.

The amenity team at Mommersteeg is headed by Phil Davies, who will be responsible for business in Scotland and Northern

Ireland and the development of distributor business throughout the United Kingdom. Based in North Wales, Phil will also be looking at new product development and expanding Mommersteeg's technical advice service.



Mark Rayner, pictured, joins Mommersteeg with a good knowledge of the company, as he spent six years with Stewart & Co Seedsmen, the Mommersteeg distributor for Scotland and the Borders.

Mark said: "It is a very exciting time to join Mommersteeg."

Speaking about the restructuring of the company's amenity team, John Akers, Commercial Manager Mommersteeg International said: "Our sales in this sector have grown well over the last few years and we are looking to develop further business, across all market areas."

Johnsons Seeds has created a new senior position – Head of Procurement – as part of its strategy to drive the business forward into the 21st century.



David Adsley, has been appointed to this position. David joins from Seliotape

where he has worked for 21 years.

David trained as a Technical Buyer. During his career he has held a variety of production management and purchasing management posts.

David describes his new role as a pivotal organisational function, "Procurement is about purchasing but more importantly it carries all aspects of purchasing and materials. It's also about supply into the production environment but it is also about supply into the sales environment."

Jay Dobson, Programme Manager and Lecturer in Turfgrass Science and Management at Myerscough College, will join PSD Agronomy on 1 February

as a consultant Agronomist. Jay has lectured widely throughout the UK,

including a spell at Langside College in Glasgow, and takes with him a broad range of knowledge and experience of the golf industry where he has been involved in the construction, maintenance and management of new and existing facilities as well as research into a broad range of turfgrass related topics.

Following an initial period of acclimatisation within PSD, Jay is looking to develop the services that they offer to a wider market place particularly in the West of Scotland.

He will be dividing his time between his home base in Glasgow and the Head Offices in Preston.

FACT: EXPRESS DUAL GRINDING SYSTEM IS SAFE!

Education at BTME will be strongest yet

Welcome to a new year, Sami and I would like to wish all readers a very happy, prosperous and educational New Year.

We will soon be totally involved in preparations for the National Education Conference, Workshops, BTME seminars and the joint STRI/BIGGA Chairmen of Green/Secretaries Course all of which are seeing an increase in popularity for 1997. There are some places left for those who have not already booked but to make sure of YOUR place, give us a call at headquarters.

Bookings will be accepted for the BTME Seminars, on the day, but we cannot guarantee that places will be available. This year's education provision at BTME is the largest ever. Take the chance to improve your knowledge and skills in a wide variety of subjects.

Master Greenkeeper credits and BASIS CPD points will be awarded for all events, ask for details at the Conference and BTME Seminar reception. Remember that improved education and training leads to improved status for greenkeepers and improved golf courses for golfers.

BIGGA Lending Library

The Lending library now has over 400 books, with new titles constantly being added and all section secretaries have been sent an updated library list and application forms.

You may borrow a maximum of two books at a time for up to six weeks simply by writing to Ald-



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

wark Manor or by sending in an application form. Books, in stock, are dispatched by return of post and we ask that you return them within the six week period. Therefore, the only cost to you is return postage. If you prefer, callers at Aldwark Manor may also borrow books.

Regional Supervisory Management Courses

Plans are being developed for this Autumn's Regional Supervisory Management Courses and, following the success of last year's courses, demand for places is expected to be very high.

Don't forget, these courses are available to all greenkeepers and are designed to prepare them for supervisory and management posts. Once again, thanks to the contributors to our Education and Development Fund, we will be able to keep the cost of these courses, for BIGGA members, to approximately one tenth of the commercial rate for similar courses.

There are seven places still left on the Essential Management Skills course, at Gateshead, on 10/11 February 1997. This course is offered at the very low cost of £50, so make sure of your place by 'phoning now or by speaking to a member of staff at BTME.

Toro wins quality standard accolade for manufacturing

The Toro Company has achieved ISO 9000 certification for its commercial business and a component parts manufacturing facility. In 1995 Toro became the first full-line irrigation and commercial equipment manufacturer to obtain ISO 9000 designations.

ISO 9000 is a formalised set of quality definitions and standards developed by the International Organisation for Standardisation. A certified company has identified and documented processes that address all elements of the ISO 9000 standard that its facility or operation is pursuing. Once certification is achieved, the company is audited every six months to assure continued compliance.

"Toro holds itself up to the worldwide standard and makes it," said Greg Holaham, Total Quality Manager for the commercial business.

"The ISO certification is an important indication to our

customers that our quality processes are world class and that we are committed to continuous improvement."

A record quarter for John Deere

Deere & Company has announced record fourth quarter worldwide net income of \$173.9 million for the quarter ended October 31, an increase of 15% compared with 1995 fourth quarter net income of \$150.6 million.

Deere & Company Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Hans W Becherer said:

"Both the fourth quarter and the full year results represent new company earnings records. The company's operating margins remain strong as our focus on continuous improvement and growth is having a positive impact throughout our businesses."

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



Need some advice?

The **LEGAL HELPLINE** can advise you

Greenkeeper Members call the LEGAL HELP LINE for FREE advice
English Law: 01206 867775 Scottish Law: 0141 332 2887

Yet another benefit of
BIGGA membership



Doug Smith, Course Manager at Thorpe Hall GC, Essex, could be forgiven for looking a little bit bleary eyed of a morning. He has just become a dad for the second time when Keri Samantha entered the world weighing seven pounds three ounces on November 15. Keri is a sister for Jena who is nearly three.

FACT: EXPRESS DUAL GRINDING SYSTEM IS SIMPLE!