



**PRESS RELEASE – 23 November 2007**

## **ROGUE TREE SURGEONS BROUGHT DOWN TO EARTH**

**In a joint High Court action led by the Arboricultural Association, a tree care company which falsely claimed to be one of its Approved Contractors has been ordered to cease passing itself off as such and to pay costs of £5,500. Acacia Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup> is the first company to be prosecuted for falsely claiming membership of the Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors scheme, which gives a trusted stamp of approval to those meeting rigorous standards of business and working practice.**

Finding a tree surgeon, or ‘arboricultural contractor’ you can trust should not be a case of picking random names from the small ads, or searching the Internet for anyone with a smart website. There are too many tales of rogue tree surgeons who can not only put the public and property at risk through poor working practice but also compromise the health of the trees in their care. The Arboricultural Association is a body charged with promoting the proper care of the nation’s amenity trees (like the trees in streets, parks or private gardens), and its Approved Contractor scheme provides the reassurance that an accredited company has met its rigorous standards of expertise and can be trusted to provide a professional tree care service. Among its 2,000 members, the Association promotes 143 Approved Contractor companies nationwide, the only companies entitled to use the scheme’s trade mark logo and to describe themselves as such.



The official registered trade mark of the Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor scheme : only AA Approved Contractors are permitted to use the logo

Employing an Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor brings the reassurance of employing a qualified professional who has been and will continue to be assessed for their technical expertise, business standards, customer care, safe operating practices, insurance credentials, and their care of trees. Accredited companies’ customers are equally reassured that in the unlikely event that something goes wrong, the scheme provides a quality assured complaints procedure. Significant numbers of local authorities, parks managers and responsible tree owners choose Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors to care for their trees, and the scheme is deservedly recognised for encouraging and embodying the highest standards of professional tree care.

Small wonder that the Arboricultural Association, together with five accredited Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors\* took action against Acacia Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup>, when complaints were received from disgruntled customers who contacted the Association to check the company’s credentials. The resultant High Court action found that Acacia

<sup>1</sup>Acacia Treecare Ltd of Wendover, Buckinghamshire, England, not to be confused with any other tree work company using “Acacia” in its name.

Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup> had falsely claimed themselves as AA Approved Contractors, and they were duly charged with passing themselves off as such and for infringement of the scheme's trade mark. The company has been ordered to remove all such claims from any material used in connection with its business (or individuals within it), and to pay costs of £5,500. It may also be liable for further financial penalties should the Association and co-claimants seek damages through the court.



Pictured (l to r) signing the case against Acacia Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup>, co-claimants and members of the Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor scheme : Luke Johnson - Gristwood & Toms (Tree Contractors Limited); Bruce Hatton - Treemenders Limited; Bill Malin – The Tree Company (London) Limited; Mike Connick - Connick Tree Services Limited; and Daryl Parkin formerly of Treecare (Arboricultural Specialists).

Commenting on the case, Director of the Arboricultural Association, Nick Eden said: “The Approved Contractor scheme exists to both encourage the highest standards of tree care and to help clients - from private individuals to local government officers and estate managers - select an arboriculturist that is competent, safe, insured and reliable. Members of the Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor scheme have been and are repeatedly assessed against strict criteria, and are committed to providing a quality and professional standard of service; we take any false claim to the accreditation very seriously. The success of our case against Acacia Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup> proves the validity of the scheme and signals a strong warning to anyone considering false representation as an Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor. We will act quickly and confidently against them”.



The Royal Courts of Justice, London – venue of the High Court hearing against Acacia Treecare Limited<sup>1</sup>.

Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors are the only companies entitled to use a dedicated logo to identify their accreditation. They are also listed in an annual Directory which is sponsored by STIHL, and which is the *only* UK directory to list only arboricultural consultants\*\* and contractors that have been assessed by, and are regularly re-assessed by their representative organisation. The Directory also gives advice on choosing an arborist or consultant, the services they offer and tips for those employing them – including a useful guide to the terminology commonly found in tree work estimates and reports. The Directory is widely distributed amongst users of tree care services and is available free of charge from the Arboricultural Association. Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors are also listed on the Arboricultural Association website : [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk).

<sup>1</sup>Acacia Treecare Ltd of Wendover, Buckinghamshire, England, not to be confused with any other tree work company using “Acacia” in its name.

For more information on the Arboricultural Association, its accreditation schemes, training courses, events and activities, along with useful advice to tree owners, visit the website [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)

\* Co-claimants and Arboricultural Association Approved Contractors :

Connick Tree Services Limited  
Gristwood & Toms (Tree Contractors) Limited  
Trecare (Arboricultural Specialists)  
Treemenders Limited  
The Tree Company (London) Limited

\*\* In addition to its Approved Contractors scheme, the Arboricultural Association also operates a listing of Registered Consultants who have met similarly rigorous standards of professionalism and business practice. Arboricultural Consultants offer advice and guidance on for example, tree management and planning issues; they may be likened to the architects or structural engineers of the construction trade.

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### Notes to Editors



Rogue tree surgeons – like those pictured – not only put the public and property at risk through poor working practice but also compromise the health of the trees in their care.

The Arboricultural Association found more than 15 serious faults with the tree work pictured.  
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1. For further press information, contact the Association on +44 (0)1794 368717 or email [admin@trees.org.uk](mailto:admin@trees.org.uk)
2. The Arboricultural Association is a Registered Charity, No. 1083845. Headquarters address: Arboricultural Association, Ampfield House, Ampfield, Nr. Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 9PA
3. The Arboricultural Association is a professional association promoting excellence in tree care to Government, professionals and society. Its 2000 members practise arboriculture as consultants, government officers, contractors ('tree surgeons'), lecturers, researchers and students. Main activities include publishing information, training, networking, and assessing and promoting competent arboricultural contractors, consultants and local government officers.
4. The Arboricultural Association produces an annual Directory of the individuals and companies on their Registered Consultants and Approved Contractors schemes. The Directory is available from the Association: +44 (0)1794 368717 or <http://www.trees.org.uk/treeservices.php>

<sup>1</sup>Acacia Trecare Ltd of Wendover, Buckinghamshire, England, not to be confused with any other tree work company using "Acacia" in its name.