Fascinating glimpse behind the scenes

A gap does exist between our profession in UK and Germany

In reply to the two letters in the February edition, under the heading 'Jerry Bashing'.

Firstly, in reply to Mr Walton at the Sennelager Golf Club. I am sorry if you got the impression we were, as you call it, "Jerry bashing." The point was more than anything aimed at the profession and the vastly different practices between the English and German greenkeeper, and was not particularly aimed at the race. Also, if you would like to visit your local Arbeitsamt (unemployment centre), you will see there is no such 'beruf' (occupation, trade, profession) as greenkeeper. In the event of becoming unemployed, which I hope you never do, you would be registered as a Landwirtschaft worker which is 'farmer or agriculturalist' or even Landschaftsgartner (landscape gardener). Let's hope this will all change as golf becomes more popular.

Secondly, I would like to reply to Mr Seve Schmitz. You're quite right, in any work you must earn respect from the people you work with and for. The former has been no problem, whether it be a German or Japanese worker. The problem we had was the golf course owner was an architect who would overrule many decisions made by Mr Bishop. Mr Bishop would explain why the owner's suggestion would not work etc., only to be told: "Yes, I understand - now do it." To cut a long story short, the so-called fight you referred to took place in court which, due to Mr Bishop's professionalism, which should not have been questioned in the first place, we won.

We cannot understand why many German golf clubs seek British greenkeepers because "they are the best", only then to question decisions made by the head greenkeepers.

Lastly, I would like to thank the response from readers and would be grateful and curious to hear from anyone else living in Germany with regard to any aspects of the profession. We can gain much from these opinions, so it's about time you all put pen to paper.

Elaine Holland
Elaine's partner, Stuart Bishop, is now head greenkeeper of 27-hole Domane Niederrhein Golf Club, due to open in July.

Not an ideal world

In reply to my earlier letter regarding hard hats, Martin Petherick (Letters, March) states that, rather than greenkeepers wearing hard hats, it would be better to educate golfers not to hit golf balls when greenkeepers are in the vicinity.

This, of course, is the ideal. Unfortunately it is not an ideal world. Many golfers, regrettably, hold greenkeepers in contempt, the attitude "if they will cut the grass, they can do it for themselves". Unfortunately, when I want to play my ball they deserve to be hit! It is, sadly, not uncommon. Given this attitude, and that greenkeepers frequently use highly dangerous machinery, I believe they should use both hard hats and education, and any other method of protection available, and that golf course management should support and encourage them to do so.

James Smith, Ollettton, Nottinghamshire