

Fresh from the trauma of completing this second issue of 'Greenkeeper International', and basking in the mild feeling of comfort it affords, I was reminded of a scrap I read somewhere by a witty writer whose name I cannot recall but whose observations on journalism are engraved indelibly in my mind. "Writing a column is easy", he wrote, "All you have to do is sit at your typewriter until small drops of blood form on your forehead".



management articles, written by the people who can properly guide those who do not presume to know it all. We will sometimes feature golf courses which perhaps bear scant resemblance to many of the tired-out affairs on which some British greenkeepers are forced to toil, but in maintaining a balance we will also look long and hard at some strife-ridden courses and aim to offer practical solutions.

Preparing the first issue was a bit like that, save that the blood ran rather more freely, but with the backing of some unsung heroes we were ready on time and judging by your generous comments we seem to have been pretty well received.

We'll also hear a lot from the educators and hope that we may absorb new ideas; we'll look at thorny environmental issues or proposed legislation that may threaten our livelihood and strive always to protect and improve the well being of all greenkeepers.

In recent times however it has become fashionable to attack almost everything that BIGGA does to improve the lot of their members, and the armchair critics of this magazine, even after a single issue, are suggesting that your editor (and by implication your Association) is guilty of pro-American views and that the magazine has failed to highlight British greenkeeping issues.

There will be enjoyment in this magazine, but there will also be controversial issues honestly faced with no attempt at 'disinformation'.

I am no apologist and will not rise to their bait, least of all after just one month, for in recognising an intelligent audience I believe that whilst issues on our doorstep are important, those happening elsewhere in the world can often have a profound influence on The Way Forward - the path we earnestly seek to tread.

We are sure there will be times when you'll want to put pen to paper, spluttering in protest at statements with which you vehemently disagree.

That is what controlling a magazine is all about.

This one is YOURS and you will be addressed seriously, without condescension or pontification.

From the warmth of my office in Sussex I'm taking pleasure in watching the snow fall, delighted that this natural blanket will give some rest and protection to courses which have been thrashed so mercilessly for so long. Just keep off those toboggans!

DAVID WHITE

## Dirty deeds in the public sector

Lack of supervision, bad working practices and quality reduced well below specifications are becoming increasingly prevalent as pressure on public sector spending continues to favour those who submit the lowest tender.

Transferring a weaker product into the drum of a specified grass growth retardant required by contract terms has led a Leicestershire based weed spraying contractor into trouble.

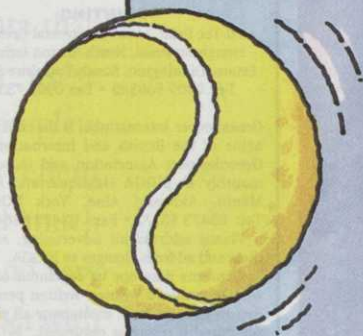
Languard Limited of Husbands Bosworth, Lutterworth, were apprehended on the side of a Yorkshire motorway and found to be in possession of a quantity of 20 litre drums labelled REGULOX K. Upon analysis the drums were found to contain a weaker strength product and not REGULOX K. Languard Limited, who were members of the National Association of Agricultural Contractors, Amenity Section, until their resignation on Feb 1st 1991, were working as sub-contractors to Tarmac in South Yorkshire at the time of the discovered abuse.

Following the incident the manufacturers of REGULOX K have been granted an injunction in the High Court of Justice preventing Languard Limited from a number of actions in relation to their product and trade mark, with costs also awarded against Languard Limited.

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## Hawaii sheds grass skirt mentality...

Forget the soft Hollywood image of grass-skirted hip swinging maidens – politicians in Hawaii, America's tourist-trap capital, are proving to be as hard-nosed as any when it comes to making an easy extra buck.

Hawaii's relatively close proximity to Japan has made it a target for Japanese golf course investment and the politicians recognise a good thing when they see it. Although proposed legislation has yet to be officially passed, some Japanese developments have already given a polite bow of approval to charges to be levied on golf course developers which could bring huge returns – billions rather than millions – to Hawaii, in the euphemistically titled Community Impact fees. Sums in excess of \$200 million were agreed by just one company to get approval to build two private members clubs. If we British question the thinking behind the casual acceptance of such unseemly extravagance, remember that golf-hungry Japanese are happily paying around \$100,000 for memberships, which can then be traded on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, just like shares in Sony or Toyota.

## ... but closer to home

If the smart though ever-so-slightly fishy scheme concocted by the Hawaiian parliamentarians has you wondering what skulduggery might be cooking on our own

doorsteps; consider the following:

Such is the concern regarding so called 'sweeteners' – the practice of firms paying for such as old peoples homes, wild-life parks, village by-passes, even agreeing to double-glaze a council estate in exchange for planning permissions – that the Government is to investigate this practice, which is recognised as being completely out of hand.

Typically, it seems, a council will suggest that planning permission is forthcoming only to hedge after a firm has committed labour and materials for the project. When actually confronted, the authority might suggest a project on their own 'shopping list' and a deal is then struck. The tactic, described by one eminent planning professor as "sometimes amounting to blackmail", is a festering sore.

Green-watching as we do, we are totally in favour of the trend for turning surplus farming land into golf courses but note that Department of the Environment guidelines recently issued suggest that golf courses should not now be built on SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) or AONB's (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

With opposition escalating to the growth of golf, certainly new golf, and with so many official sticky fingers in the honeypot, one wonders how long it will be before golf course developers are 'persuaded' to include little 'Extra's'? On the premise that nothing's for nothing in the business world, the poor old end user – the golfer – may well foot this final bill.

Agenda – The ITV programme which looks at political decisions affecting the South and South East – took on the role of campaigning for reasoned thinking with regard to new golf course applications when featuring our own John Millen recently. John appeared in his role of designer at the new Weald of Kent Golf Course and demonstrated in his inimitable fashion the thinking that has gone into this new and exciting pay and play complex. Viewers were treated to a brief lesson in the psychology of playing shots over water and shown an impressive image of John's swing – albeit without the benefit of club or ball!



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