As a BIGGA member who was the beneficiary of two exceptional events in November, I feel duty bound to write to the magazine and share my experiences with all of you who care to read on.

My first sojourn took me to the deep south to participate in the BIGGA Golf Environment Conference. An association with Amazon and Rhône Poulenc award ceremony. Our club was chosen as the Scottish regional winner, which was a real surprise to me knowing the quality of the work already carried out at other Scottish clubs such as Loch Lomond. So with this in mind, it was with great pride that I travelled down to the highly impressive Hanley Common to accept our award.

This is the second year in a row that we have won this specific award and I would like to say that the people who I have met at each award ceremony, in conjunction with the award itself, have provided me with a great deal of motivation and a buzz which our conservation management plan at Linlithgow. I am sure that our club is not the only one which gains so much from this competition and I think all big greenkeepers take personal satisfaction from the way this whole concept has grown, and from the good that it has engendered.

Part two of my week of travelling took me to sunny Marbella (although it was pouring when I arrived and left), to deliver a talk to the inaugural FEGGA conference. When first asked by FEGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver, to represent BIGGA by delivering the paper on the environment I was stunned, honoured and delighted (in that order), but I became so concerned with turning up to Dean’s expectations that I travelled to Spain with very few expectations about what I could learn from the whole experience. Consequently, a series of affairs did not last too long through because literally from the moment of my arrival, which was fortuitously just in time for dinner, I was put at ease by the assembled company, which by nature of the event consisted of many of the leading lights of greenkeeping in Europe.

During the two day conference I learned a great many things not only about greenkeeping, but about life in continental Europe in general, which in these days of common climatic conditions, oppressive pesticide legislation and a populace that is far too often taken for granted in this country. In BIGGA we British greenkeepers not only have a very well run organisation led by motivated and capable people, but we have a collective voice in the profession that is taken seriously by others in the golf industry and beyond.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have had an exceptional year, taking part in many wonderful events including the Loch Lomond Invitational, The Open, The National Tournament and many more. But I became so concerned with turning up to Dean’s expectations that I travelled to Spain with very few expectations about what I could learn from the whole experience. Consequently, a series of affairs did not last too long through because literally from the moment of my arrival, which was fortuitously just in time for dinner, I was put at ease by the assembled company, which by nature of the event consisted of many of the leading lights of greenkeeping in Europe.

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