In November I visited Mentmore Golf & Country Club for the Midlands Region Seminar, which was the last for Peter Larier who is leaving his post as Midland Administrator, to manage a family business. Peter has been a very popular man who has worked hard for the Region and will be badly missed. The seminar was very good and well organised. My only problem was getting home after I ran into train congestion, having to pass by Wembley at the same time as the Scots were trying to get there for the match with England.

The following week I attended the FEGGA Conference in Fuengirola, Spain, which started slowly but came to life on the second day with Jonathan Smith’s presentation on the Ecology Charter for golf clubs in Spain, which started slowly but came to life on the second day with Jonathan Smith’s presentation on the Ecology Charter for golf clubs in Spain. This was followed by a report given by Joe Bedford, as a FEGGA observer, on the Committed to Green Conference held the week before at Valderrama. The report provoked a long discussion as FEGGA had been asked to endorse the Valderrama Declaration on Committed to Green. All 22 member Associations firmly rejected any implementation and talking to so many members and friends on my trips around the country. But one occasion stands out for so many reasons, that was the opening of BIGGA HOUSE. It was my most nervous time for introducing His Royal Highness The Duke of York. It was also very fitting to have the many trips representing the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Trust, to give us all the guidance we need and within the appropriate laws.

This is my last column as your Chairman before handing over to Elliot at the AGM. It has been a wonderful experience for me, meeting so many greenkeepers and friends on my trips around the country. But one occasion stands out for so many reasons, that was the opening of BIGGA HOUSE. It was my most nervous time for introducing His Royal Highness The Duke of York. It was also very fitting to have the many trips representing the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Trust, to give us all the guidance we need and within the appropriate laws.

2) The whole programme was American-dominated with many Superintendents taking part as if the same laws of the land apply here as in the States.

3) We were suspicious of the real motive of running Committed to Green. Greenkeepers in the UK have a long history of concern and involvement in conservation of the land and we don’t need some jumped up do gooders telling us what to do. We have men like Bob Taylor, the STRI, and Jonathan Smith, of the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Trust, to give us all the guidance we need and within the appropriate laws.

Those who took part are sure it will be remembered for a very long time. It was great to meet our Canadian friends and count the relationship between the two Associations. All these occasions were very moving experiences and I will always look back with pride and enjoyment on the many trips representing the Association.

I would like to thank you all for the way you welcomed me at events around the regions and for giving me the opportunity to be your Chairman. My grateful thanks to all our staff, they have worked hard to put greenkeepers where we are today and on a personal note, for all the help and support they have given me throughout my two years. Finally, to my wife Marion who has put up with all my travelling and for doing all my typing and office work.

I have just been given the sad news that a dear friend, Harry Diamond, has passed away. Harry was a highly respected man, golfer and greenkeeper. He served on the National Board up to 1996 and sat on the Review Body, representing Scotland, which reformed the Constitution and Rules of BIGGA in 1995/96. There are many who will have known Harry longer than me, particularly in Scotland, and they don’t need me to tell them of his qualities. He was larger than life and a good friend who will be missed by all who knew him. All our sympathy at this time must be with Jess, his wife and family for their sad loss.

It is a sad note on which to end my final column, but that was Harry, he always wanted the last word.