Another much travelled month taking in Germany and Scotland and many points in between.

The German trip was to Dortmund as the guest of the German Greenkeepers Association at their annual conference and exhibition. As you would expect it was a superibly organised event with top quality speakers and instantanous translation of the papers. Among those speakers was Bruce Williams, a past president of the GCASA who has a lot to thank him for. Greenkeepers throughout Europe.

We also had the opportunity to visit a local golf club and the Borussia Dortmund and Schalke 04 football grounds. The Schalke Stadium was particularly impressive, being like the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff it has a retractable roof, but in this case the turf was wheeled out on pallets between matches.

One point that was made was that they were still having problems with the pitch because it is being stored too close to the stadium and shading was still a problem. We were lucky in the first phase of the visit in the first phase of the next year.

Nearer to home, those of you who know me well must be amazed that I've reached December before mentioning my beloved Sutton United, but one look at the Byram's League table will show you why. We're not too good in the league and we're out of both the FA Cup and the FA Trophy. As a vice president of the club I haven't been able to get there as often as I should have been as BIGGA business has taken priority but perhaps with the season we are having that is just as well.

Even nearer to home, I thought I'd got away with it when the Gentlemen's Dinner was cancelled earlier in the year but it came round again. We were lucky with the weather, as ever there was a good turnout and it seemed everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. I must confess that I'd been away on my travels and Mick Haynes and the rest of the team had prepared the course and I was delighted that Mick and the team were given due acknowledgement and appreciation for the great work they had done.

Still on the course it seems that the season just gets longer and longer as, if I write, we are still cutting fairways as least once a week and we've only just got underway on our winter programme.

It just leaves me to wish all BIGGA members and their families a Happy Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

Clive Osmond, Chairman