I’m currently laid up with a stinking cold in a hotel room in Nottingham. It may explain the slightly random and rambling nature of today’s column. I should be in a conference hall: it’s our Vineyard Churches National Leaders Conference, the church family to which I belong. But here I am blowing my nose and feeling sorry for myself.

That’s winter for you. There’s always something going round. It is not the time to be popping into Home Park and saying hello to the players either. I don’t want to add to their injury woes by giving someone the lurgy. As it is they seem to avoid what’s going around quite well, and hopefully by the time you’re reading this the string of players sidelined will have got themselves back to full fitness and the squad will be as it should be.

I asked Paul the physio whether there were any patterns to injuries within football clubs. Perhaps the time of year, or whether particular training regimes that produced injuries more than others, citing the recent comments made about Van Gaal and the spate of injuries Man Utd suffered from when he came in. The word from the treatment room is that apart from over work on the training ground sometimes new managers (with slightly different fitness and training routines) can bring on a spate of injuries. Otherwise there isn’t much of a pattern to it – they come and go. At least I think that’s what he said.

From my window I can see the Notts County ground Meadow Lane, and just behind it Nottingham Forest’s City Ground. Not quite as close together as the two Dundee clubs, but not far off. I do love a football stadium. They’re exciting places even when empty. The adverts on TV are telling me that the NFL is visiting Wembley again this Autumn: Britain’s fastest growing sport.

When I was at university over twenty years ago they were trying to sell American Football. A Chinese lad from Oldham used to play for the Uni. He was stocky – about 5 and a half feet tall and the same width – and was imaginatively named Odd Job. That sort of thing would never happen nowadays. Well after twenty years of hard sell it seems someone other than Sparksy is watching it now. Our very own Adam Sibley, one of the guys doing the audio description each week at Home Park, also travels up to Wembley to do audio description for the NFL games they have there (you find out a lot of interesting things about people when chatting before a game).

So as I lie here bravely fighting infection while I watch the main conference session on live feed and feel ever so slightly sorry for myself, it is appropriate to share with you some famous last words of the great and good that have gone before me. John Maynard-Keynes the economist said ‘I should have drunk more champagne’. The basketball player Pete Maravich: ‘I feel great!’ whereas Chairman Mao Zedong was more accurate when he said, ‘I feel ill. Call the doctor.’

The American playwright Wilson Mizner, to a priest ministering to him, said ‘Why should I talk to you? I’ve just been talking with your boss.’ And when Voltaire was asked to renounce Satan on his deathbed by a priest he replied “Now, now my good man, this is no time to be making enemies." My favourite one has to be John Newton, author of the hymn Amazing Grace, who told those standing around him ‘I am in the land of the dying, and I am soon going to the land of the living.’