Not long ago, Mrs McDivot and myself decided the unrelenting stress of being, necessitated a much needed vacation...

As it was the middle of the winter months and we were in great requirement of some change in scenery and temperature, so we chose the ever-popular semi paradise known as Tenerife and one of those late deals that allocate your destination upon arrival. Allocation on arrival always fills me with the fear of the unknown but as we had stipulated a four star hotel we were reasonably confident of meeting with a degree of success. I am glad to say we were not disappointed, as we discovered our stay was to be in a small resort in the most agreeable Hotel Los Gigantes, an establishment that catered for the mature guest and was as a result totally devoid of screaming little urchins and marauding teenagers desperate for some nocturnal activity.

We therefore settled down to a delightful week of sunbathing, coastal walking and the occasional sojourn in our little hired car to another part of the island. This particular activity I found to be most entertaining, as it involved heading in a roughly vertical direction for about half an hour up the side of a mountain along a highly precipitous road with a drop of about a thousand or so feet down the unprotected side. Some of these roads, particularly when we got to about 7,000 foot were in places already starting to make their own way down the mountainside. This added greatly to the amusement value, especially when confronted as we were on a regular basis by oncoming vehicles approaching at about 60 mph on the wrong side of the road or dirt track as it became. I must say some of the locals seemed to inject a great
deal of humour into their motoring, something that was not altogether shared by Mrs McDivot as we narrowly avoided an imminent demise on several occasions.

As we continued to survive each approaching hairpin bend and the weather and vegetation became indistinguishable from that found in the Scottish Highlands, I thought of some of our nations clubhouses and received the same level of service that we received in this, a very pleasant but otherwise unexceptional hotel. Is it a question of economics, or is it a case of tradition being the immovable obstruction to progress on this front?

As "Blackjack" embarked upon a medley of poignant 80's arias, starting with Ornella's "Hands up", a song that seemed to convey sentiments that were not altogether misplaced. Englebert Humperdinck, that I choose the pretty or younger females as the focus of his attention. They were the ones that did not need the boost to their confidence that came with his technique with the ladies be something that was not altogether shared by Mrs McDivot as we narrowly avoided an imminent demise on several occasions.

We would then be utterly amazed at how many of the hotels senior citizens would actually get out of their wheel chairs and dance the night away with seemingly unaged legs. It was while listening to I believe a rendition of "The last waltz" which they chose to sing without quite the same vocal force as deployed by Englebert Humperdinck that I realised we were metaphorically speaking, a little further away than the 2,000 miles that separated us from the golf clubs of Britain.

The service at this hotel was on a totally different level. If we required refreshment, I did not have to go to the bar and spend ten minutes or so trying to draw the attention of the barman while he means about the house committee to some wearted member. I did not have to ring a bell and wait for some acne ridded gormless teenager or to materialise from the recesses of a darkened kitchen and produce an unimelligle grunting noise. None of your twenty minutes of pugilism here that are required to purchase a half pint of lager following the June medal back home. No, the technigae needed to get served at Hotel Los Gigantes was to glance around and raise a digit for about one second before an immaculately dressed head barman would glide over, smiling to the other guests as he went and produce a note book ready to take your order. He would then pass this to one of the many barmen that were omnipresent and produce a note book ready to take your order. He would then pass this to one of the many barmen that were omnipresent and produce a note book ready to take your order. He would then pass this to one of the many barmen that were omnipresent and produce a note book ready to take your order.

Now to my recollection, I have never once visited a British golf clubs clubhouse and received the same level of service that we received in this, a very pleasant but otherwise unexceptional hotel. Is it a question of economics, or is it a case of tradition being the immovable obstruction to progress on this front.

As "Blackjack" embarked upon a medley of poignant 80's arias, starting with Ornella's "Hands up", a song that was not unknown to me had an entire dance routine associated with it, I reflected on the quality of the headwaiter at Hotel Los Gigantes. In fact as we watched all the seughtepanergians going through the routine of raising and lowering there arms in expert synchronisation as the Swedish Duo sang "Gimme your heart, gimme, gimme", I could not help but notice how the maitre d'hote greeted many of his more regular female guests with a kiss on the cheek.

Was it the holiday atmosphere that had them swooning as he did so, or was it his polished Latino charm that enabled him to carry it off with such elegance? As I further observed the headwaiter's skills, I began to notice the little secrets that he had at his disposal. One of them was to never choose the pretty or younger females as the focus of his attention. They were the ones that did not need the boost to their confidence that came with his technique with the ladies.

In fact I would even venture to say, a great deal of their charm lies in their antiquated ways. But could it not happen in some of the more select establishments, those proprietary owned places that are looking to provide that little bit extra that will set them apart from the masses. Could it happen here, or is it just I and the rest of the World, that have missed the point entirely.

Sandy McDivot: Head Greenkeeper, Sludgecombe Play and Play.