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Pretty as a Picture

Scott MacCallum visits **Meon Valley**, the subject of last year's Photographic competition winning picture, and discovers a hotel golf complex with a members' club feel

Let's face it we are all guilty of stereotyping. Scots are all tight-fisted; southerners are all softies; the Welsh all sing and are descended from coal miners, while the Irish all come up a bit short when it comes to grey matter. We all know it's nonsense, but the myth still gets perpetuated on a daily basis.

It also exists in golf. The accepted mantra is that members' clubs are invariably cosy and stuffy with visitors treated as a barely tolerated, but necessary, evil, while proprietary clubs and hotel courses on the other hand have wide fairways, short rough and pile as many people through as can humanly be accommodated.

• We all know that while there is perhaps an element of truth in it there are many golf venues which don't fit into that stereotypical mould.

One such is Marriott Meon Valley Golf & Country Club, in Southampton, which operates much more like a conventional golfing establishment than many traditional golf clubs and possesses 27 holes that are as interesting as they are challenging.

Attached to a superb, recently refurbished, four star hotel – the 18 hole Meon and excellent nine hole Valley – offers a great test for hotel guests, but the 700 Meon Valley members are lucky to have some great facilities and a golf course which is set up for enjoyment rather than purely speed.

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