



(19)

Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 0 953 368 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
03.11.1999 Bulletin 1999/44

(51) Int. Cl.⁶: **A63B 53/04**

(21) Application number: **98303299.6**

(22) Date of filing: **28.04.1998**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE**
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(72) Inventor:
**Viljoen, Kenneth Victor
Morningside, Sandton, Gauteng (ZA)**

(71) Applicant:
**Golftech (Proprietary) Limited
Johannesburg, Gauteng (ZA)**

(74) Representative:
**Howden, Christopher Andrew
FORRESTER & BOEHMERT
Franz-Joseph-Strasse 38
80801 München (DE)**

(54) Golf clubs and sets thereof

(57) A golf club head (1) and generally a set of golf club heads is provided in which there is associated with the golf club head an aesthetic picture, relief image, or other graphic (4) which is employed purely as ornamentation and has no relationship to the origin, the physical characteristics, manufacturer or other persons or companies handling or marketing the golf club head. Usually the clubs of a set of such golf club heads will each have a different picture, relief image, or other graphic associated therewith. The preferred embodiment is a cavity backed club head having an integral relief image formed in the cavity (2).

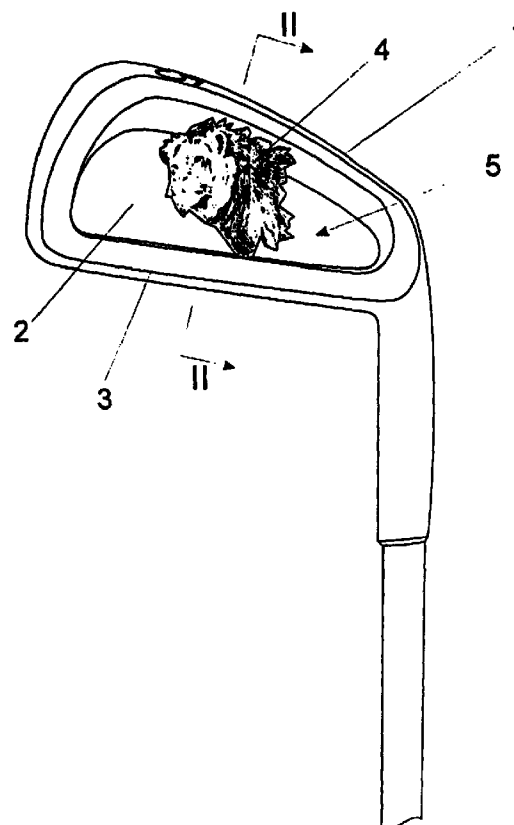


Fig 1

EP 0 953 368 A1

Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to golf clubs and more particularly, but not exclusively, to sets of golf clubs usually consisting of a plurality, often three or four woods, or, alternatively, or in addition, a set of irons containing any number of irons, usually from four to ten, and possibly also a putter.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

[0002] The individual golf clubs of a set thereof are usually, if not always, made to look substantially identical to each other apart from the necessary differences dictated by the angle of loft of the club face and, in the case of a wood, the overall size of the head.

[0003] Accordingly, apart from the strictly functional aesthetic appeal of the particular club head design, no aesthetically pleasing or artistic element is embodied in golf clubs other than trade marks or other material indicating the origin of the golf clubs.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0004] It is the object of this invention to provide golf clubs and sets thereof in which the clubs have an improved aesthetic appeal which may also be used as a functional feature as may be required.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In accordance with this invention there is provided a golf club head which has permanently associated with it a picture, relief image, or other graphic having aesthetic appeal and unrelated to the origin or physical characteristics of the club head and not being a corporate name, logo, personal initials, or the like.

[0006] The invention also provides a set of golf club heads as defined above wherein at least two of the heads of said set have different pictures, relief images, or graphics associated therewith with the different pictures, relief images, or graphics preferably related to the extent that they clearly constitute a set.

[0007] Further features of the invention provide for each club of a set to have a different picture or graphic associated therewith; for the pictures or graphics to be of a common subject thereby providing a link between them, for example a series of animals, cartoon characters or the like; for the picture or graphic to be located, in the case of an iron, in a cavity at the rear of the club head; for the picture or graphic to assume the form of a relief image formed integral with the club head; and for the relief image to be formed in the casting or forging process whereby the club head is manufactured.

[0008] Alternatively, the picture or graphic may be made as a separate item and permanently bonded, sol-

dered, brazed, or welded to the club head.

[0009] In order that the invention may be more fully understood, one embodiment thereof is described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] In the drawings:-

FIG.1 is an elevation of the rear face of the club head of an iron in the inverted orientation in which it is normally found in a golf bag;

FIG.2 is a cross-section taken through the club head along line II to II in Figure 1, but with the golf club head in an operative orientation;

FIG.3 is a view similar to Figure 1, but showing three different irons of a set according to the invention; and,

FIG.4 is a perspective view of a putter head according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AN EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION WITH REFERENCE TO THE DRAWINGS

[0011] As illustrated in the drawings, a golf club head (1), in this case a number three iron, has a cavity (2) formed in the rear face (3) of the head and formed integrally with the metal of the head is a picture (4) formed in relief from the surface (5) of the cavity.

[0012] In this case, the picture is that of an animal such as a lion and in this embodiment of the invention each of the other irons of the set which includes the illustrated number five iron, will have a relief picture of a different animal as indicated and illustrated in Figure 3.

[0013] It will be clear from the above, that the relief picture is preferably formed integral with the club head and at the time of casting or forging thereof.

[0014] Thus, when viewed in the normal orientation in which the clubs are stored in a bag, i.e. the inverted orientation, the various pictures on the rear faces of the club heads can be viewed in their normal upright orientation and it is considered that a particularly pleasing or at least enticing feature is added to a set of golf clubs by virtue of the invention.

[0015] In the case of a putter (6), illustrated in Figure 4, however, because in the normal inverted orientation in a bag it is obscured by means of a cover, a relief image (7) of an animal is, in this case, orientated so that it is in its normal orientation when the putter head is lowest in its operative orientation. The relief image could extend between a lower flange (8) and an upright striking flange (9) of the putter.

[0016] Clearly, the pictures could be of any desired subject such as, for example, a series of comic charac-

ters; pictures of a series of famous golfers; emblems of a series of famous golf courses; or any other series of pictures. It is also not essential that each and every club of a set have a different picture and it is within the scope of this invention that a picture can be repeated in the set.

[0017] In the case of a set of woods, the pictures could be flat pictures on the top face of the golf club or, preferably, on the rear arcuate surface of the golf club head.

[0018] The invention therefore provides a set of golf clubs which will have a very much enhanced aesthetic appeal, as well as a uniqueness factor which, it is envisaged, will be of great appeal to many persons.

[0019] In its broadest sense, this invention relates to a golf club head which has associated with it a picture, relief image or other graphic. In a preferred embodiment, the picture, relief image or graphic has aesthetic appeal and is unrelated to the origin or physical characteristics of the club head and is not a corporate name, logo, personal initials or the like.

[0020] The features disclosed in the foregoing description, in the following claims and/or in the accompanying drawings may, both separately and in any combination thereof, be material for realising the invention in diverse forms thereof.

Claims

1. A golf club head (1) which has permanently associated with it a picture, relief image, or other graphic (4) having aesthetic appeal and unrelated to the origin or physical characteristics of the club head and not being a corporate name, logo, personal initials, or the like.
2. A golf club head as claimed in claim 1 in which the picture, relief image, or other graphic image is located within the confines of a cavity (2) in the rear (3) of the club head.
3. A golf club head as claimed in either of claims 1 or 2 in which a relief image having aesthetic appeal is formed integral with the club head by a casting or forging process whereby the club head is manufactured.
4. A golf club head as claimed in either of claims 1 or 2 in which the picture, relief image, or other graphic is made as a separate item which is permanently attached to a prefabricated golf club head.
5. A set of golf club heads which comprises at least two golf club heads as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4.
6. A set of golf club heads as claimed in claim 5 in which each of the golf club heads has a different picture, relief image, or other graphic associated

therewith.

7. A set of golf club heads as claimed in claim 6 in which the different pictures, relief images, or other graphics are related to each other by a common subject.
8. A set of golf club heads as claimed in claim 7 in which the common subject is selected from a series of animals and a series of cartoon characters.
9. A set of golf clubs comprising a set of golf club heads as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 8 with each golf club head being carried on a golf club shaft.
10. A set of golf clubs as claimed in claim 9 in which the golf clubs are irons.
11. A golf club head as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 in the form of a putter head having a lower flange and an upright striking flange with a relief image extending between the flanges.

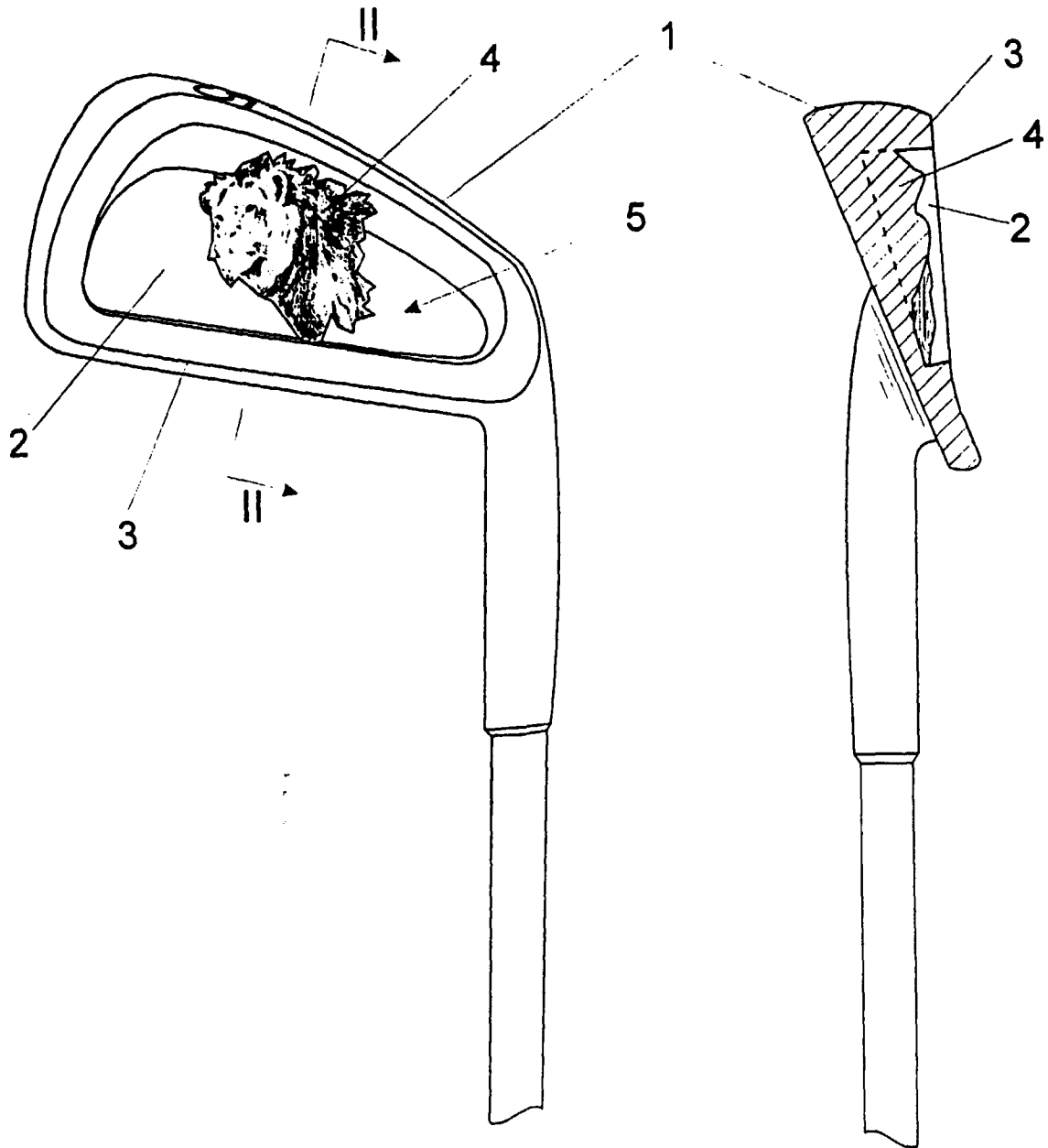


Fig 1

Fig 2

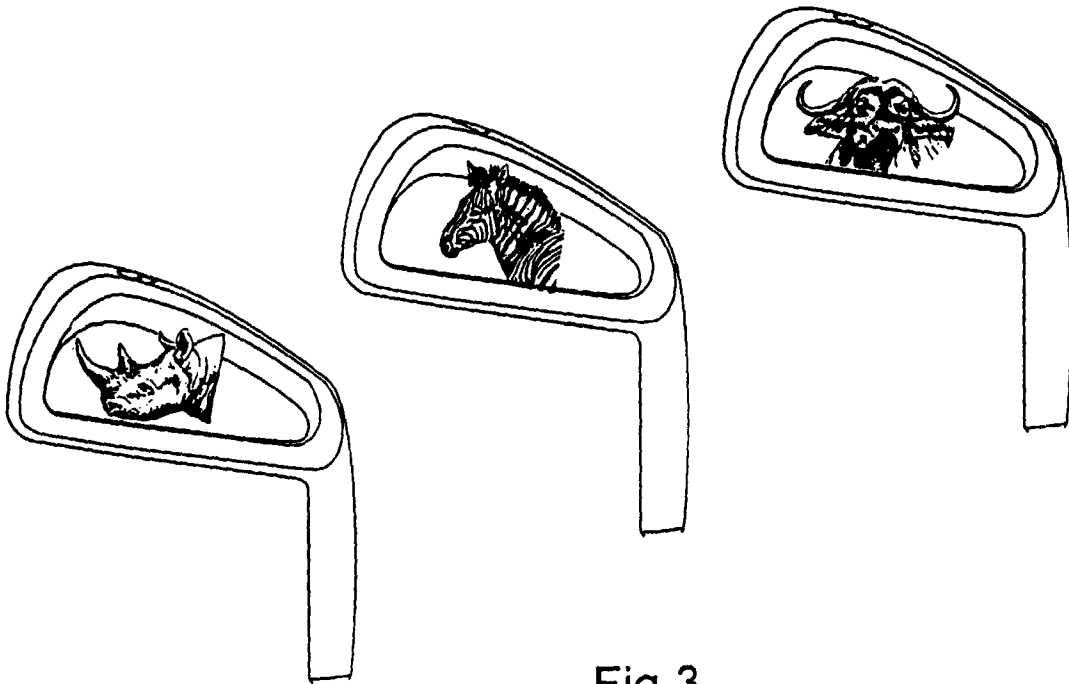


Fig 3

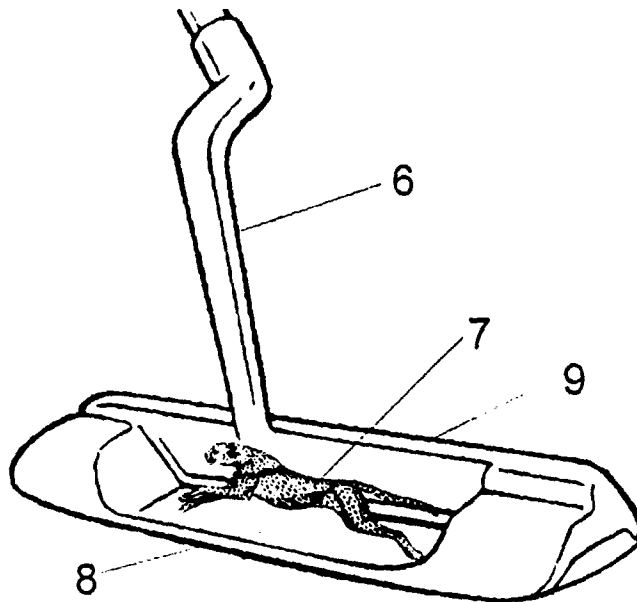


Fig 4



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 30 3299

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	US 4 809 977 A (DORAN ET AL.) 7 March 1989 * the whole document *	1-5,9-11	A63B53/04
X	US 3 814 437 A (WINQUIST) 4 June 1974 * the whole document *	1-5,9,10	
X	US 5 242 167 A (ANTONIOUS) 7 September 1993 * the whole document *	1-3,5,9, 10	
X Y	GB 450 755 A (COCHRANE) 20 August 1936 * the whole document *	1,4-6,9 7,8	
X Y A	US 2 880 002 A (WETTY) 31 March 1959 * column 4, line 64 - column 5, line 5 *	1 7,8 2	
X A	US 5 104 457 A (VILJOEN ET AL.) 14 April 1992 * column 2, line 45 - column 3, line 26; figures 1-4 *	1,2,4,5, 9,10 6,11	
X A	EP 0 434 398 A (SUMITOMO RUBBER IND) 26 June 1991 * the whole document *	1,4,5,9, 10 2,6,7	A63B
X A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 095, no. 002, 31 March 1995 & JP 06 315549 A (YOSHINOBU HARADA), 15 November 1994 * abstract *	1,4 5,6,9,10	
A	WO 88 02642 A (ARMSTRONG ET AL.) 21 April 1988		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 September 1998	Examiner Williams, M
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons</p> <p>& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03/82 (P04C01)