

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

RECONSTRUCTION AT EAST DORSET

Proposals for the construction of 9 additional holes and the reconstruction of the existing 18 holes have now been submitted by the club's course architect, Martin Hawtree of Hawtree & Sons.

Work on the new 9 holes should start in April and it is anticipated that they will come into play in 1992. Reconstruction of 10 of the holes on the existing course will start in May and by turfing the greens, it is hoped that they will come into play next year. Work on the remaining 8 holes of the existing course will start in 1991 and these should be back in play at the same time as the new 9 holes.

By that time the club will have an 18 hole course some 7000 yards in length from the back tees with an additional 9 hole course - all tees and greens having been relocated and reconstructed to modern standards.

Landscaping of the area in front of the clubhouse will include a new large putting green, and the clubhouse itself will be enlarged, with additional car parking space. Martin Hawtree is working closely with Eddie Hadgkiss the club's recently appointed course manager. It is interesting to note that Martin's father Fred was the Architect for the extensive improvements on the John O'Gaunt Golf Club when Eddie's father was the head greenkeeper there - like father, like son!

The East Dorset Club's General Manager, David Thomas, sees the overall construction programme as an exciting one although current members may suffer a little during the next couple of years. However, by 1992 they should have an excellent 27 golf holes with clubhouse facilities to match - not forgetting the recently opened floodlit driving range.

DIY GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION SCHEME

Many farmers are deterred from converting their land into a golf course because of the high production costs involved. With 700 courses required by the year 2000 AD to meet demand, the irony is that these

landowners have ideal sites but feel limited by finance.

Now Hawtree & Son, the Oxford based international golf course architects, have come up with a revolutionary idea for what in essence are do-it-yourself golf courses, in which they submit a simple design and then allow the farmer and his workforce to build it in their own time, while maintaining a supervisory role.

By this method the Oxford-based practice, is making golf course ownership more attainable. The first example of this new concept is the Sandford Springs Golf Club near Kingsclere in Hampshire on the site of Sandford Farm owned by Raleigh Place. The complex was opened by Nick Faldo US Masters champion, earlier this year. Simon Gidman, Hawtree's on-site architect for the project designed the layout for the farmer and his partners to produce an 18 hole 6050 yard par 70 course. Throughout construction the architects were on hand to advise and check each stage of development.

The second example is an 18 hole golf course at Wrag Farm just north of Swindon. The construction work has now been completed and the course is scheduled to open in 1991.

Over the next few years it is hoped a form of joint venture between architect and farmer will lead to many new golf courses as no-frills development costs are kept to a minimum, but to a high specification.

STAVERTON PARK HOTEL AND GOLFING COMPLEX OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Staverton Park, the established parkland course near Daventry and the course where Nick Faldo's coach David Leadbetter began his successful career, have opened its impressive hotel complex.

The initial phase of 30 bedrooms to luxury standards, complements the golf course, before, further 20 rooms featuring 6 luxury suites with jacuzzi spa baths and glorious panoramic views of the golf course will open in the spring. A health and fitness suite for hotel guests including a trimnasium, sauna, solarium and snooker room add to the facilities. The complex should appeal not only to lovers of golf but to anyone seeking a relaxing leisure break.

Hewn out of the natural Northamptonshire landscape, Staverton represented a significant change in direction in golf course construction when building started nearly 15 years ago.

The brief to architect John D Harris from proprietor David Green was simple, create a course of spectacular dimension that is enjoyable to play 12 months a year.

The late Commander Harris was the ideal man for the job, having established a reputation throughout the world in the field of golf course architecture, with projects as far afield as Runway Bay in Jamaica and Canberra, Australia. He also recognised the need for aesthetic features on courses with a particular penchant for sand and water, both of which feature significantly at Staverton Park plus the need to have clear vision of both features and hazards from tee.

Work started at Staverton Park in 1975 with the original course being designed around mighty elm trees, which provided the definition on a number of the holes, large sand traps, large sand greens with suspended water table construction and a number of constructed water features.

The original 150 acres of farm land on which the course was built required considerable "re-forming" in order to provide the necessary contour ideal for a golf course. This involved the movement of approximately 600,000 tons of earth and the laying of 10,000 yards of land drainage.

The sand construction of the greens on top of the suspended water table provide the ideal surface for maximum drainage and it is this facility above all other that makes Staverton such a popular course during the winter months.

The greens, sown with Pencross Bent combine all the elements that make them ideal for play throughout the year - snow or heavy frost excepting, winter greens are a rarity at Staverton.

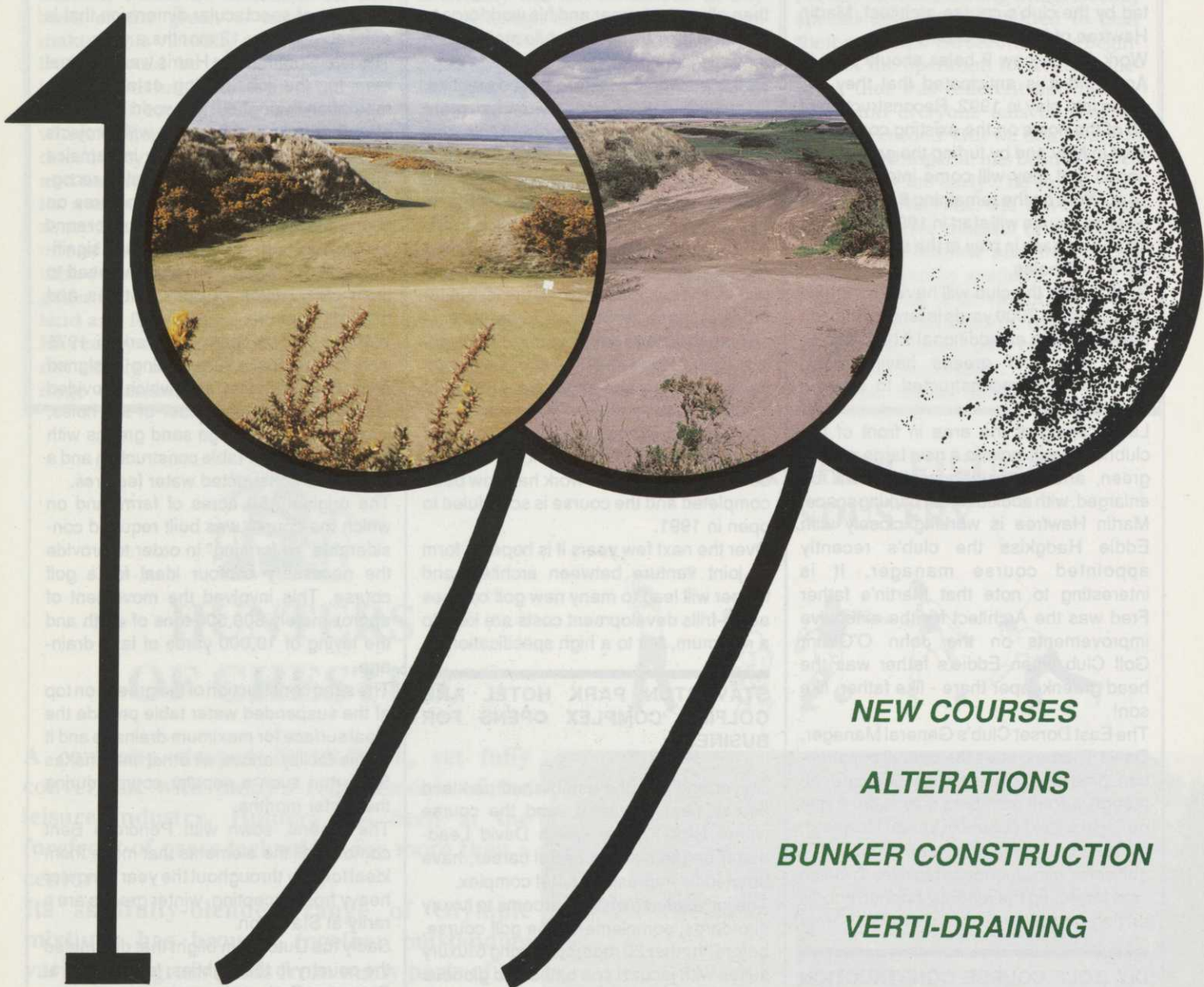
Sadly the Dutch Elm blight that decimated the country in the eighties, left its mark at Staverton Park and a major tree planting programme has been in operation for the last ten years.

Now open for nearly 13 years, Staverton Park is maturing into a very fine course, its open fairways encourage players to open their shoulders from the tee, but beware

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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Steven Marnoch summed up my sentiments perfectly in his article

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Staverton Parks new luxury hotel

the careless 2nd shot, despite the deceptively large greens, each is surrounded by Commander Harris' hungry traps and if they don't get you, the cunning borrow on these huge greens (some nearly 1/2 acre in size) certainly will.

Each hole enjoys a character of its own at Staverton Park, none too hard, but none too simple, ensuring an enjoyable day out for golfers of handicaps both high and low. Greens and tees are irrigated by an automatic Watermation system installed at construction. Water is pumped from a main pond on the course to a reservoir pond by the 1st tee. From here water is circulated back around the course with tees, approaches and greens being irrigated. Because of the natural clay subsoil a number of springs feed the water throughout the year ensuring ample irrigation in even the driest of conditions.

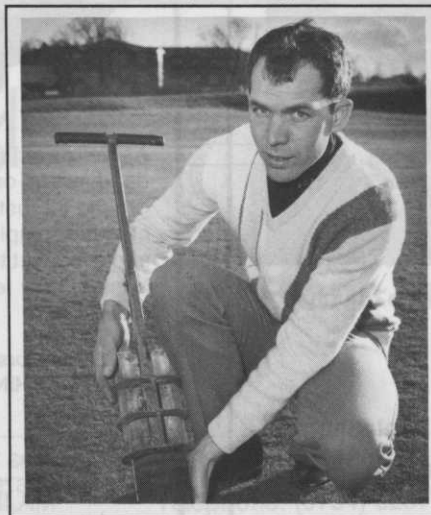
These ponds also play an important part in the aesthetics providing a natural habitat for both indigenous wild life such as, coots, moorhens, swans, ducks but also, the occasional foreign visitor such as Canada Geese.

Due to its rural location the course is a haven for other natural inhabitants, including foxes, rabbits, hares and even the odd mercurial badger.

Head Greenkeeper, Howard Middlesbrook served his course manager apprenticeship at Tankersley Park Golf Course for seven and a half years, where he studied for the city and guilds greenkeeping certificate, and then passed with three distinctions and three credits at Broomfield Col-

lege, Derby, where he was top student. Howard, aged 29, held his first major position at Pinegrove Country Club where he was head greenkeeper for two years. During that time he built a large bowling green and a putting green from scratch. He then moved on to Pontefract Golf Club where he was head greenkeeper for three and a half years. He directed the reconstruction of all the bunkers, built new tees and developed the course. He also took control of a major tree planting operation.

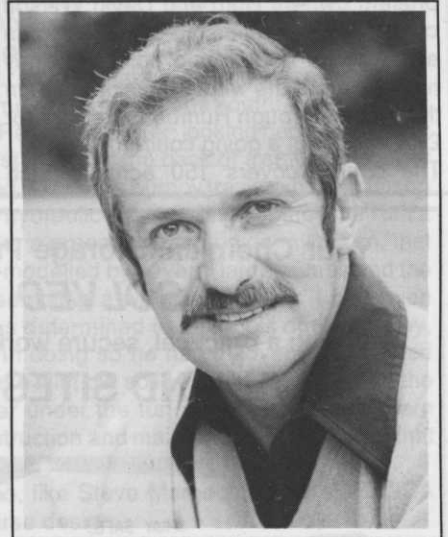
Howard (below) plays golf with the Green-keepers Association and is a section member of the Greenkeepers Committee. Married to Debbie, who he met while playing at Tankersley Park Golf Course some time after leaving there, they have two children, Gavin aged three and a



half and a toddler Francis at 20 months. They now live in Daventry and are starting to settle into the Northamptonshire way of life.

Howard has worked at Staverton for some months and plans to develop the course to its full potential. He describes the course as being well laid out with many attractive features, the large sand constructed greens giving all year round play ability.

Howard and his team of three greens staff have recently planted 1,000 trees, birch, oak, alder willow, lime, sycamore and scots pine to add to the beauty of the course in years to come.



SEPTEMBER OPENING FOR PAXHILL PARK

The construction of the clubhouse of the new Paxhill Park Golf Club at Lindfield has just begun and is scheduled to be completed before the opening of the club this September.

The 6,128 yard course, which was designed by PGA professional Patrick Tallack (pictured above) and built by his construction company is creating tremendous interest in the area and the club have opened an application list for members. Patrick Tallack told us "We are all delighted with progress and the amount of interest shown already is very encouraging indeed. The golf club will soon establish itself as one of the finest in Sussex. The setting and views are superb".

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE FOR EAST ANGLIA

A new 18 hole championship golf course is to open in East Anglia. Hintlesham Hall Golf Club, four miles west of Ipswich, will attract the world's leading golfers.

The 6835 yards Par 73 golf course, designed by Hawtree & Son the Oxford-based architects, responsible for over 300 courses worldwide is scheduled to open officially later this year was built by Land Unit Construction Ltd of Milton Keynes.

Nearing completion the golf course adjoins the 16th century country house previously owned by Robert Carrier, the internationally known restaurateur. The present owners Ruth and David Watson converted Hintlesham Hall in 1984 to an exquisite 33 bedroomed hotel and they have now put the whole development on the market through Humberts Leisure for £7.5 million as a going concern.

The course covers 150 acres of rich

Suffolk parkland, not far from Constable country and is only ten minutes from the main A12 London-Yarmouth road.

Eight greenkeepers will work under the direction of Charles Burke, formerly head greenkeeper with the Stowmarket Golf Club.

Membership has been restricted to 400 for the coming season. This number will consist of corporate members and those paying annual subscriptions. By restricting the use of the course initially, the intention is to allow it to mature at a natural pace.

The course architecture follows in the classic tradition of Augusta National, in that placement of shot on the fairways, rather than avoiding savage hazards, is the primary test.

In essence Hawtree & Son has steered clear of blind holes and random unfair penalties in favour of a more honest and open test that will challenge the best players as well as the club golfer.

This was the primary objective of the cur-

rent owner David Watson when he commissioned the international architects to design a course alongside his hotel.

Over the next three months 200 trees-a-day will be planted mainly saplings, in and around the perimeter of the 150 acre parkland course. Charles Burke currently leads the team undertaking this forward looking project and by the time the course opens it will benefit from 8,000 new trees. It is expected that the character of this picturesque course will change dramatically as the woodland matures and complements the famous 16th century country house.

Despite heavy rainfall in the Ipswich area in February, Hintlesham Hall remained relatively unaffected, after a week in which almost two inches of rain forced many courses to close. Through it all, Hintlesham remained unaffected.

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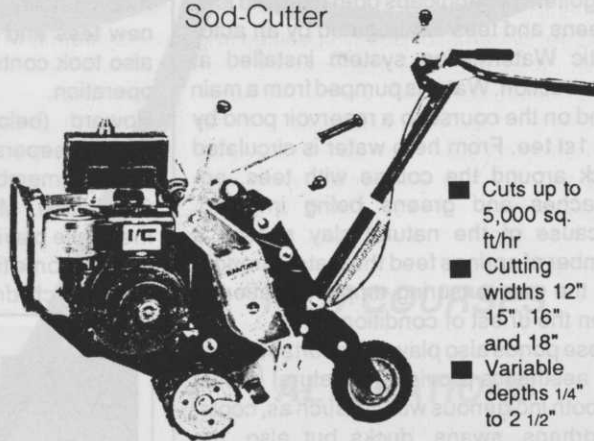
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FROM THE FAIRWAY

Dear Sir,

Steven Marnoch summed up my sentiments perfectly in his article in your February 1990 issue. I can appreciate the problems he has had in getting into a career in Golf Course Architecture. I have received equally demoralising replies to job applications too.

I am now studying for the same Education Programme Steven mentioned in his article and only now do I feel that I am making some progress. Although the course set up by the BAGCA is the best thing that could have happened for someone like Steven or myself, I cannot emphasise enough, how important an understanding of the construction side of the industry is. Fortunately, Golf Landscapes Ltd, are providing me with this excellent grounding.

A comprehensive understanding of construction techniques will inevitably give the Golf Course Architect a much wider knowledge and ultimately, with the BAGCA Education Programme, a much more professional approach.

With regard to this professional approach, I was surprised to read a comment in a letter from Graham Hurst of Glebe Consultants. He stated that, "If we wait for the day when all courses will have been designed by qualified architects, may we not be overtaken by events."

Is he suggesting there is suddenly an insatiable need for golf developments!

The demand has been growing rapidly from the 70's, and no matter how quickly these courses are designed and built there will always be the demand for more, due to a greater availability of the sport to the individual, due to increased leisure time, the televising of all major golfing events and Europe's success in the Ryder Cup. Surely the last thing the golfer wants is the rushed building of new courses. Rapid development of a golfing facility can lead to short cuts taken in the construction stages, such as poor materials supply and specification, or the installation of insufficient drainage systems, or poorly specified irrigation systems, which will cause inevitable problems in the future.

The modern golfer is not looking for a barren turfed green space to hit a ball around, he/she is looking for something of quality, which has been designed with him/her in mind. A course that challenges all levels of golfer, which is sympathetic to the aesthetic quality of the surrounding landscape, a course that can be maintained by experienced greenkeeping staff with ease, and that entices the golfer back again even as he/she walks off the 18th green. Golf courses which provide a facility of such high

standards must not be rushed, every course is unique and it can take between 18 months and two years from it's conception to the opening day.

I am concerned that due to the present shortfalls in facilities, developers may begin to accept lower standards as a result of their urgency to satisfy the demand for new courses. Whereas, the BAGCA by setting up the Education Programme, are promoting an awareness of a higher standard approach. This may take a little longer to establish, but will benefit many more golfers in the long term. I can only hope the developers take the latter choice.

Jonathan C. Gaunt
Golf Landscapes Ltd

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read Steve Marnoch's article regarding golf course Architects.

I too, way back in the days of the Beatles and mini skirts had the desire to become involved in the design of golf courses.

From an office bound job I moved to the "great outdoors!" In pursuit of my passion for golf I managed to get a job on a golf course. This was mainly due to an understanding head greenkeeper who was willing to give me a chance. The following two years I learnt the basics in the art of good greenkeeping. This period was one of the happiest in my career. I have fondest memories of incidents that happened at this time of my impetuous youth: e.g. wrapping the 6th green around a Patissson spiker; looking back and seeing the head greenkeeper standing in the back of a stationary tipper trailer, as I merrily roared off along a bumpy track with my Fordson devoid of coupling and hydraulic pipes flailing. Or the time I left a perforated hose to water a green, only to find on my return, that the green had been re-modelled by several large humps and the rest of the surface resembling a water bed! While I had been away, a golfer who was determined to make his double bogey, had moved the hose. In doing so he had inadvertently aligned several holes in the hose with old solid tine holes which had the effect of injecting water under the turf. Of course with modern methods of green construction and maintenance it is unlikely that this would happen today!

Some years later, I too, like Steve Marnoch, wrote to BAGCA enquiring into golf course design.

At that time I was working as a Grounds Maintenance Officer with Berkshire County Council designing and supervising the construction of playing field and sports facilities.

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FROM THE FAIRWAY

My grounding for this work included experience in architectural draughting, my two years at Banstead Downs Golf Club; four years at Art College studying environmental design and several years as landscape assistant in Berkshire County Architects Department.

For the last thirteen years I have devoted my working experience to improving the standards of playing surfaces for sport in Berkshire's schools. Together with a colleague have lead Berkshire into the 21st century with artificial grass pitches on school sites. By the year 2000 these pitches will be some of the oldest in the country!

It was in May last year that the opportunity arose for myself and colleague to effect a management buyout with Berkshire County Council. We have set up a partnership Fountain and Shatford specialising in sports and recreational landscape design and consultancy service in both natural and artificial surfaces.

My partner (who incidentally was an advisor with STRI) and I, feel we make a worthwhile contribution in the advancement of sports surfaces especially in the area of synthetics. Synthetic surfaces in golf are usually confined to tee areas but with the ever increasing sophistication of these products a synthetic green could be on the horizon. Ughh! I hear you purists say but how about temporary winter greens? We are members of Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management a worthy forward thinking body, who are dedicated to promoting a modern sport technology and high standard leisure provision.

I do sincerely hope that BAGCA in its attempt to safeguard the design standards of golf courses does not fall into the same trap as a few elitist institutes who in their relentless pursuit of professionalism prelude the often wealth of talent that can be found but is excluded by academical insistence.

Good luck to the S.M. and the BAGCA course organisers. At least future designers and architects alike will be teeing off in the right direction. FORE!

Mike Fountain

Fountain & Shatford

Dear Sir,

It is most gratifying to read that the PGA European Tour is to introduce 'a two stroke penalty' rule as the ultimate deterrent against 'slow play'. This will surely encourage their members to have due respect for a reasonable pace of play.

Last season an experimental scheme to encourage an acceptable pace of play was introduced by the Committee of the Vauxhall Club Team Classic. The scheme met with widespread approval among the hundreds of players and club officials who were involved. This special rule was based in the establishment of a reasonable time for play and subject to consistent refereeing, carried the potential for a penalty of 'two strokes'. It worked.

On behalf of Vauxhall Motors, I shall be pleased to send copies of the rules and guidelines that were introduced last season, to anyone who is interested.

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Stephen Russell

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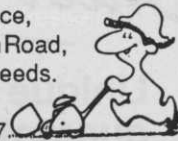
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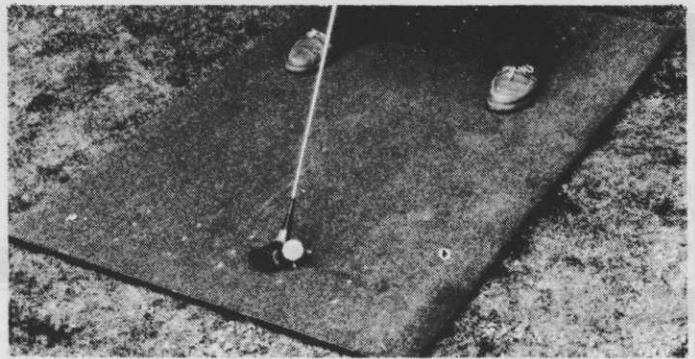
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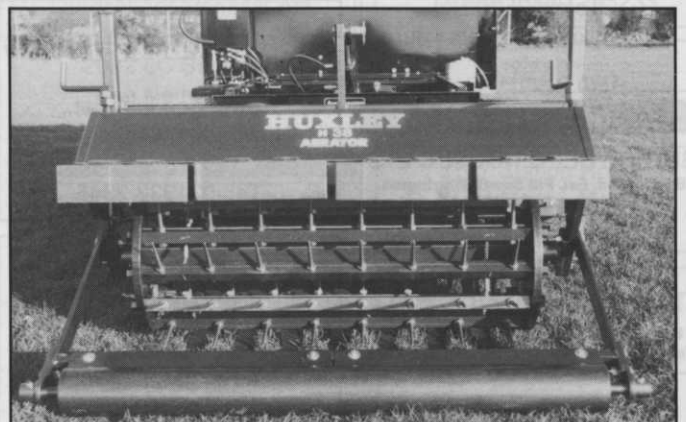
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