



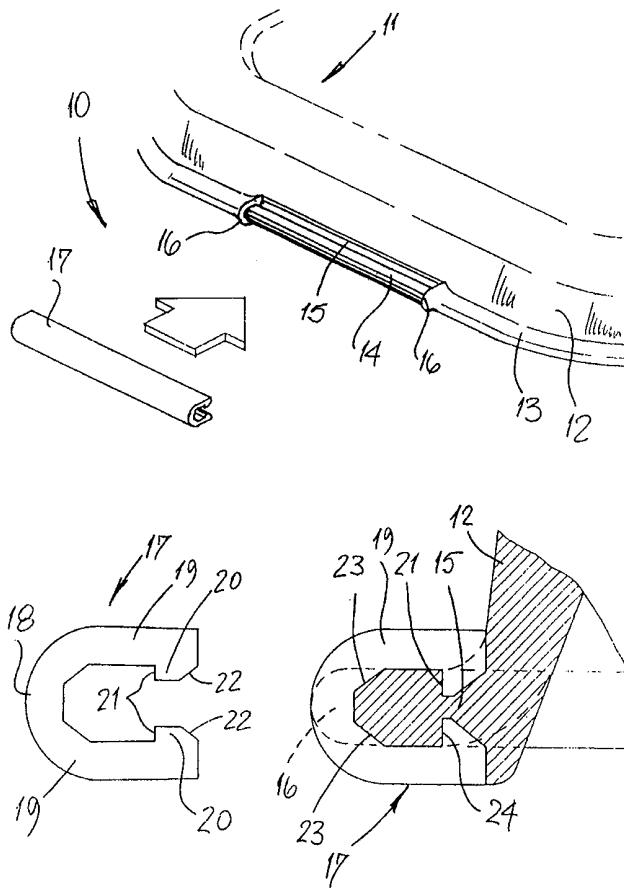
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/02990 (22) International Filing Date: 6 October 1998 (06.10.98) (30) Priority Data: 9721033.0 6 October 1997 (06.10.97) GB (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): STEWART PLASTICS LIMITED [GB/GB]; Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey CR9 4HS (GB). (72) Inventor; and (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): ROWE, Anthony, Peter, Varney [GB/GB]; 66 Selwyn Avenue, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2HD (GB). (74) Agents: GILLAM, Francis, Cyril et al.; Sanderson & Co., 34 East Stockwell Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1ST (GB).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).</p> <p>Published With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</p>

(54) Title: IDENTIFICATION DEVICE FOR CONTAINERS

(57) Abstract

A container and lid (11) primarily intended for food use has a flange (13) extending at least around one of the container and the lid (11), but preferably has respective flanges (13) extending around both the container and the lid. A colour coded identifying device (10) is in the form of a generally U-shaped clip (17) and is connectable to the flange (13) of the container or the lid. The clip has a pair of arms (19) between which the flange (13) is received, at least one of the arms (19) defining an abutment face (21) which is engageable with a corresponding abutment (24) on the flange (13) so that when the clip (17) is connected to the flange, it is retained thereon during all normal use of the container and lid.



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IDENTIFICATION DEVICE FOR CONTAINERS

This invention relates to containers, and particularly (but not exclusively) to containers for food use.

Concerns about health and food safety often focus on maintaining
5 separate certain kinds of foods and the importance of not contaminating one
kind of food (for example, uncooked meat) with another kind (such as cooked
meat). Particularly in the catering and restaurant businesses, there is a
special need to ensure that certain foods are kept separate and in particular
are not stored together but this is rendered difficult, in practice, by the use of
10 food containers. Such containers may be labelled to show what they
currently contain but the labels often become detached from the containers or
the writing on the labels becomes illegible. Furthermore, even after washing,
containers which have been used for one type of food may still result in
unwanted contamination if then used for another type of food.

15 There is thus a recognised need to be able to designate a container to
be exclusively for a certain kind of food. Such a designation, in theory,
should be permanent but, in practice, it is desirable to permit a change in
designation though perhaps with some difficulty, to ensure that the
designation remains physically associated with the container, for all normal
20 use of that container. Using differently-coloured lids is one method for
indicating an intended use of a container but unless a lid is permanently
attached to a container, it is very easy for the lids for a number of containers
to become mixed up. On the other hand, if a lid is permanently attached,
then it cannot be replaced by another of a different colour, if the intended use
25 of the container is to change. Moreover, since a container manufacturer has
no control over the intended use of the container, a large number of different
lids would have to be supplied with each container to permit the purchaser
sufficient flexibility in use – and this is relatively expensive and also would
require significant storage space, for all of the lids.

30 Having regard to the recognised problem of the desirability of clearly
and unambiguously identifying a container as being for a particular food stuff,
one aspect of the present invention provides a container having a base, a

- 2 -

side wall upstanding from the base and an outwardly-projecting flange extending at least part-way around the side wall, the container further comprising a device to identify the intended use of the container which device is in the form of a generally U-shaped clip connectable to the flange, the clip
5 having a pair of arms with a throat therebetween and into which the flange is receivable, the flange defining a first abutment face and at least one arm of the clip having a second abutment face engageable with said first abutment face when the clip is connected to the flange so as to retain the clip to the flange during all normal use of the container.

10 An alternative form of this invention provides a container having a base, a side wall upstanding from the base and defining an opening, a lid releasably connectable to the container to close the opening, and an outwardly-projecting flange extending at least part-way around the lid, the container further comprising a device to identify the intended use of the
15 container which device is in the form of a generally U-shaped clip connectable to the flange of the lid, the clip having a pair of arms with a throat therebetween and into which the flange is receivable, the flange defining a first abutment face and at least one arm of the clip having a second abutment face engageable with said first abutment face when the clip is connected to
20 the flange so as to retain the clip to the flange during all normal use of the lid.

It will be appreciated that the present invention provides a relatively simple and cheap solution to the problem of identifying a container and/or its lid as being for a particular kind of foodstuff, in such a way that the identification remains with the container or lid for all normal use of the
25 container or lid. Though the clip could be made so that it is essentially irremovable, once attached to a container or lid, the resilience of the clip may permit removal of the clip and its replacement by another, provided that the removal of the clip is deliberately performed, for example by using a suitable tool to prise the clip from the flange. Moreover, since the clip may be
30 relatively small, the storage of a significant number of clips is not an issue. Also, the cost of each clip may be very small (for example, as compared to

- 3 -

the cost of a lid) and thus a manufacturer may readily supply a number of differently-coloured clips, with each container.

Though the present invention is applicable to a wide range of designs of container, with or without lids, intended for containing almost any products,
5 the invention does find particular utility in connection with the storage and display of foodstuffs. Thus, the invention will hereinafter be described primarily with reference to the storage and display of foodstuffs though it is not to be regarded as limited to this use.

This invention is equally applicable to open-topped containers, such
10 as trays for the display of foodstuffs such as may be employed by retailers, as well as lidded containers. In the case of the latter, preferably both the container and the lid have a respective flange, each of those flanges being provided with a device of this invention of substantially the same form, so that both the container and its lid carry a suitable designation for the intended
15 foodstuff with which the container and lid are to be used.

It is an important feature of the device of the present invention that the clip is retained to the flange during all normal use of the container and its lid, if provided. Thus, the clip should remain on the flange for example during
20 handling of the container, washing of the container, subsequent drying of the container and during loading or removing foodstuffs from the container.

The identifying device of the present invention may take a number of different forms and moreover the clip itself may be secured to the flange of the container or the lid, as appropriate, in a number of different ways. These
25 give rise to greater or lesser security of attachment of the clip to the flange, ranging from almost irremovable without destroying the clip to removable relatively easily but only when intentionally removed, for example when the clip is to be changed, for another.

A particularly preferred form of identifying device has the first abutment
30 face defined by a groove formed in the thickness of the flange and running parallel to an adjacent edge of the flange. In this way, a bar is formed along the free edge of the flange, separated from the remainder of the flange or from the side wall of the container or lid by means of a relatively thin web, a

- 4 -

face of the bar directed towards a wall of the container or lid defining the first abutment face. In the alternative, the groove may be replaced by an aperture right through the flange, such that the bar is held to the flange solely at its ends. In either case, the second abutment face may be defined by a barb
5 formed on an inwardly directed surface of one of the arms of the clip. Greater security may be achieved by having two second abutment faces on the clip, defined respectively on both inwardly directed surfaces of the two arms of the clip.

In an alternative arrangement, the first abutment face is formed by a
10 wall of a re-entrant slot extending into the flange from an edge thereof, into which slot is received a lug extending across the throat of the clip. In this case, the clip may be snap-fitted on to the flange so that the two arms of the clip lie one to each side of the flange, with the clip being retained in position by the inter-engagement of the lug and the slot. The security of attachment
15 may be controlled by adjusting the relative dimensions and configurations of the slot and the lug.

If required, a second re-entrant slot may be formed in the flange, spaced from the first re-entrant slot and the clip having correspondingly-spaced lugs in the throat of the clip, such that one lug engages in each slot,
20 respectively.

In yet another arrangement, the first abutment face of the flange may be defined by at least some of the walls of an aperture formed through the flange. For example, the aperture may take the form of a substantially round hole, in which case the second abutment face may comprise a stud on the
25 clip, and which may be received in the aperture thereafter to resist withdrawal of the clip from the flange.

Depending upon the thickness of the flange, it may be relieved over the area where the clip is received so that the clip does not upstand from the flange by the full thickness of the arms of the clip. In the alternative, the ends
30 of the clip may be located between a pair of shoulders spaced along the length of the flange, such that the clip is securely held in the required position. This may be enhanced by having the arms of the clip sufficiently

- 5 -

long such that the free long edges of the clip engage the side walls of the container or lid, when the clip has fully been engaged with the flange.

This invention extends either to a container or to a lid, as described above, in combination with a multiplicity of individually coloured clips, whereby a user may select a suitable colour for the intended contents of the container and then identify the container or the lid with that clip. Moreover, for a container with a lid, the combination may have a multiplicity of pairs of individually coloured clips, whereby a user may select a suitable colour for the intended contents and then identify both the container and the lid with a pair of clips of the same colour.

By way of example only, several specific embodiments of container lid and one specific embodiment of a container all including an identifying device of this invention will now be described in detail, reference being made to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1A is a diagrammatic perspective view of a part of a container lid and an identifying clip arranged in accordance with this invention;

Figures 1B and 1C are respectively cross-sections through the clip shown in Figure 1A and the clip connected to a flange;

Figure 2A is a view on a lid similar to that of Figure 1A but of a second embodiment of identifying clip;

Figures 2B and 2C are respectively an end view on the clip shown in Figure 2A and a cross-section through a part of the flange illustrated in Figure 2A;

Figure 2D is a cross-section through an alternative flange arrangement from that shown in Figure 2A, but with the clip of Figure 2B attached thereto;

Figures 3A, 3B and 3C are respectively views corresponding to those of Figures 1A, 1B and 1C but of a third embodiment;

Figure 4A is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of identifying device, connected to a lid flange;

Figure 4B is a sectional view through the arrangement of Figure 4A;

Figures 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D are views corresponding respectively to

- 6 -

Figures 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D, but of a fifth embodiment and (in Figure 5D) a modification to the flange of that embodiment;

Figure 6A is a perspective view of a sixth embodiment;

Figures 6B and 6C are respectively plan and edge views on the clip of
5 Figure 6A;

Figure 6D is a cross-section through the arrangement of Figure 6A,
with the clip fitted to the flange;

Figures 7A, 7B and 7C are respectively perspective views on a
seventh arrangement, a plan view on the clip of that arrangement and a
10 cross-section through the flange with the clip fitted thereto; and

Figures 8A, 8B and 8C generally correspond to Figures 1A, 1B and 1C
respectively, but of an eighth embodiment as applied to an open-topped tray
for the display of foodstuffs at a retail point of sale.

Referring initially to Figures 1A, 1B and 1C, there is shown a first
15 embodiment of identifying device 10 of this invention, as applied to a lid 11
for a container. The container could typically be for food storage, moulded
from a plastics material and having a side wall to the free upper edge of
which can be fitted a lid. Typically, the container is of square or rectangular
horizontal cross-sectional shape but with rounded corners, and the lid is of
20 similar shape, so that it may be snap-fitted on to the upper edge of the side
wall. In this way, the container may be closed in an air-tight manner. The
container could however be of other cross-sectional shapes and could be
provided with other lid configurations, such as a lid having an internally
threaded collar which is engaged with an externally threaded neck on the
25 container.

The lid 11 has a downwardly depending rim 12 from which extends an
outwardly projecting peripheral flange 13, around the lid. A portion of the
flange is formed as shown in Figures 1A and 1C, to have a bar 14 of
substantially the same thickness as the main part of the flange but connected
30 to the flange by a relatively thin web 15. Moreover, the ends of the bar 14 are
defined by shoulders 16, upstanding from the main surfaces of the flange 13.

- 7 -

A clip 17 may be attached to the flange 13 between the shoulders 16, the clip being retained in position by engaging with the surfaces of the bar 14. As shown in Figures 1B and 1C, the clip is generally of U-shaped cross-sectional shape having a base portion 18 and two arms 19, each arm having at its free end an inwardly-directed lip 20 defining an abutment surface 21. The leading edge of each lip 20 is chamfered, at 22.

The space within the clip 17 between the base 18 and arms 19 approximates to the cross-sectional shape of the bar 14. The front edge of the bar 14 is chamfered at 23 and the rear edge of the bar, adjacent the web 15, defines second abutment surfaces 24, engaged in use by abutment surfaces 21.

The clip 17 is made of a relatively hard self-coloured plastics material and may be snap-fitted on to the bar 14, as shown in Figure 1C. The chamfers 22 on the two arms of the clip and the chamfer 23 of the bar assist the springing of the clip on to the bar, and once so positioned, the clip is securely held in place by the inter-engagement of the abutment surfaces 21 and 24, respectively on the clip and the bar 14. The leading edges of the arms 19 engage the rim 12 of the lid, as shown in Figure 1C, to prevent movement of the clip once fully engaged with the bar. Subsequent removal of the clip is possible only by prising off the clip with a suitable tool; for all normal handling and use of the container and its lid, the clip remains securely locked on to the bar 14.

Though not shown in the drawings, the container with which the lid 11 is used may be furnished with an identifying device of essentially the same form as that described above, for the lid.

Figures 2A to 2C show a second embodiment and (as with all of the following embodiments) like parts with those of Figure 1 are given like reference characters and will not be described in detail again. The clip 25 has a rounded and ribbed outer profile, and defines a generally U-shaped but part-circular re-entrant recess 26, for receiving a bar 27 formed on the flange 13. The bar 27 is of circular cross-sectional shape and, in the embodiment of Figure 2C, is connected to the flange solely at its two ends, at the shoulders

- 8 -

16. The leading edges of the arms 19 of the clip are chamfered at 22, to assist the expansion of the clip to snap around the bar 27 and the width of the slot leading into the recess 26, when the clip is relaxed, may be adjusted during clip manufacture, to control the degree of security of attachment of the clip to the bar.

Figure 2D shows an alternative arrangement, where the bar 27 is connected to the flange 13 also by means of a relatively thin web 28 extending along the length of the bar. In other respects this modified form of the second embodiment corresponds to that of Figures 2A to 2C.

Figures 3A, 3B and 3C show a third embodiment, where the flange 13 has a simple round hole 30 formed therethrough, at the location where the clip is to be connected to the flange. The clip 31 is of simple U-shaped form, but with two circular studs formed on the inwardly directed opposed surfaces of the clip arms 19, midway between the end of the clip. The opposing faces 33 of the studs 32 define a tapering gap therebetween, to assist the snapping of the clip over the flange 13, to engage the studs into the hole 30. Once so located, removal of the clip is resisted by the studs 32 engaging the internal circular wall of the hole 30, though the clip may be removed using a suitable prising tool.

In the arrangement of Figures 4A and 4B, the flange 13 is provided with a bar 35 somewhat similar to the bar 14 of the arrangement of Figure 1, but having a rounded front profile 36. The bar 35 is connected by a web 37 to the main part of the container and is engaged by a generally U-shaped clip 38 having an internal profile which corresponds to that of bar 35. The clip has lips 39 defining abutment surfaces 40 which engage corresponding abutments on the bar 35. The clip 38 has a generally rectangular label plate 41 depending therefrom, to which a label may be adhered. In the alternative, the plate 39 may suitably be finished to permit the direct writing thereon for example with an indelible pen.

Figures 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D show another embodiment, somewhat similar to that of Figures 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D except that the bar 42 has a generally similar profile to bar 35 of the arrangement of Figures 4A and 4B.

- 9 -

In the embodiment of Figure 5C, the bar 42 is connected to the flange 13 only at the ends of the bar (as in the embodiment of Figure 2C) but in the modification of Figure 5D, the bar is also connected to the lid by a web 43 (as in the embodiment of Figure 2D). The clip 44 (Figure 5B) is of a generally similar form to that shown in Figure 1B, except that the base 18 of the clip is rounded to match the profile of bar 42 and the lips 20 are chamfered to a greater extent to assist the fitting of the clip over the rounded front part of the bar 42.

The embodiment of Figures 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D employs a different form of clip, as compared to the previous embodiments. Here, the flange 13 is provided with a pair of slots 45, the walls 46 of the two slots nearer each other being recessed at 47 such that the width of each slot 45 is greater at the bottom of the slot, than at its mouth. The clip 48 is of generally U-shaped cross-section but includes end walls 49, the inwardly directed surfaces 50 of those end walls having a corresponding profile to that of walls 46 of the slots 45. The distance between the end walls 49 corresponds to the spacing of the slots 45, such that the clip may be fitted to the flange 13 with the end walls 49 located in the slots 45, the clip being snapped into position by virtue of the recesses 46 receiving the correspondingly formed portions of the end walls 49. As with the previous embodiments, the free long edges of the clip engage the rim of the lid, to prevent movement of the clip when fully engaged with the bar. Once fitted to the flange 13, the clip is securely held in position though may be sprung away from the flange without the need to use any special implement. In this way, the clip may be changed for another, perhaps of a different colour, should the need arise but the clip will remain in position during normal use of the container and its lid.

Figure 7 shows an arrangement having certain similarities with that of the previous embodiment, but employing only a single slot 52 in flange 13. The main part of the slot is of circular shape, entry being gained to that part of the slot through a mouth defined by flaring walls 53. The clip 54 is of relatively simple U-shaped form, having a pair of arms 55 with a stud 56 extending therebetween, midway between the ends of the clip. The stud 56 is

- 10 -

of circular cross-sectional shape of the same diameter as the main part of the slot 52, and may be sprung through the mouth defined by the tapering side walls 53. When fully located in the circular part of the slot, the free edges of the arms 55 engage corresponding parts of the lid.

5 Figure 8 shows use of the identifying device of Figure 1 on a container in the form of an open-topped food display tray 60, having a base 61 and side walls 62. Typically, the tray is of rectangular shape measuring a few tens of cms in each direction, with side wall 62 flaring outwardly to some extent from base 61 as shown in Figures 8A and 8C. The upper part of a side wall 62
10 defines a flange 63 which extends around the tray, a portion of that flange being profiled to define a bar 14 corresponding to that of Figures 1A and 1C. Equally, the clip of Figure 8B is of substantially the same profile as the clip of Figure 1B, and the clip is used in the same manner as has been described above with reference to Figure 1.

15 In all of the embodiments described above, the clip is of a relatively hard moulded plastics material, and suitably is coloured to permit identification of the lid or container for use with a certain type of food stuff. Typically, a container and lid may be supplied with a number of similar clips, but of different colours, so that a user may select a colour suitable for the
20 intended use of the container and then fit the clips to the container and lid flange in such a way that the container and lid are clearly marked and will remain so, for all normal use of the container and lid including handling, loading and removing contents, washing, drying and so on. Should the need arise, it is possible to remove the clips and replace them by others, the
25 difficulty of doing so being governed by the precise configuration of each clip and the abutments on the flange, together with the material from which the clips are made.

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- 11 -

CLAIMS

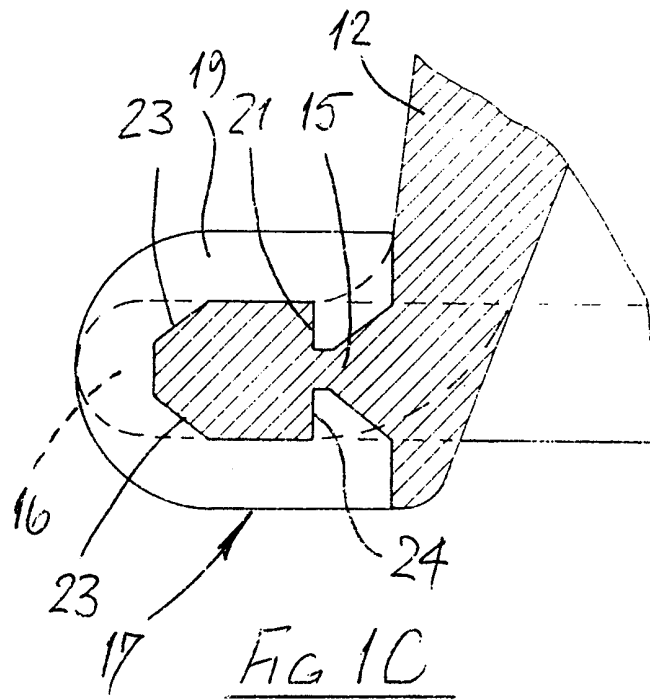
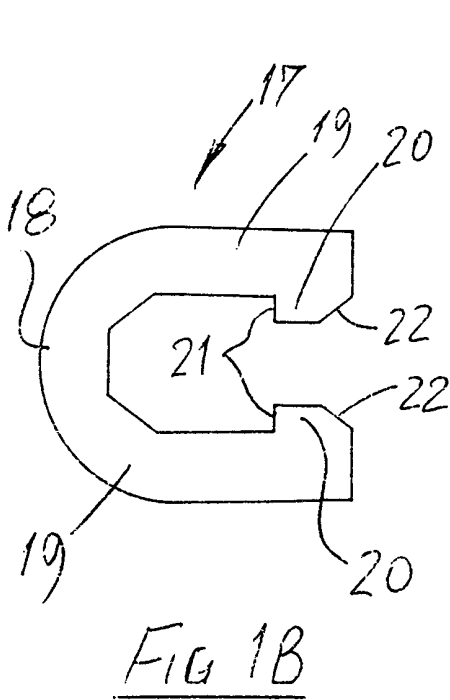
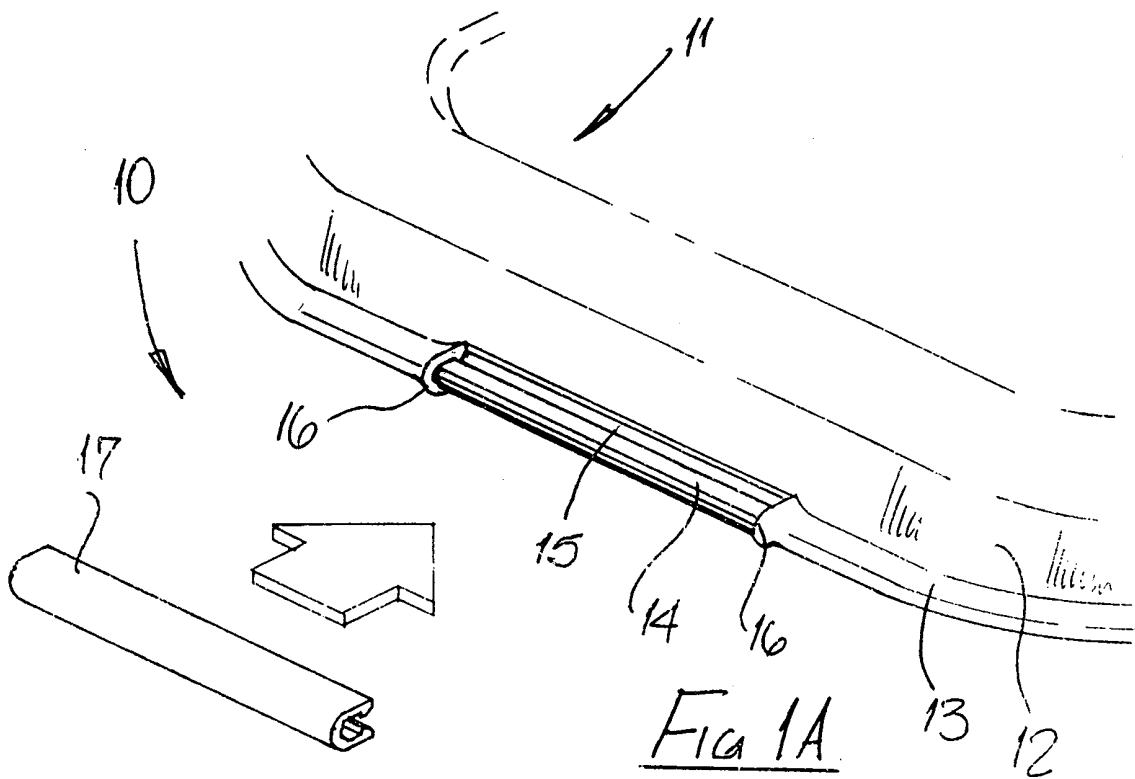
1. A container having a base, a side wall upstanding from the base and an outwardly-projecting flange extending at least part-way around the side wall, the container further comprising a device to identify the intended use of the container which device is in the form of a generally U-shaped clip connectable to the flange, the clip having a pair of arms with a throat therebetween and into which the flange is receivable, the flange defining a first abutment face and at least one arm of the clip having a second abutment face engageable with said first abutment face when the clip is connected to the flange so as to retain the clip to the flange during all normal use of the container.
2. A container as claimed in claim 1, wherein the container side wall defines an opening to the interior of the container and there is a lid for the opening releasably connectable to the container to close the opening.
3. A container as claimed in claim 2, wherein a second flange is formed around the lid and a second device to identify the intended use of the container with which the lid is to be used is provided for the second flange, which second device is of substantially the same form as the first-mentioned device.
4. A container having a base, a side wall upstanding from the base and defining an opening, a lid releasably connectable to the container to close the opening, and an outwardly-projecting flange extending at least part-way around the lid, the container further comprising a device to identify the intended use of the container which device is in the form of a generally U-shaped clip connectable to the flange of the lid, the clip having a pair of arms with a throat therebetween and into which the flange is receivable, the flange defining a first abutment face and at least one arm of the clip having a second abutment face engageable with said first abutment face when the clip is connected to the flange so as to retain the clip to the flange during all normal use of the lid.

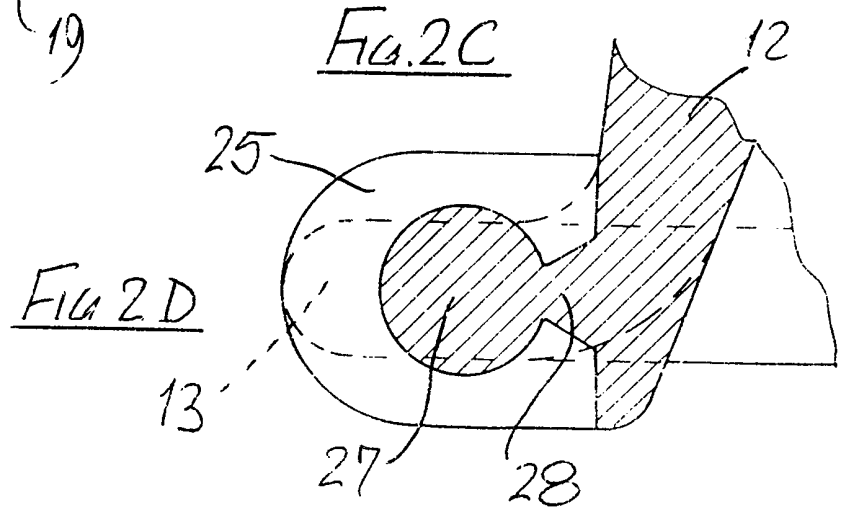
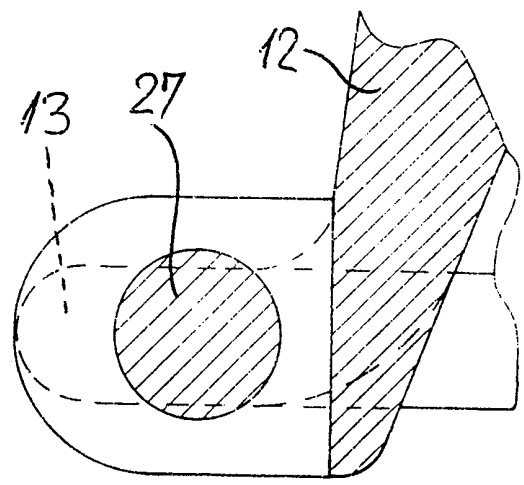
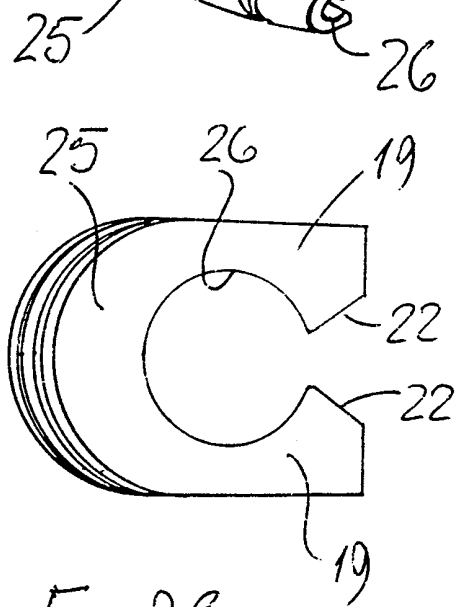
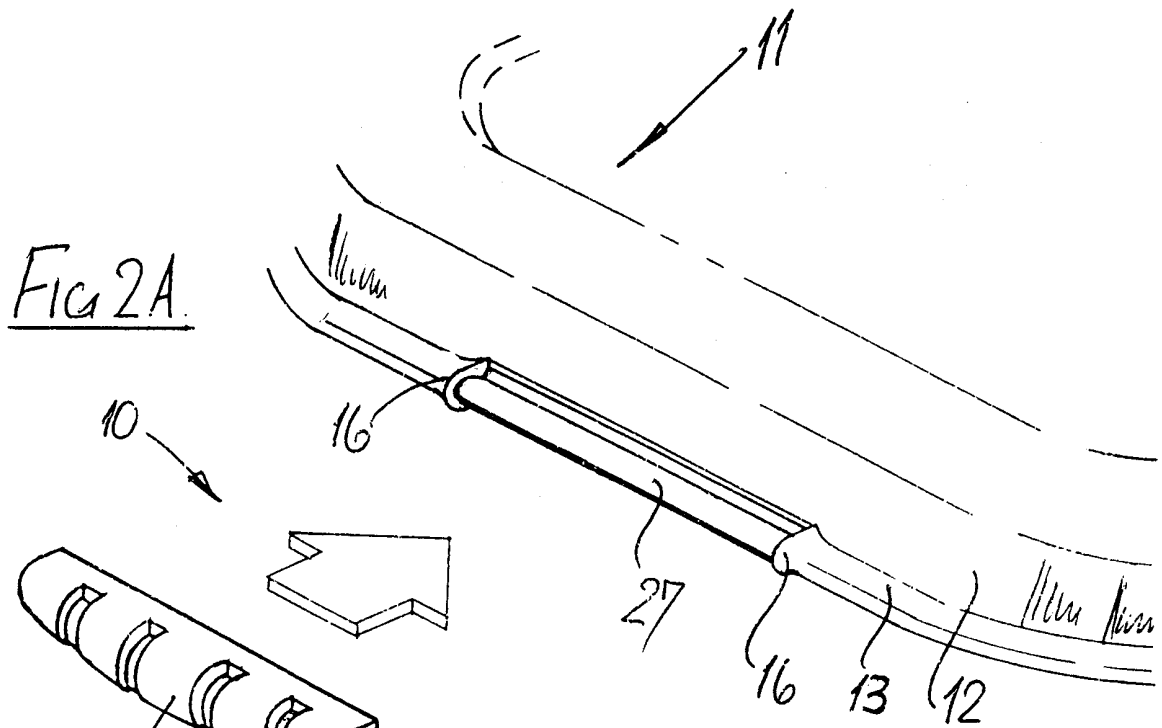
- 12 -

5. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the first abutment face is defined by at least some of the walls of an aperture formed through the flange.
6. A container as claimed in claim 5, wherein the aperture is in the form
5 of a substantially round hole.
7. A container as claimed in claim 5, wherein the aperture is in the form of a slot running substantially parallel to an adjacent edge of the flange.
8. A container as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the first abutment face is defined by a groove formed in the thickness of the flange
10 and running parallel to an adjacent edge of the flange.
9. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the second abutment face is defined by a barb formed on the inwardly directed surface of one of the arms of the clip.
10. A container as claimed in claim 9, wherein the other arm of the clip
15 carries a barb opposed to said barb on the one arm of the clip, which opposed barbs engage corresponding first abutment faces on the flange.
11. A container as claimed in claims 1 to 4, wherein the first abutment face is formed by a wall of a re-entrant slot extending into the flange from an edge thereof, into which slot is received a lug extending across the throat of the
20 clip, said lug defining the second abutment face.
12. A container as claimed in claim 11, wherein a second re-entrant slot is formed in the flange spaced from the first re-entrant slot, the clip having correspondingly-spaced lugs in the throat thereof.
13. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the
25 flange is relieved over the area where the clip is received, so that the clip does not upstand from the flange by the full thickness of the arms of the clip when the clip is received on the flange.
14. A container as claimed in any of claims 1 to 12, wherein the ends of the clip are disposed between a pair of shoulders upstanding from the flange.
- 30 15. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the inwardly-directed surfaces of the arms of the clip bear on corresponding surfaces of the flange to restrain rotational movement of the clip.

- 13 -

16. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the long free edges of the arms of the clip bear on the side walls of the container or lid from which the flange projects.
17. A container as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the clip
5 is colour-coded to indicate the contents of the container.
18. A container as claimed in claim 17 in combination with a multiplicity of individually-coloured clips, whereby a user may select a suitable colour for the intended contents and then identify the container with a clip of the appropriate colour for the intended use.
- 10 19. A container as claimed in claim 17 and having a lid, in combination with a multiplicity of individually-coloured clips, whereby a user may select a suitable colour for the intended contents and then identify the lid with a clip of the appropriate colour for the intended use.
- 15 20. A container and lid as claimed in claim 3 and claim 17, in combination with a multiplicity of pairs of individually coloured clips, whereby a user may select a suitable colour for the intended contents and then identify both the container base and the lid with a pair of clips of the same colour.





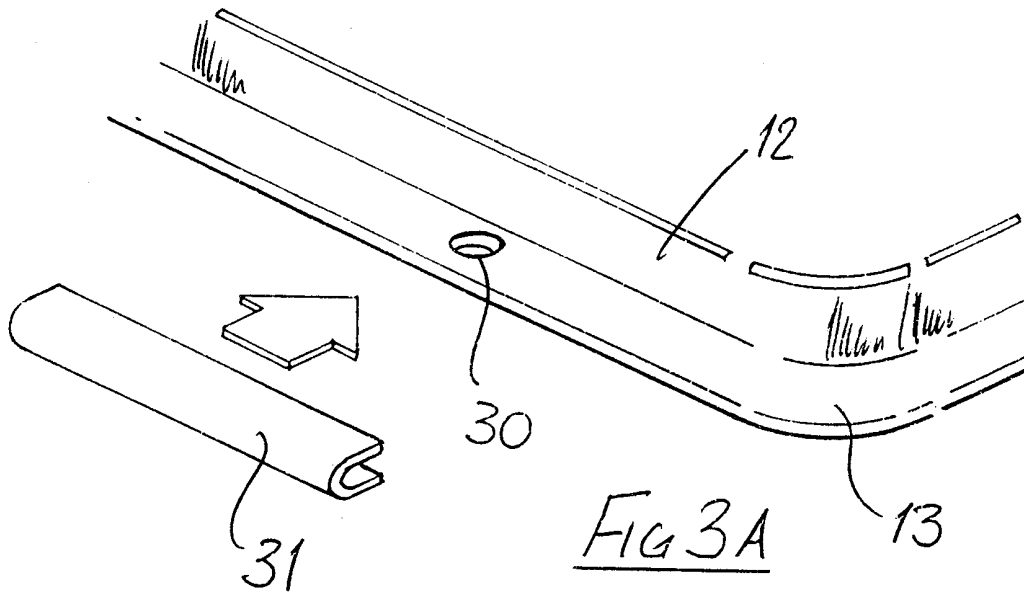


Fig 3A

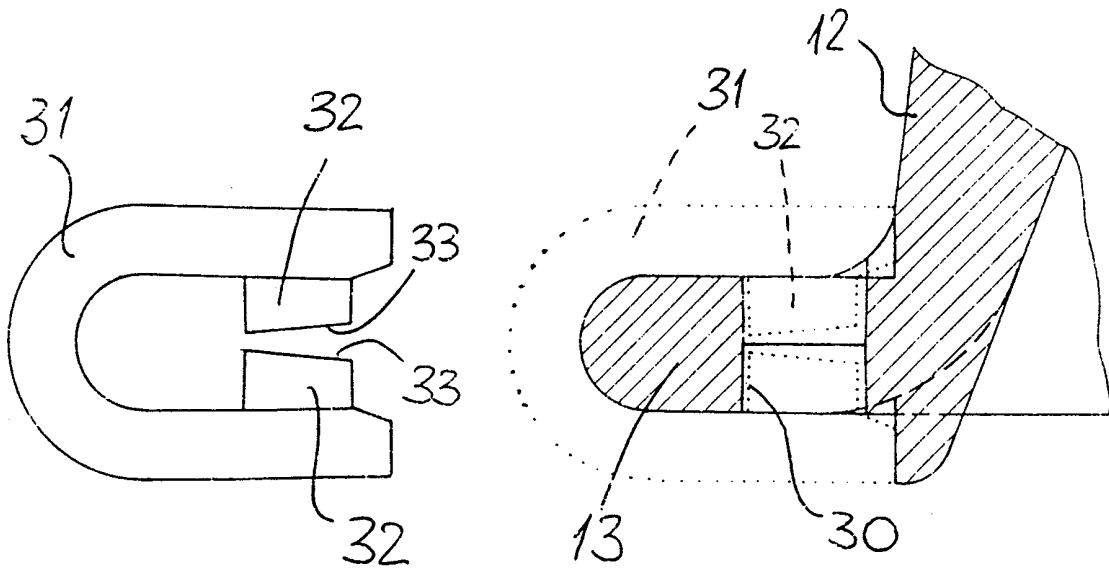
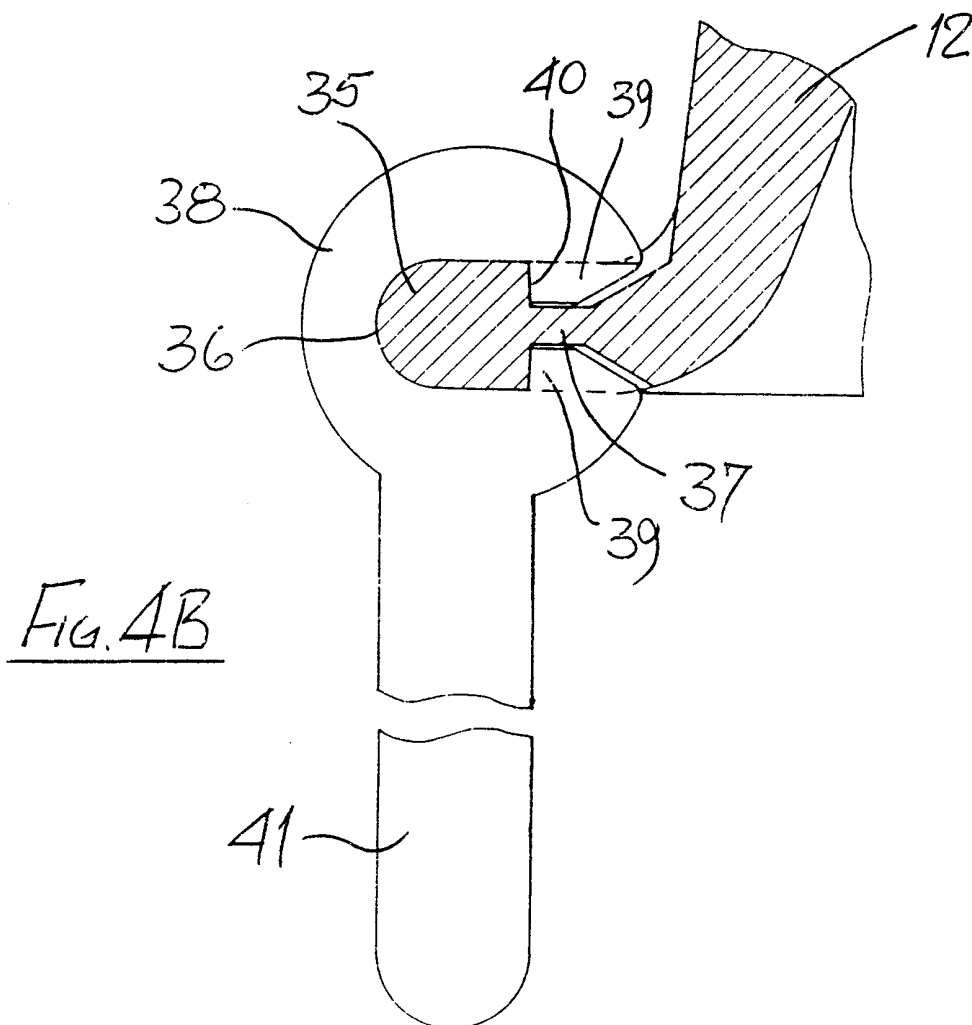
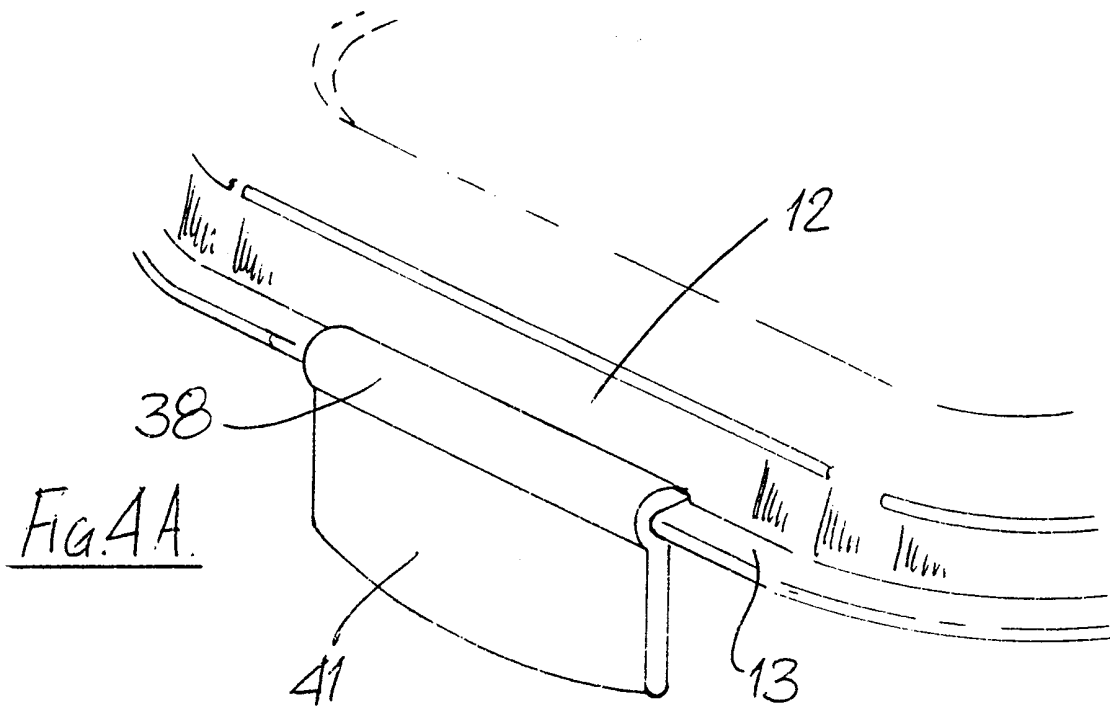
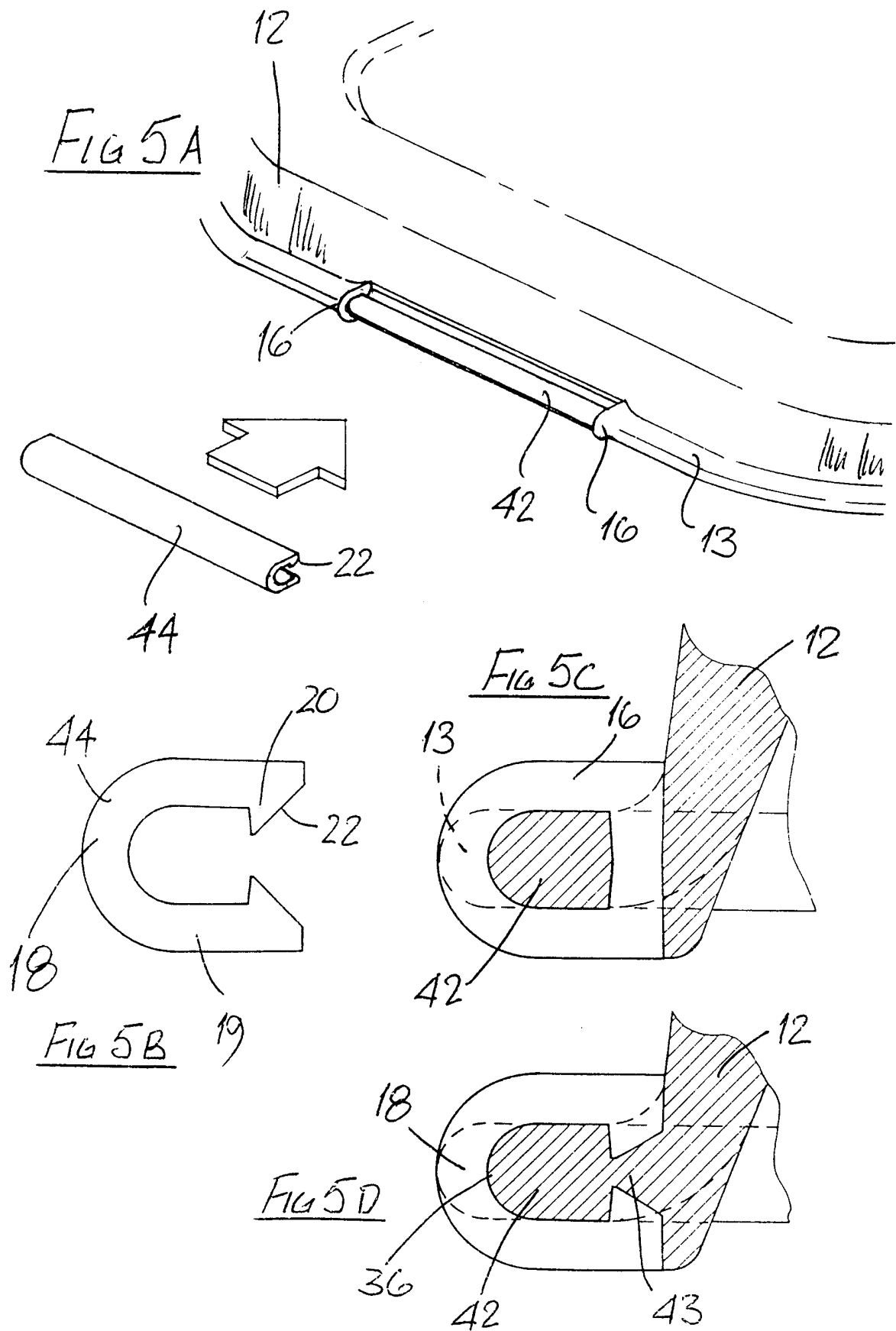


Fig 3B

Fig 3C





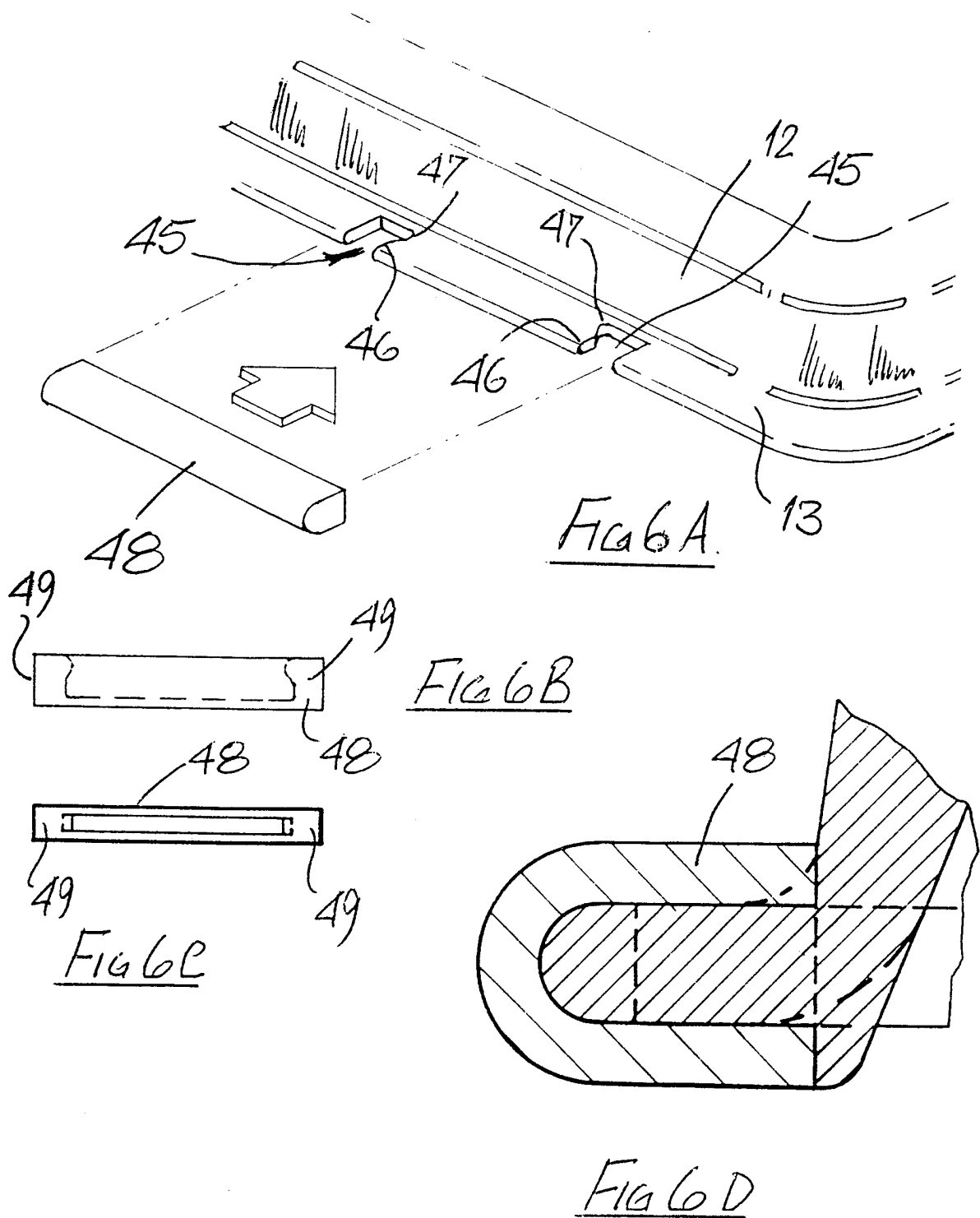


Fig 7A.

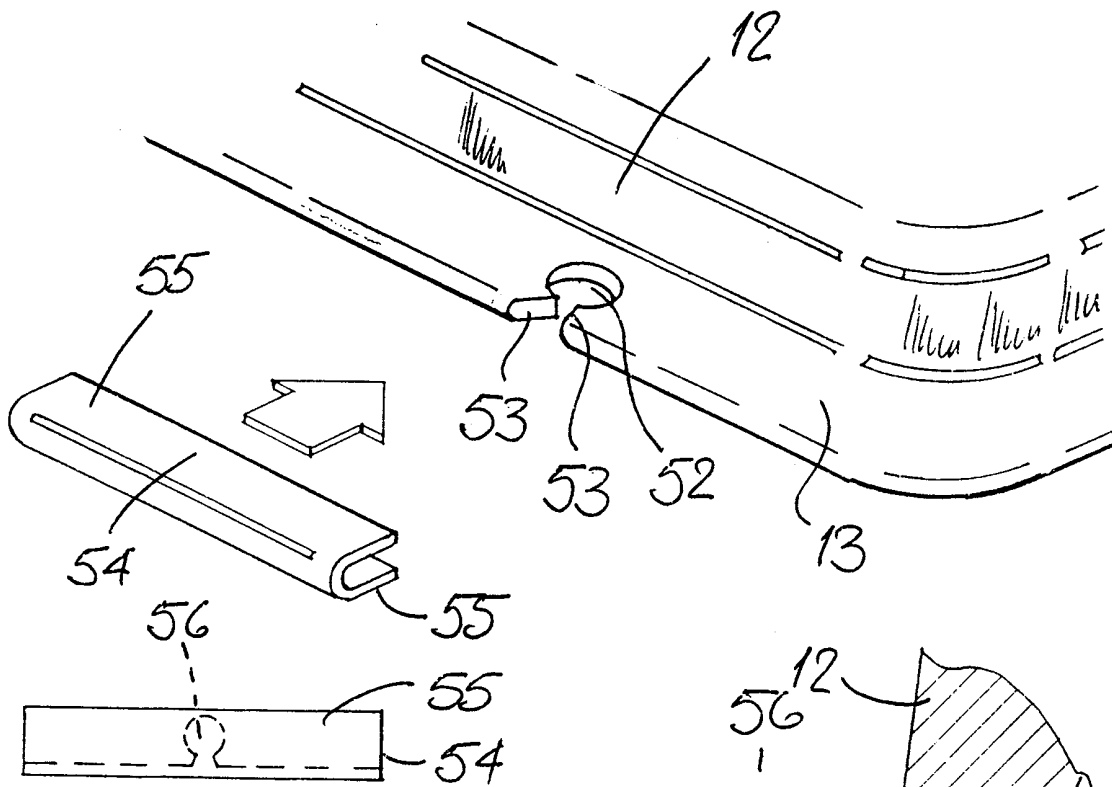


Fig 7B

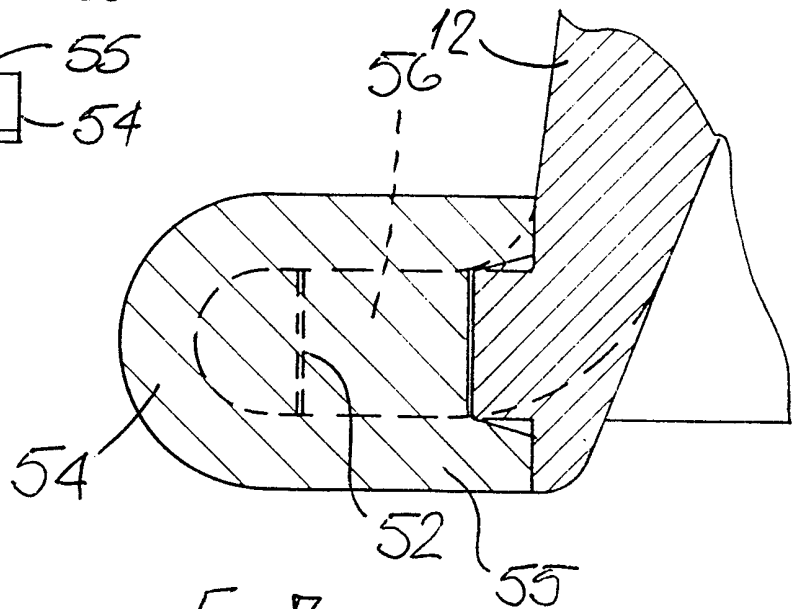


Fig 7c

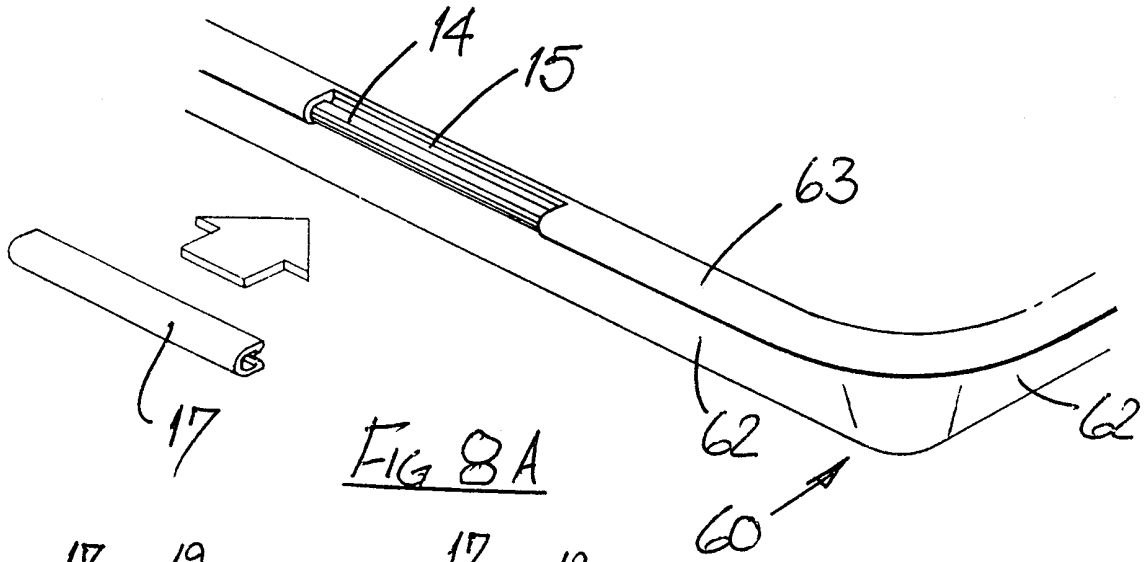


FIG 8A

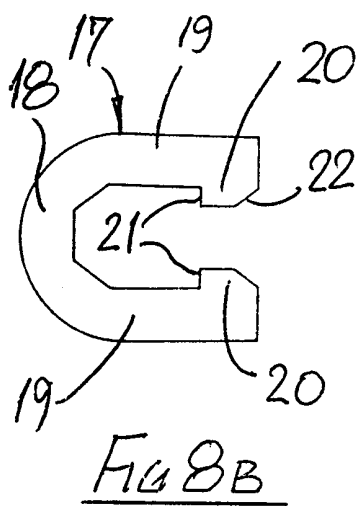


FIG 8B

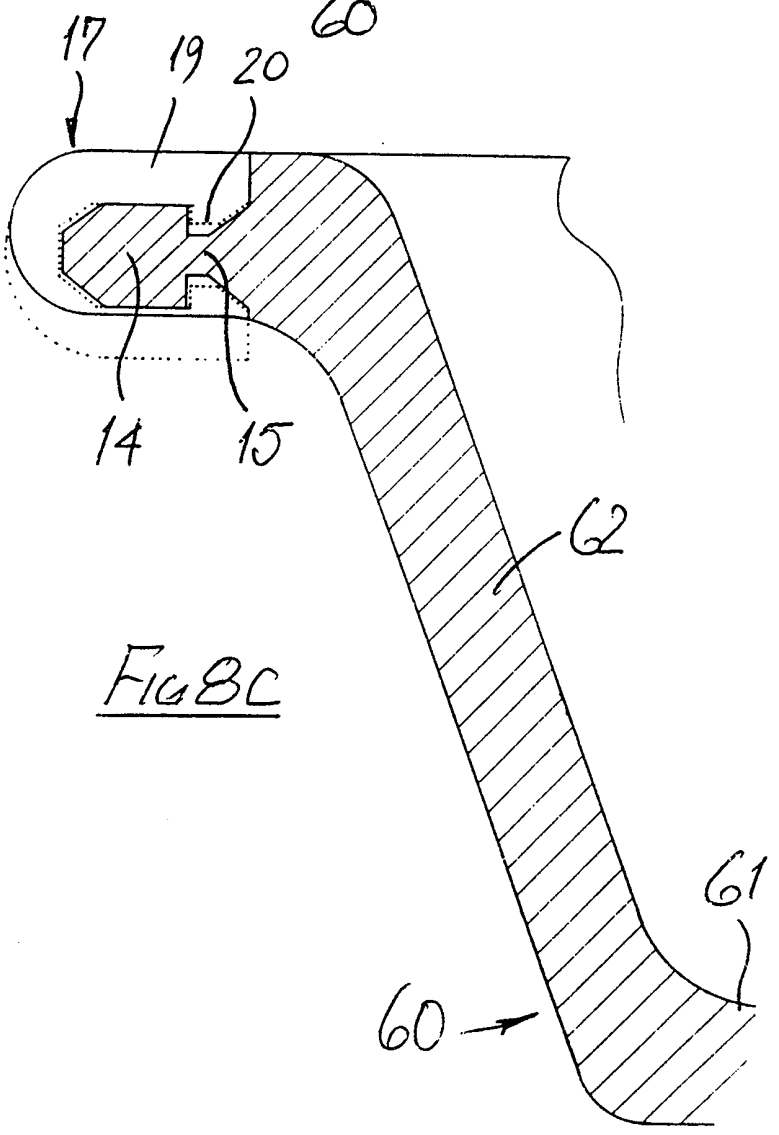


FIG 8C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 98/02990

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 6 B65D25/20 G09F3/16

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 B65D G09F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	EP 0 446 800 A (BUCHTER REINHARD) 18 September 1991 see page 3, column 3, line 55 - page 3, column 4, line 53 see figures 1,2 ----	1,4
A	DE 81 25 328 U (PFENNIGS FEINKOSTFABRIK HANNOV) 30 December 1982 see page 5, line 13 - page 6, line 25 ----	1,4
A	DE 93 14 378 U (WAVIN BV) 24 February 1994 see page 2, line 25 - page 3, line 32 see figures 1,2 ----	1,4
A	US 4 744 162 A (OKAZAKI MASAYUKI) 17 May 1988 see column 2, line 48 - column 3, line 54 see figures 1-3 -----	1,4

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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- "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

26 January 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

02/02/1999

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

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Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 0446800	A	18-09-1991	DE 4008265 A	19-09-1991
DE 8125328	U	30-12-1982	NONE	
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US 4744162	A	17-05-1988	NONE	