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(54) Title: A CLEANER-HEAD FOR A VACUUM CLEANER

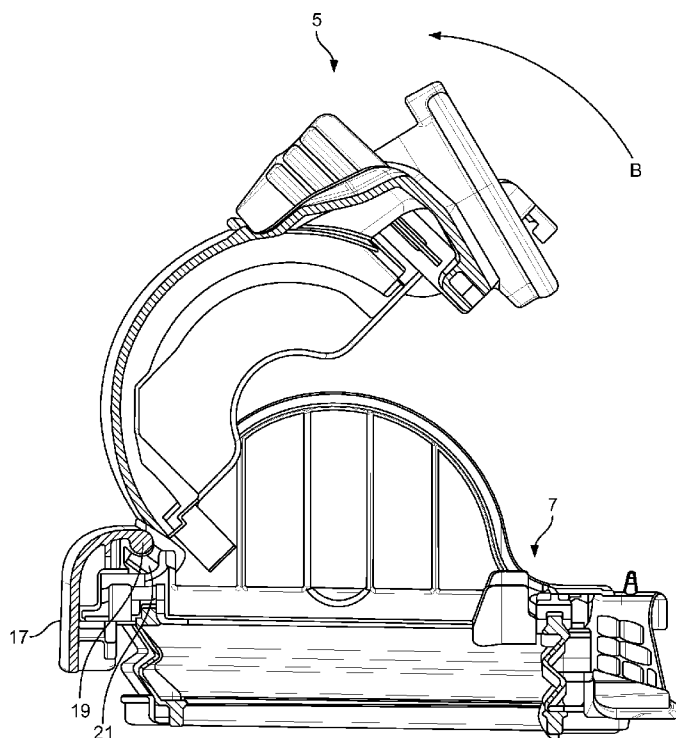


FIG. 7

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a cleaner-head for a vacuum cleaner. The cleaner-head has a housing, this housing being connected to a hinged soleplate assembly which can be opened and closed to provide access to the inside of the housing. In accordance with the invention, the soleplate assembly is a clip-on assembly which a user can manually un-clip from the housing, as required, to detach the soleplate assembly for separate cleaning or replacement.



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A Cleaner-head for a Vacuum Cleaner

The present invention relates to the field of vacuum cleaners, and in particular to a cleaner-head for a vacuum cleaner.

The vacuum cleaner itself may be of any type. For example, the cleaner-head may be a cleaner-head for an upright vacuum cleaner, or alternatively it may be a cleaner head for a floor tool intended to be used with a cylinder vacuum cleaner or stick-vac cleaner. The invention is not limited to cyclonic vacuum cleaners.

The underside of a cleaner head typically comprises a soleplate. This is the part which engages with the floor in use. The soleplate is normally a flattish plate – formed from metal or plastic – provided with a relatively large opening which acts as the suction inlet for the cleaner head.

The soleplate may be detachable, either individually or as part of a larger, detachable soleplate assembly. This allows a user to access the inside of the cleaner head for cleaning, removing blockages etc. Alternatively, the soleplate – or soleplate assembly – may be hinged to allow access inside the cleaner head.

The present invention concerns a cleaner head having a hinged soleplate assembly.

According to the present invention, there is provided a cleaner-head for a vacuum cleaner, the cleaner-head comprising a housing, the housing connected to a hinged soleplate assembly which can be opened and closed to provide access to the inside of the housing, the soleplate assembly being a clip-on assembly which a user can manually un-clip from the housing, as required, to detach the soleplate assembly for separate cleaning or replacement.

Hinged soleplates are convenient: they allow simple access to the inside of the cleaner head without having to disassemble the cleaner head. The problem with conventional, hinged soleplates, however, is that they are not generally removable at all by the user. This makes it difficult for a user to clean or repair the soleplate assembly itself, and impossible to replace the soleplate assembly individually: instead a replacement cleaner head needs to be purchased or else obtained under warranty, even if the remaining parts of the cleaner head do not actually require replacement

The present invention addresses this problem by providing a soleplate assembly which is both hinged and removable.

The soleplate assembly is arranged to clip onto the housing. Detaching the soleplate assembly is thus straightforward and can be carried out by the user without any special tools being required.

The soleplate assembly may comprise a first hinge part and the housing may comprise a second hinge part, the two hinge parts being arranged so that a user can clip them together to hinge the soleplate on the housing and then subsequently un-clip them as required to detach the soleplate from the housing. Thus, the hinged connection is formed by clipping together the soleplate assembly and the housing. This is a particularly simple arrangement which can be implemented at low cost using resilient tabs as the first and second hinge parts.

The hinge parts may be provided towards the front of the housing and the soleplate assembly.

In a particular arrangement according to the invention, the soleplate assembly comprises a soleplate and a bumper running along the front of the soleplate, the first hinge part being provided on the bumper.

The hinged soleplate assembly may be held closed on the housing by a catch located towards the rear of the housing.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, with reference to the
5 accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an upright vacuum cleaner having a cleaner head;

Figure 2a is a perspective view of the above-mentioned cleaner head, but in isolation
10 from the upright vacuum cleaner;

Figure 2b is a perspective view of the cleaner head from underneath, showing the suction opening and brushbar;

15 Figure 3 is a front perspective view of a brush housing forming part of the cleaner head;

Figure 4 is a front perspective view of a soleplate assembly forming part of the cleaner head;

20 Figure 5 is a rear perspective view of the brush housing;

Figure 6 is a rear perspective view of the soleplate assembly;

Figure 7 is a sectional view along A-A, illustrating the hinged connection between the
25 soleplate assembly and the brush housing;

Figure 8 is a rear perspective view of the assembled cleaner head; and

Figures 9a -9c show a rear part of the cleaner head comprising a catch in a locking
30 position, an intermediate position and a release position, respectively.

Figure 1 shows an upright vacuum cleaner 1 having a cleaner head 3.

The cleaner head 3 is shown in isolation in Figures 2a and 2b. It comprises two parts: a
5 brush bar housing 5 and a soleplate assembly 7.

The brush bar housing 5 is shown in isolation in Figures 3 and 5. It houses a motor-driven brush bar 9 (Figure 2b) which, in use, rotates about the axis A (the drive motor is itself housed inside the brush bar 9).

10 The soleplate assembly 7 is shown in isolation in Figures 4 and 6. It comprises a chassis 11 and a soleplate 13 which is connected to the chassis 11 via a flexible skirt 15 to give the soleplate 13 a degree of “float” see e.g. PCT Publication No.WO2010/119279.

15 The soleplate 13 is generally rectangular, and incorporates a relatively large, rectangular suction opening 13a, which forms the suction inlet for the cleaner head 3. The suction opening 13a is oriented so that it aligns with the brush bar 9.

20 The soleplate assembly 7 is hinged so that the entire soleplate assembly 7 can be opened and closed, as required, conveniently to access the inside of the brush bar housing 5, for example to access the brush bar 9. The hinge connection between the soleplate assembly 7 and the brush housing 5 is formed by a first hinge part on the soleplate assembly 7, which clips on to a second hinge part on the brush housing 5.

25 The first hinge part comprises a series of resilient tabs 19 running along the inside of a bumper 17 provided along the front edge of the chassis 11. You can see these resilient tabs 19 in Figure 6.

30 The second hinge part comprises a corresponding series of resilient tabs 21 running along the front edge of the brush housing 5. You can see these resilient tabs 21 in Figure 3.

The two sets of resilient tabs 19, 21 manually clip together – as illustrated in Figure 7 – and co-operate to provide the required hinge action B between the soleplate assembly 7 and the brush housing 5.

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The two hinge parts are arranged so that, if it is required to detach the soleplate assembly 7 from the housing 5 – for example to replace or clean the soleplate assembly 7 individually – the soleplate assembly 7 can simply be un-clipped from the brush housing 5. This is achieved by over-rotating the soleplate assembly 7 and brush housing 10 5, effectively levering the bumper 17 against the brush housing to force the resilient tabs 19, 21 out of clipping engagement with one another. In effect, the over-rotation of the soleplate assembly is used to prise apart the resilient tabs 21, so that the soleplate assembly 7 can be detached.

15 As required, the resilient hinge parts 19, 21 can conveniently be clipped back together to reconnect the soleplate assembly 7 and the brush housing 5. The arrangement thus combines the advantages of a hinged connection and the ability to be able to separate the soleplate assembly 7 and brush housing 5 completely as and when required, simply by manually clipping and un-clipping the hinge parts. No separate tools are required to 20 connect and detach the soleplate assembly 7 and brush housing 5.

The soleplate assembly 7 is held closed by two pivotable catches 19a, 19b mounted on a rear part of the brush housing 5. You can see these catches in Figure 8. The two catches 19a, 19b are spaced apart so that the catch 19a is positioned towards the left-hand side 25 of the brush housing 5 (looking from the rear of the brush housing 5, as in Figure 8) and the other catch 19b is positioned towards the right-hand side of the brush housing 5 (again, looking from the rear of the brush housing 5).

Figures 9a to 9c illustrate operation of the catch 19a.

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The catch 19a is obscured slightly by the brush housing 5 when it is *in situ* (see Figure 8) and so the brush housing 5 has been omitted in Figures 9a to 9c to admit a better view of the catch 19a.

- 5 The catch 19a is pivotally mounted on the brush housing 5 via a journal part 23 which clips onto a corresponding axle (not shown) on the brush housing 5. The axis of rotation of the catch 19a thus extends into the page in Figures 9a to 9b.

- 10 The catch 19a comprises a catch recess 23 (hidden from view, but shown in phantom in Figure 9a), a first cam 25 and a second cam 27 which, in this case, is formed by the walls of the catch recess 23.

- 15 The catch recess 23 engages with a corresponding projection 29 on the soleplate 7 to hold the soleplate 7 closed. In Figure 9a, the catch 19a is shown in its locking position, fully engaged with the locking projection 29.

To release the catch 19a, the catch 19a is manually rotated anti-clockwise (indicated by the arrow C in Figures 9a and 9b).

- 20 The release action of the catch 19a is a cam-action, resulting from co-operation of the first cam 25 with the locking projection 29. This is illustrated in Figure 9b, which shows an intermediate position for the catch 19a, between the locking position and a full release position. Here, the first cam 25 has engaged with the projection 29 and, as the catch 19a is pivoted towards the full release position, 'pushes' on the projection 29 to
25 force apart the housing 5 and the soleplate assembly 7 (indicated by the arrow D in Figure 9b). This initial pushing movement helps alert the user to the fact that the catch 19a releases the soleplate assembly 7 from the brush housing 5.

- 30 The full release position for the catch 19a is shown in Figure 9c. Here, the recess 23 is fully disengaged from the locking projection 29, allowing detachment of the soleplate assembly 7 from the brush housing 5.

The locking action of the catch 19a is also a cam-action, resulting from co-operation of the second cam 27 with the locking projection 29. Thus, as the catch 19a is rotated back towards the locking position in Figure 9a, the second cam 27 ‘pulls’ against the locking projection 27a to force the soleplate assembly 7 and housing 5 back together. The catch 19a is effectively designed to ‘gather’ the locking projection as it pivots back towards the locking position. Consequently, the user does not need to hold the soleplate assembly 7 and housing 5 together when locking the catch 19a: close proximity of the relevant edges of the housing 5 and soleplate assembly 7 will suffice.

The catch 19b pivots in the reverse sense to catch 19a, but otherwise operates in the same way.

The catches 19a, 19b can each be operated by grasping the respective end of the cleaner head 3 and using the thumb to pivot the catch. The catches 19a, 19b are thus arranged for simultaneous operation using two hands. This is facilitated in part by the fact that the catches pivot about respective pivot axes which extend front-to-back (into the page in Figures 9a to 9c), providing for a natural, comfortable movement of the user’s thumb to pivot the catches 19a, 19b between the locking position and release position.

CLAIMS

1. A cleaner-head for a vacuum cleaner, the cleaner-head comprising a housing, the housing connected to a hinged soleplate assembly which can be opened and closed to provide access to the inside of the housing, the soleplate assembly being a clip-on assembly which a user can manually un-clip from the housing, as required, to detach the soleplate assembly for separate cleaning or replacement.
2. A cleaner head according to claim 1, in which the soleplate assembly comprises a first hinge part and the housing comprises a second hinge part, the two hinge parts being arranged so that a user can clip them together to hinge the soleplate assembly on the housing and then subsequently un-clip them as required to detach the soleplate from the housing.
3. A cleaner head according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the hinge parts are provided towards the front of the housing and the soleplate assembly.
4. A cleaner head according to claim 3, in which the soleplate assembly comprises a soleplate and a bumper running along the front of the soleplate, the first hinge part being provided on the bumper.
5. A cleaner head according to claim 3, wherein the hinged soleplate is held closed on the housing by a catch located towards the rear of the housing.

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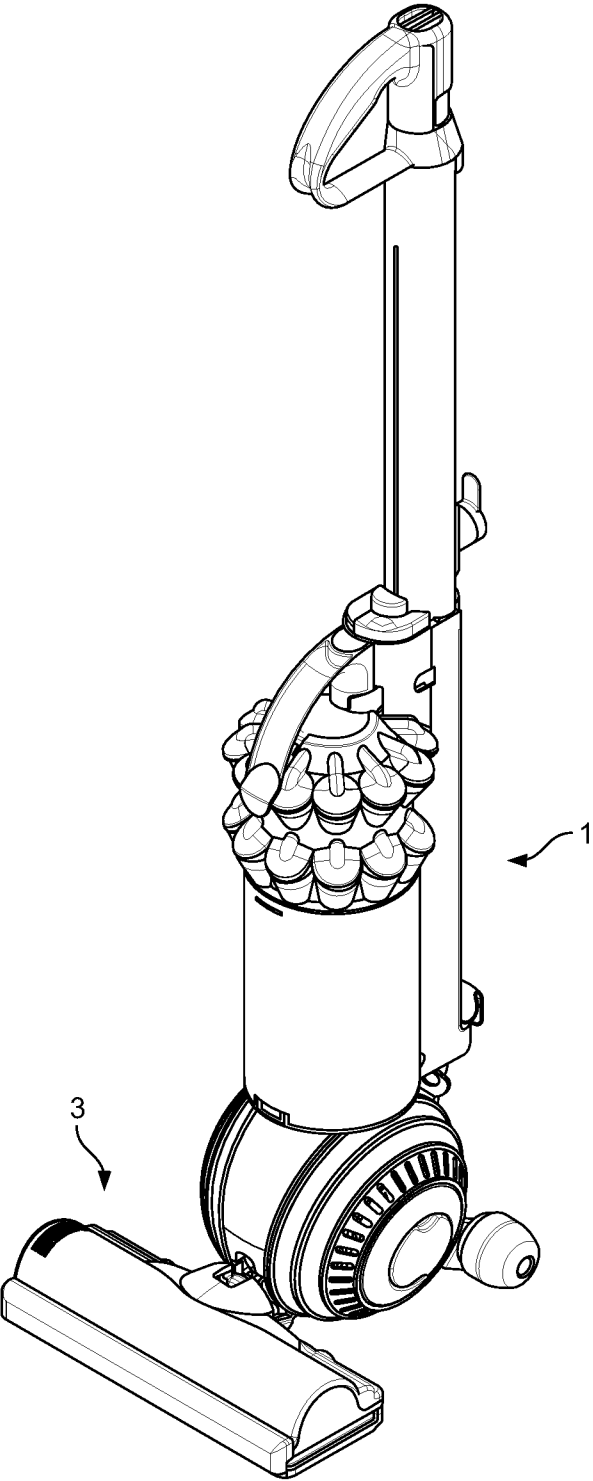


FIG. 1

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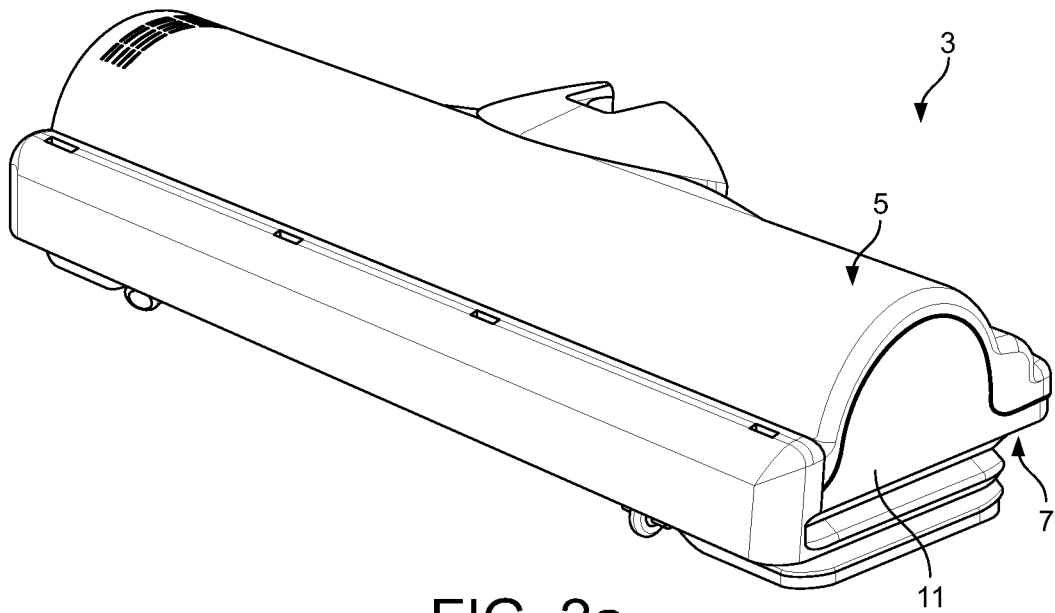


FIG. 2a

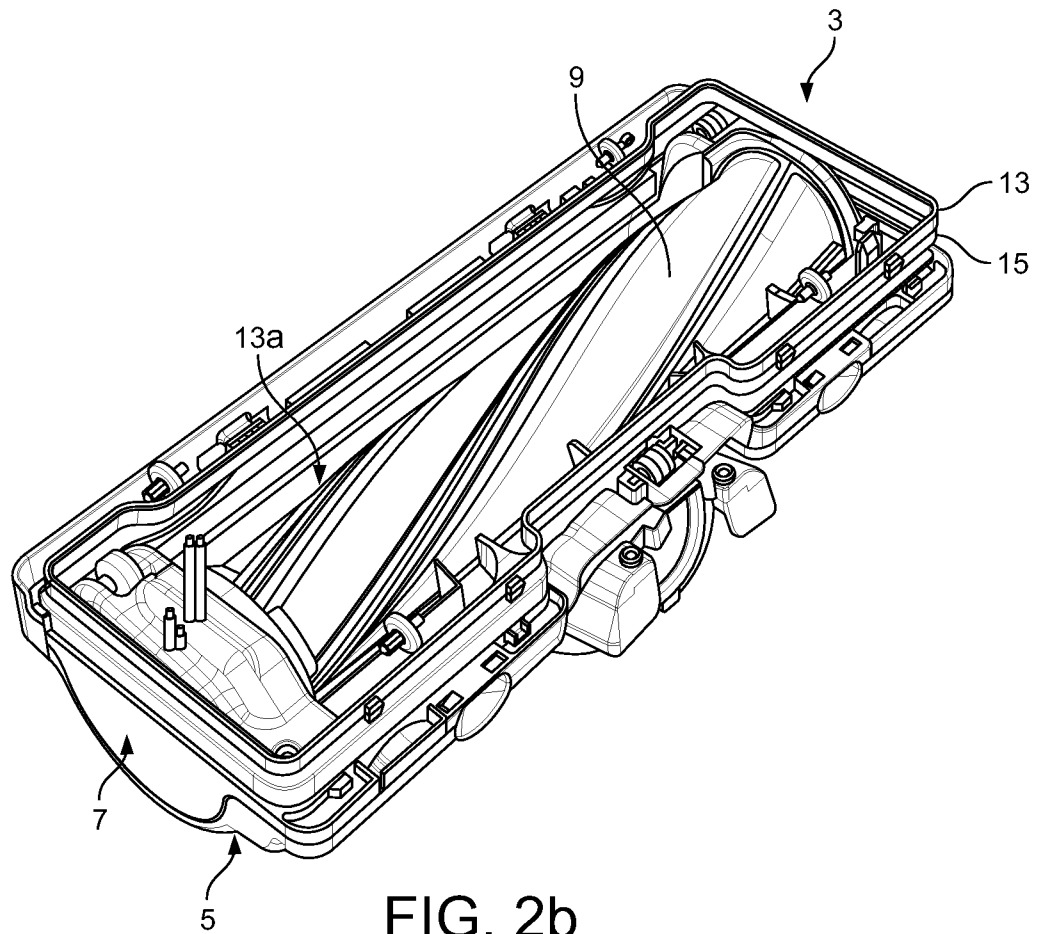


FIG. 2b

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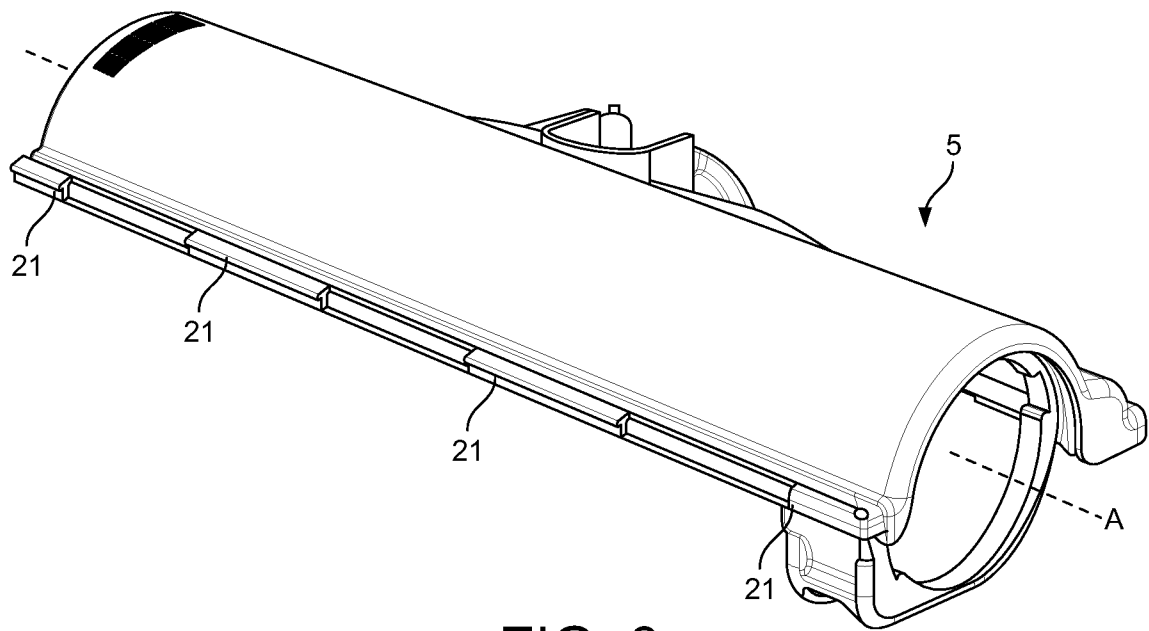


FIG. 3

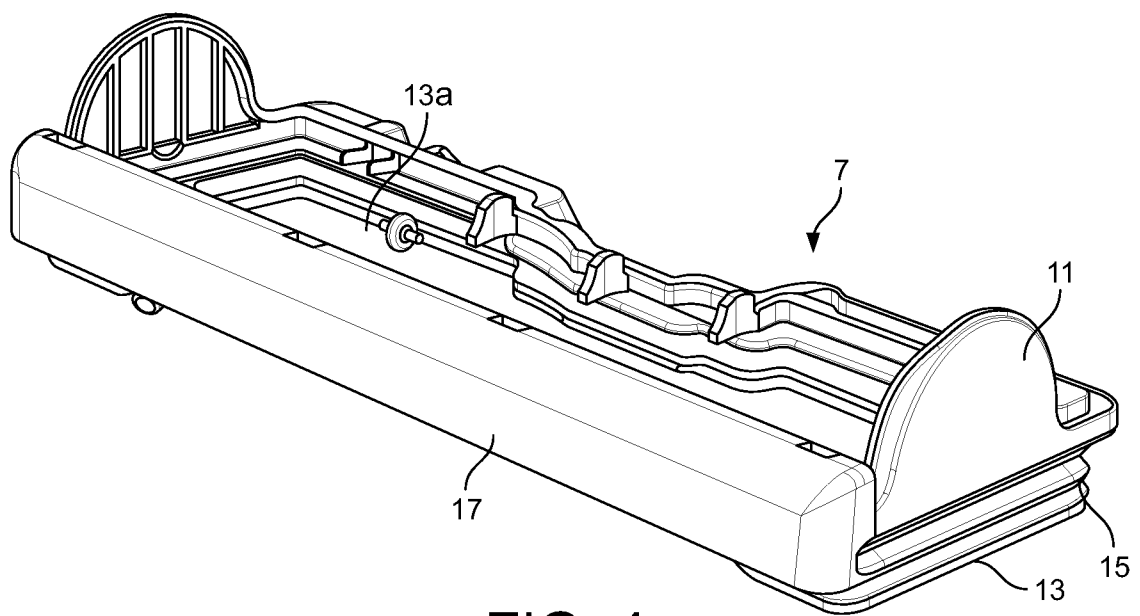


FIG. 4

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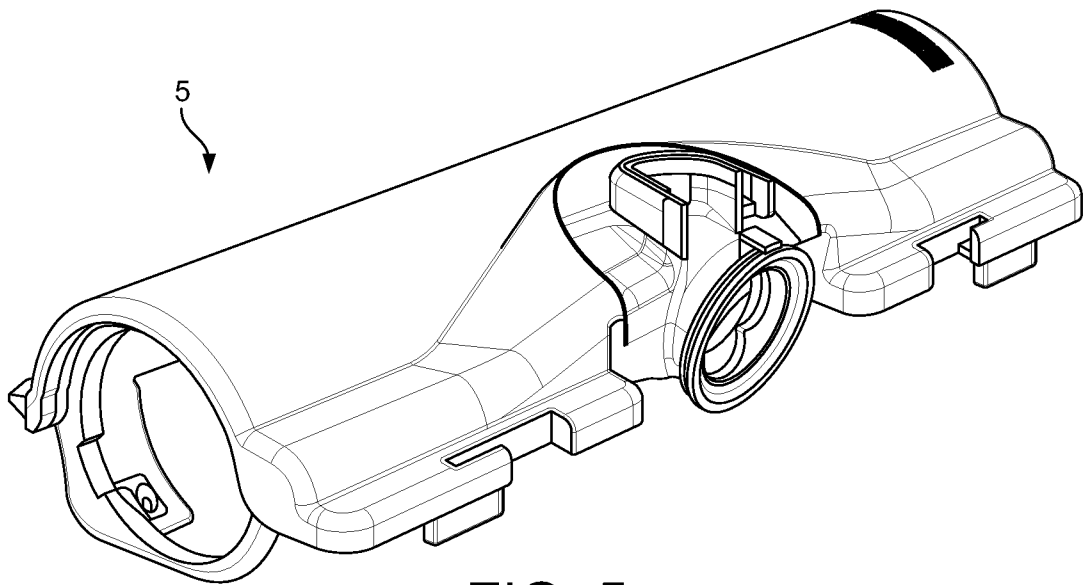


FIG. 5

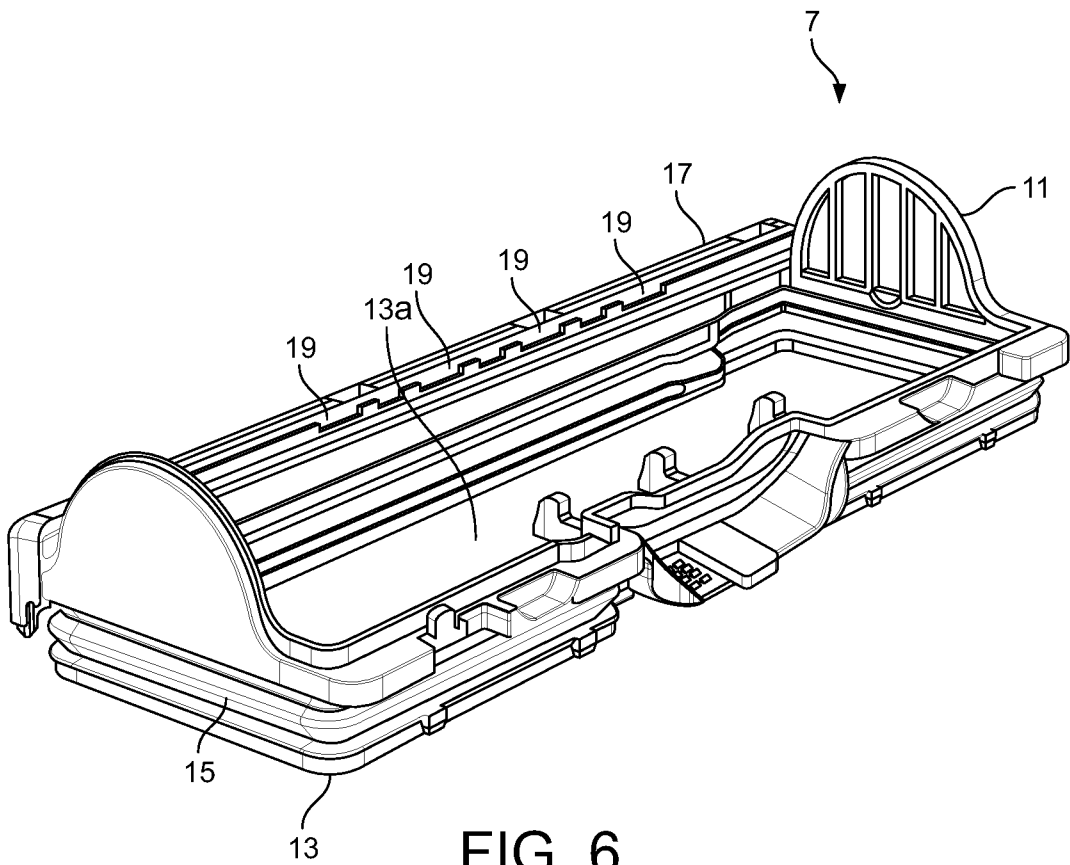


FIG. 6

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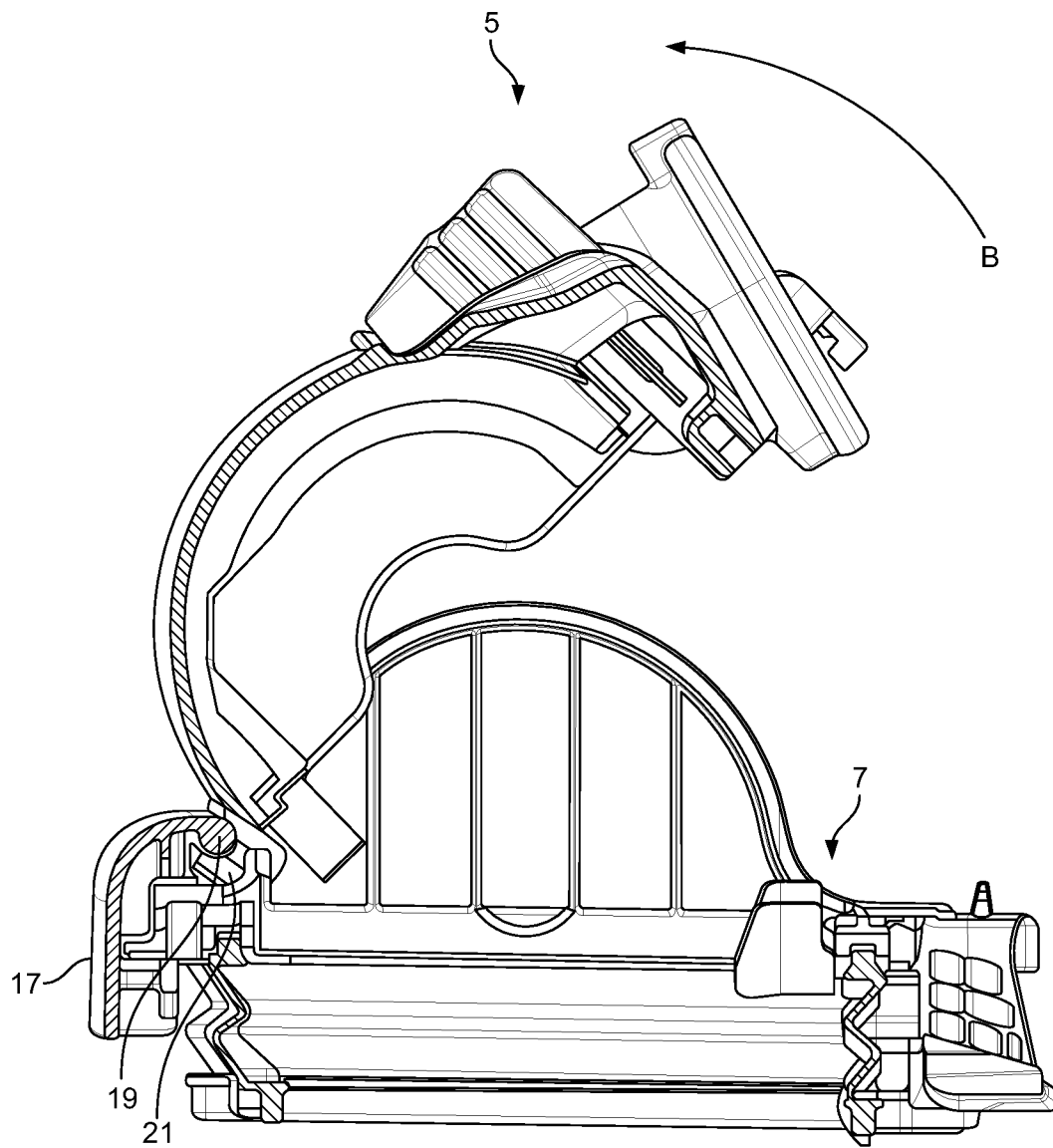


FIG. 7

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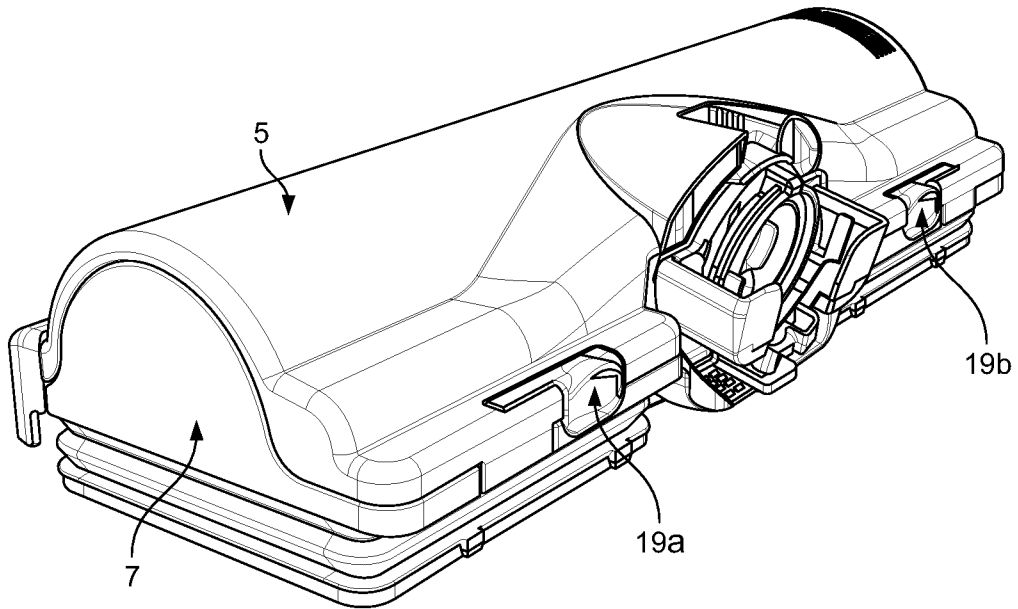


FIG. 8

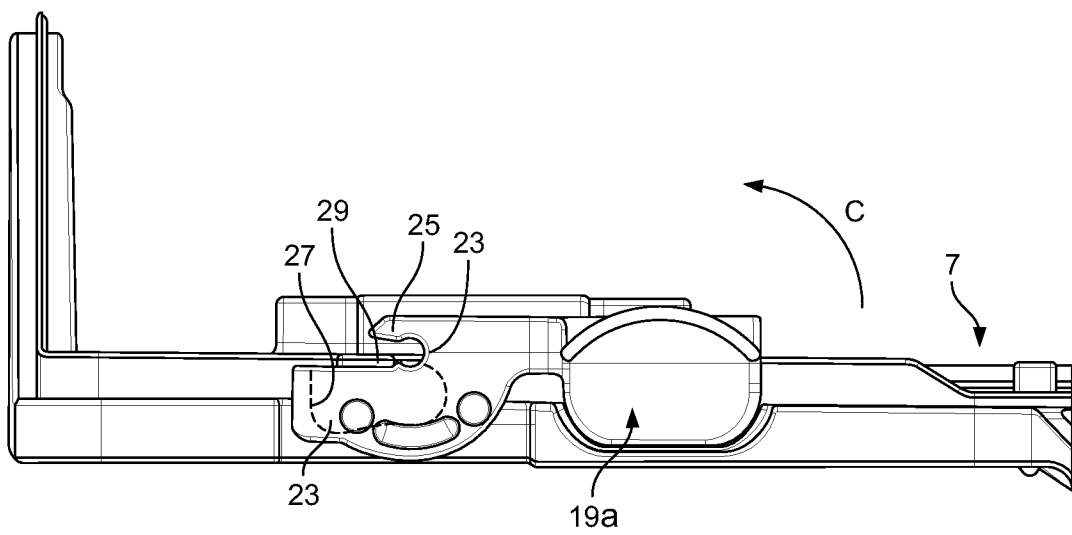


FIG. 9a

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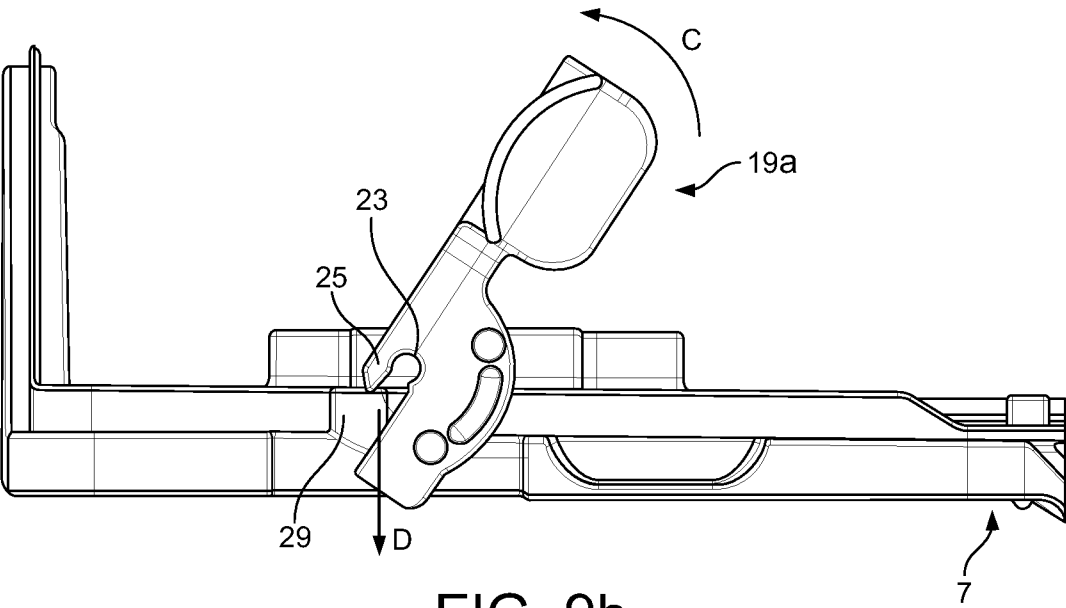


FIG. 9b

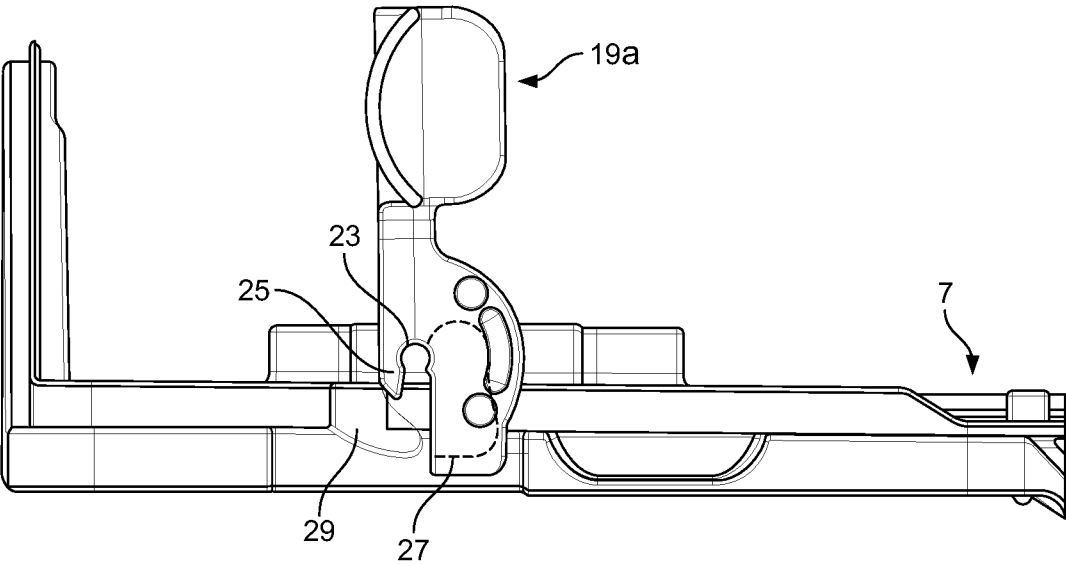


FIG. 9c

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/IL2013/050803

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. A47L9/02
ADD.

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)
A47L

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 practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2010/257695 A1 (MAGUIRE SCOTT ANDREW [GB] ET AL) 14 October 2010 (2010-10-14)	1-3
A	paragraph [0055]; figures 4,5	4,5
A	----- EP 0 650 689 A1 (REXAIR INC [US]) 3 May 1995 (1995-05-03) the whole document	1-5
A	----- WO 2005/111084 A2 (DYSON TECHNOLOGY LTD [GB]; BYATT NICHOLAS GEORGE [GB]; CAMERON JAMES E) 24 November 2005 (2005-11-24) the whole document	1-5



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

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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

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

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10/12/2013

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/IL2013/050803

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