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Declarations under Rule 4.17:

- as to the identity of the inventor (Rule 4.17(i))
- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))
- of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))

Published:

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(54) Title: BOTTLE OPENING TOOL

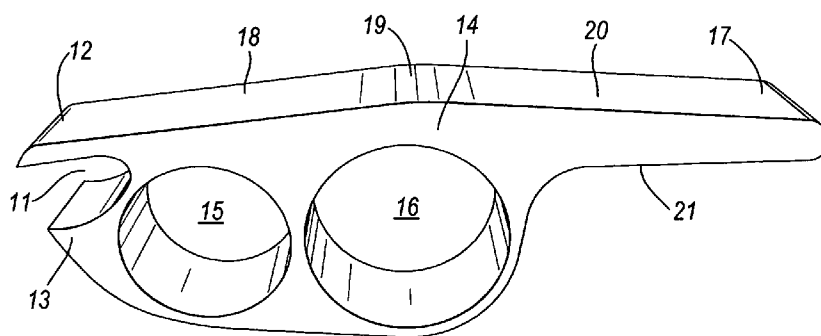


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: A bottle opening tool has a body (14) having on opposite sides a bottle opener (11) and a lever arm (17). Jaws (12, 13) form the bottle opener side and are located onto the cap of a bottle by a user placing his or her little and ring fingers into the holes (15, 16) in the body. The cap is levered off by applying force through the lever arm (17) with fingers that remain free. Between uses the tool is worn on the outside of the hand without impeding other actions of the hand. Branding is effective by being located on upper surfaces (18, 20) of the tool, visible to the recipient of the opened bottle.

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BOTTLE OPENING TOOL

The present invention relates to a bottle opening tool, in particular to a bottle
5 opening tool that acts as a branding device.

It is known to close drinks bottles, usually made of glass, with a cap crimped onto
the top of the bottle, and the present invention relates to tools for opening such
bottles, rather than for opening bottles closed e.g. with a cork or stopper.

10

Many tools are known for opening bottles, generally by levering the cap from the
top of the bottle.

A common problem with these is that to operate the tool requires use of both
15 hands of the user. One hand holds the bottle whilst the other holds and operates
the tool to lever the cap from the bottle. Holding the tool between opening different
bottles is awkward as little else can be done with the hand when holding the tool
other than open another bottle. So, when the tool is not in use it must generally
rest on a surface, e.g. the bar or counter, or be attached to a belt or other clothing
20 or be placed out of the way, e.g. in a pocket or drawer. The tool is then retrieved
in order to open another bottle, and the retrieval takes time. This is a
disadvantage. Also the tool can be lost.

Bottle opening tools are very commonly of similar design in the sense that the
25 action of opening a bottle is common so the fundamental mechanics of the tool
are relatively uniform across tools.

Most tools are not designed for frequent, easy use, and can be painful to operate
repeatedly, e.g. whilst working in a busy bar.

30

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Novelty tools are known, in many shapes and sizes but with a common functional end to lever the cap from the bottle. These are fun to look at and use once but not repeatedly e.g. in a bar environment.

- 5 One such novelty tool is in the form of a finger ring carrying a bottle opener section. This is, as mentioned, fun to use but is painful to use more than once.

Another known novelty tool is fashioned upon a so-called knuckle duster, and is illustrated in the drawings herewith. It is made up of a line of four finger rings
10 welded or moulded into a single unit with a bottle opener section at the end, as a fifth finger ring. There is no thumb hole, only four finger holes, which makes the tool awkward and painful to use as the thumb has to be bent out of alignment with the other fingers to operate the tool. Using the tool requires the whole hand. It is also potentially an offensive tool, not acceptable in a bar or other public place, as
15 it resembles a knuckle duster, a weapon. Because it is also awkward to use it can not easily be used for repeated, rapid bottle opening, which would be required in a busy bar.

In bars today many items are branded or otherwise carry advertising, though this
20 is possible only to a limited extent with bottle opening tools, which are out of sight for much of the time.

The present invention seeks to overcome or at least ameliorate one or more of the above-identified issues. It is an object of the invention to provide a bottle opening
25 tool which provides an alternative means of opening a bottle and it is a particular aim to provide a bottle opening tool which is easy to use for rapid, successive bottle openings. It is a particular object of the invention to provide a bottle opening tool which in addition can carry advertising material and be adapted to display the material during use and between uses.

30

Accordingly, the present invention provides a bottle opening tool, comprising a tool body on which are located (i) a bottle opener, (ii) at least one finger grip, and

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(iii) a surface for location of branding material, wherein the tool is adapted to be worn on the outside of the hand with the bottle opener adjacent the little finger of the wearer and with the surface on the back of the hand of the wearer.

5 Hence in use of a tool of the invention, the tool is worn on the outside of the hand and the bottle opener is on the same side of the hand as the wearer's little finger. A bottle is opened by rotation of the hand and arm, clockwise if worn on the right hand and anti-clockwise if worn on the left.

10 It is found in use of the invention that the location of the tool on the outside of the hand means that the user retains relative freedom to use his or her fingers without removing the tool, and so the tool can be worn between bottle opening operations. It is no longer necessary to waste time picking up the tool when a bottle needs to be opened; in a busy bar environment this speeds up the bar service provided.

15 There is reduced likelihood of losing the tool.

The bottle opening tool generally has a bottle opener comprising upper and lower jaws in the tool body. In use these jaws engage the top of the cap and an undersurface of the cap, enabling it to be levered off the top of the bottle.

20

The finger grip enables the tool to be held between and grasped by a user's finger or fingers. Preferred grips are sized to be grasped by one finger, by two fingers or by three fingers, and particularly preferred grips are for two fingers, especially the little and ring fingers. The grips can comprise a projection or tab so the fingers can
25 hold the tool in the hand via the projection or tab. The projection or tab can be relatively straight or can also be shaped to sit around a finger. One suitable grip comprises a closed loop or ring. This can be large enough for two or even three fingers. In one preferred embodiment, however, the grip comprises one loop or ring per finger. The loop or ring is conveniently formed as a hole within the tool
30 body, and examples of such holes are illustrated in the figures.

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In preferred embodiments of the inventions, the bottle opening tool comprises at least two finger holes or one hole adapted for at least two fingers. These enable the tool to be held by at least two fingers of the hand, preferably the little and ring fingers; it is thus unlikely to fall off the hand. The holes are shown as circular in the examples but can be irregular as long as the tool can be held in the hand using the grip.

It is further preferred that the bottle opening tool comprises no more than three finger holes. The tool thus allows at least one finger and the thumb to remain free and out of a finger hole, and hence most movements of the hand are not impeded by wearing the tool for extended periods.

It is particularly preferred that the tool comprises just two and no more finger holes, adapted very preferably for the outer two fingers, namely the little and ring fingers. A user places his or her outer two fingers into these holes and locates the tool on the outside of the hand with the middle and index fingers free and with the flat surface outwards, on the back of the hand and positioned to be seen by a person next to the user: in a bar that person is typically the person ordering or receiving the to-be-opened bottle. The flat surface is highly visible to that person and can be presented to that person during the action of opening. There is the opportunity of locating advertising and/or branding material on the flat surface. Preferred tools of the invention have branding material affixed to the surface. Another option is for the surface to be moulded into branding material, for example a logo is moulded in relief into or onto the surface. Reference to the surface or the flat surface thus embraces embodiments in which such material is incorporated into or onto the surface, e.g. by moulding.

To allow for different sized fingers it is an option to make the tool in different sizes, labeled for example small, medium and large. It is also an option to provide a tool with inserts that fit into the finger grips or holes and enable their internal size or diameter to be reduced; using the inserts a, say, large sized tool can comfortably be used by someone with a medium or small hand.

- 5 -

In further embodiments of the invention the grip comprises one or more open loops, that is to say projections which curve around one or more fingers but are not closed into complete loops. It can be easier to get fingers into these open loops and the curve allows the grip to be held by fingers and the tool retained in the hand during and between uses.

The bottle opening tool also preferably comprises a lever arm extending from the body in a direction opposite to that of the bottle opener. The arm allows the user more easily to exert a turning or levering force through the tool and onto the cap of the bottle. In particular embodiments, the lever arm is adapted to extend in use over the middle and preferably also the index fingers of a user. This enables these one or two fingers to be used to assist the generation of turning force, reducing the build up of fatigue through frequent repeated use of the tool that may be experienced in a bar, but without locating the fingers in holes and restricting their movement.

In another aspect the invention provides a tool for opening a bottle, comprising a tool body on which are located (i) a bottle opener, and (ii) at least one finger grip, wherein the tool is adapted to be worn on the outside of the hand with the bottle opener adjacent the little finger of the wearer and the tool is adapted to open a bottle by rotation of the arm and hand of the wearer.

The tool preferably comprising at least two finger grips, more preferably finger holes, more preferably no more than three finger holes, and in particular comprises no more than two finger grips or holes.

The tool preferably comprising a lever arm extending from the body in a direction opposite to that of the bottle opener, and suitably adapted to extend in use over the middle and index fingers of a user.

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As for the first aspect of the invention, a flat surface for location of branding material, visible in use on the back of the hand of the wearer is included in preferred embodiments.

- 5 In all aspects of the invention, to be effective for branding purposes it is preferred that the surface is big enough to be attractive for organizations to locate material thereon. The surface is typically at least 5mm wide, preferably at least 10mm or more wide, more preferably 12mm or more wide. Separately, the flat surface is typically 50mm or more long, preferably 80mm or more long, more preferably
- 10 90mm or more long. Generally, the flat surface has an area of 400mm² or greater, preferably 800mm² or greater, more preferably 1000mm² or greater, very preferably 1200mm² or greater. The surface can be made up of adjacent surfaces on the outside of the tool which are angled to each other.
- 15 The tools can readily be made as single moulded pieces, and in an example of the invention illustrated below, the tool is made from moulded aluminium.

The invention further provides methods of opening bottles using the tool.

- 20 One method of opening a bottle comprises locating the tool of any aspect of the invention onto a hand of a user, such that the bottle opener is adjacent a little finger of the user and the flat surface is on the back of the user's hand, placing the tool onto the cap of the bottle and levering the cap from the bottle by turning the tool relative to the bottle. Using a tool of preferred embodiments of the invention,
- 25 the ring holes have axes which lie substantially perpendicular to the plane of rotation of the tool when opening a bottle. It is seen that in the known bottle opener shown in the drawings, the ring holes have axes which lie in the plane of rotation of that known tool when opening a bottle. So, when using the tool of the invention, the back of the hand of the user can be turned flat towards a customer.

30

A method of promoting a brand to a person, e.g. a customer in a bar, comprises placing advertising material relative to the brand onto the tool. The method may

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further comprise opening a bottle so as to move the advertising material towards the person whilst the bottle is being opened. The preferred embodiments of the invention present the advertising material on the flat surface of the tool, located on the back of the hand of the user, and using the tool moves the back of the hand
5 towards the customer, thus presenting the advertising material to the customer.

An advantage of the invention is that the tool can be used as a virtually hands free bottle opener. Its typical location is worn on the outside of the hand, leaving fingers free to carry out other functions both between openings and even during
10 opening a bottle. The tool does not have to be put down whilst not being used – it is there whenever needed.

Use of the tool typically includes display of the outer, advertising surface to the person receiving the opened bottle, hence the tool is a powerful advertising and
15 branding medium.

From a manufacturing point of view, the tool can be moulded as a single piece, and thus is cheap and easy to make in large numbers.

20 Other tools can be added, such as a pen or a cigarette lighter or torch or any combination or all of these, making a composite tool which still has the ease of use advantages of the basic unit. Embodiments of the invention thus provide a tool as defined further comprising one or more of a pen, a cigarette lighter and a torch.

25

In a further embodiment, a tool of the invention comprises an identification tag. These are used to identify the user e.g. to electronic devices, such as a cash register or a computer screen and reduces the risk of fraud within a bar.

30 For tools that display advertising that is not symmetrical there are left-handed and right handed embodiments, depending upon on which hand the tool is worn.

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The invention is now illustrated with reference to the following specific examples and the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 shows a schematic view from the front and above of a tool of one
5 embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 shows a user in process of opening a bottle using the tool of fig. 1;

Fig. 3 shows a schematic view from the front, above and side of a tool of
another embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 4 shows a schematic view from front and side and above of a known
10 novelty bottle opener of the prior art;

Fig. 5 shows a schematic view from above and the side of a further
embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 6 shows a side view of the embodiment of fig. 5; and

Fig.s 7 and 8 show views of variants of the embodiment of fig. 5, with the
15 surface for display of advertising material visible.

Referring to fig.s 1 to 3, the tool 10 comprises:-

- 11 - bottle opener
 - 12 – upper jaw
 - 20 13 – lower jaw
 - 14 – body
 - 15 – little finger hole
 - 16 – ring finger hole
 - 17 – lever arm
 - 25 18 – first upper branding surface
 - 19 – kink
 - 20 – second upper branding surface
 - 21 – lever surface
- 30 Referring in particular to fig.s 1 and 2, a tool made of moulded and brushed aluminium is shown of length approximately 96mm and width approximately 15mm.

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The tool has a body 14 with a bottle opener 11 on one side of the body and lever arm 17 projecting from the other side. The bottle opener 11 is made up of upper jaw 12 and lower jaw 13 which are dimensioned to fit around a bottle cap and in use are placed respectively above and below the bottle cap.

Holes are located in the body, dimensioned to receive typically sized fingers, specifically a first hole 15, designated the little finger hole and a second hole 16 designated the ring finger hole. In use, an operator inserts his or her outer or little finger of one hand into hole 15 and his or her 4th or ring finger into hole 16. The remaining two fingers, the middle finger and so-called index finger do not go into holes but lie underneath the lever surface 21 as shown in fig. 2. The tool is thus gripped by two fingers and is effectively worn on the two outer fingers and when needed is located onto a bottle cap on a bottle. The user then levers the cap from the bottle by turning the hand and arm and achieving a combination of a turning action and a lever action including applying force through the middle and/or index fingers via the lever surface 21. During this time the bottle is held steady by the other hand, or otherwise, e.g. by another person.

The bottle can be held between the person opening the bottle and the recipient person for whom the bottle is being opened. During the opening the flat branding or advertising surfaces 18 and 20 are visible to the recipient and are moved towards the recipient by the opening movement. The recipient's attention is on the moving hand and the bottle being opened and thus the recipient's attention is focused on these branding surfaces, making them ideal for location of branding material.

Referring to the embodiment of fig. 3, the tool comprises parts numbered as for the embodiment of fig.s 1 and 2. The bottle opener 11 has altered dimensions, with an upper jaw which protrudes more towards the bottle in use and with a less pronounced lower jaw, resulting in a smaller set of jaws to engage the bottle cap.

- 10 -

Depending to some extent upon personal preference, this smaller jaw is easier to use for some individual users.

Fig. 4 is a known bottle opening tool looking in part like a so-called “knuckle duster”. It is designed so that the bottle opening portion is adjacent the index finger.

Referring to figures 5 to 8, the tool 30 of a further embodiment of the invention has bottle opener 11, upper jaw 32, lower jaw 33, body 34, little finger hole 35, ring finger hole 36, lever arm 37, first upper branding surface 38, kink 39, second upper branding surface 40, and lever surface 41. The little and ring finger holes (35, 36) are combined into a single hole which for some wearers makes the tool more comfortable to use and/or locate in position on the hand compared with one hole for each finger. Use and operation of this embodiment is otherwise as for the embodiments shown in figures 1 to 3.

The invention thus provides a bottle opening tool, with optional extra features, and methods of opening bottles.

Claims

1. A bottle opening tool, comprising a tool body on which are located:-

(i) a bottle opener;

5 (ii) at least one finger grip; and

(iii) a flat surface for location of branding material,

wherein the tool is adapted to be worn on the outside of the hand with the bottle opener adjacent the little finger of the wearer and with the flat surface on the back of the hand of the wearer.

10

2. The bottle opening tool of claim 1, wherein the bottle opener comprises upper and lower jaws in the tool body.

3. The bottle opening tool of claim 1 or 2, comprising at least two finger holes.

15

4. The bottle opening tool of claim 3, comprising no more than three finger holes.

5. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, comprising a lever arm
20 extending from the body in a direction opposite to that of the bottle opener.

6. The bottle opening tool of claim 5, wherein the lever arm is adapted to extend in use over the middle and index fingers of a user.

25 7. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, wherein the flat surface is 10mm or more wide.

8. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, wherein the flat surface is 80mm or more long.

30

9. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, wherein the flat surface has an area of 800mm² or greater.

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10. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, made from moulded aluminium.

5 11. The bottle opening tool of any preceding claim, comprising branding material on the flat surface.

12. A method of opening a bottle, comprising locating the tool of any preceding claim onto a hand of a user, such that the bottle opener is adjacent a little finger of
10 the user and the flat surface is on the back of the user's hand, placing the tool onto the cap of the bottle and levering the cap from the bottle by turning the tool relative to the bottle.

13. A method of promoting a brand to a person, comprising placing advertising
15 material relative to the brand onto the flat surface of the tool of any of claims 1 to 11.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising opening a bottle so as to move the advertising material towards the person whilst the bottle is being opened.

20

15. A tool for opening a bottle, comprising a tool body on which are located:-
(i) a bottle opener; and
(ii) at least one finger grip;

wherein the tool is adapted to be worn on the outside of the hand with the bottle
25 opener adjacent the little finger of the wearer and the tool is adapted to open a bottle by rotation of the arm and hand of the wearer.

16. The tool of claim 15, comprising at least two finger grips.

30 17. The tool of claim 16, comprising no more than three finger holes.

18. The tool of claim 17, comprising no more than two finger holes.

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19. The tool of any of claims 15 to 18 comprising a lever arm extending from the body in a direction opposite to that of the bottle opener.

5 20. The tool of claim 19, wherein the lever arm is adapted to extend in use over the middle and index fingers of a user.

21. The tool of any of claims 15 to 20 comprising a flat surface for location of branding material, visible in use on the back of the hand of the wearer.

10

22. The tool of claim 21, wherein the flat surface is 10mm or more wide.

23. The tool of claim 22, wherein the flat surface is 80mm or more long.

15 24. The tool of claim 22 or 23, wherein the flat surface has an area of 800mm² or greater.

25. The tool of any of claims 21 to 24, comprising branding material on the flat surface.

20

26. A tool substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to fig.s 1 and 2.

27. A tool substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to fig. 3.

25 28. A tool substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to fig. 5.

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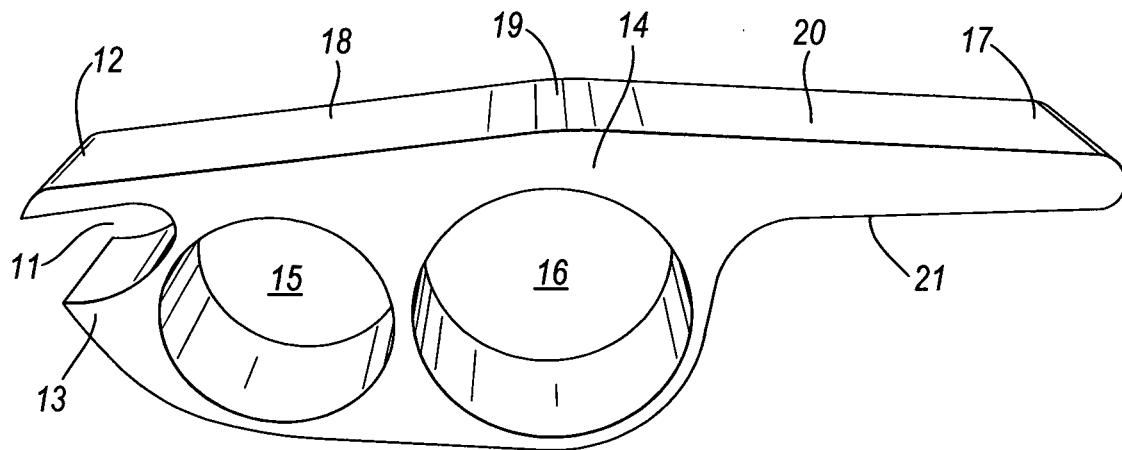


Fig. 1

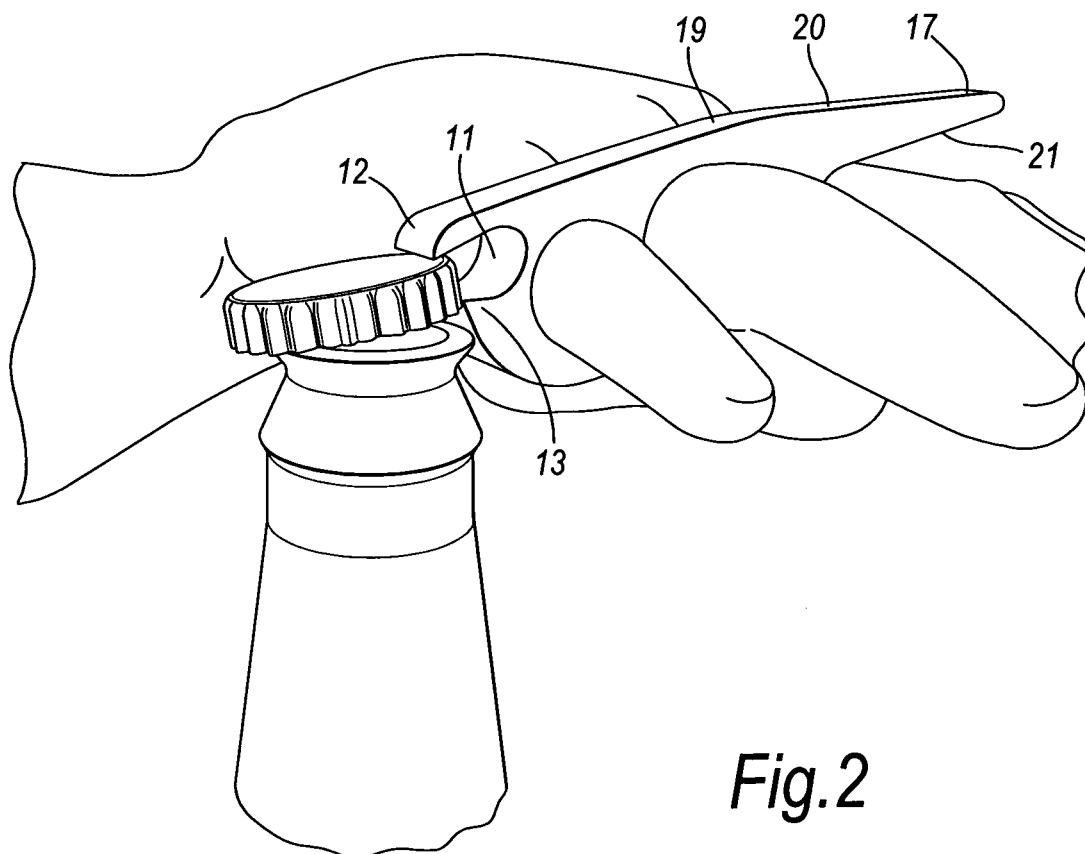


Fig.2

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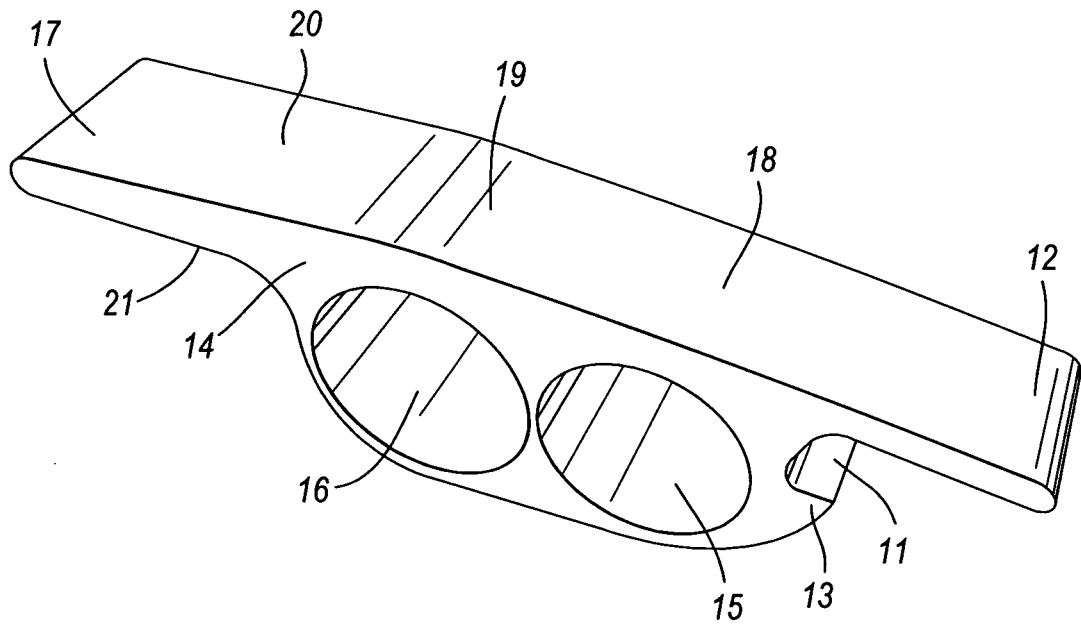


Fig.3

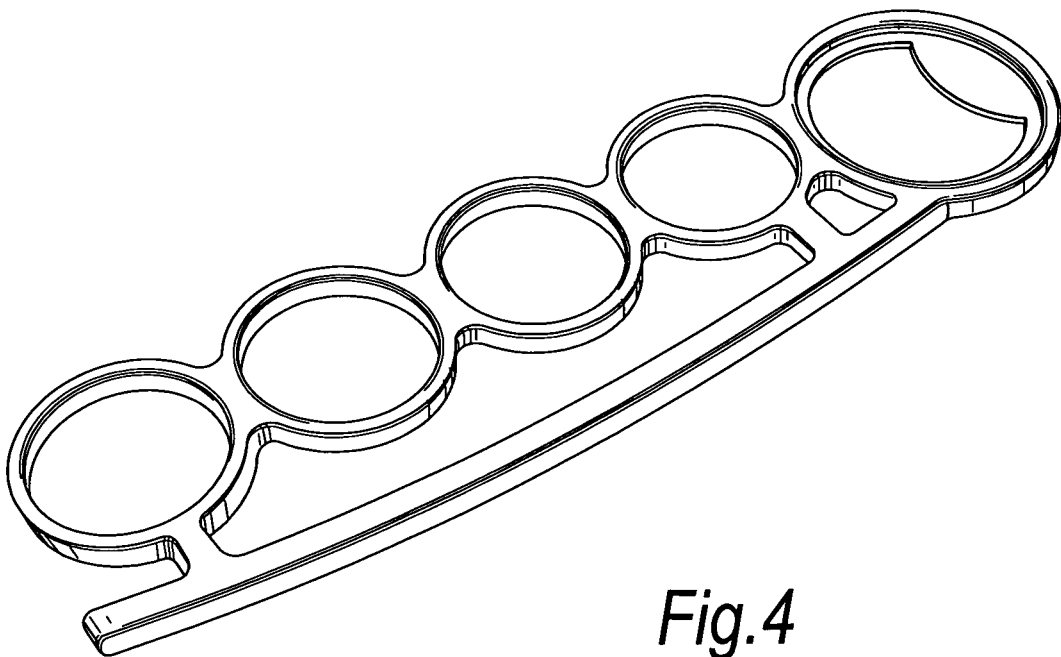


Fig.4

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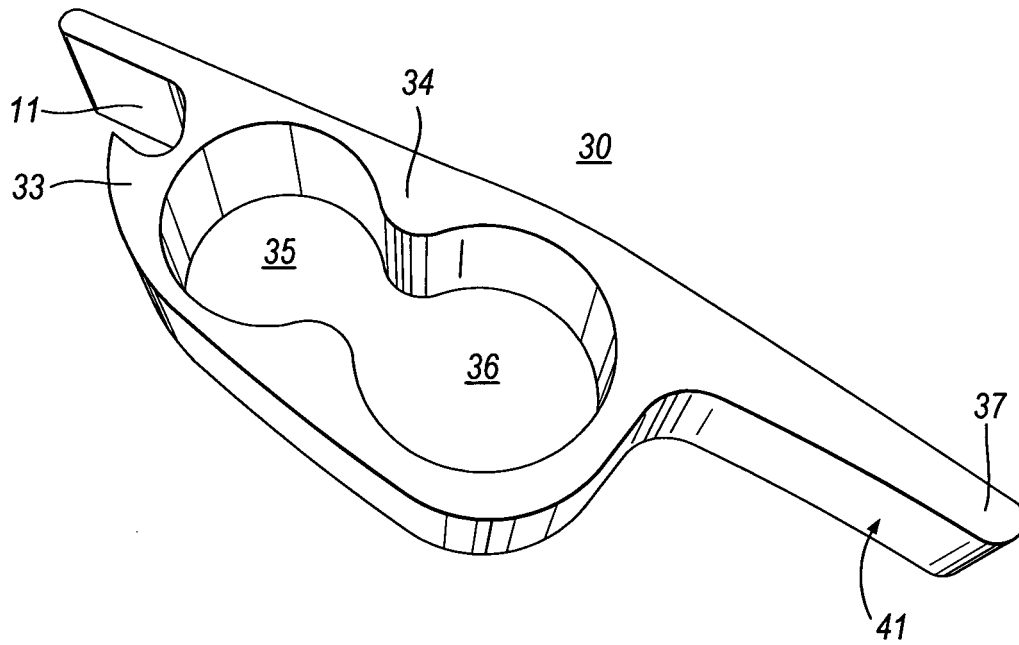


Fig. 5

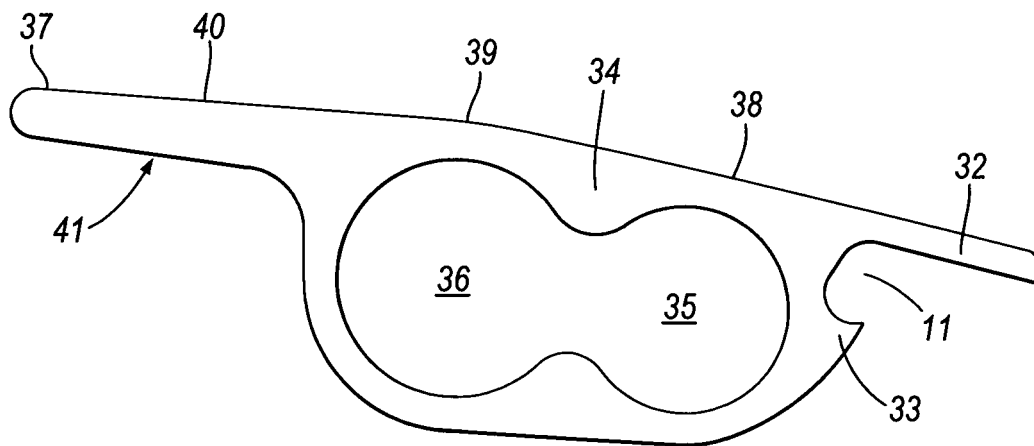


Fig. 6

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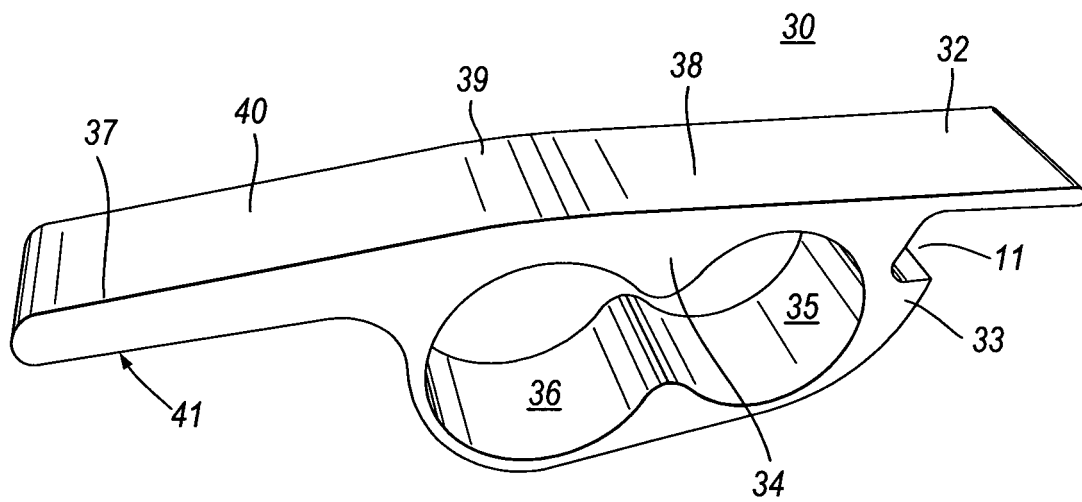


Fig.7

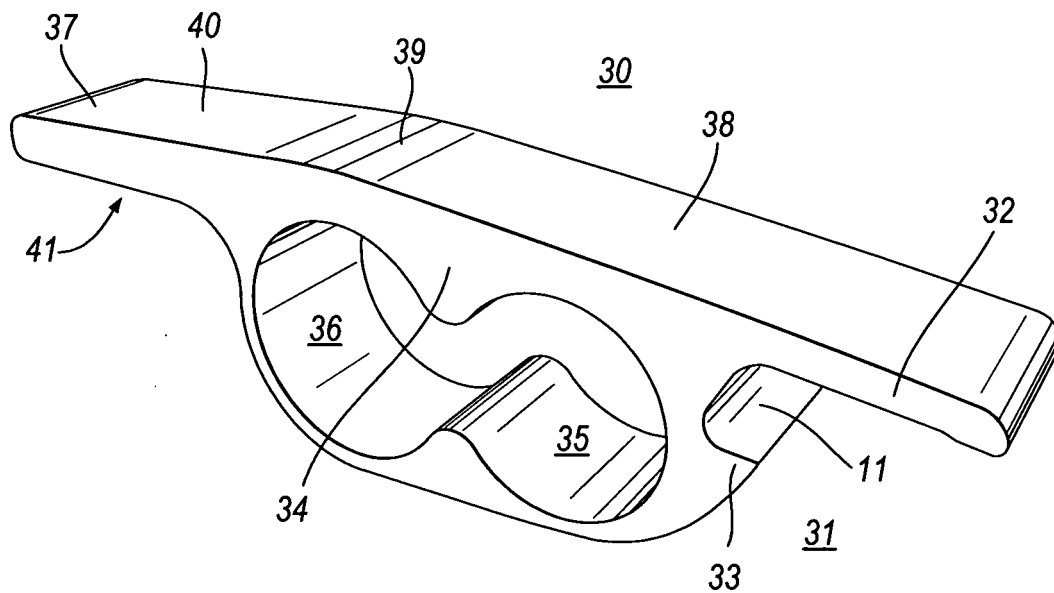


Fig.8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/GB2008/002196

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. B67B7/16

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)
B67B

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)

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 3 495 284 A (W. WEINGARDT) 17 February 1970 (1970-02-17) the whole document	1-25
X	US 2005/126344 A1 (J. JONES) 16 June 2005 (2005-06-16) the whole document	7, 11-15, 21, 22, 25
A	EP 1 172 328 A (R. SUBIC) 16 January 2002 (2002-01-16) the whole document	1-25



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 document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *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

2 September 2008

Date of mailing of the international search report

09/09/2008

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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Smolders, Rob

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/GB2008/002196

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☒ Claims Nos.: 26-28
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
see FURTHER INFORMATION sheet PCT/ISA/210
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers allsearchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search reportcovers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

Continuation of Box II.2

Claims Nos.: 26-28

Rule 6.2(a) PCT.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guideline C-VI, 8.2), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2)PCT declaration be overcome.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

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