A game playing apparatus comprises at least at least one support structure (8,10,12). The apparatus also comprises at least one construction member (16), which is arranged to engage with said support structure and to be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow exceeding a pre-determined pressure, to thereby provide an entertaining game adaptation of the children's tale of the Three Little Pigs. Also provided is an air compressor 4 that gives the air flow and operates at 2 different power levels in order to blow different types of construction member 16 from support structure 8,10,12. There may be three types of construction member 16 representing 'brick', 'wood' and 'straw' respectively.
Game Playing Method and Apparatus

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for playing a game based upon the popular and cautionary children’s tale of the Three Little Pigs.

Hitherto, to the best of the applicant’s knowledge, the popular children’s tale of the Three Little Pigs has not been successfully adapted into an engaging multiplayer game.

We have now devised a game playing apparatus for implementing just such a game.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a game playing apparatus comprising:

- at least one support structure;
- at least one construction member arranged to engage with said support structure and to be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow exceeding a pre-determined pressure; and
- means for providing a directed flow of air towards said support structure.

Preferably said apparatus comprises at least 2 types of construction member arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by incident air flows exceeding different respective thresholds, said means for providing a directed flow of air being arranged to provide an air flow at a first pressure, exceeding that required to disengage one of said at least 2 types of construction member from said support structure but less than that required to disengage the second of said at least 2 types of construction member from said support structure, and at a second pressure exceeding that required to disengage both types of construction member from said support structure. Preferably said means for providing a directed flow of air is arranged to determine at random, upon each
operation thereof, whether to provide a flow of air at said first pressure or at said second pressure.

Preferably said apparatus comprises at least one type of construction member arranged to engage with said support structure such that is will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means.

Most preferably said apparatus comprises 3 types of construction member, 2 arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by incident air flows from said air-flow providing means exceeding different respective thresholds, and a third arranged such that it will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means, each type of construction member being visually identifiable as being of either a "brick" type, a "wood" wood or a "straw" type.

Preferably said apparatus comprises a plurality of support structures, one for each game player.

Preferably said means for providing a directed flow of air is displaceable to selectively direct a flow of air towards one or other of said support structures. Most preferably said means for providing a directed flow of air is rotatable about a vertical axis to selectively direct a flow of air radially outwards from said axis, towards one or other of said support structures.

Preferably said apparatus comprises a plurality of playing pieces, one for each game player, and a track about which said playing pieces may be moved, at least one section of said track being marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that he or she is required to add a construction member (or where the apparatus comprises 2 or more different types of construction member, one or
other of those types of construction member) to his or her respective support structure.

Preferably at least one further section of said track is marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that said air-flow providing means must be operated to direct a flow of air towards his or her respective support structure or, alternatively, that the player may operate said air-flow providing means to direct a flow of air towards the support structure of another player.

Preferably said apparatus comprises 3 different playing pieces, in the form of 3, visually-differentiable, stylised members of the mammal family Suidae, most preferably diminutive examples of Sus scrofa domesticus, otherwise known as the common domesticated hog or pig.

Preferably said means for producing a flow of air comprises an outlet in the form of a stylised member of the mammal family Canidea, otherwise known as the wolf, most preferably an over-developed, malevolent example of that animal family.

Preferably said means for providing a flow of air comprises a motorized air-compressor or reservoir of compressed air.

Also in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method of playing a game, wherein each of a plurality of players attempts to attach a pre-determined number of construction members to respective support structures and wherein, during the course of the game, a flow of air may be directed at one or other of the support structures to disengage at least one construction member therefrom.
An embodiment of the present invention will now be described by way of an example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a game playing apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

Figures 2 and 3 are respectively first and second sectional side-elevations of a first construction member, in a normal position and under the influence of an incident air-flow at a first pressure;

Figures 4, 5 and 6 are respectively first, second and third sectional side-elevations of the same construction member shown in Figures 2 and 3, in a normal position, under the influence of an incident air-flow at a second pressure and disengaged from its support structure; and

Figure 7, 8 and 9 are respectively first, second and third sectional side-elevations of a second construction member in a normal position, under the influence of an incident air-flow at said first pressure and disengaged from its support structure.

Referring to Figure 1, a game playing apparatus is shown comprising a substantially dome-shaped housing 2 upon which a moulded character 4, in the shape of a wolf, is mounted for rotation about a vertical axis.

Contained within the hollow body of the housing 2 is a motorized air compressor, arranged to drive a flow of air through the body of the moulded wolf character 4 and radially outwards through a vent 6 below the character’s head, to provide the impression that the wolf character is blowing towards whichever one of three support structures 8,10,12 the head of the wolf is directed.

The apparatus is arranged such that the air compressor, when operated, will provide a flow of air at either a first pressure or a second pressure, higher than
said first pressure, the pressure of the air flow being determined, at random, each time the compressor is operated.

Each of the three support structures 8,10,12 takes the form of a house, having a plurality of apertures e.g. corresponding to the windows and door of that house, to which a plurality of panels 16 may be attached, to close the apertures.

The panels 16 comprise three different types: a first panel-type which, when attached in place to close an aperture of any of the support structures 8,10,12, cannot be dislodged by a flow of air directed at that structure from the air compressor; a second panel-type which, when attached in place to a support structure can be dislodged by a flow of air from the air compressor at either said first pressure or said second, higher pressure; and a third panel-type which, when attached in place to a support structure can only be dislodged by a flow of air at said second pressure.

Figures 2 and 7 show preferred arrangements whereby panels 18,20 of said third and second panel-types respectively, may be attached to a support structure e.g. 8. It can be seen that each panel 18,20 is suspended by a pair of tapered lugs formed at either end of its upper edge, the suspension-lugs 22, 24 of the third and second panel-type differing in their relative degree of taper, such that a panel of the third panel-type 18 must be displaced through a greater angle than that of a panel of the second panel-type 20 (i.e. the third panel-type must be subjected to a greater degree of incident air pressure) for the apex of its suspension lugs 22 to disengage from the indentations 26 in the support structure, in which they are normally located.
As an illustration, Figure 3 shows a panel 18 of said third panel-type subjected to an air flow at said first pressure, which is insufficient to dislodge the suspension lugs 22 of the panel from their respective seatings. Figure 5 shows the same panel 18 subjected to an air flow at said second, higher pressure, which is sufficient to unseat the lugs 22, as shown in Figure 6. Figure 8 shows how an air flow at said first pressure is sufficient to unseat the lugs 24 of a panel 20 of said second panel-type, as shown in Figure 9.

The substantially dome-shaped structure 2 is encircled by a track 28, divided into successive sections e.g. 30, between which three playing pieces 32, 34, 36, in the form of pigs may be moved, as determined by the roll of a die 38.

In use of the apparatus, each of three players is first allocated a respective support structure 8, 10, 12 and corresponding playing piece 32, 34, 36. Players then take it in turns to roll the die 38 and move their respective playing pieces around the track. Should a player land upon a section marked with an image of a pile of bricks, that player may then attach a panel of said first panel-type to his respective support structure. Similarly, if that player should land on a section marked with an image of a pile of wood or of a bale of straw, then he or she may attach a panel 20, 18 of said second panel-type or said third panel-type, respectively. Should the player land on a section marked with an image of a wolf, then according to different variants of the game, that player must then either rotate the wolf character 4 to face his or her own support structure, or instead rotate the wolf character 4 to face the support structure of one of his or her opponents, before operating the air
compressor to direct a flow of air at the chosen support structure.

It will be appreciated that, if the air compressor provides a flow of air at said first pressure, only panels of said second panel-type 20 will be dislodged from the support structure 8,10,12 towards which the flow of air is directed, whereas if the air compressor provides a flow of air at said second, higher pressure, any panels of either said second 20 or said third 18 panel-type will be dislodged from the support structure towards which the flow of air is directed.

It is each player’s objective to be the first to close each of the apertures e.g. 14 in his or her respective support structure 8,10,12 with a panel 16.

The apparatus thus described provides an entertaining game adaptation of the children’s tale of the Three Little Pigs.
Claims

1) A game playing apparatus comprising:
at least at least one support structure;
at least one construction member arranged to engage
with said support structure and to be disengaged from
said support structure by an incident air flow exceeding
a pre-determined pressure; and
means for providing a directed flow of air towards
said support structure.

2) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
comprising at least 2 types of construction member
arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by
incident air flows exceeding different respective
thresholds, said means for providing a directed flow of
air being arranged to provide an air flow at a first
pressure, exceeding that required to disengage one of
said at least 2 types of construction member from said
support structure but less than that required to
disengage the second of said at least 2 types of
construction member from said support structure, and at a
second pressure exceeding that required to disengage both
types of construction member from said support structure.

3) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 2,
wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air
is arranged to determine at random, upon each operation
thereof, whether to provide a flow of air at said first
pressure or at said second pressure.

4) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding
claim, comprising at least one type of construction
member arranged to engage with said support structure
such that it will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means.

5) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising 3 types of construction member, 2 arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by incident air flows from said air-flow providing means exceeding different respective thresholds, and a third arranged such that it will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means, each type of construction member being visually identifiable as being of either a "brick" type, a "wood" wood or a "straw" type.

6) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising a plurality of support structures, one for each game player.

7) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air is displaceable to selectively direct a flow of air towards one or other of said support structures.

8) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air is rotatable about a vertical axis to selectively direct a flow of air radially outwards from said axis, towards one or other of said support structures.

9) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising a plurality of playing pieces, one for each game player, and a track about which said playing pieces may be moved, at least one section of said track
being marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that he or she is required to add a construction member (or where the apparatus comprises 2 or more different types of construction member, one or other of those types of construction member) to his or her respective support structure.

10) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein at least one further section of said track is marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that said air-flow providing means must be operated to direct a flow of air towards his or her respective support structure.

11) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein at least one further section of said track is marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that the player may operate said air-flow providing means to direct a flow of air towards the support structure of another player.

12) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any of Claims 9 to 11, comprising 3 different playing pieces, in the form of 3, visually-differentiable, stylised pigs.

13) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for producing a flow of air comprises an outlet in the form of a stylized wolf.
14) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for providing a flow of air comprises a motorized air-compressor.

15) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for providing a flow of air comprises a reservoir of compressed air.

16) A method of playing a game, wherein each of a plurality of players attempts to attach a pre-determined number of construction members to respective support structures and wherein, during the course of the game, a flow of air may be directed at one or other of the support structures to disengage at least one construction member therefrom.

17) A game playing apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

18) A method of playing a game, said method being substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
Amendments to the claims have been filed as follows

1) A game playing apparatus comprising:
   at least at least one support structure;
   at least one construction member arranged to engage
   with said support structure and to be disengaged from
   said support structure by an incident air flow exceeding
   a pre-determined pressure; and
   means for providing a directed flow of air towards
   said support structure.

2) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,
   comprising at least 2 types of construction member
   arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by
   incident air flows exceeding different respective
   thresholds, said means for providing a directed flow of
   air being arranged to provide an air flow at a first
   pressure, exceeding that required to disengage one of
   said at least 2 types of construction member from said
   support structure but less than that required to
   disengage the second of said at least 2 types of
   construction member from said support structure, and at a
   second pressure exceeding that required to disengage both
   types of construction member from said support structure.

3) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 2,
   wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air
   is arranged to determine at random, upon each operation
   thereof, whether to provide a flow of air at said first
   pressure or at said second pressure.

4) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding
   claim, comprising at least one type of construction
   member arranged to engage with said support structure
such that is will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means.

5) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising 3 types of construction member, 2 arranged to be disengaged from said support structure by incident air flows from said air-flow providing means exceeding different respective thresholds, and a third arranged such that it will not be disengaged from said support structure by an incident air flow from said air-flow providing means, each type of construction member being visually identifiable as being of either a "brick" type, a "wood" type or a "straw" type.

6) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising a plurality of support structures, one for each game player.

7) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air is displaceable to selectively direct a flow of air towards one or other of said support structures.

8) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said means for providing a directed flow of air is rotatable about a vertical axis to selectively direct a flow of air radially outwards from said axis, towards one or other of said support structures.

9) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising a plurality of playing pieces, one for each game player, and a track about which said playing pieces may be moved, at least one section of said track
being marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that he or she is required to add a construction member (or where the apparatus comprises 2 or more different types of construction member, one or other of those types of construction member) to his or her respective support structure.

10) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein at least one further section of said track is marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that said air-flow providing means must be operated to direct a flow of air towards his or her respective support structure.

11) A game playing apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein at least one further section of said track is marked to indicate to a player whose respective playing piece may land upon that particular section, that the player may operate said air-flow providing means to direct a flow of air towards the support structure of another player.

12) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any of Claims 9 to 11, comprising 3 different playing pieces, in the form of 3, visually-differentiable, stylised pigs.

13) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for producing a flow of air comprises an outlet in the form of a stylized wolf.
14) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for providing a flow of air comprises a motorized air-compressor.

15) A game playing apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said means for providing a flow of air comprises a reservoir of compressed air.

16) A game playing apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
Application No: GB0601280.1
Claims searched: 1-15, 17
Examiner: Andrew Hole
Date of search: 11 April 2006

**Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17**

**Documents considered to be relevant:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Relevant to claims</th>
<th>Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance</th>
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<td>-</td>
<td>US 4223894 A (Fabricant) See abstract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>US1079678 A (West) See figures.</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>US 5429369 A (Hurst) See figures and abstract.</td>
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<td>US 464887 A (McConaughy) See figures.</td>
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**Field of Search:**

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC:

A6D; A6S

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC:

A63F; A63H; F41J

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

EPODOC, WPI, TXTE, Internet