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London WC1R 5DJ(GB)(54) **Cosmetics dispenser.**

(57) A cosmetics dispenser has a plurality of containers (13) each with a respective closure (7) which is attached to a respective applicator. The containers are releasably held together, for example by a casing or connections between adjacent pairs of the containers, so that containers of different cosmetics materials or different types of applicator can be assembled together and individual containers can be replaced as desired. A common handle is provided, engageable with any selected one of the applicators.

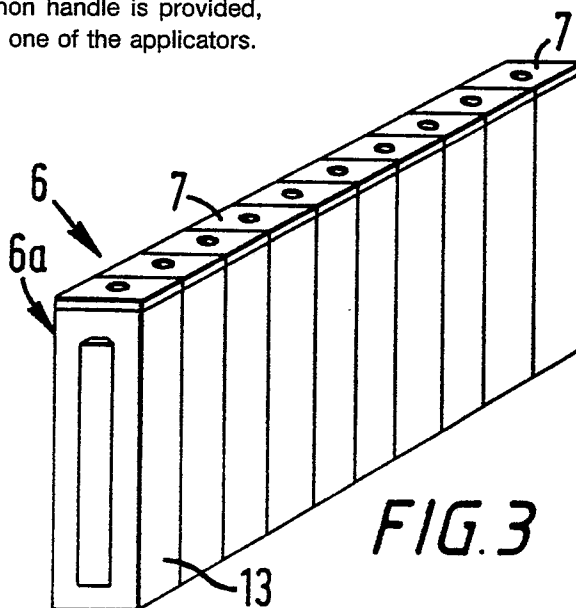


FIG. 3

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COSMETICS DISPENSER

This invention relates to a dispenser for cosmetics materials, and relates particularly, but not exclusively, to an eye make-up kit.

Cosmetic compositions for use around the eyes include treatment products and make-up products. The former of these groups includes, for example, lotions, creams etc., for skin treatment, and the latter group includes such colouring compositions as mascara, eyeliner etc., for eyelash, eyebrow and skin colouring, and products for removing such colouring compositions.

A construction of a mascara dispenser comprising a tubular container containing a quantity of mascara, and a screw or snap-fit cap which closes the container and carries an elongate axially extending applicator which normally projects into the container, is well known. Although such dispensers are generally cheap to manufacture, they have certain drawbacks.

Firstly, they hold a relatively large quantity of the mascara, or other cosmetic material and are therefore used over a relatively long period. Over this period, the applicator may be removed from the container and used for the application of material several tens or even hundreds of times, and this can lead to chemical and microbiological contamination of the product within the container.

Secondly, since each known dispenser contains only a single type of colouring material, a variety of different colouring materials can be made available only by the user carrying several separate dispensers. Several such dispensers will occupy a relatively large space in a handbag or the like, and generally can only be retained together if they are all kept in a make-up bag, thus further increasing the problem of bulk.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cosmetic dispenser comprising a plurality of containers or compartments (hereinafter referred to simply as "containers") each for holding a quantity of cosmetics material, and each closed by a respective closure member to which is attached an applicator member which projects into the respective container and which can be withdrawn therefrom and used for the application of material retained thereon on withdrawal, characterised by means for releasably holding the containers in an assembly so that the containers can be disassembled and reassembled together or assembled with further such containers.

The holding means may comprise a casing for the containers into which the containers are removably fitted, and/or means for releasably connecting adjacent pairs of the containers.

The dispenser according to the invention offers considerable scope and versatility and can provide the basis for a variety of cosmetic requirements. For example, although the containers may all be filled with the same cosmetic product, it is also possible to fill some, or all of the containers or compartments with different materials, thereby to satisfy the user's various cosmetic requirements in a single cosmetic package. For example, the different compartments or containers may hold such different make-up materials as mascara, eyeliner, lip gloss etc. The applicators attached to the closure members may then be of different form, particularly suited to the materials in the respective containers or compartments.

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cosmetics dispenser comprising a plurality of containers, each for holding a quantity of a cosmetic composition, and each closed by a respective closure member to which is attached an applicator member which projects into the respective container, and which can be withdrawn therefrom and used for the application of material retained thereon on withdrawal, characterised by a casing within which the containers are removably disposed.

The casing may have parts which can move relative to one another between an open position in which the closure members of the containers are exposed and a closed position in which the containers are totally concealed.

The containers may be detachably engaged in a modular arrangement, each module comprising one or more of the containers. In this case the casing may have a plurality of recesses to receive snugly the modules. Alternatively, the containers may be formed as a single compartmentalized container unit.

In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cosmetics dispenser comprising a plurality of containers each for containing a quantity of cosmetics material and each being closed by a respective closure member and accommodating an applicator attached to or integrally formed with said closure member characterised in that the containers are arranged as a plurality of modules each having engagement means by which that module is detachably secured to at least one other of the modules.

The dispenser according to any of the aspects of the invention may further comprise a handle which is adapted to be attached, for example by screw-threading or bayonet or snap-fitting connection, to any selected one of the closure members for withdrawal of the applicator from the respective

container. In the case where the dispenser includes a casing, the casing preferably has means to accommodate the handle when not attached to any of the closure members.

Some embodiments of the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a perspective view a cosmetics dispenser in accordance with the invention shown with its lid open;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the dispenser of Figure 1, shown with the lid closed;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a cosmetics container unit which can be used in the dispenser of Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 4 is a vertical section through a single container module, a number of which can be assembled to form the unit of Figure 3;

Figure 5 is an enlarged base plan view of the module of Figure 4;

Figures 6A to 6E illustrate five different forms of handle which can be used in a cosmetics dispenser of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a perspective view of another cosmetics package in accordance with the present invention shown in its open condition ready for use;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of the dispenser of Figure 7, shown in its closed position;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of another cosmetics dispenser in accordance with the present invention shown in its open condition;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of the cosmetics dispenser of Figure 9 shown in its closed condition;

Figure 11 is a perspective view of another cosmetics package according to the invention, shown partly opened; and

Figure 12 is another perspective view, taken from another angle, of the cosmetics package shown in Figure 11.

With reference first to Figures 1 and 2, a cosmetics dispenser according to a first embodiment of the invention comprises a casing 1 having a generally rectangular base part 2 and a lid 3 hinged along one edge to the rear edge of the base part 2. The forward edge face 4 of the base part 2 has an elongate rectangular opening 5 which leads into an internal flat cuboidal cavity in the base member 2 for accommodating a cosmetics container unit 6 as shown in Figure 3.

The cosmetics container unit 6 (hereinafter referred to simply as the unit) comprises a row of containers or compartments, each closed by a respective closure member 7. The outer faces of the closure members 7 lie flush with the portions of the front face 4 surrounding the opening.

The lid 3 comprises a rectangular flat major part 8 which in the closed position shown in Figure 2 lies flat against the upper face 2a of the case part 2, and a forward lip or flange 9 which projects substantially perpendicularly to the major part 8 and which, in the closed condition of the package covers the front face 4 and thus conceals the row of closure members 7. In this closed condition, the lid also closes an elongate U-section recess 10 extending front-to-back of the base part 2 at one end thereof. This recess 10 accommodates a handle 11 adapted at one end to be engaged with any one of the closure members 7 exposed within the aperture 5 in the front face 4 of the base part 2.

A mirror 12 is fixed to or formed on the under-surface of the major portion 8 of the lid.

The lid 3 snap closes onto the base part 2 into the position as shown in Figure 2. When the lid is opened into the position shown in Figure 1, the handle 11 may be slid forwardly out of the recess 10 and attached to any selected one of the closure members 7. The selected closure member 7 and an attached applicator head (not seen in Figure 1) within the respective container or compartment can then be withdrawn from such container or compartment and cosmetic material retained on the applicator head can be applied as required. The mirror 12 can be used to aid the application procedure.

The unit 6 accommodated in the base 2 can be removed and replaced with a new unit or modified by replacement of one or more containers, and then reinserted into the base cavity.

Figure 3 illustrates one particular form in which the unit may be embodied. The unit of this embodiment comprises a plurality of (in this case ten) individual containers 6a which are attached to one another in a row, the containers being preferably molded from plastics material and of square cross-section. With reference to Figure 4, each container comprises a square section receptacle 13 having four elongate side walls and a square base wall, and a generally square closure member 7. The closure member 7 fits as a plug into the open end of the receptacle 13 and has a peripheral lip 14 which engages over the edge of the open end of the receptacle. The closure member 7 is attached to, or formed integrally with an applicator head 15 which extends into the receptacle. The construction of the applicator head 15 will depend upon the nature of the cosmetics composition contained in the receptacle, but in the particular form illustrated in Figure 4 it comprises a central stem 16 carrying material-retaining formations comprising a number of axially extending and circumferentially distributed rows of radial teeth 17 integrally formed with the stem 16. This particular construction is well suited for the application of mascara compositions

to the eyelashes. UK Patent No. 2071558 discloses a suitable method and apparatus for integrally moulding such an applicator from a plastics material.

The receptacle 13 is preferably formed with an inwardly projecting flange 18 which defines a central circular wiper orifice 19 through which the material-retaining portion of the applicator passes as the closure member 7 and applicator head 15 are withdrawn from the receptacle. As this happens, excess product is wiped from the applicator head so as to limit suitably the quantity of product retained on the withdrawn applicator head.

The outer faces of opposed side walls 13a, 13b of the receptacle are formed with complementary engagement formations so as to facilitate the assembly of the unit from the individual containers. In the illustrated form, one such sidewall 13a is formed with an elongate axially extending dovetail section projection 20, while the other surface 13b is formed with a complementary elongate dovetail recess 21. The dovetail recess 21 extends to one end (in this case the base) of the receptacle 13 to permit the individual containers to be assembled together by sliding the projection 20 of one such container into the recess 21 of another from the base end of the latter.

Numerous other possible arrangements for interconnecting the individual containers will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

Each closure member 7 is provided with a central, axially extending screw threaded bore 22 which opens onto the square outer surface of the closure member. The threaded end of the handle 11 can be screwed into this bore 22 so as to attach the handle to the applicator head and the closure member, and the applicator head can then be removed from the receptacle.

Accordingly, in the embodiment illustrated in Figures 3 to 5, the cassette is of modular construction and can be assembled from any ten selected pre-filled containers. Accordingly, a variety of cosmetics products may be included in the cosmetics pack. For example, the cassette could be assembled from containers containing ten different shades of mascara, or several different shades of mascara and several different shades of eye shadow etc. It will be appreciated that if a predetermined non-selectable variety of cosmetic products is to be presented, the cassette could comprise a single container sub-divided into ten separate compartments, each with its own closure and applicator head. An intermediate level of choice could be provided by assembling the cassette from a plurality of sub-divided containers (eg from five two-compartment containers), the containers being

adapted to interconnect by a similar dovetail projection and recess configuration as illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 for the individual container arrangement.

In the illustrated embodiment, the receptacles are of square section and the closure members 7 push fit into the open ends of the receptacles in a plug-closure fashion. It will be appreciated that the receptacles could be made cylindrical, and the closure members could be modified for screw-closure in or over the ends of the receptacles.

Figures 6A to 6E illustrate five different forms of handle which can be detachably secured to the closure members of the individual containers or compartments. Figure 6A shows a simple circular section rod with a screw thread 23 at one end. The handle of Figure 6B is a simple circular section rod formed at one end with a bayonet fitting 24. Figure 6C shows a handle having at one end a snap fitting comprising a pair of flexible legs 25 which can snap fit into an appropriately shaped recess in the closure member. The handle of Figure 6D is flat and has at its lower end a screw threaded shaft 23 and a widened portion 24 defining an annular shoulder 24a for engaging the top surface of the closure. Similarly, the handle of Figure 6E has a screw threaded shaft 23 and a widened base portion 24, the major part of the length of the handle, however, comprising a simple circular section rod.

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate another embodiment. In this embodiment, the unit 6 is accommodated in an elongate hollow carrier portion 26 which is pivoted at its opposite ends to respective end pieces 27a of a common base member. An elongate lid 28 is also hinged at its opposite ends to respective end pieces 27a, which project upwardly from opposite ends of a generally rectangular base piece 27. The hollow carrier portion 26 of the casing can pivot from the open position shown in Figure 7 downwardly onto the base piece 27 into the space between the upstanding end pieces 26, whereafter the lid 28 can be pivoted downwardly to lie against the outer surface 29 of the hollow carrier portion 25. This outer surface 29 is profiled so as to accommodate the thickness of the lid 27 so that in the closed condition the outer surface 27a of the lid lies flush with the adjacent part 29a of the outer surface 29. The lid 27 carries a mirror 30 on its inner surface, and is also formed with an elongate recess 31 for accommodating a common handle 32 to be attached to any selected one of the closure members 7.

In another embodiment illustrated in Figures 9 and 10, an elongate base member 33 is formed with an internal cavity for accommodating a unit 6, the closure members 7 of which are, in the open condition of Figure 9, exposed in an opening 33a in a side face of the base member 33. The base

member 33 is also formed with an elongate slot 34 for accommodating a mirror-carrying wall portion 35 of a hinged lid 36. This lid 36 also has an L-shaped edge wall 37 attached to two edges of the wall 35; one limb of the edge wall is hinged at its end 37a to a corner of the base member 33, and the other limb covers the side face which includes the unit-exposing aperture 33a in the closed portion of the lid. As can be seen from Figures 9 and 10, the two limbs of the L-shaped lid lie against the corresponding side faces of the base member 33 in the closed position.

Figures 11 and 12 illustrate a further embodiment. In this embodiment, the casing of the dispenser comprises an inner, hollow, unit-accommodating member 40 which is adapted to slide into and out of an enclosure cover 42 in a matchbox-like fashion. Again, unit 6 is inserted into the member 40 through a rectangular aperture formed in one elongate side 41 surface thereof. One of two opposite flat faces of this member 40 is formed with an elongate recess 43 for accommodating a handle 44 (see Figure 11) while the other flat surface of this member 40 carries a rectangular mirror 45 (see Figure 12).

It will be appreciated that the above described cosmetics packages are only exemplary embodiments of the invention, and that numerous other constructions are possible within the scope of the invention. For example, although in each of the described embodiments a separate handle must be attached to a selected closure/applicator, each closure could be integrally formed with its own respective handle. Also, the containers or compartments may be arranged otherwise than in a single row. For example, two units, each compartmentalised to provide five compartments, may be attached together side-by-side to form a two-by-five block accommodated in a suitably shaped cavity in the casing.

Claims

1. A cosmetics dispenser comprising a plurality of containers (13), each for holding a quantity of cosmetics material, and each closed by a respective closure member (7) to which is attached an applicator member (15) which projects into the respective container and which can be withdrawn therefrom and used for the application of material retained thereon on withdrawal, characterized by means (2; 20, 21; 26; 33; 40) for releasable holding the containers in an assembly so that the containers can be disassembled and reassembled together or assembled with further such containers.

2. A dispenser as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the holding means comprises a casing (2; 26; 33, 40) for the containers into which the containers are removably fitted.

3. A dispenser as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the releasable holding means comprises means (20, 21) for releasably connecting adjacent pairs of the containers.

4. A cosmetics dispenser comprising a plurality of containers (13), each for holding a quantity of a cosmetic composition, and each closed by a respective closure member (7) to which is attached an applicator member (15) which projects into the respective container, and which can be withdrawn therefrom and used for the application of material retained thereon on withdrawal, characterised by a casing (2; 26; 33; 40) within which the containers are removably disposed.

5. A dispenser as claimed in claim 4, wherein the casing has parts (2, 3; 26, 27, 28; 33, 36; 40, 42) which can move relative to one another between an open position in which the closure members of the containers are exposed and a closed position in which the containers are totally concealed.

6. A dispenser as claimed in claim 4 or 5, wherein the containers are detachably engaged in a modular arrangement, each module comprising one or more of the containers.

7. A dispenser as claimed in claim 6, wherein the casing has a plurality of recesses to receive snugly the modules.

8. A dispenser as claimed in claim 4 or 5, wherein the containers are formed as a single compartmentalized container unit.

9. A cosmetics dispenser comprising a plurality of containers (13) each for containing a quantity of cosmetics material and each being closed by a respective closure (7) member and accommodating an applicator (15) attached to or integrally formed with said closure member characterised in that the containers are arranged as a plurality of modules each having engagement means (20, 21) by which that module is detachably secured to at least one other of the modules.

10. A dispenser as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising a handle (Figures 6a to 6e) which is adapted to be attached to any selected one of the closure members for withdrawal of the applicator from the respective container.

11. A dispenser as claimed in claim 10 when appendant to any of claims 2 and 4 to 8, wherein the casing has means (10; 31; 43) accommodate the handle when not attached to any of the closure members.

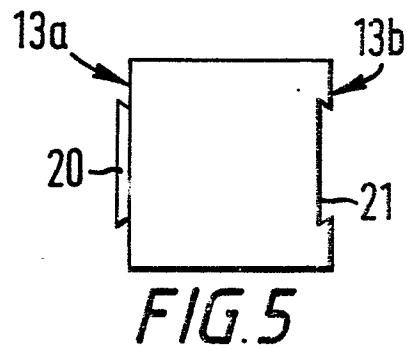
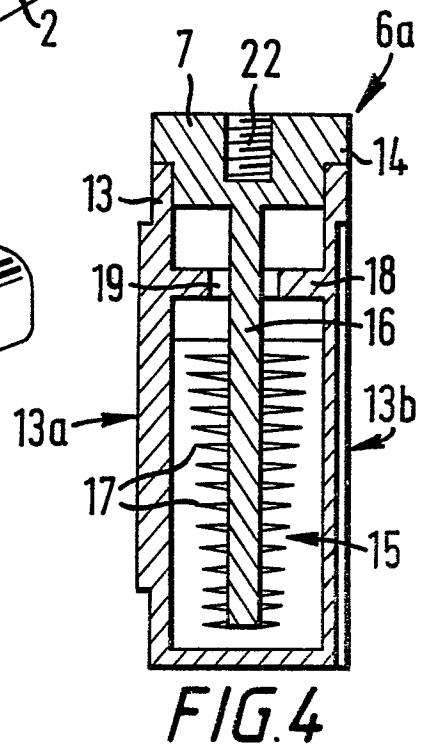
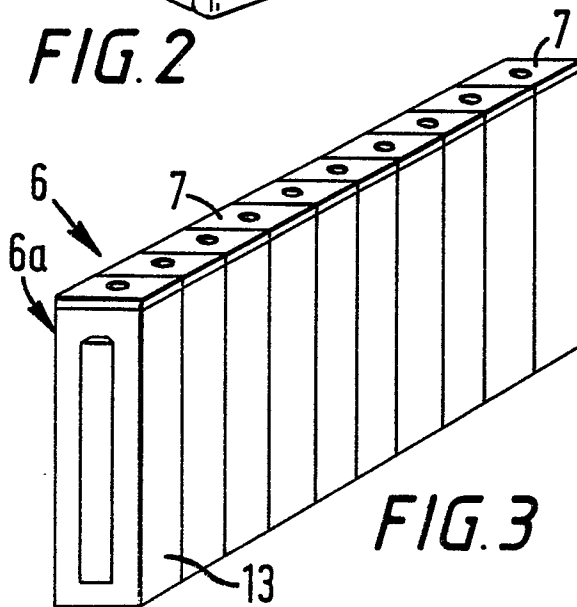
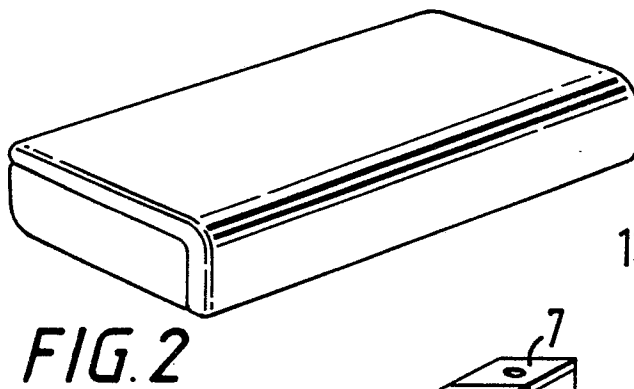
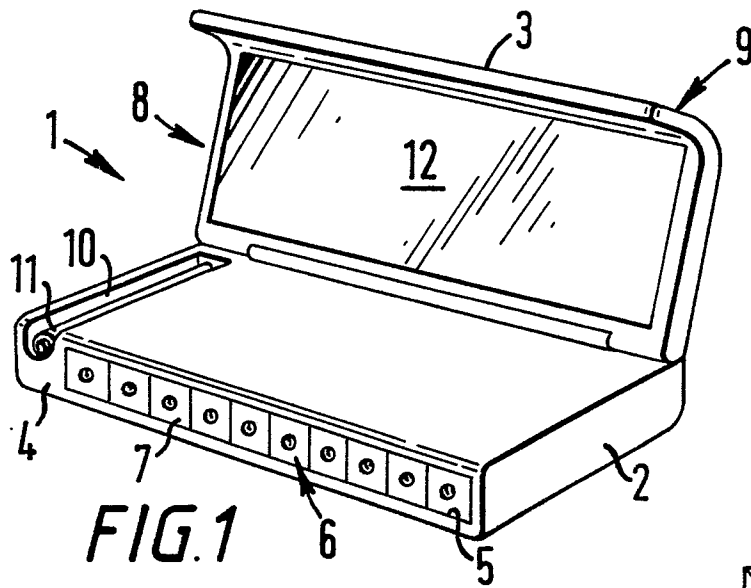


FIG. 6

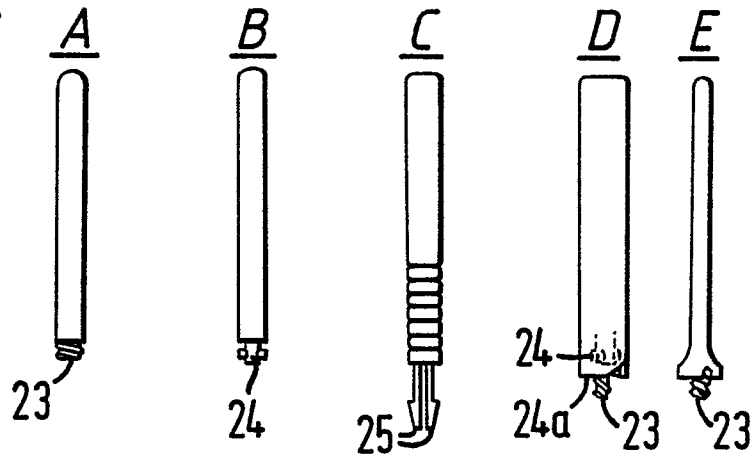


FIG. 7

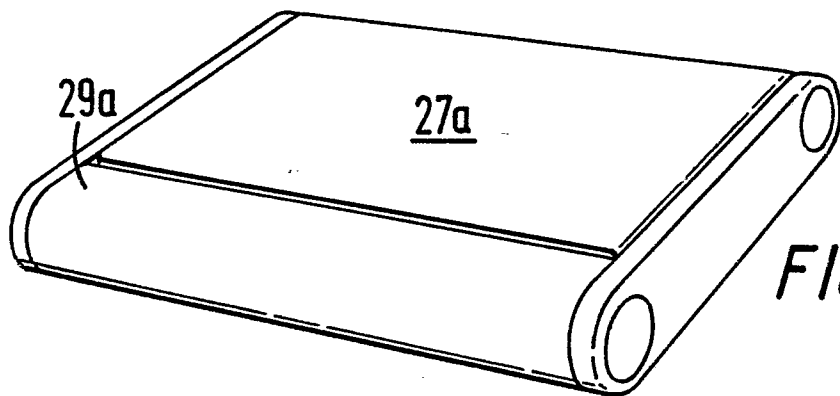
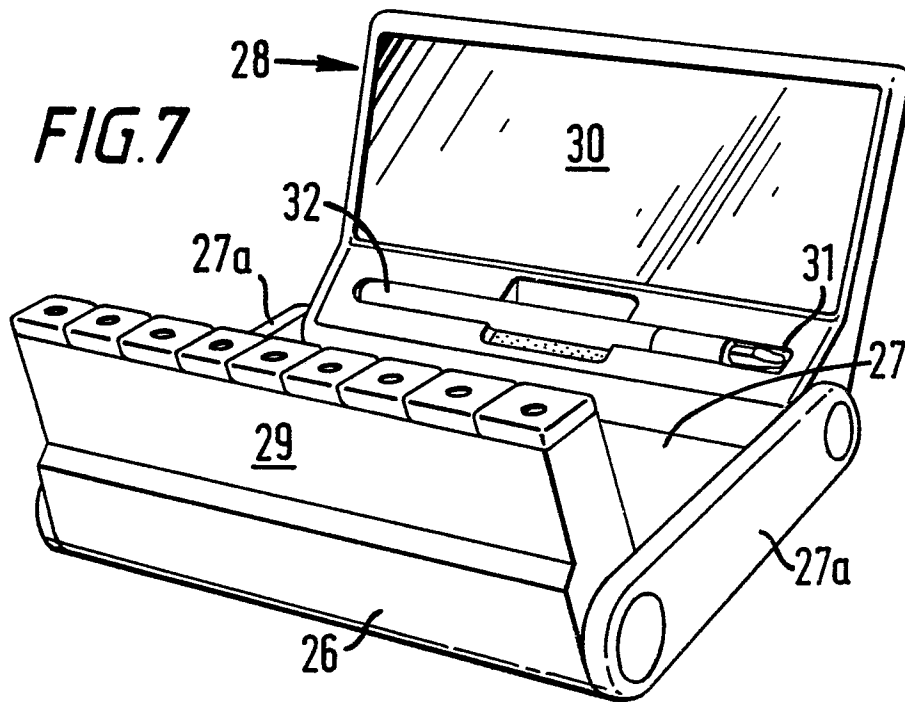


FIG. 8

