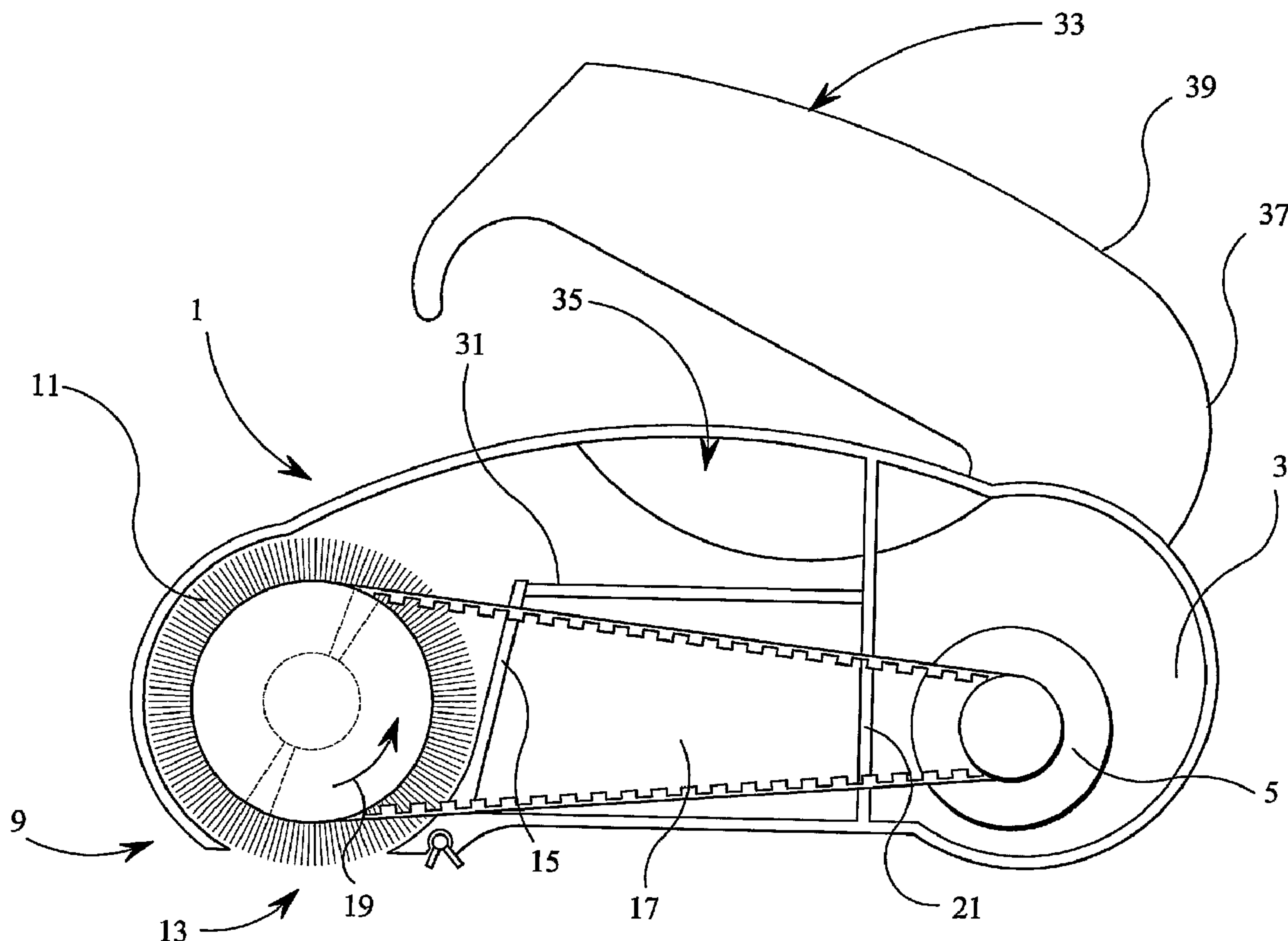




(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 2003/10/31
(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 2004/05/21
(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2008/04/15
(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 2004/07/22
(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: GB 2003/004722
(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 2004/041057
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2002/11/02 (GB0225618.8)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *A47L 11/33* (2006.01),
A47L 7/02 (2006.01), *A47L 9/04* (2006.01),
A47L 9/06 (2006.01)
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(54) Titre : APPAREILLAGE DE NETTOYAGE DE SURFACE
(54) Title: SURFACE CLEANING APPARATUS



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A surface cleaning apparatus includes a surface cleaning strip (8, 208) and means (6, 206, 220) responsive to movement of the surface cleaning apparatus over a surface (104) to be cleaned for positioning the cleaning strip (8, 208) relative to the surface to be cleaned in dependence upon the direction of movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.



(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
21 May 2004 (21.05.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/041057 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **A47L 11/33**,
9/04, 9/06, 7/02

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/GB2003/004722

(22) International Filing Date: 31 October 2003 (31.10.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
0225618.8 2 November 2002 (02.11.2002) GB

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(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,

CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE,
GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR,
KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK,
MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT,
RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR,
TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

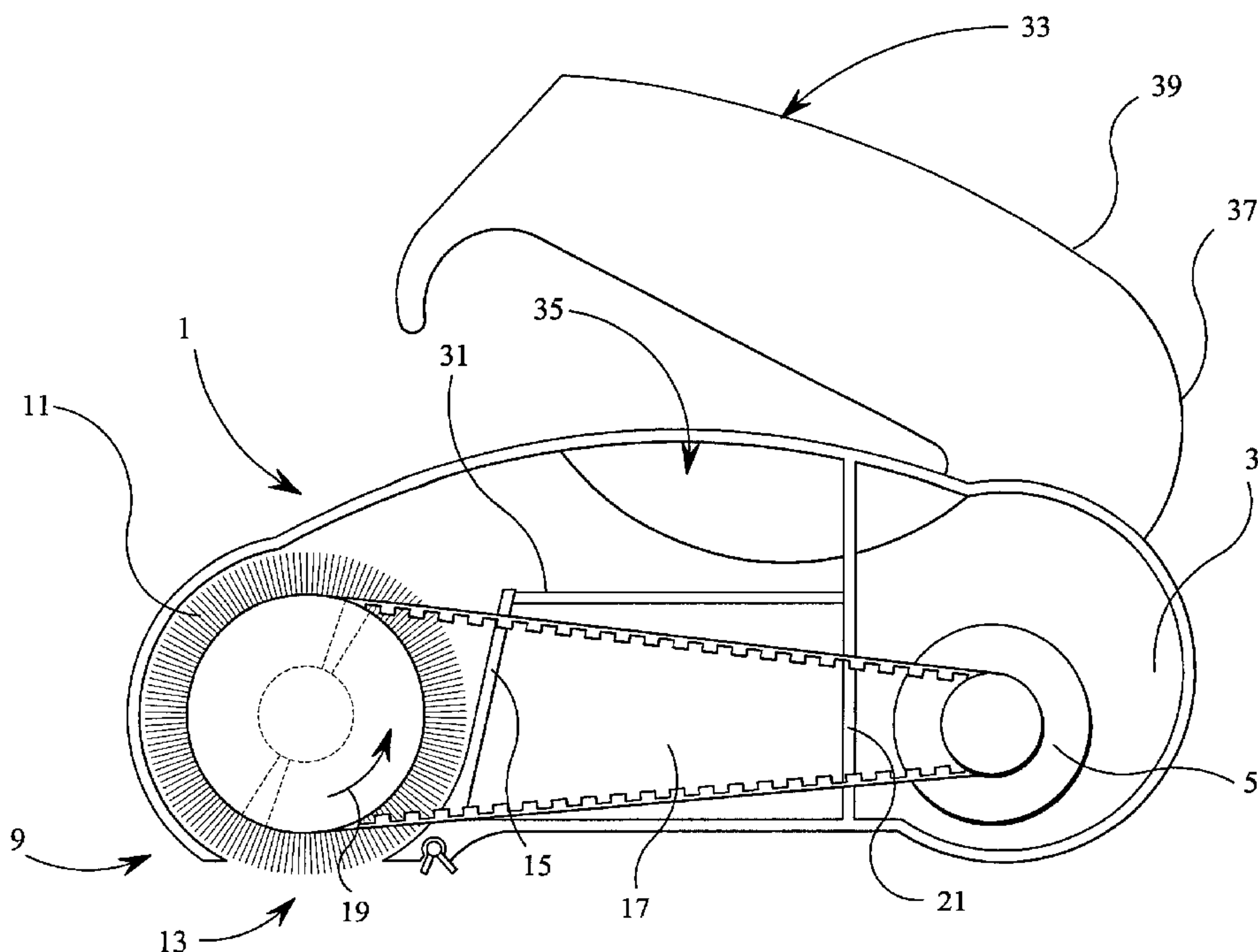
(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM,
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),
Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE,
ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO,
SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM,
GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the
claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of
amendments

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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(57) Abstract: A surface cleaning apparatus includes a surface cleaning strip (8, 208) and means (6, 206, 220) responsive to move-
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surface to be cleaned in dependence upon the direction of movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.

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SURFACE CLEANING APPARATUS

5 This invention relates to a surface cleaning apparatus including a surface cleaning strip, such as for cleaning hard floor surfaces.

10 Current vacuum cleaner attachments generally employ a flexible cleaning strip intended for cleaning hard floor surfaces, for example tiles, marble or linoleum. The flexible strip is intended to increase air speed and mechanically gather particles to assist performance. On a forward stroke the flexible strip will push particles forward. When the vacuum cleaner attachment is pulled in a rearward direction, the gathered particles are left
15 behind by the strip and are extracted by the suction. A disadvantage is that the flexible strip can gather particles on the rearward side, away from the suction, when the attachment is pulled in a rearward direction. However, the action of the suction itself causes the majority of the
20 particles on the rearward side of the flexible strip to pass under the flexible strip and be removed.

25 For surface cleaning apparatus which do not use suction, for example, sweeper type floor cleaning apparatus using rotatable brushes to pick up and collect particles, the presence of a flexible cleaning strip for cleaning hard floor surfaces results in particles becoming trapped behind the flexible strip when the sweeper is pulled in a rearwards direction, resulting in particles being kept away
30 from the brushes and not being collected.

35 It is also known that the edge of a flexible cleaning strip used to clean hard floor surfaces can wear out relatively quickly due to the constant contact with the hard floor surface when in use. Flexible strips used on devices, for

- 2 -

example, for washing hard floor surface are known to wear out relatively quickly without the benefit of a lubricating cleaning solution which reduces friction between the flexible strip and the floor.

5

In sweeper type floor cleaning apparatus, the current rotatable brush arrangement comprises rows of bristles, with all of the bristles having substantially the same thickness and diameter. The bristles used are relatively thick and short, and are of sufficient stiffness to support the floor cleaning apparatus relative to the surface to be swept. However, if a floor surface is irregular, for example there are cracks or crevices, the bristles on the current brush arrangement cannot reach down into the irregularities and extract particles.

15

Also in sweeper type floor cleaning apparatus, the bristles on current rotatable brush arrangement are generally arranged radially from a horizontal cylindrical body supported within the body of the cleaning apparatus. Sweeping of a surface to be cleaned occurs in an area directly below the cylindrical body of the brush and not to the full width of the floor cleaning apparatus. As such the rotatable brush arrangement is unable to sweep fully to an edge of a surface where it joins an upright feature, for example a wall or skirting board of a wall.

20

25

It is known to provide additional rotary brushes adjacent to the side of the body of the cleaning apparatus. Such additional rotary brushes are arranged to rotate about a vertical axis such that the an area alongside the surface cleaning apparatus can be swept. However the construction of a cleaning apparatus with such an additional rotary brush is relatively complicated and as such relatively expensive.

30

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- 3 -

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a surface cleaning apparatus including a surface cleaning strip which overcomes, or at least ameliorates, the problems of known apparatus.

5

An alternative or further object of the present invention is to provide a surface cleaning apparatus including a rotatable brush arrangement which overcomes or ameliorates the problem of cleaning uneven floor surfaces.

10

An alternative or further object of the present invention is to provide a surface cleaning apparatus which overcomes or ameliorates the problem of cleaning an area to a side of a rotatable brush arrangement.

15

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a surface cleaning apparatus including a surface cleaning strip and means responsive to movement of the surface cleaning apparatus over a surface to be cleaned for positioning the cleaning strip relative to the surface to be cleaned in dependence upon the direction of movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.

20

The cleaning strip may be mounted on a support means which is movable between first and second positions by the positioning means in response to movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.

25

The movement responsive means may comprise at least one motion detector, such as an electronic motion detector.

30

Alternatively, the movement responsive means may comprise means adapted to frictionally engage the surface to be cleaned.

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The friction engagement means may be adapted to be moved in a first direction relative to a body of the apparatus in response to movement of the apparatus in a first direction relative to the surface to be cleaned, movement of the friction engagement means in the first direction being transmitted to the cleaning strip to cause the cleaning strip to adopt a first orientation or elevation relative to the body of the apparatus whereby in use the cleaning strip is in contact with the surface to be cleaned.

The friction engagement means may be adapted to be moved in a second direction, opposite to the first direction, relative to the body of the apparatus in response to movement of the apparatus in a second direction, opposite to the first direction, relative to the surface to be cleaned, movement of the friction engagement means in the second direction being transmitted to the cleaning strip to cause the cleaning strip to adopt a second orientation or elevation relative to the body of the apparatus whereby in use the cleaning strip is raised clear of the surface to be cleaned.

The friction engagement means may be mounted pivotably and may be provided with an arm engaging the cleaning strip, whereby pivoting movement of the friction engagement means as a result of movement of the apparatus is transmitted to the cleaning strip to raise and lower the cleaning strip.

The cleaning strip may be pivotably mounted for raising and/or lowering the strip.

Alternatively, the cleaning strip and the friction engagement means may be mounted on an elongate member which is pivotably mounted relative to the body of the apparatus, whereby contact between the friction engagement means and

- 5 -

the surface to be cleaned causes rotation of the elongate member such that the cleaning strip adopts one of the first and second orientations.

5 The cleaning strip and the friction engagement means may project substantially radially from the elongate member, for example at different angles relative to each other. There may be an included angle of substantially 45 degrees between the cleaning strip and the friction engagement
10 means.

The friction engagement means may be in the form of a tab extending from the elongate member.

15 The cleaning strip and the friction engagement means may be formed integrally with the elongate member.

The elongate member may be made of a flexible material, for example a plastics or rubber material.

20

The cleaning strip may be made of a flexible material, for example a plastics or rubber material.

25 The friction engagement means may comprise a flexible material, for example a plastics or rubber material.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a rotatable brush arrangement for a surface cleaning apparatus, the brush arrangement comprising an
30 elongate cylindrical member and bristles attached to the cylindrical member, wherein the bristles comprise at least two different types.

35 The bristles may extend radially from the cylindrical member.

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The bristles may be attached along the length of the cylindrical member.

5 The at least two types of bristles may be arranged helically around the elongate cylindrical member.

The at least two types of bristles may be arranged in at least one row, preferably at least two rows.

10 The at least two rows of bristles may be arranged such that each row only contains bristles of a single type.

15 The at least two different types of bristles may comprise bristles of different length and/or thickness. The length of the bristles may be in a range from 8 mm to 25mm, preferably a range from 14 mm to 17 mm. The thickness of individual bristles may be in a range from 0.04 mm to 0.3 mm, preferably in a range from 0.06 mm to 0.25mm. The bristles may be arranged in tufts and the tufts may have a
20 diameter in a range from 1.5 mm to 5 mm, preferably a range from 2 mm to 3 mm. Thus the bristles may be of different dimensions to facilitate cleaning an uneven surface.

25 According to a third aspect of the present invention there is provided a surface cleaning apparatus comprising a housing and a rotatable brush arrangement positioned within the housing, wherein the rotatable brush arrangement comprises a cylindrical member having a plurality of tufts of bristles attached therealong, at least one tuft of
30 bristles in an end region of the cylindrical member extending laterally in an axial direction of the cylindrical member, and wherein the housing is provided with an opening to allow the at least one tuft of bristles to extend laterally outwards beyond an end of the
35 cylindrical member during a part of each rotation of the

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cylindrical member and with deflecting means for directing the at least one tuft of bristles back towards the cylindrical member.

5 The plurality of tufts of bristles may be arranged in at least one row.

The at least one tuft of bristles may extend laterally beyond the housing.

10

Thus, as the brush arrangement rotates within the housing of the surface cleaning apparatus the at least one tuft of bristles, on reaching the opening, is able to move axially outward of the housing to clean an area beyond the end of the cylindrical member, and preferably alongside the housing, before encountering the deflecting means and being directed back towards the cylindrical member within the housing until the cylindrical member has rotated sufficiently for the at least one tuft of bristles to reach the opening once again.

20

The deflecting means may be an edge, preferably a rearward edge, of the opening.

25 The rearward edge of the opening may be contoured to assist in deflecting the at least one tuft of bristles back into the housing.

30

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a body comprising a rear compartment, a forward compartment and an intermediate compartment arranged between the rear and forward compartments, the elongate rotatable brush arrangement being positioned within and extending across the forward compartment, and with an electric motor positioned in the rear compartment and drive means

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extending between the rotatable brush arrangement and the electric motor.

5 A battery, such as a rechargeable battery, may be positioned in the rear compartment together with the electric motor. Alternatively, the electric motor may be mains powered.

10 The rotatable brush arrangement may extend substantially the entire width of the forward compartment.

The intermediate compartment may be provided with a removable closure, such as a removable side wall, for the removal of debris therefrom.

15 The drive means may pass at least partly through the intermediate compartment. The drive means may pass through a tunnel which passes at least partly through the intermediate compartment. The drive means may be
20 positioned adjacent one side of the intermediate compartment.

The drive means may comprise a belt, for example a toothed belt.

25 A wall may be provided between the rear compartment and the intermediate compartment to seal the rear compartment from the intermediate compartment.

30 A wall may be provided between the intermediate compartment and the forward compartment, the wall extending from the base of the intermediate compartment and terminating short of the top thereof. The top of the wall may be at substantially the same height as the top of the brush
35 arrangement. The wall may be inclined rearwardly. The

- 9 -

angle of inclination may be in the range of 15 to 20 degrees, for example.

5 The wall between the intermediate compartment and the forward compartment may include a cavity in a lower edge of the wall into which the elongate member of the cleaning strip is supported by retaining means. The cleaning strip may protrude through an open face of the cavity such that the strip member and the at least one tab is directed
10 towards a surface to be cleaned. The cavity may have a substantially upright first main wall, and a second main wall, opposite to the first wall and angled, for example, at 60 degrees away from the first wall. A surface of the cavity furthest from the open face may have a surface
15 curvature complementary to the curved surface of the elongate member.

The retaining means may comprise a plurality of clips extending from the first wall of the cavity and overlying
20 portions of the elongate member such that the elongate member is held within the cavity.

The surface cleaning apparatus may incorporate handle means. The length of the handle means may be varied. For
25 example, the handle means may be interchangeable. Thus, one handle means may be relatively short and another handle means may be relatively long. Alternatively, the other handle means may serve to extend the one handle means. The handle means, or at least the relatively long handle means,
30 may be rotatable about the axis thereof to facilitate steering of the apparatus and/or may be pivotable about an axis transverse to the axial direction thereof.

An auxiliary brush arrangement may be provided at one side
35 of the body of the surface cleaning apparatus. The

- 10 -

auxiliary brush arrangement may extend outwardly from the forward compartment. The auxiliary brush arrangement may rotate about an axis inclined to the vertical. The auxiliary brush arrangement may be provided with radial
5 bristles. The radial bristles may be inclined at an acute angle to the axis of rotation of the auxiliary brush arrangement. The auxiliary brush arrangement may be driven by the electric motor or by friction and may be driven by gear means provided between the brush arrangement and the
10 auxiliary brush arrangement.

The forward compartment includes in the lower face thereof an aperture through which bristles of the brush arrangement protrude. A front part of the forward compartment may be
15 movable to expose bristles at the front of the apparatus. For example, the cover may be removable or may be pivotable, or otherwise movable, to expose bristles at the front of the apparatus.

20 The rear compartment may be provided with ground-engaging wheels.

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a body provided with an electric motor and drive means extending between
25 the rotatable brush arrangement and the electric motor, wherein the body is provided remote from the brush arrangement with one or more ground-engaging wheels.

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a housing
30 provided with a movable (including removable) cover for part of the brush arrangement.

Thus, the apparatus can clean surfaces that would not be possible with an apparatus having a front cover extending

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down to the level of the base of the apparatus and can, for example, clean the front faces of steps.

5 The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a housing provided with the elongate rotatable brush arrangement, wherein bristles of the brush arrangement extend beneath the body to such an extent that the body can be inclined in use to increase contact between the bristles and a surface to be cleaned.

10

Thus, the housing may be inclined to increase contact between the bristles of the brush arrangement and the surface being cleaned or to increase the depth to which the bristles of the brush arrangement may penetrate the surface being cleaned.

15

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a body provided with an electric motor and drive means extending between the rotatable brush arrangement and the electric motor, wherein the body is provided with handle means, the length of which handle means may be varied.

20

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise a body provided with an electric motor and drive means extending between the rotatable brush arrangement and the electric motor, wherein the body is provided with handle means mounted to be pivotable about a longitudinal axis thereof such that pivoting of the handle facilitates steering of the apparatus.

25

30

The surface cleaning apparatus may comprise: a housing adapted to be propelled at least in a forwards direction on the surface; the elongate brush arrangement supported for rotation in and extending transversely of the housing and adapted to contact the surface; means to rotate the

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elongate brush arrangement; and at least one auxiliary brush means of substantially circular form extending outwardly from the housing and adapted to be rotatably driven by means within the housing, such that during
5 rotation of the at least one auxiliary brush means, a peripheral region thereof angularly rotates to sweep debris into the path of the elongate brush arrangement.

10 The at least one auxiliary brush means may be arranged for rotation about a vertical axis or about an axis inclined to vertical.

15 The at least one auxiliary brush means may be arranged to extend outwardly from a right and/or left hand side of the housing. When such an auxiliary brush means extends outwardly from a right hand side of the housing, as viewed from above and behind the housing, the auxiliary brush means is arranged to be rotated in an anti-clockwise direction, as so viewed. When such an auxiliary brush
20 means extends outwardly from a left hand side of the housing, as viewed from above and behind the housing, the auxiliary brush means is arranged to be rotated in a clockwise direction, as so viewed.

25 The at least one auxiliary brush means may be provided with radial bristles which may be inclined at an acute angle to an axis of rotation of the at least one auxiliary brush means.

30 The at least one auxiliary brush means may be rotatably driven by the elongate brush arrangement and suitably by gear means provided at at least one end of the elongate brush arrangement.

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5 The at least one auxiliary brush means and/or the elongate brush arrangement may be adapted for rotation by means of at least one electric motor provided in the housing. Such at least one electric motor may be battery or mains operated.

10 Alternatively, the elongate brush arrangement may be adapted to be rotated by friction means resulting from propelling the housing across the surface, the elongate brush arrangement so rotated being adapted to rotate the at least one auxiliary brush means.

15 The housing may be provided with one or more wheels for engaging the surface and for enabling or assisting propulsion of the housing along the surface.

20 The housing may be provided with a compartment for receiving debris picked up from the surface by the elongate brush arrangement.

25 Alternatively, the housing may be provided with outlet means, such as a pipe or hose means, for directing debris, picked up from the surface by the elongate brush arrangement, into a receiving container, such as a bag, located elsewhere in or on the apparatus.

30 The housing may be adapted for demountable or fixed connection to suction hose means, such suction hose means being adapted to receive from the housing debris picked up from the surface by the elongate brush arrangement. The suction hose means may incorporate electrical wiring and connection means, by means of which one or more electric motors in the housing may be powered from a remote source, such as electric mains, or battery means.

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The surface for cleaning by the apparatus of the present invention may be any surface which is to be swept and may be a floor, stairway, or upholstery, of premises or vehicles.

5

For a better understanding of the present invention and to show more clearly how it may be carried into effect reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings in which:

10

Figure 1 is a plan view of one embodiment of a surface cleaning apparatus for use with the present invention;

15

Figure 2 is a side elevational view, partly in section, of the surface cleaning apparatus shown in Figure 1 and showing a cleaning strip assembly;

20

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a brush arrangement of the surface cleaning apparatus of Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a cleaning strip assembly for use in the apparatus of Figures 1 and 2;

25

Figure 5 is a perspective view of another cleaning strip assembly for use in the apparatus of Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 6 is an elevational view of the surface cleaning apparatus of Figures 1 and 2 with an alternative handle;

30

Figure 7 is a view, on a larger scale, of part of an end of the brush arrangement shown in Figure 3 in relation to a surface to be cleaned;

35

Figure 8 is a side view of the cleaning strip assembly of Figure 5 in a first and a second orientation;

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Figure 9 is a perspective view of part of another embodiment of a surface cleaning apparatus for use with the present invention;

5 Figure 10 is a perspective view of the apparatus of Figure 9, with part of the housing thereof removed;

Figure 11 is an underside view of the apparatus of Figure 9;

10

Figure 12 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a surface cleaning apparatus for use with the present invention;

15 Figure 13 is a perspective view of a further alternative embodiment of a surface cleaning apparatus for use with the present invention;

20 Figure 14 is a side elevational view of an alternative embodiment of a cleaning strip assembly in a lowered and raised position, showing the relationship between the cleaning strip and a separate friction means;

25 Figure 15 is side elevational view of a further embodiment of a cleaning strip assembly in a lowered position;

Figure 16 is a side elevational view of the cleaning strip assembly of Figure 15 showing an alternative form of friction means;

30

Figure 17 is a further embodiment of a rotatable brush arrangement; and

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Figure 18 is an elevational view of a modification of the surface cleaning apparatus shown in Figures 1 and 3 for use with the brush arrangement of Figure 17.

5 The surface cleaning apparatus incorporating the cleaning strip shown in Figures 1 to 4 comprises a body 1, suitably moulded of plastics material, and having effectively three compartments.

10 A rear compartment 3 houses an electric motor 5 and a rechargeable battery pack 7. The battery pack 7 may be connected to a mains power supply (not shown) for recharging the battery pack. The battery pack may either
15 be connected to the mains supply whenever the apparatus is not in use or at suitable times when the battery pack has become depleted. Switch means (not shown) is provided to permit a user to energise and de-energise the motor 5 as desired. As an alternative to a rechargeable battery pack, the apparatus could employ disposable batteries or be mains
20 powered.

A forward compartment 9 houses an elongate rotatable brush arrangement 11. For convenience a forward wall of the forward compartment is arcuate and extends around the
25 periphery of the brush arrangement 11. The bottom of the forward compartment is open at 13 to allow the bristles of the brush arrangement to contact a floor, carpet or the like over which the surface cleaning apparatus is to be moved.

30 The rear of the forward compartment is a rearwardly inclined wall 15 which allows debris, such as dust, dirt and the like, to be propelled up the wall due to rotation of the brush arrangement 11 and to pass over the wall into
35 an intermediate compartment 17 which will be described in

- 17 -

more detail hereinafter. The wall 15 extends upwardly to about the same height as the top of the brush arrangement 11 and is angled rearwardly (i.e., away from the forward compartment) at an angle of about 18 degrees. The precise
5 angle is not important, but the inclination facilitates the passage of the debris up and over the wall and at the same time facilitates retention of the debris within the intermediate compartment 17.

10 The brush arrangement extends substantially the entire width of the forward compartment and is provided with two helically arranged rows of bristles. The two rows are diametrically opposed and each row is in the form of a pair
15 of separate helices which twist in opposite directions and meet substantially midway between the ends of the brush arrangement. The brush arrangement comprises bristles 118. The length of the bristles, for example, is in a range from 8 mm to 25 mm, preferably a range from 14 mm to 17 mm. The
20 thickness of individual bristles is in a range from 0.04 mm to 0.3 mm, preferably in a range from 0.06 mm to 0.25 mm. The bristles are arranged in tufts and the tufts have a diameter in a range from 1.5 mm to 5 mm, preferably a range from 2 mm to 3 mm.

25 As shown in Figure 3, the bristles comprise two different types in the form of standard bristles 119 and fine bristles 121, the fine bristles being longer than the standard bristles. The bristles are arranged such that the standard bristles comprise one of the helical rows, whilst
30 the fine bristles comprise the other helical row. It should be appreciated, however, that the bristles could be arranged such that a mixture of bristle types are present together in a single helical row as shown in Figure 7. Mounted in and along the lower edge of the wall 15, behind
35 the elongate brush arrangement, is a cleaning strip, for

- 18 -

example for cleaning hard floor surfaces, as shown in Figure 4, which will be described in more detail hereinafter.

5 The intermediate compartment 17, shown in Figures 1 and 2, is positioned between the wall 15 and a wall 21 which encloses the electrical components 5, 7 in the rear compartment 3, the wall 21 protecting the components in the rear compartment from the ingress of debris. The
10 intermediate compartment 17 also has a lower wall, an upper wall and side walls formed by the outer wall of the body 1. Debris therefore accumulates within the intermediate compartment 17. The intermediate compartment is provided with a removable closure to facilitate the removal of
15 debris. For example, one of the walls, such as a side wall, the upper wall or the lower wall, can be removed in order that the debris can be emptied from the intermediate compartment, the removed wall being replaced once the compartment has been emptied. Ideally, side wall 23 is
20 removable for emptying purposes. The wall 15 provides the advantage that debris does not readily escape from the intermediate compartment 17 and, even if the body is inclined such that the forward compartment is below the intermediate compartment, the debris does not escape from
25 the intermediate compartment.

The brush arrangement 11 is rotated by the motor 5 by way of toothed rollers 25, 27 attached to the motor and to the brush, respectively, and by way of a toothed belt 29, for
30 example of elastomeric material, extending around the two rollers. The toothed belt 29 is enclosed within a tunnel 31 where it passes through the intermediate compartment 17 in order to prevent the ingress of debris into the rear compartment 3. The tunnel 31 may pass through the
35 intermediate compartment 17 at any convenient point.

- 19 -

However, particularly in the event side wall 23 is removable for emptying purposes, the tunnel may be arranged at that side of the intermediate compartment 17 remote from the side wall 23.

5

The cleaning strip assembly 2 as shown in Figure 4 comprises an elongate support member 4 comprising a flexible material, for example rubber or a plastics material, with a substantially circular cross-section. Formed integral with the elongate member 4 are a series of spaced apart flexible tabs 6. Also formed integral with the elongate member 4 is a flexible strip 8 positioned along substantially the entire length of the elongate member. The thickness of the flexible strip 8 decreases progressively towards an edge furthest from the elongate member. The flexible strip 8 need not be integral with the elongate support member 4. As an alternative, the support member 4 may be formed with a recessed groove extending in the axial direction and the flexible strip 8 may be formed with a projection of complementary configuration to retain the flexible strip in the groove. The groove and the projection may be substantially T-shaped.

The flexible strip may have any convenient length, for example in the range from 2.5 to 8 mm. However, a length of substantially 4.5 mm has been found to be particularly suitable.

The flexible tabs 6 and the flexible strip 8 are positioned on the elongate member substantially at an angle relative to each other of approximately 45 degrees. The flexible tabs and flexible strip extend in a generally radial direction from the elongate member, and are directed, in use, towards the lower face of the body of the surface cleaning apparatus.

- 20 -

The elongate member of the cleaning strip assembly is housed within a cavity in the underside of the wall 15 of the surface cleaning apparatus so as to be rotatable about the axis of the elongate member. The cleaning strip assembly is orientated such that the flexible strip is nearer to the front of the surface cleaning apparatus and the flexible tabs are nearer to the rear of the surface cleaning apparatus. The cavity has an open face through which the flexible strip and the flexible tabs protrude. As shown in Figure 8, the cavity has a first major wall, the rear wall in use, which is substantially upright, and a second major wall. The second major wall, the front wall in use, is inclined away from the rear wall at a nominal angle of 60 degrees. The inner face of the cavity, opposite the opening, is in the form of a concave curved surface wherein the curvature complements the curvature of the elongate member. The elongate member is retained within the cavity by retaining tabs attached to the rear wall of the cavity at the open face of the cavity. The cavity in the wall 15 is shaped such that excessive rotation of the elongate member in either direction is prevented by the walls of the cavity engaging the flexible tabs or flexible strip.

Lateral movement of the elongate member may be inhibited by any suitable means. For example, a cover for part of the drive mechanism may be provided with a protrusion which extends sufficiently to cover the end of the elongate member. Removal of the cover then exposes the end of the elongate member and allows it to be removed, for example for replacement.

Figure 5 shows an alternative embodiment of the cleaning strip assembly in which the flexible strip has a first section 10 and a second section 12 positioned close to a

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first end 14 and to a second end 16, respectively, of the elongate member 4 at which material of the flexible strip is absent such that an isolated portion 20 of the flexible strip is provided at the ends 14, 16 of the elongate member. In use, the isolated portions 20, in conjunction with restraining pins 18 provided on the ends 14, 16 of the elongate member, impinge on retaining tabs of the cavity, such that the ends of the elongate member are prevented from being pulled towards each other during flexure of the elongate member.

A handle 33 is attached to the body 1 in the region of the rear compartment 3, the body being formed with a recess 35 beneath the handle to allow the handle to be gripped while maintaining a low profile for the surface cleaning apparatus. The handle 33 may be in two parts, a first part 37 which is secured to the body 1 and a second part 39 which can be removed from the first part and replaced by a longer handle part 41 as shown in Figure 6. The longer handle part 41 is provided with swivel means 43 to allow the handle part 41 to rotate about the axis thereof relative to the body 1 and with pivot means 45 to allow the handle part to pivot about an axis transverse to the axial direction of the handle part to enable the surface cleaning apparatus to be steered by the user. As an alternative to interchangeable handles, the handle part 41 may be removably engageable with the handle part 33. In such a case, the handle part 33 is arranged such that the swivel means 43 functions only in certain positions of the handle part 33 in order that movement can be inhibited when the handle part 33 is used alone.

As will be apparent particularly from Figure 6, the bristles of the brush arrangement 11 extend outwardly from the aperture in the forward compartment 9. In order to

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remove stubborn debris and/or to revitalise carpet the lower front region of the forward compartment may be chamfered, or the front region of the forward compartment may be movable (including removable), to increase the exposure of the bristles in this region. In this way, the forward part of the apparatus may be inclined relative to the surface to be cleaned, thereby increasing contact between the bristles and a surface to be cleaned and, on some surfaces, increasing the depth to which the bristles penetrate and clean the surface.

Although not shown, an auxiliary rotary brush may be provided at that side of the brush arrangement 11 which incorporates the roller 27 and the belt 29. Such an auxiliary brush is described, for example, in GB-A-1 547 286. Such an auxiliary brush is able to sweep debris into the path of the brush arrangement 11 which might otherwise be missed due to the lack of bristles in the region of the roller 27. The auxiliary brush may be driven by any suitable means, such as gearing from the brush arrangement 11 or by friction with the surface to be swept, and is suspended from and extends outwardly beyond the body 1. The auxiliary brush may comprise a cylindrical body rotatable about an axis which is inclined to the vertical by about 10 degrees so as to extend outwardly beyond the body 1. Bristles protrude radially outwardly from the periphery of the cylindrical body, but need not be perpendicular to the axis of rotation and may preferably be at an angle of about 80 degrees to the axis of rotation so as to form a cone which increases in cross-section with increasing distance from the body 1.

Although not shown, the front part of the forward compartment 9 may be removed to expose the bristles at the front of the apparatus. This effectively increases the

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aperture in the forward compartment which would seriously impair the effectiveness of a suction cleaner, but in the present invention can effectively be used to assist in the sweeping of stairs, cleaning upholstery and carpets in vehicles and the like operations where a greater exposed area of bristles can be useful. As an alternative to removing the front part of the compartment 9, the front part may be movable, for example pivotable or slidable, relative to the remainder of the compartment in order to expose the bristles.

Although not shown, the rear compartment 3 may be provided with ground-engaging wheels in order to assist mobility of the surface cleaning apparatus. The ground-engaging wheels may, for example, be formed externally in the side regions of the rear compartment 3 or may be provided within recesses formed at least partly beneath the rear compartment 3.

Although the illustrated embodiments of the present invention are intended primarily for domestic use, the surface cleaning apparatus can also be used outdoors or in workshops if desired. However, it may be preferable to provide a more rugged design specifically adapted for such use.

In use of the surface cleaning apparatus incorporating the cleaning strip assembly according to the invention, as shown in Figures 1 to 8, the surface cleaning apparatus is placed upon a surface to be swept, such as a carpet, and the switch operated to energise the motor and consequently to rotate the brush arrangement to sweep debris from the surface and then propel the debris up and over the inclined wall 15 and into the intermediate compartment 17 where it is temporarily stored. As the surface cleaning apparatus

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is moved over the surface with the brush arrangement 11 rotating, any further debris is similarly swept from the surface and propelled up and over the wall 15 and into the intermediate compartment 17. Figure 7 shows that the standard bristles 119, for example 14 mm long with an individual bristle diameter in a range from 0.12 mm to 0.25 mm and with a tuft diameter of nominally 3.0 mm, of the brush arrangement 11 support the surface cleaning apparatus in use and are used to sweep the majority of the surface 104 to cleaned. The fine bristles, for example 15mm to 17 mm long with an individual bristle diameter of nominally 0.06 mm and with a tuft diameter of nominally 2.0 mm, of the brush arrangement 11, reach down into irregularities in the floor surface, for example cracks and crevices, and remove any debris present and sweep it up into the intermediate compartment 17.

The cleaning strip assembly 2 is used to ensure that efficient cleaning of surfaces, for example hard floor surfaces, is achieved. As shown in Figure 8A, when the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forward 24 over a surface 104 to be cleaned, the flexible tabs 6 of the cleaning strip respond to movement of the apparatus by being dragged backwards by friction with the floor causing the elongate member 4 to rotate about its axis. Rotation of the elongate member brings the flexible strip 8 into contact with the floor. Continued forward movement of the surface cleaning apparatus results in the flexible strip being held in contact with the surface and particles of dirt 103 on the surface to be cleaned are gathered together and pushed forward along with the movement of the surface cleaning apparatus. Excessive rotation of the elongate member 4, when the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forwards 24, is prevented by the rear face of the flexible strip engaging on the retaining tabs 22 which retain the

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elongate member within the cavity 32 of the wall 15. Further rotation is also prevented by the flexible tabs 6 engaging the rear wall 28 of the cavity 32.

5 Figure 8B shows, when the surface cleaning apparatus is moved in a rearward direction 26, the flexible strip 8 responds to movement of the apparatus by being dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus by friction with the surface 104 to be cleaned. In dragging
10 the flexible strip forwards, the elongate member 4 of the cleaning strip assembly is rotated such that the flexible tabs 6 are brought into contact with the floor or other surface 104 to be cleaned. The flexible tabs 6 are also dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus
15 so resulting in continued rotation of the elongate member and the subsequent lifting of the flexible strip clear of the surface. Excessive rotation of the elongate member is prevented by the flexible strip engaging the inclined front wall 30 of the cavity 32 in wall 15 and being stopped from
20 further forward movement. When the surface cleaning apparatus is pulled in a rearward direction, the particles of dirt gathered together by the flexible strip during use in the forward direction are swept from the surface by the brush arrangement and propelled up and over the wall 15 and
25 into the intermediate compartment 17. As the flexible strip is clear of the floor, additional particles of dirt can pass between adjacent flexible tabs and are not prevented from passing under the flexible strip.

30 The surface cleaning apparatus is extremely portable and can be employed wherever it may be required. For example, it can be used to sweep stairs without the need for electrical leads or suction hoses. The shape of the apparatus with the rounded shape of the rear compartment as
35 illustrated facilitates movement of the apparatus over

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stairs, but ground engaging wheels may be provided to further facilitate such sweeping operations.

5 When the intermediate compartment 17 is to be emptied, one wall of the compartment is removed as explained above and the debris can readily be discharged. The removable wall is then replaced. Alternatively, the intermediate compartment may be in the form of a tray which can be removed and emptied so as to discharge debris.

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When the surface cleaning apparatus is not in use, it can be stored, for example either in a cupboard or the like or plugged into a mains supply in order to recharge the battery 7.

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Thus the illustrated surface cleaning apparatus incorporating the cleaning strip assembly of the present invention incorporates an electrically driven brush arrangement. The brush arrangement is not driven by frictional forces between the surface cleaning apparatus and the surface over which it is to be moved. Thus, efficiency of the apparatus is not dependent on the nature of the frictional contact. Further, the illustrated apparatus does not rely on suction means to draw the debris into a storage chamber. Thus, efficiency of the apparatus is not dependent on the effectiveness of suction means and the substantial power drain of suction means on the rechargeable battery is avoided. The provision of the motor at the rear of the apparatus eliminates the need for increased height should the motor be positioned over the compartment for collecting dust and the like and also provides effective full width cleaning which would not be possible if the motor was to be positioned within the compartment for collecting debris. In such a position, debris is likely to accumulate around the motor and cause

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blockages. The illustrated apparatus overcomes this problem by passing the drive means for the brush arrangement at least partly through the debris compartment.

- 5 Referring to Figures 9, 10 and 11, apparatus 102 for cleaning a surface 104 by sweeping comprises a housing 106, suitably of moulded plastics material, and effectively having three compartments. A rear compartment 108 houses an electric motor 110 and a rechargeable battery pack 112.
- 10 The battery pack 112 may be connected to a mains power supply (not shown) for recharging the battery pack. The battery pack may either be connected to the mains supply whenever the apparatus is not in use or at suitable times when the battery pack has become depleted. Switch means
- 15 113 is provided to permit a user to energise and de-energise the motor 110 as desired. As an alternative to a rechargeable battery pack, the apparatus could employ disposable batteries or be mains powered.
- 20 A forward compartment 114 houses a transversely-arranged elongate rotatable brush arrangement 116, with bristles 118. Such elongate rotatable brush arrangement 116 is sometimes known as a brush bar. The length of the bristles on the brush arrangement 116, as described hereinbefore
- 25 are, for example, in a range from 8 mm to 25 mm, preferably a range from 14 mm to 17 mm. The thickness of individual bristles are in a range from 0.04 mm to 0.3 mm, preferably in a range from 0.06 mm to 0.25 mm. The bristles are arranged in tufts and the tufts have a diameter in a range
- 30 from 1.5 mm to 5 mm, preferably in a range from 2 mm to 3 mm. The bottom of the forward compartment 114 is open at 120 to allow the bristles 118 of the elongate brush arrangement 116 to contact a floor, carpet or the like over which the apparatus is to be propelled. The rear of the
- 35 forward compartment is a rearwardly inclined wall 122 which

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allows debris, such as dust, dirt and the like to be propelled up the wall due to rotation of the brush arrangement 116 and to pass over the wall into an intermediate compartment 124. Mounted in and along the lower edge of the wall 122, behind the brush arrangement 116, is a cleaning strip assembly, for example for cleaning hard floor surfaces, as described hereinbefore. The front of the forward compartment is provided with a cover (not shown) which may be removable if desired. Debris accumulating in the intermediate compartment 124 can be removed by opening a cover 126. The wall 122 extends upwardly to about the same height as the top of the elongate brush arrangement 116 and may be angled rearwardly (i.e. away from the forward compartment) such as at an angle of about 18 degrees. The precise angle is not important, but the inclination facilitates the passage of the debris up and over the wall 122 and at the same time facilitates retention of the debris within the intermediate compartment 124.

The elongate brush arrangement 116 is rotated by the motor 110 by way of toothed rollers 128, 130 attached to the motor and to the brush arrangement, respectively, and by way of a toothed belt 131, for example of elastomeric material, extending around the two rollers. The toothed belt 131 is enclosed within a tunnel 132 where it passes through or alongside the intermediate compartment 124 in order to prevent the ingress of debris into the rear compartment 108.

An auxiliary brush means 134 is provided extending outwardly from the housing 106 at the right hand side of the elongate rotatable brush arrangement 116 as viewed from above and behind the apparatus 102. The auxiliary brush means 134 is of substantially circular form and is

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supported for rotation about an axis 136, which may be vertical or inclined to vertical, such as at an angle of about 10 degrees to vertical. The auxiliary brush means 134 has a body 138 provided with radial bristles 140 which are inclined at an acute angle to the axis of rotation 136 so as to effectively form a conical arrangement increasing in cross-section with increasing distance from the body 138.

The auxiliary brush means 134 is rotatably driven from the rotating elongate brush arrangement 116 by a gear wheel 142 at the end of the elongate brush arrangement 116 which meshes with a further gear wheel 144 on the body 138 of the auxiliary brush means 134. The auxiliary brush means 134 is caused to be rotated in an anti-clockwise direction denoted by arrow 146, as viewed from above and behind the apparatus 102. During such rotation of the auxiliary brush means 134, a peripheral region thereof rotates from a sideways-directed position 148 (Figure 6) outside the housing 106 to an opposed sideways-directed position 150 covered by the housing 106, through a forwardly-directed position 152.

The cleaning strip assembly 2 is used to ensure that efficient cleaning of surfaces, for example hard floor surfaces, is achieved. As described hereinbefore, when the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forward 24 over a surface 104 to be cleaned, the flexible tabs 6 of the cleaning strip assembly are dragged backwards by friction with the floor causing the elongate member 4 to rotate about its axis. Rotation of the elongate member brings the flexible strip 8 into contact with the floor. Continued forward movement of the surface cleaning apparatus results in the flexible strip being held in contact with the surface and particles of dirt 103 on the surface to be

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cleaned are gathered together and pushed forward along with the movement of the surface cleaning apparatus. Excessive rotation of the elongate member 4, when the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forwards 24, is prevented by the rear face of the flexible strip engaging on the retaining tabs 22 which retains the elongate member within the cavity 32 of the wall 15. Further rotation is also prevented by the flexible tabs 6 engaging the rear wall 28 of the cavity 32.

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When the surface cleaning apparatus is moved in a rearward direction 26, the flexible strip 8 is dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus by friction with the surface 104 to be cleaned. In dragging the flexible strip forwards, the elongate member 4 of the cleaning strip assembly is rotated such that the flexible tabs 6 are brought into contact with the floor 104. The flexible tabs 6 are also dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus so resulting in continued rotation of the elongate member and the subsequent lifting of the flexible strip clear of the floor. Excessive rotation of the elongate member is prevented by the flexible strip engaging the inclined front wall 30 of the cavity 32 in wall 122 and being stopped from further forward movement.

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When the surface cleaning apparatus is pulled in a rearward direction, the particles of dirt gathered together by the flexible strip during use in the forward direction are swept from the surface by the brush arrangement and propelled up and over the wall 122 and into the intermediate compartment 124. As the flexible strip is clear of the floor, additional particles of dirt can pass between adjacent flexible tabs and are not prevented from passing under the flexible strip.

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The apparatus 102 is provided with a handle 154 by means of which it can be propelled at least in a forwards direction 156. Wheels 158 and 160 are provided to enable or assist manual propulsion of the apparatus across the surface 104 to be swept, such as a floor, stairway or upholstery. The handle 154 could be longer, or be of a different shape or form, as required.

The rotating auxiliary brush means 134 does not rely on contact with the surface 104 for its rotation and therefore provides more efficient sweeping of edge regions of the surface 104 regardless of the nature of the surface 104. Furthermore, the direction of rotation 146 of the auxiliary brush means 134 ensures that debris is swept positively by the auxiliary brush arrangement 134 into a position ahead of the rotating elongate rotating brush assembly 116, ready to be picked up by the elongate brush arrangement 116.

If desired, instead of or in addition to the auxiliary brush means 134 provided extending outwardly from the right hand side of the housing 106, a similar auxiliary brush means (not shown) could likewise be provided extending outwardly from the left hand side of the housing 106 and driven from the opposite end of the elongate brush arrangement 116. Such additional or alternative auxiliary brush means differs from the auxiliary brush means 134 only in that it is caused to rotate in a clockwise, rather than anti-clockwise, direction as viewed from above and behind the apparatus 102.

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Instead of the apparatus 102 being provided with a battery or mains powered electric motor 110 to drive the elongate brush arrangement 116 and hence the auxiliary brush means 134, a known form of friction drive means (not shown), resulting from propulsion of the apparatus 102 along the

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surface 104, may be utilised to effect rotation of the elongate brush arrangement 116 and hence rotation of the auxiliary brush means 134.

5 An alternative embodiment of apparatus incorporating a cleaning strip assembly according to the present invention is shown in Figure 12. Such alternative embodiment comprises an upright vacuum cleaner apparatus 102A, having a housing 106A with wheels 158A and 160A, a rotating
10 elongate brush arrangement 116A, and an auxiliary brush means 134A. The apparatus 102A is constructed in substantially similar manner to the apparatus 102 of Figures 9, 10 and 11, with the main exception that instead of the debris-collecting compartment 124 of Figure 10, a
15 debris-collecting container 124A, which may include a bag, is provided between a handle 154A and the housing 106A and connected by a well-known form of suction arrangement (not shown) to the housing 106A.

20 A further embodiment of apparatus 102B according to the present invention is shown in Figure 13. Here the housing 106B incorporates components similar to those of the housing 106 of Figures 9, 10 and 11 including wheels 158B and, in particular, an elongate rotating brush arrangement
25 116B with an auxiliary rotating brush means 134B driven therefrom. However, no debris-collecting compartment is provided inside the housing 106B. Instead, the housing 106B is provided with a tubular portion 162 which is demountable on, or may be fixed to, a debris-receiving
30 flexible hose 164 connected to a well-known form of suction vacuum cleaner 166, which may be of cylinder form, mounted on wheels 168. Electrical wiring 170 can be incorporated in the hose 164 by means of which mains electrical power can be supplied from the vacuum cleaner 166, and through a
35 connector 172 and wiring 174 in the tubular portion 162, to

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an electric motor 110B where provided in the housing 106B for driving the elongate rotating brush arrangement 116B and the auxiliary brush means 134B. Of course, such wiring 170 would be unnecessary where the elongate brush arrangement 116B and the auxiliary brush means 134B driven therefrom, is caused to be rotated by the friction means previously described. Alternatively, the elongate brush arrangement 116B and the auxiliary brush means 134B may be caused to be rotated by means of a (rechargeable) battery or an air turbine driven by air passing along the tubular portion 162. The housing 106B with its included components could be provided as an accessory for existing vacuum cleaners of cylinder form.

Although the cleaning strip assembly described hereinbefore is shown as comprising an elongate member with a substantially circular cross-sectional area having attached thereto at least one tab and a strip member, it should be appreciated that the cleaning strip assembly may take other forms and the moving of the strip member relative to a floor may be achieved by other methods rather than by rotation of the elongate body of the cleaning strip assembly.

Figure 14 shows another embodiment of a cleaning strip assembly 202 which comprises an elongate member 204 of rigid material, for example plastics material, which is attached to a flexible strip 208, for example of a plastics or rubber material, positioned along substantially the entire length of the elongate member 204. The thickness of the flexible strip 208 decreases progressively towards an edge furthest from the elongate member. The thickness of the flexible strip is less than that of the elongate body such that a shoulder portion 210 is formed either side of

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the flexible strip where it is attached to the elongate member.

5 The flexible strip is directed, in use, towards the lower face of the body of the surface cleaning apparatus.

10 The elongate member of the cleaning strip assembly is housed within the cavity (not shown) in the underside of the wall 15 of the surface cleaning apparatus so as to be movable in a substantially upright plane relative to the floor. The cavity also contains an arm 212 fixed at one end to a pivot pin 214 which can rotate about a fixed axis within the cavity. In use, the fixed axis of the pivot pin 214 is substantially parallel to the surface of the floor.

15 The end of the arm 212 furthest from the pivot pin is positioned beneath a shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly. Also attached to the pivot pin 214 within the cavity are a number of flexible tabs 206. The free end of each tab 206, in use, is in contact with the floor 104.

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The cavity has an open face through which the flexible strip and the flexible tabs protrude. The elongate member 204 is retained within the cavity by means of the arm 212 positioned below the shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly.

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As shown in Figure 14A, when the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forward 24 over a surface 104 to be cleaned, the flexible tabs 206 of the cleaning strip assembly are dragged backwards by friction with the floor causing the arm 212 to pivot about the fixed axis of the pivot pin 214 towards the floor. Pivoting of the arm away from the shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly allows the elongate member of the cleaning strip assembly to lower and bring the flexible strip 208 into contact with the

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floor. Particles of dirt 103 on the surface to be cleaned are gathered together by the flexible strip and pushed forward along with the movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.

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Figure 14B shows, when the surface cleaning apparatus is moved in a rearward direction 26, the flexible tabs are dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus by friction with the surface 104 to be cleaned. In
10 dragging the flexible tabs forwards, the arm 212 pivots away from the floor about the fixed axis of the pivot pin 214. The arm 212, positioned under the shoulder 210 of the cleaning strip assembly, urges the cleaning strip assembly in a substantially upward direction such that the flexible
15 strip 208 is lifted clear of the floor.

When the surface cleaning apparatus is pulled in a rearward direction, the particles of dirt gathered together by the flexible strip during use in the forward direction are
20 swept from the surface by the brush arrangement. As the flexible strip is clear of the floor, additional particles of dirt can pass between adjacent flexible tabs and are not prevented from passing under the flexible strip.

25 Figure 15 shows a further embodiment of the cleaning strip assembly, wherein the cleaning strip assembly comprises an elongate member 204 of rigid material, for example plastics material, which is attached to a flexible strip 208 positioned along substantially the entire length of the
30 elongate member. The thickness of the flexible strip 208 decreases progressively towards an edge furthest from the elongate member. The thickness of the flexible strip is less than that of the elongate body such that a shoulder portion 210 is formed either side of the flexible strip
35 where it is attached to the elongate member.

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5 The cavity also contains a first arm 212 fixed at one end to a pivot pin 214 which can rotate about a first fixed axis within the cavity. The end of the first arm 212 furthest from the pivot pin 214 is positioned beneath a shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly. Also attached to the pivot pin within the cavity are a number of flexible tabs 206. The free end of each tab 206, in use, is in contact with the floor 104.

10 Attached to the elongate body 204 is a second arm 216 which connects the cleaning strip assembly 202 to a second pivot pin 218 within the cavity in the wall of the surface cleaning apparatus. The elongate member of the cleaning strip assembly is housed within the cavity of the surface
15 cleaning apparatus so as, when in use, to be pivotably moved on the second arm 216 relative to the floor about an axis of the second pivot pin 218 substantially parallel with the surface of the floor.

20 The cavity comprises an open face through which the flexible strip and the flexible tabs protrude. The elongate member is retained within the cavity by means of the first arm 212 positioned below the shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly and by means of the
25 second arm 216 attaching the cleaning strip assembly to the second pivot pin 218.

When the surface cleaning apparatus is pushed forward 24 over a surface 104 to be cleaned, the flexible tabs 206 of
30 the cleaning strip assembly are dragged backwards by friction with the floor causing the first arm 212 to pivot towards the floor about the axis of the first pivot pin 214. Pivoting of the first arm 212 allows the elongate member of the cleaning strip assembly to pivot on the
35 second arm 216 about the axis of the second pivot pin 218

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and so bring the flexible strip 208 into contact with the floor. As described hereinabove, particles of dirt 103 on the surface to be cleaned are gathered together by the flexible strip and pushed forward along with the movement
5 of the surface cleaning apparatus.

When the surface cleaning apparatus is moved in a rearward direction the flexible tabs are dragged towards the front of the surface cleaning apparatus by friction with the
10 surface 104 to be cleaned. In dragging the flexible tabs forwards, the first arm 212 pivots away from the floor about the axis of the first pivot pin 214. The first arm, positioned under the shoulder 210 of the cleaning strip assembly, urges the cleaning strip assembly in a
15 substantially upward direction such that the flexible strip is lifted clear of the floor and pivots, via the second arm 213, about the axis of the second pivot pin 218.

When the surface cleaning apparatus is pulled in a rearward
20 direction, the particles of dirt gathered together by the flexible strip during use in the forward direction are swept from the surface by the brush arrangement. As the flexible strip is clear of the floor, additional particles of dirt can pass between adjacent flexible tabs and are not
25 prevented from passing under the flexible strip.

It should be understood that an alternative to the flexible tabs described hereinabove could be a friction wheel 220, as shown in Figure 16, whereby movement of the friction
30 wheel 220 relative to the floor can be used to cause an arm 212 beneath the shoulder portion 210 of the cleaning strip assembly to be moved thus raising and lowering the cleaning strip assembly as described hereinabove.

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It should be understood that electronic or other means may be used in place of frictional means to determine the movement of the surface cleaning apparatus and for controlling the positioning of the flexible strip.

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Although the rotatable brush arrangement hereinbefore described is shown to comprise rows of tufts of bristles attached to a cylindrical member wherein the tufts all extend substantially radially from the cylindrical member and therefore only sweep an area of surface below the cylindrical body of the brush apparatus and as such only an area below the body of the surface cleaning apparatus, it should be appreciated that the rotatable brush arrangement may take other forms to provide means of cleaning an area of surface beyond the end of the cylindrical body of the rotatable brush apparatus, and preferably alongside the surface cleaning apparatus.

Figure 17 shows another embodiment of a rotatable brush arrangement 302 which comprises a cylindrical elongate body 304 and tufts of bristles 306. The tufts of bristles are arranged as two helically arranged rows. The two rows are diametrically opposed and each row is in the form of a pair of separate helices which twist in opposite directions and meet substantially midway between the ends of the brush arrangement. In general the tufts are arranged to extend radially from the cylindrical member.

The length of the bristles, for example, is in a range from 8 mm to 25 mm, preferably a range from 14 mm to 17 mm. The thickness of individual bristles is in a range from 0.04 mm to 0.3 mm, preferably in a range from 0.06 mm to 0.25mm. The tufts have a diameter in a range from 1.5 mm to 5 mm, preferably a range from 2 mm to 3 mm.

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Tufts of bristles 308 positioned at the ends of the cylindrical member 304, the end-most bristles, are arranged such that they are directed in the axial direction of the cylindrical member towards the nearest end of the cylindrical member and, if unrestrained, extend beyond the end. In use, the end-most bristles will contact an area of surface alongside the surface cleaning apparatus in which the rotatable brush arrangement is housed.

Figure 18 shows a side of the housing 310, in which the brush arrangement rotates, with an opening 312 through which the end-most bristles 308 (not shown) protrude when in line with the aperture.

As the brush arrangement is rotated, successive tufts of the bristles 308 positioned at the end of the cylindrical member pass the front wall 314 of the opening and align with the opening itself. When in alignment with the opening, the end-most bristles are no longer restrained by the housing wall 316 and the end-most bristles move axially of the cylindrical member to extend outwards through the opening and contact the surface alongside the surface cleaning apparatus. As the brush assembly continues rotating the end-most bristles will rotate rearwards until they contact the rear wall 318 of the opening. At the point of rotation of the brush assembly, when the end-most bristles contact the rear wall, the bristles are deflected axially inwards by the wall such that further rotation leads to the bristles being pulled inside the housing again. The action of the end-most bristles being deflected back inside the housing results in particles of dirt in the area of surface alongside the surface cleaning apparatus also being swept into the area below the housing and being swept up by the radially arranged bristles 306 of the brush assembly 302.

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5 In order to facilitate the deflection of the end-most
bristles back into the housing, the rear wall of the
opening can be contoured to provide a surface curving
inwards along which the end-most bristles are moved as the
brush assembly rotates.

CLAIMS:

1. A surface cleaning apparatus characterised by: a housing (1, 106, 106A, 106B; an elongate brush arrangement (11) mounted so as to be rotatable about a longitudinal axis thereof and extending across the housing for contacting a surface (104 to be cleaned; a substantially continuous surface cleaning strip (8, 208) extending across an underside of the housing; and movement responsive means (6, 206, 220) including friction engaging means adapted to engage the surface to be cleaned and movable in opposing first and second directions in response to movement of the apparatus in opposing first and second directions relative to the surface to be cleaned, movement of the friction engaging means being transmitted to the cleaning strip, whereby movement of the apparatus in the first direction causes the cleaning strip to adopt a first orientation relative to the housing such that in use a substantially continuous edge of the cleaning strip contacts the surface to be cleaned, and movement of the apparatus in the second direction causes the cleaning strip to adopt a second orientation relative to the housing so as in use to raise the cleaning strip clear of the surface to be cleaned.
2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8, 208) is mounted on a support means (4, 204) which is movable between first and second positions by the movement responsive means (6, 206, 220) in response to movement of the surface cleaning apparatus.
3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the friction engaging means (6, 206, 220) is mounted pivotably and is provided with an arm

(212) engaging the cleaning strip (208), whereby pivoting movement of the friction engaging means as a result of movement of the apparatus is transmitted to the cleaning strip to raise and lower the cleaning strip.

4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 3, characterised in that the cleaning strip (208) is pivotably mounted (218) for raising and/or lowering the strip.

5. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8) and the friction engaging means (6) are mounted on an elongate member (4) which is pivotably mounted relative to the housing (1, 106, 106A, 106B) of the apparatus, whereby contact between the friction engaging means and the surface (104) to be cleaned causes rotation of the elongate member such that the cleaning strip adopts one of the first and second orientations.

6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 5, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8) and the friction engaging means (6) project substantially radially from the elongate member (4).

7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8) and the friction engaging means (6) extend at different angles relative to each other.

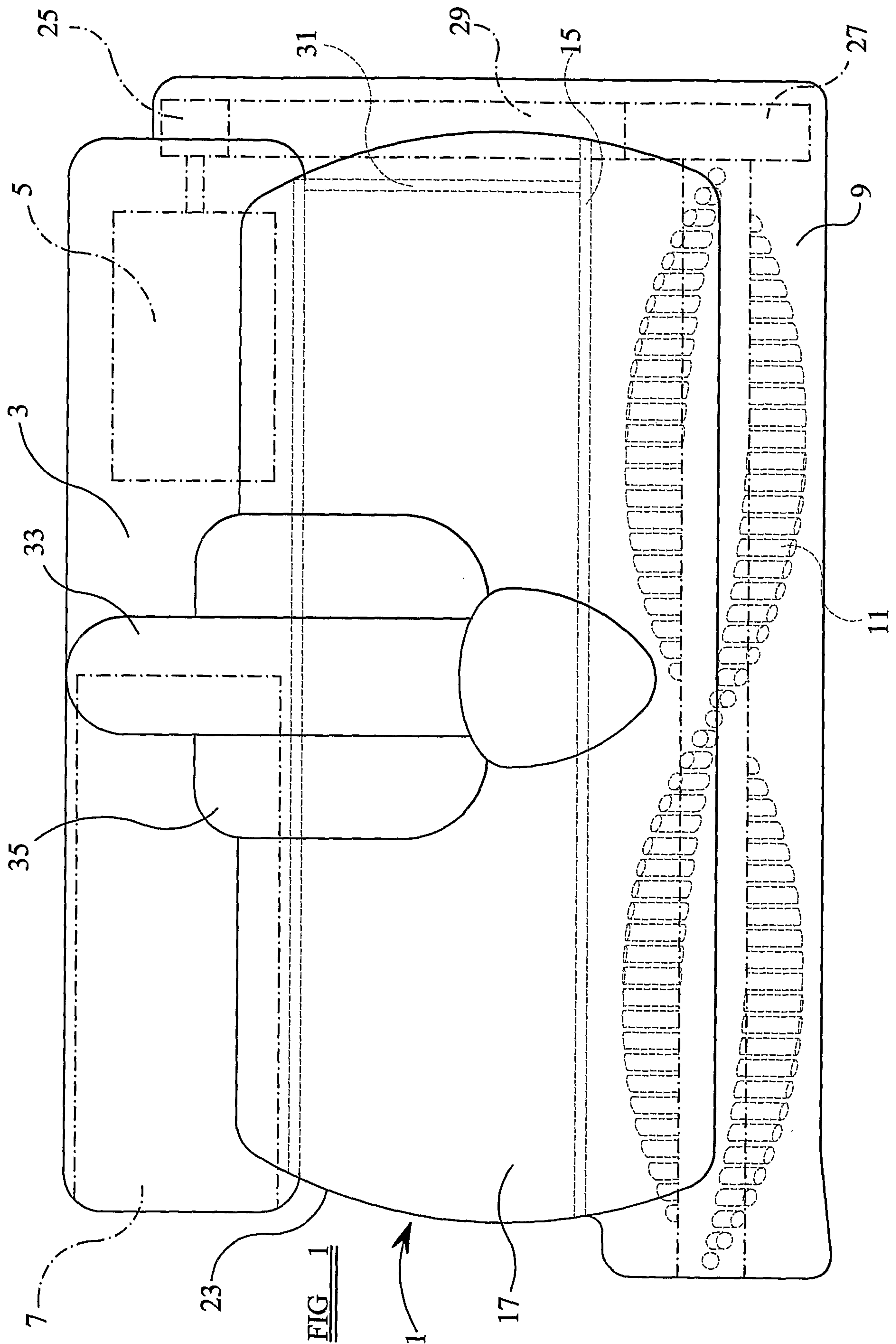
8. Apparatus as claimed in claim 7, characterised in that there is an included angle of substantially 45 degrees between the cleaning strip (8) and the friction engaging means (6).

9. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 8, characterised in that the friction engaging means (6) is in the form of a tab extending from the elongate member (4).
10. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 9, characterised in that the elongate member (4) is made of a flexible material.
11. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 10, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8) and the friction engaging means (4) are formed integrally with the elongate member (6).
12. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 10, characterised in that the elongate member (4, 204) is formed with a recessed groove and the cleaning strip (8, 208) is formed with a projection of complementary configuration adapted to retain the cleaning strip in the groove.
13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 12, characterised in that the groove and the projection are substantially T-shaped.
14. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8, 208) is configured to extend towards the surface (104) to be cleaned by 2.5 to 8 mm.

15. Apparatus as claimed in claim 14, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8, 208) is adapted to extend by 4.5 mm.
16. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 15, characterised in that the apparatus includes means for inhibiting movement of the cleaning strip (8, 208) in the longitudinal direction thereof.
17. Apparatus as claimed in claim 16, characterised in that the movement inhibiting means is movable or removable to allow replacement of the strip (8, 208).
18. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 17, characterised in that the cleaning strip (8, 208) is made of a flexible material.
19. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 18, characterised in that the friction engaging means (6, 206) comprises a flexible material.
20. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 19 characterised in that the apparatus includes a motor (5) provided within the housing (1, 106, 106A, 106B) for rotating the brush arrangement (11).
21. Apparatus as claimed in claim 20, characterised in that the apparatus further includes a battery pack (7) within the housing (1, 106, 106A, 106B) for energizing the motor (5).

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22. Apparatus as claimed in claim 21, characterised in that the battery pack (7) is rechargeable.



SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

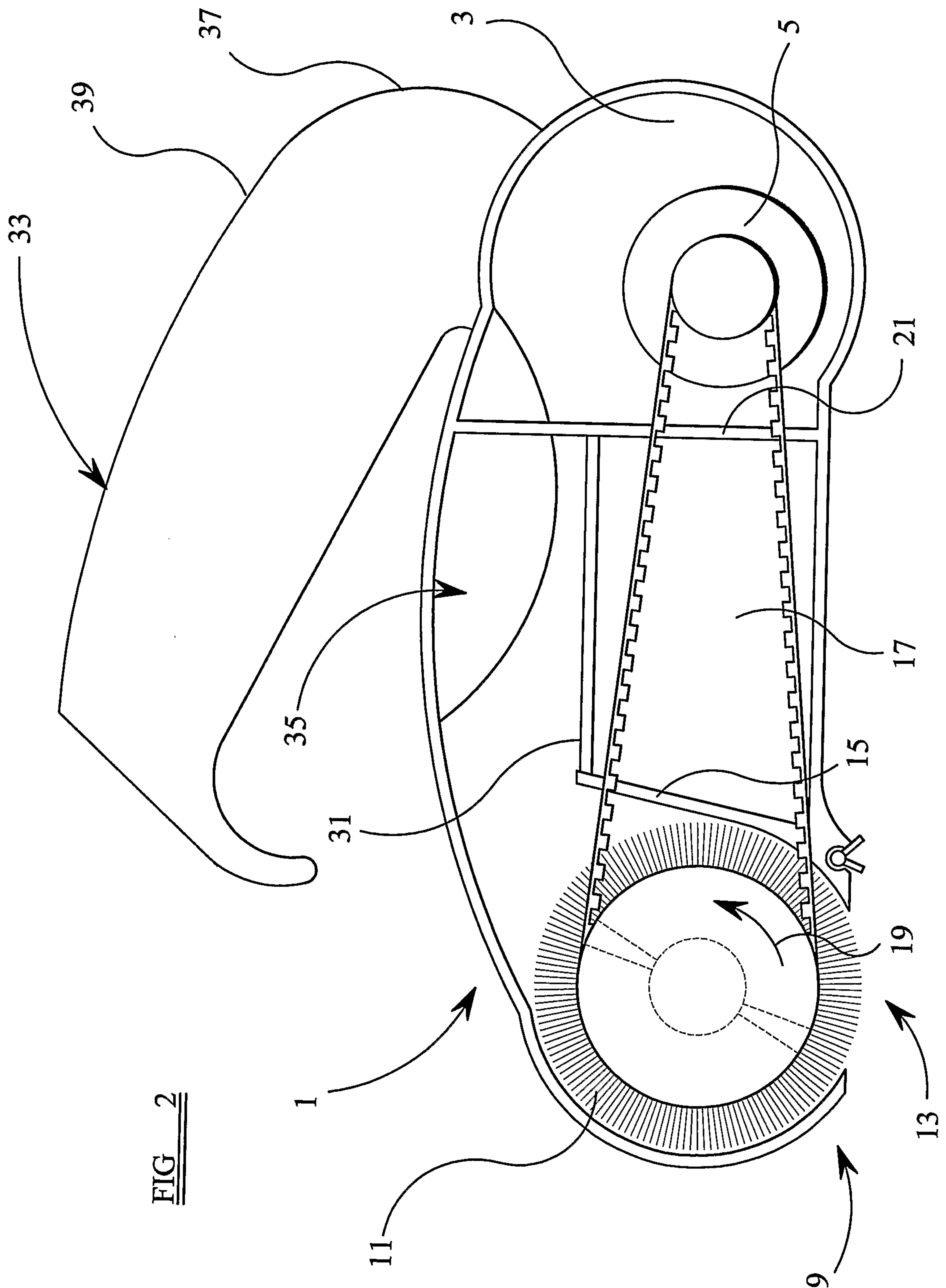
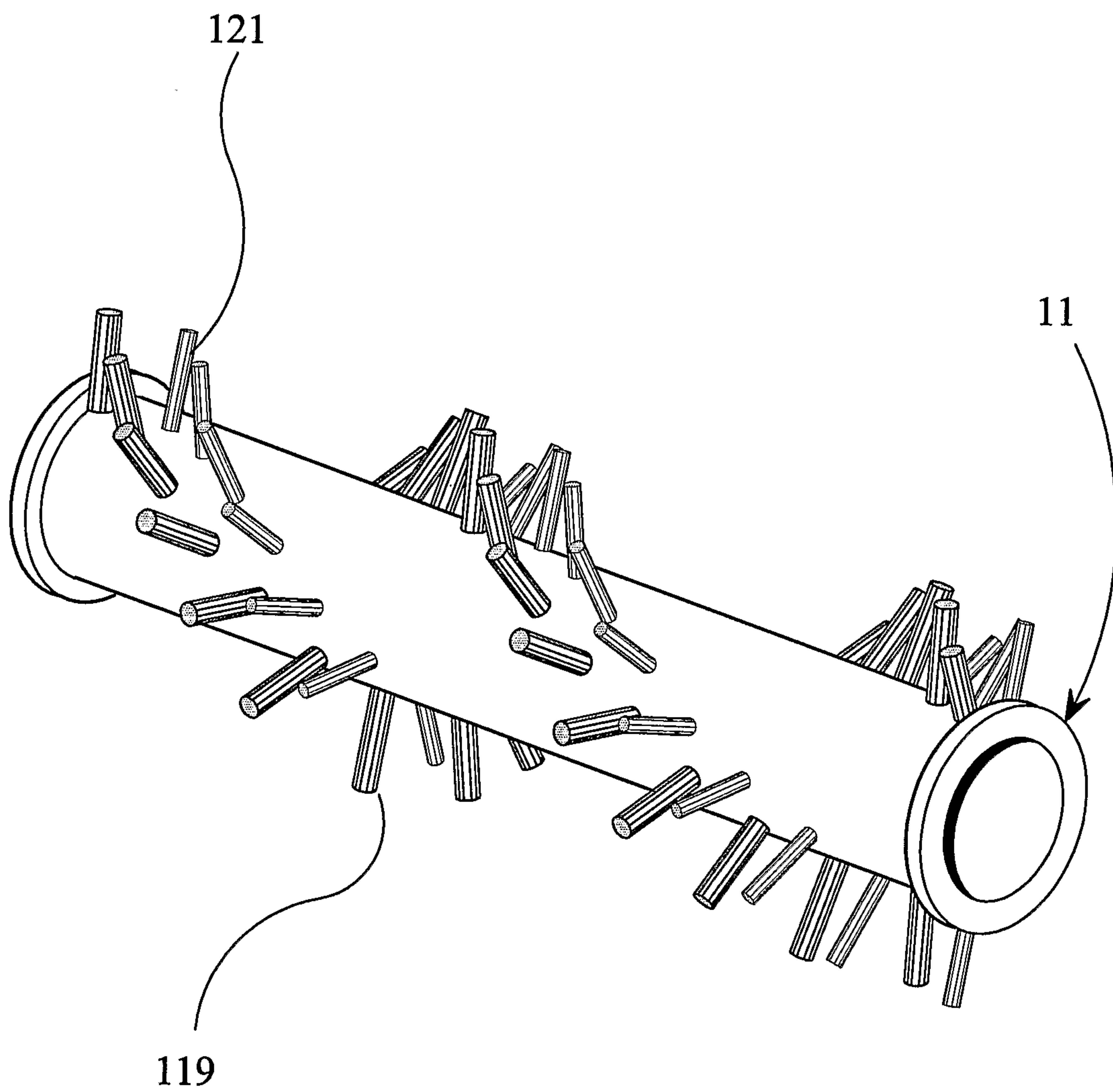
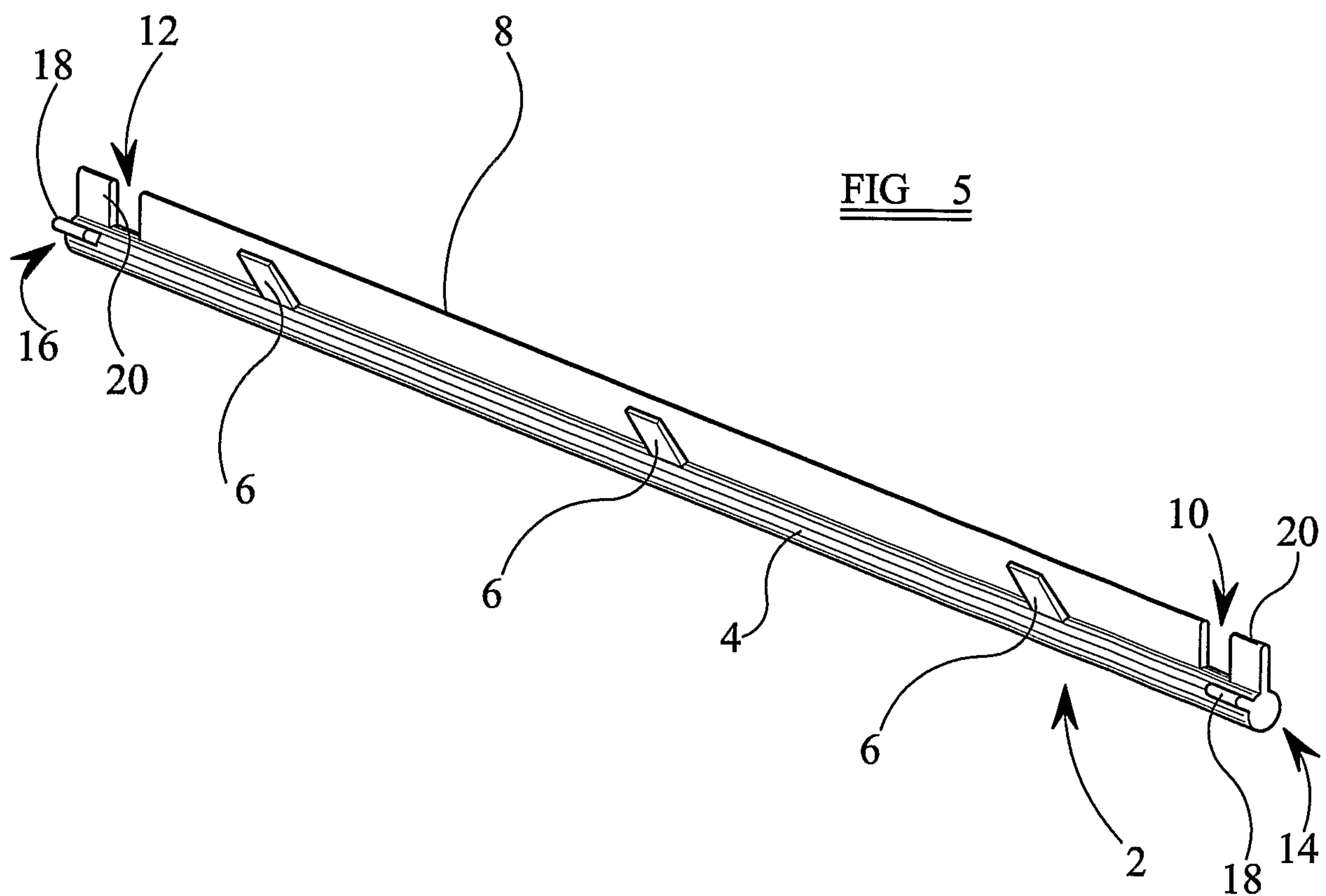
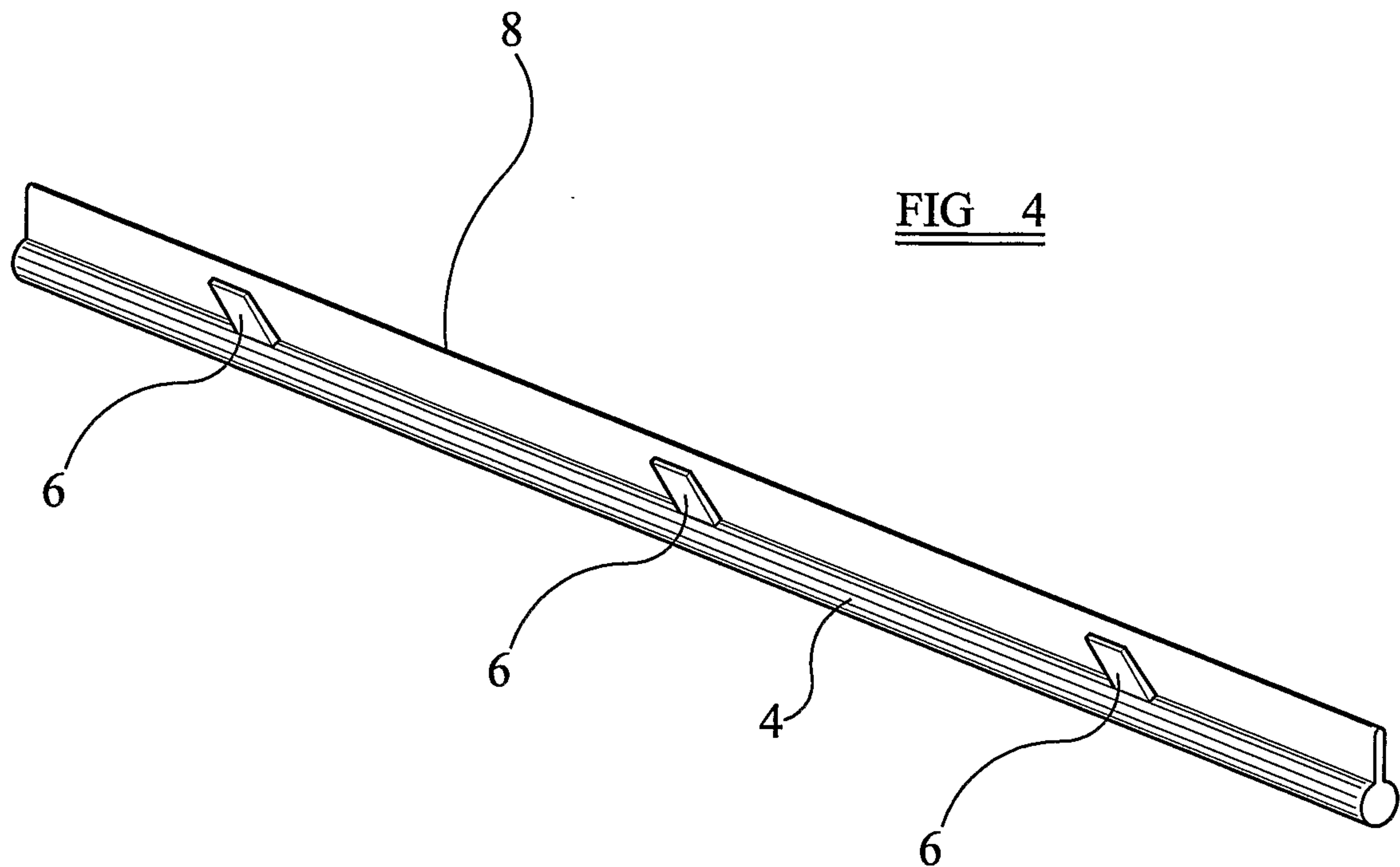


FIG 2

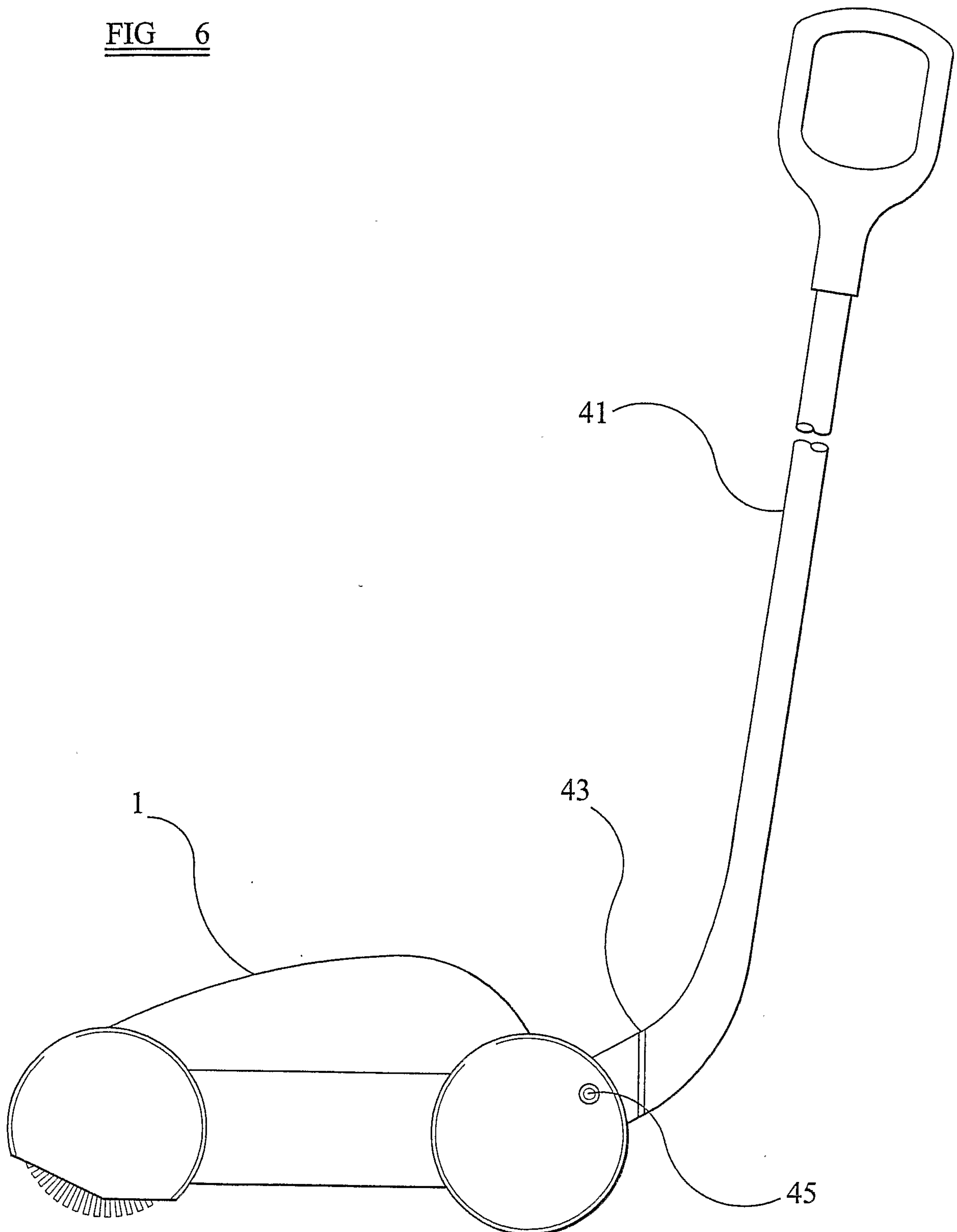
3 / 15

FIG 3

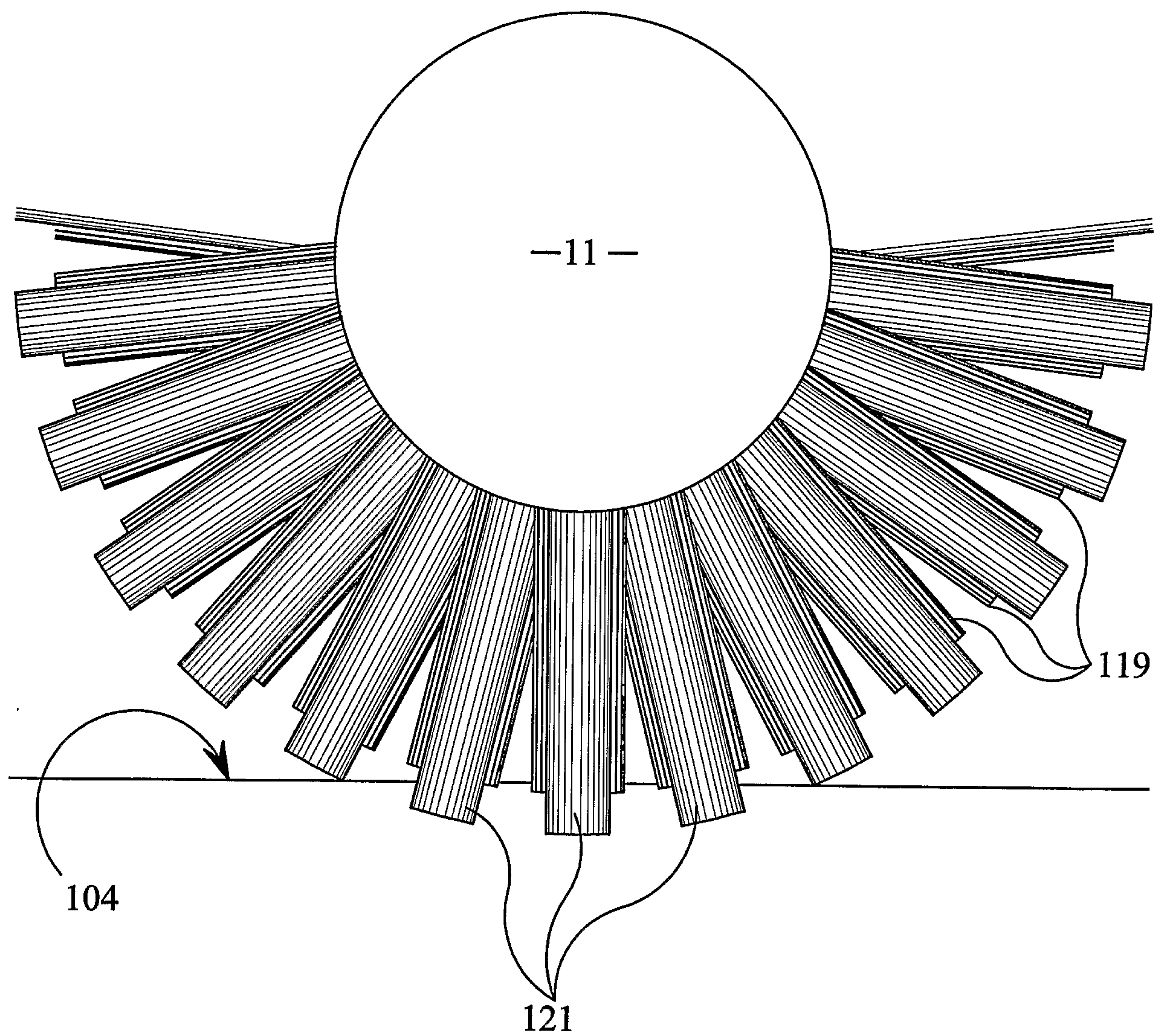
4 / 15



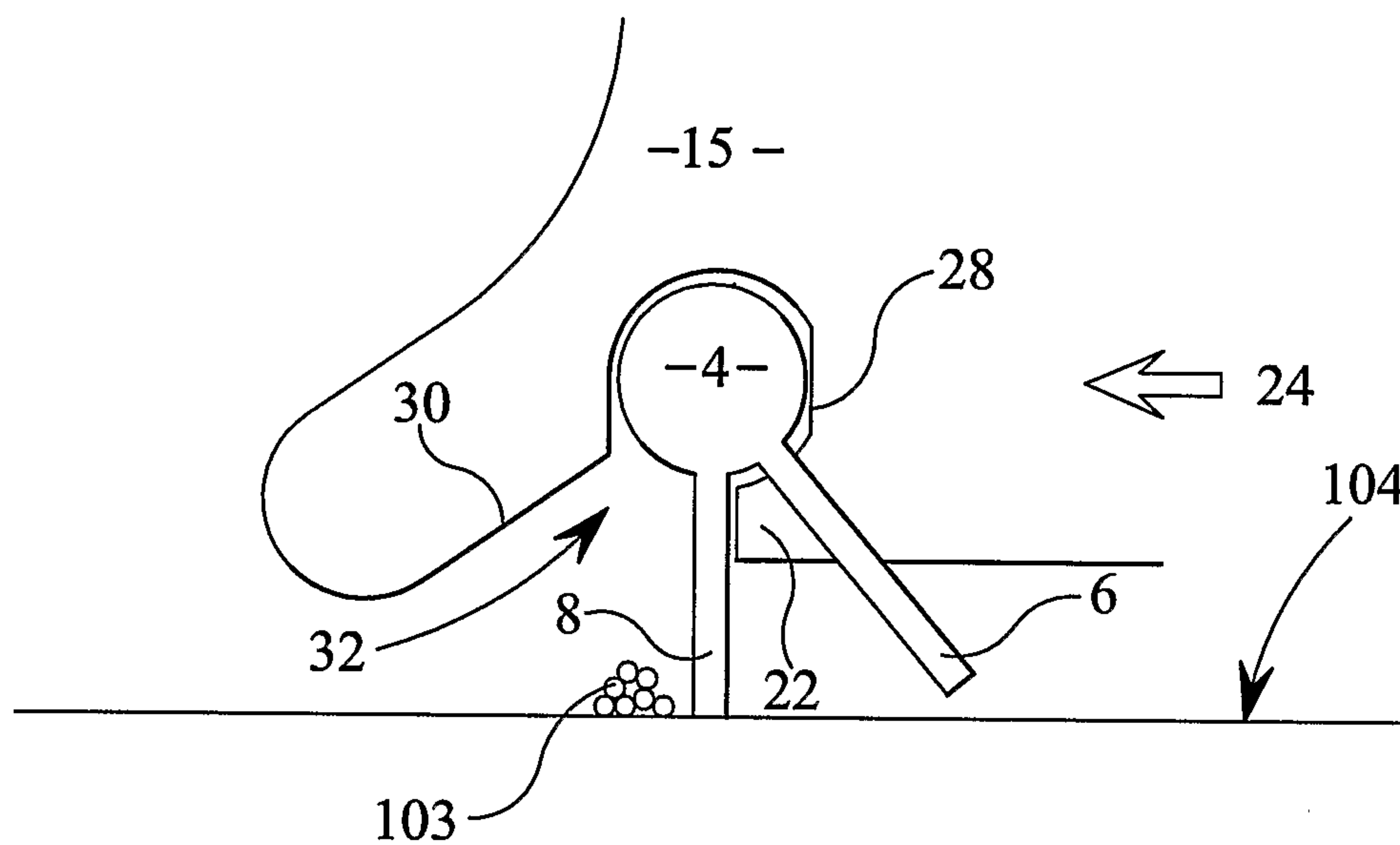
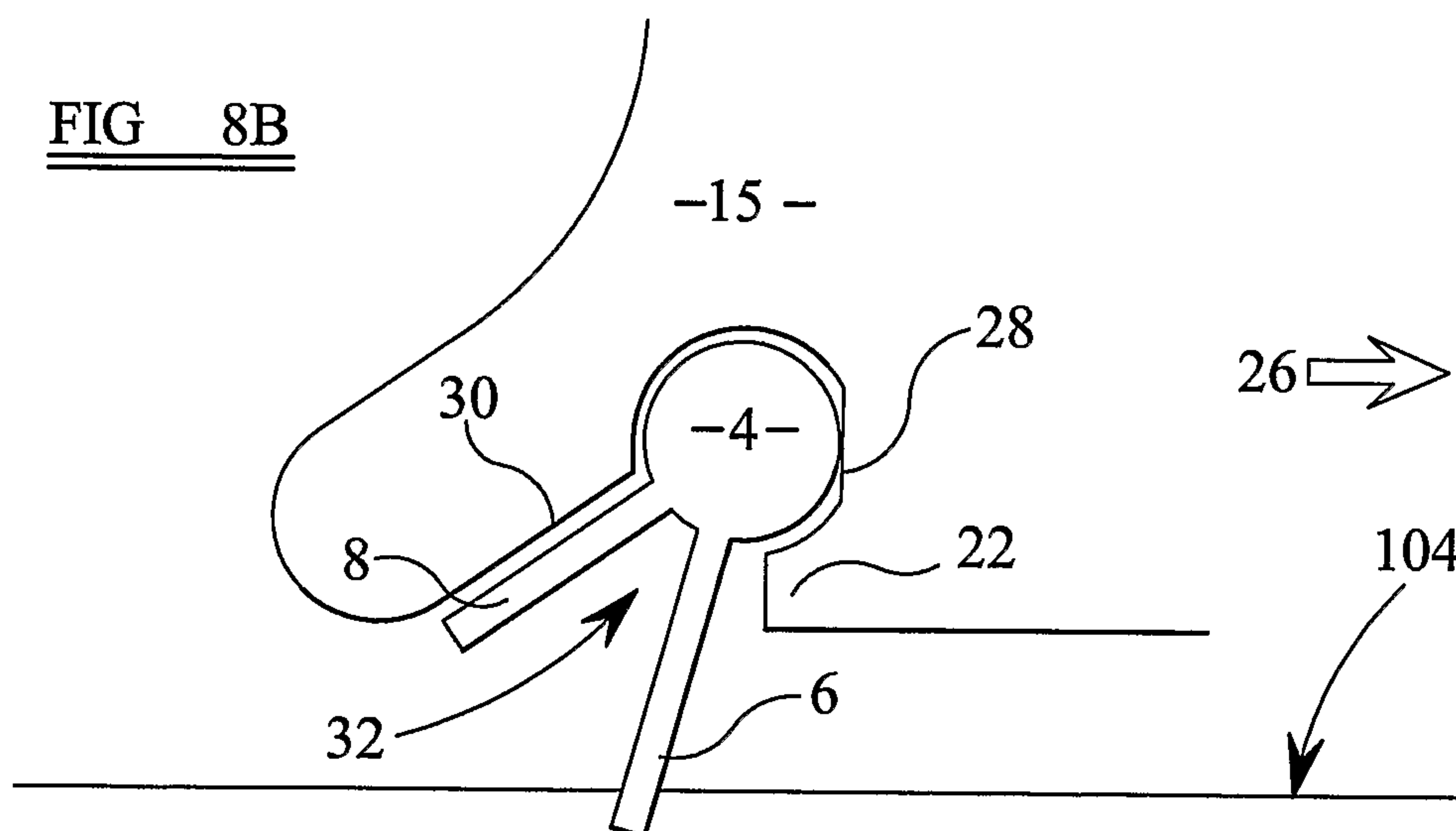
5 / 15

FIG 6

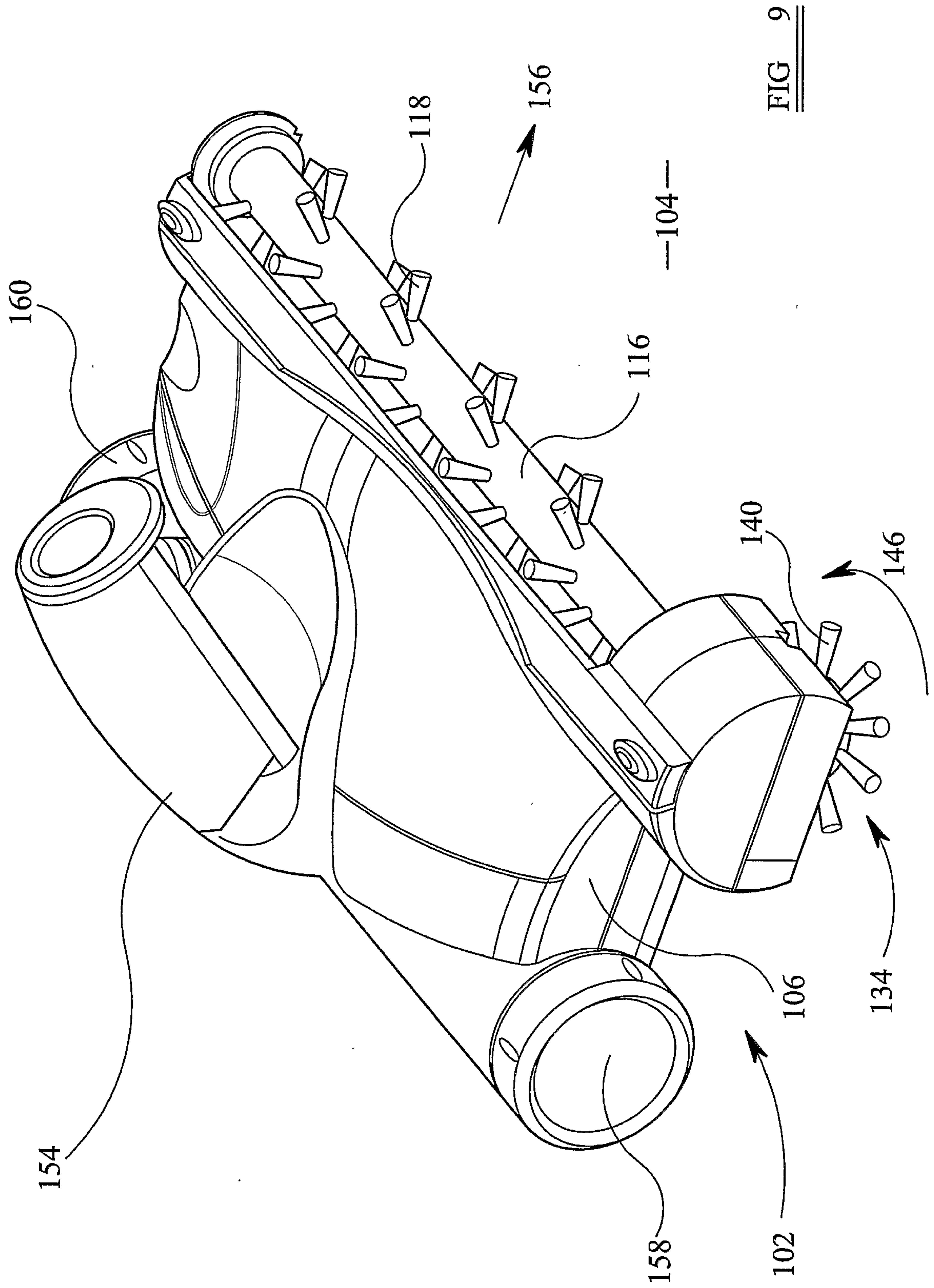
6 / 15

FIG 7

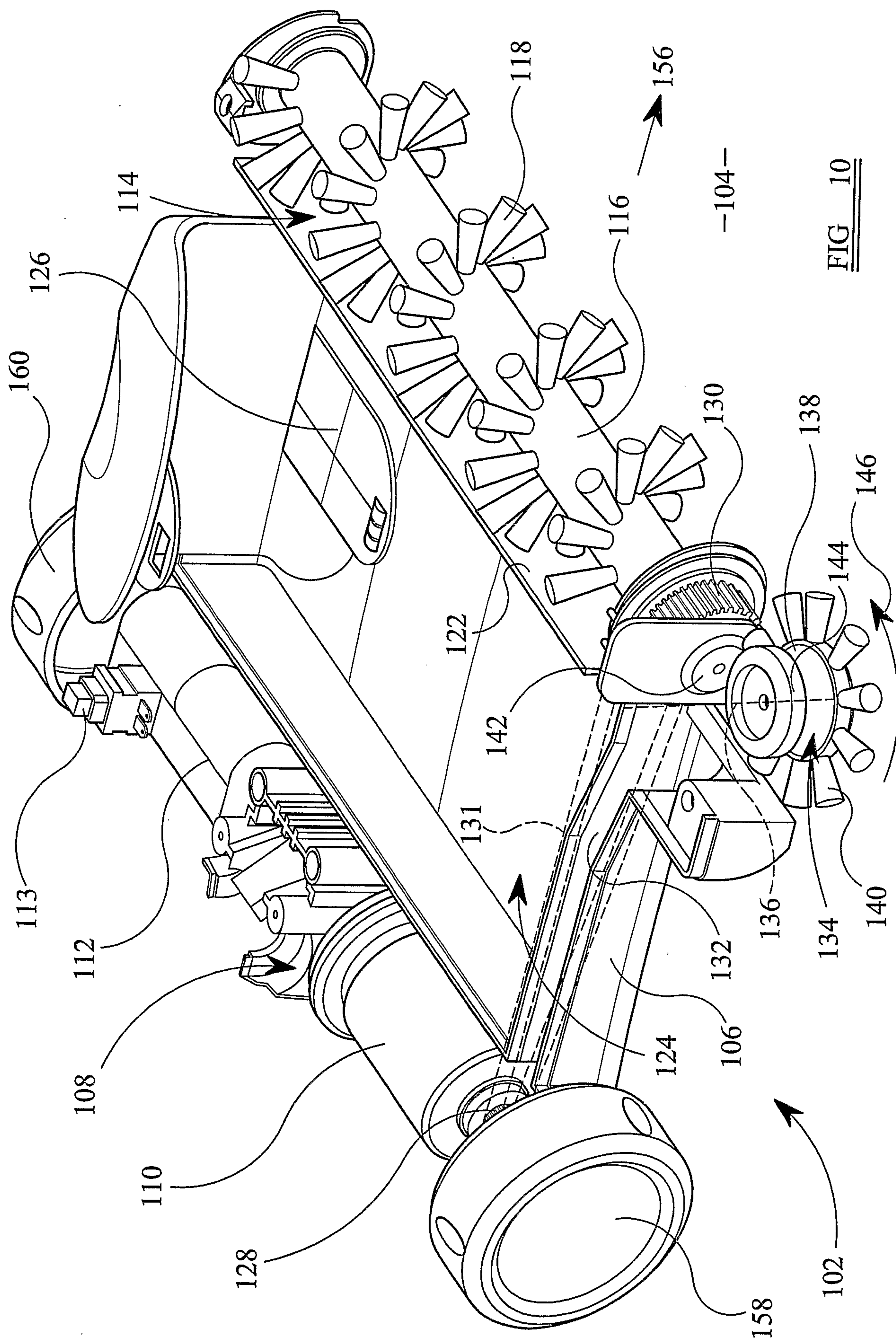
7 / 15

FIG 8AFIG 8B

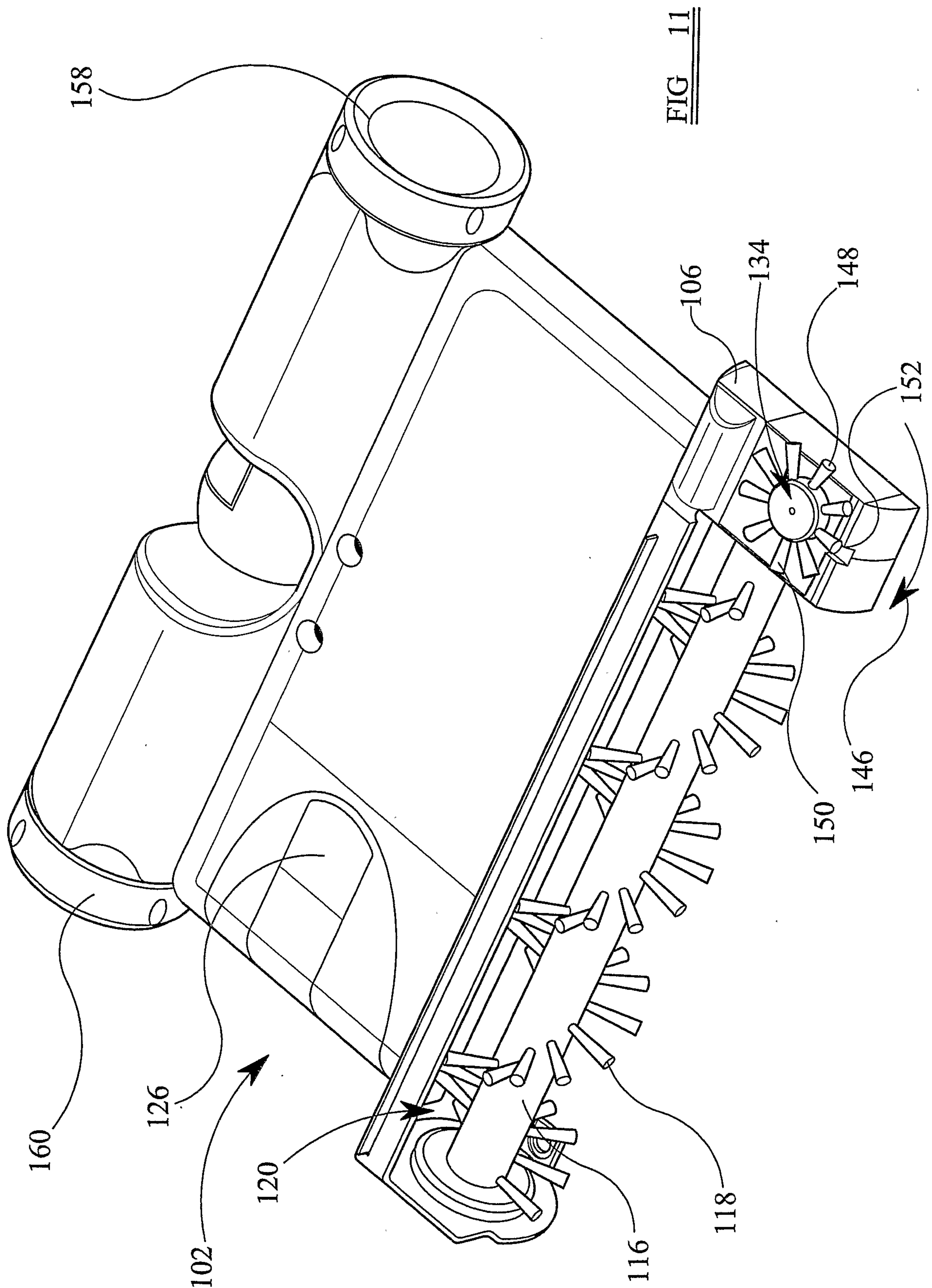
8 / 15



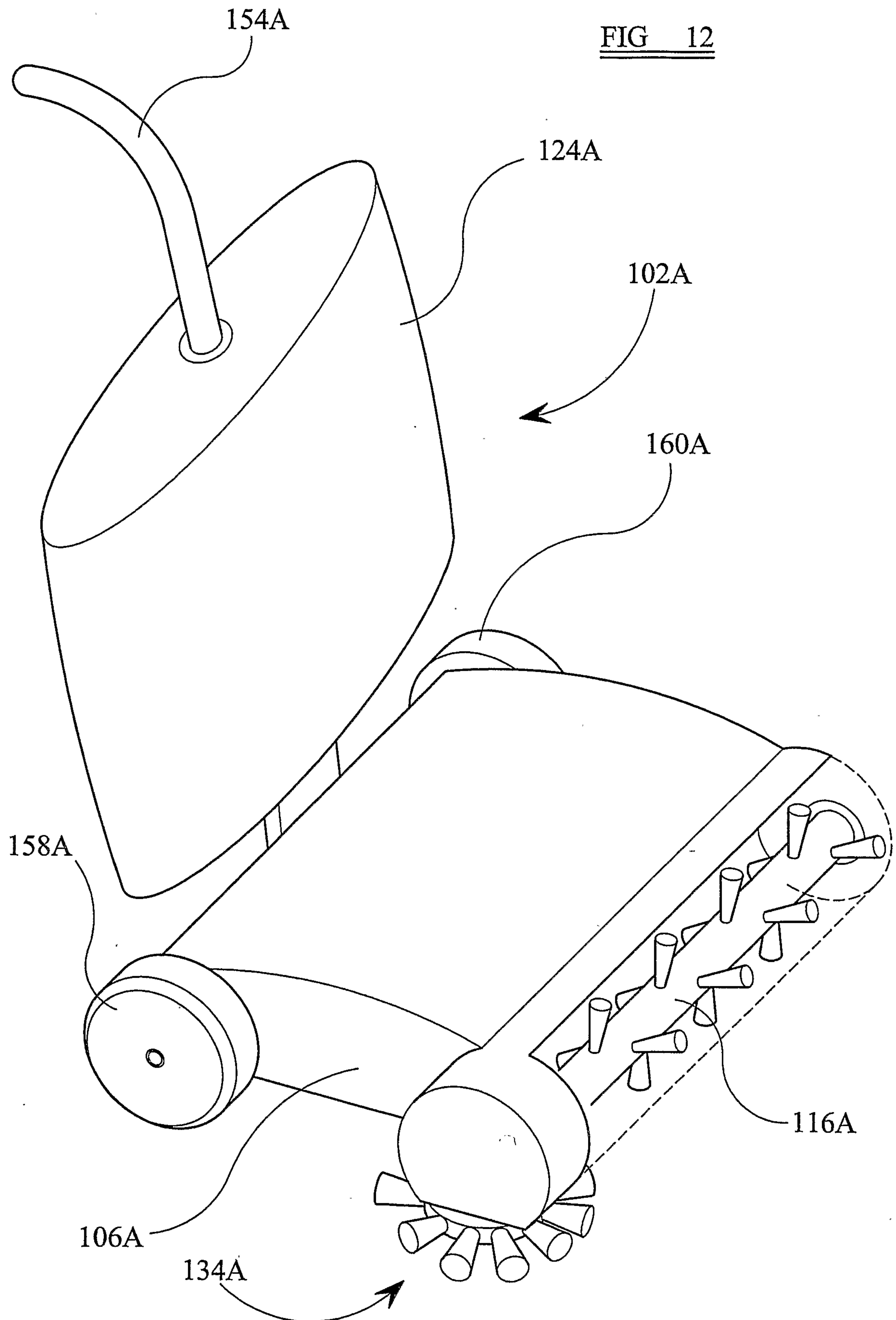
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FIG. 10

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FIG 12

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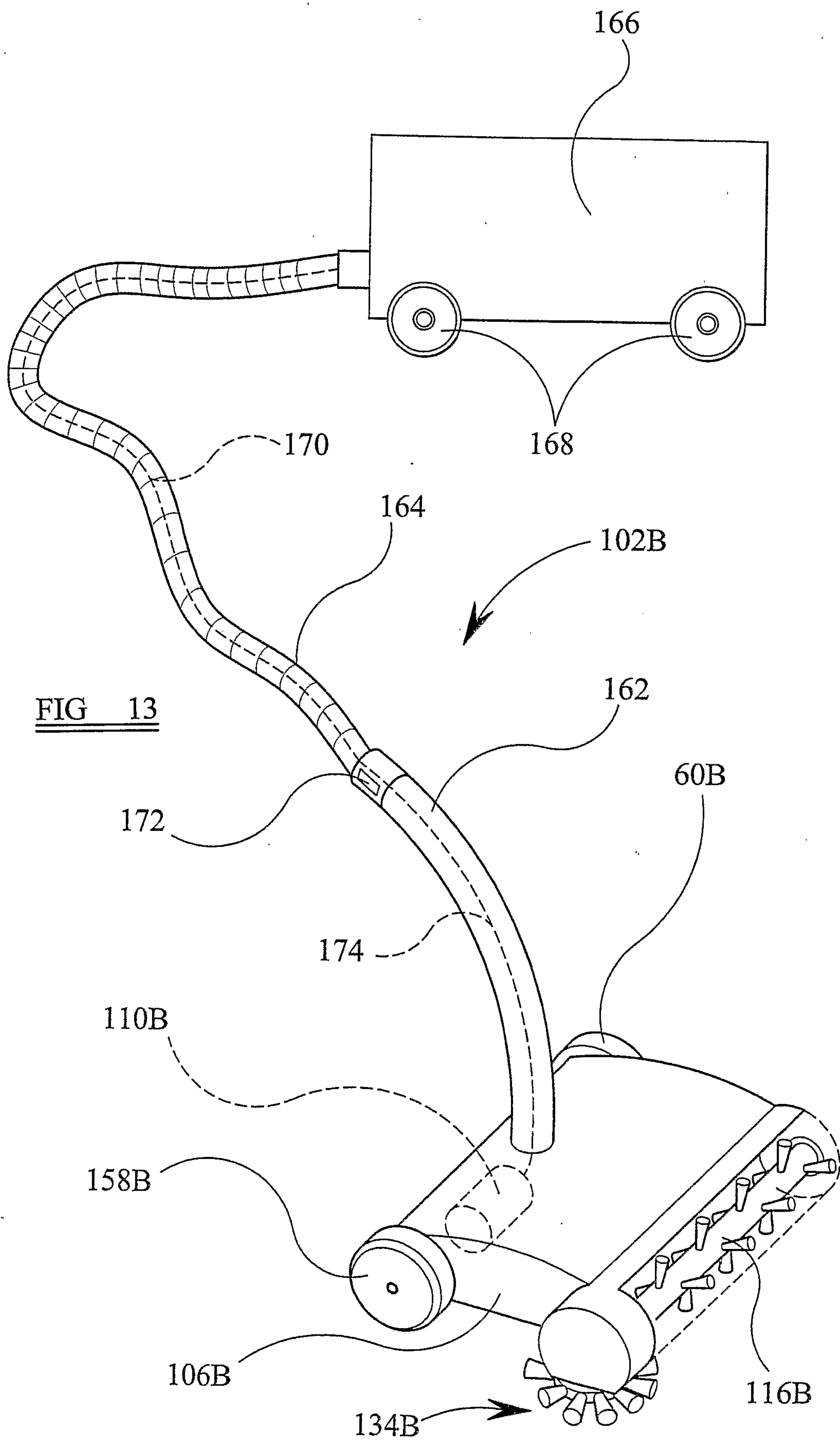


FIG 15

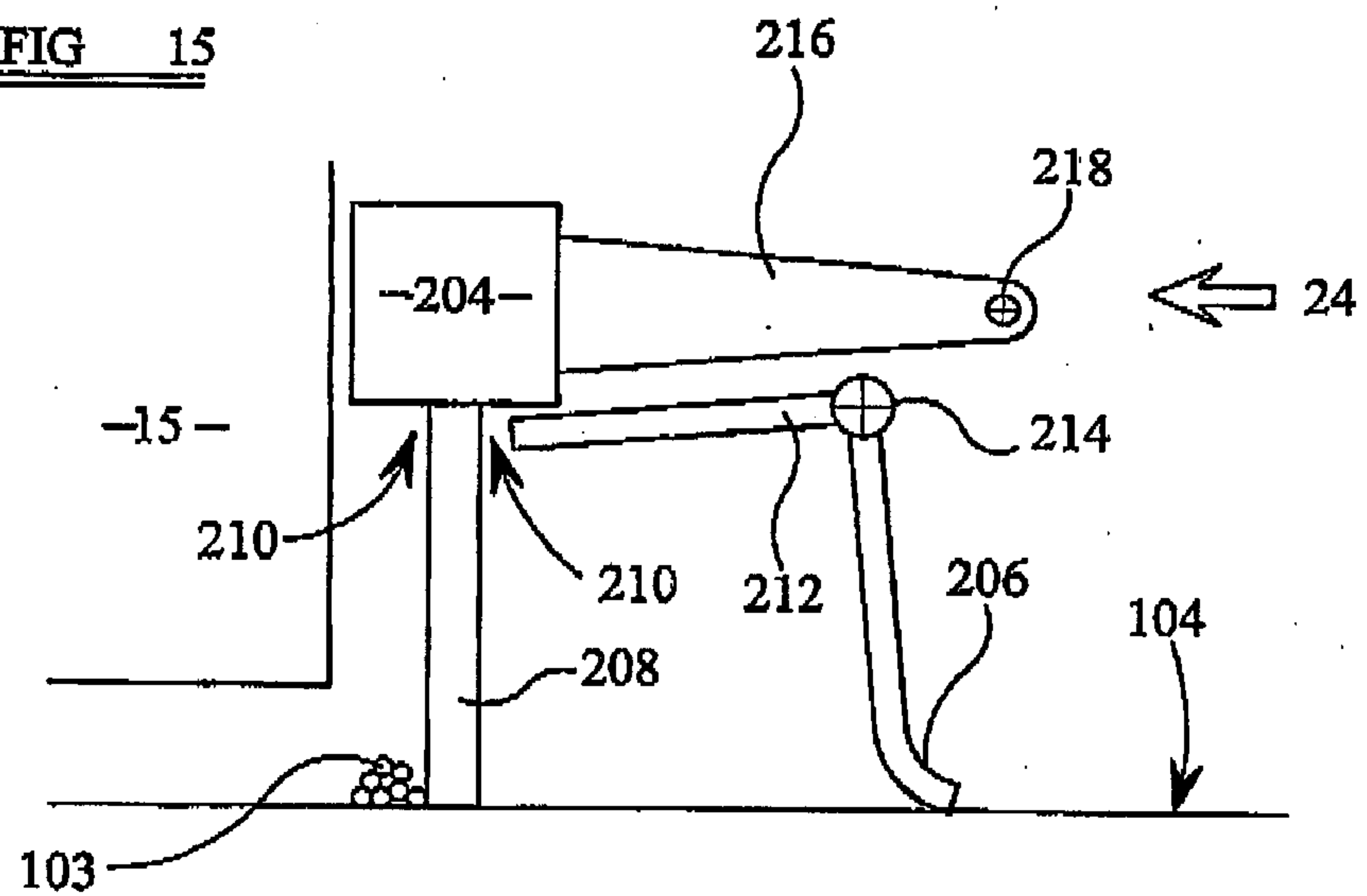
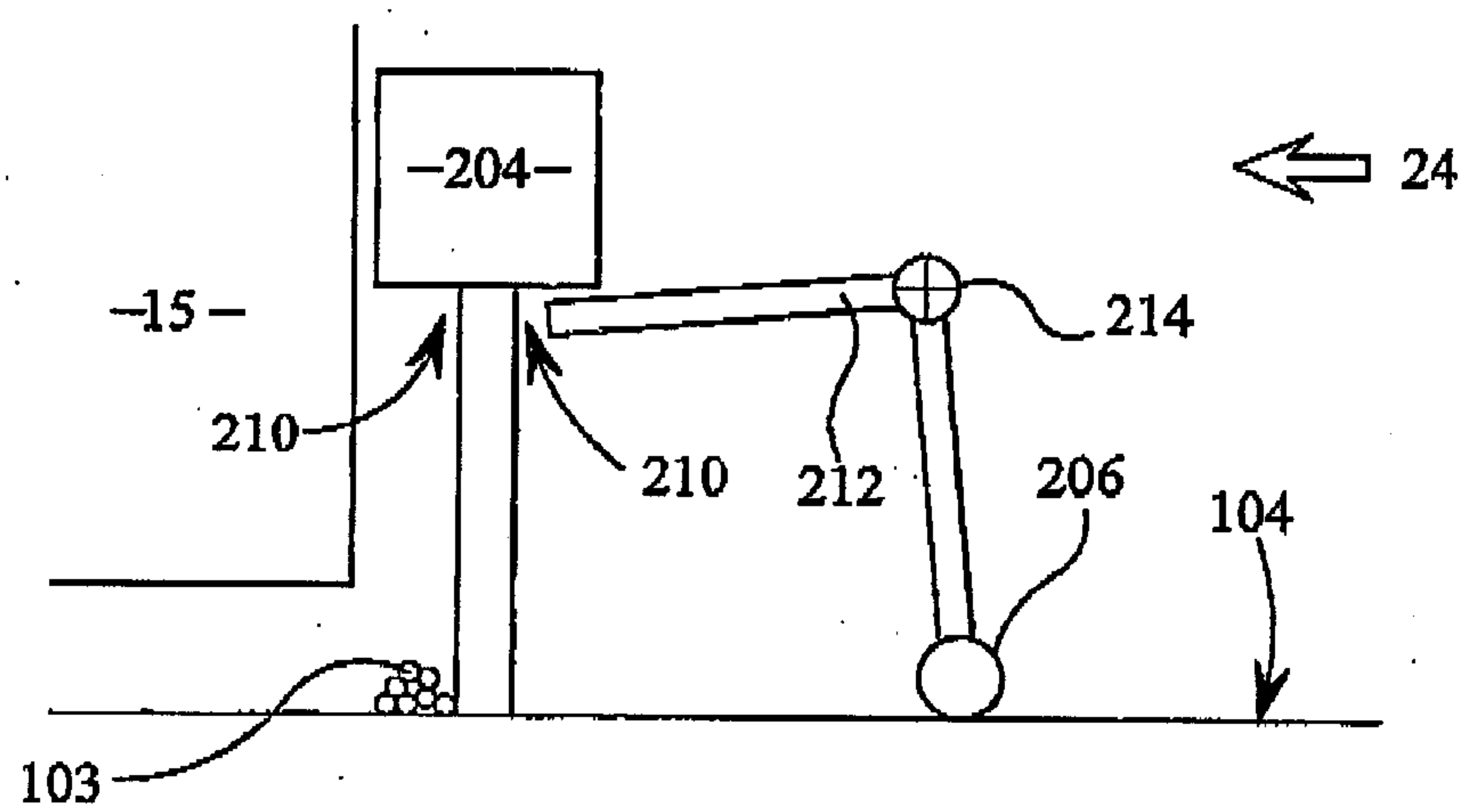
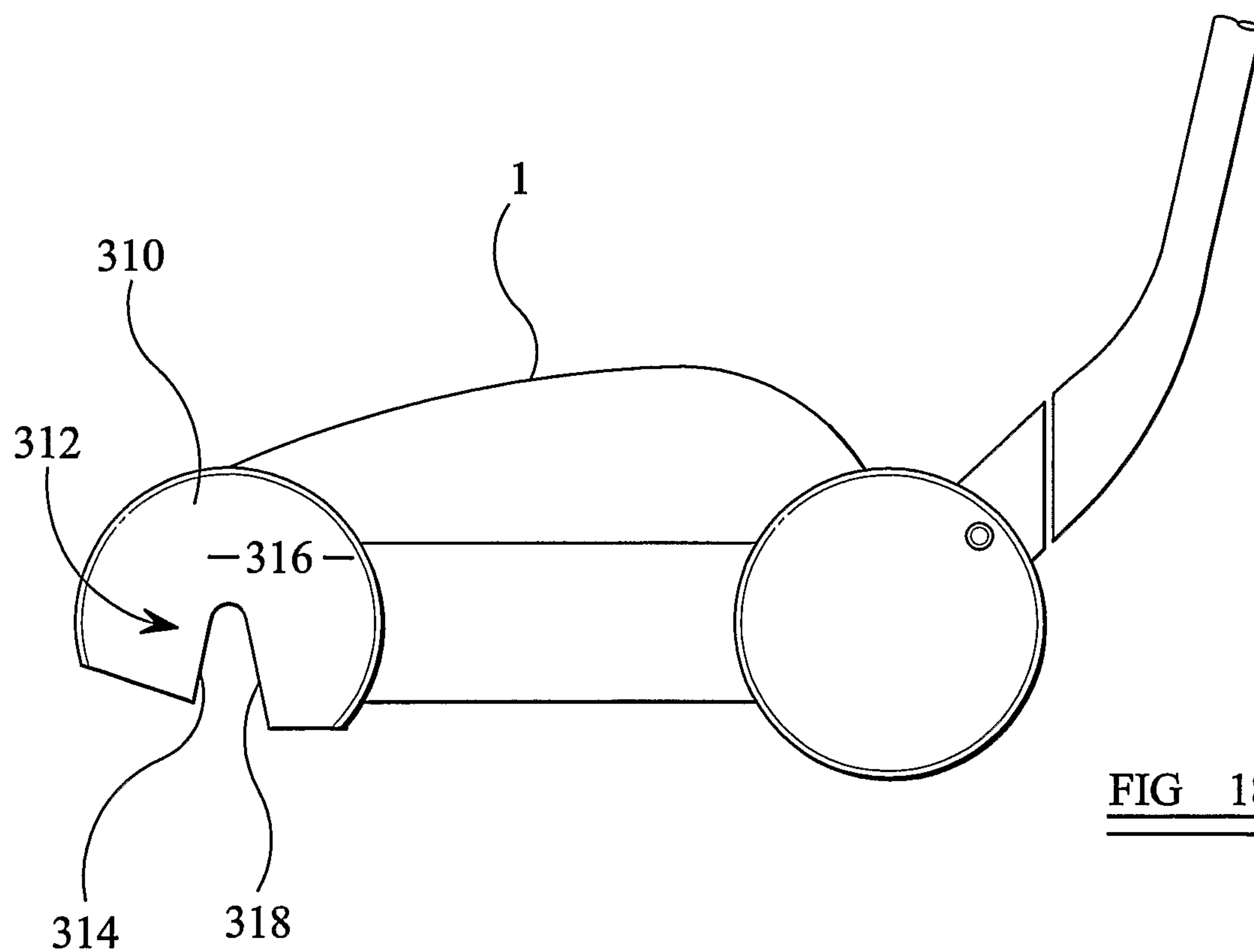
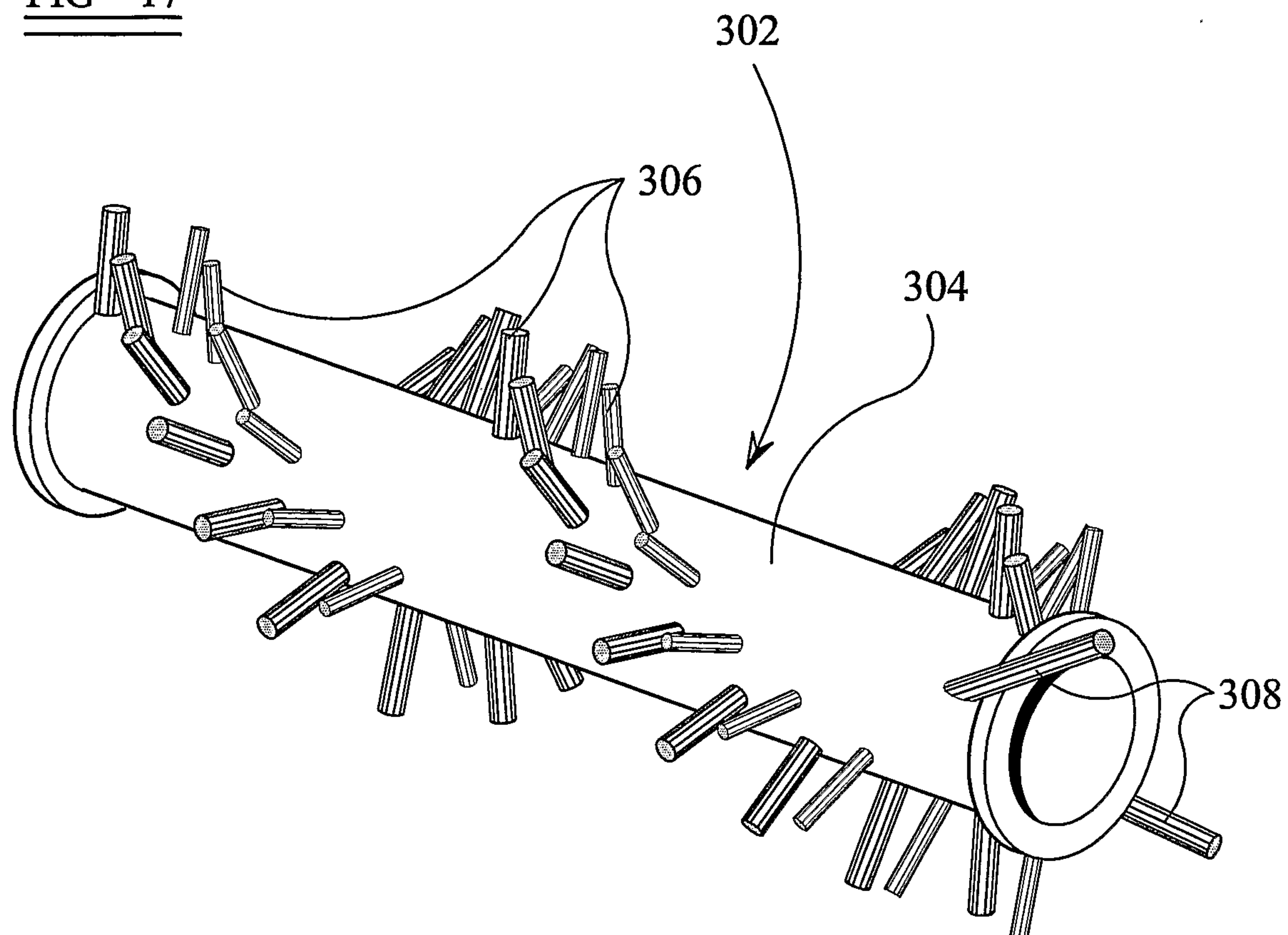


FIG 16



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FIG 17FIG 18

