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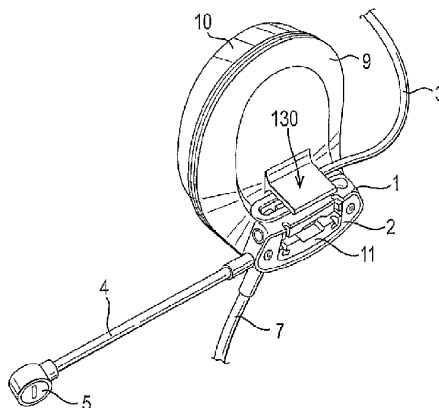
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(54) Title: ATTACHMENT APPARATUS



(57) Abstract: A headset apparatus having a headwear member (9) e.g. an ear shell, possessing a surface formation to which a separate attachment device (1) is reciprocally shaped to attach by a push-fit (e.g. by sliding, slotting or clipping) into engagement with the surface formation. In this way the attachment means may be fitted to the surface formation on the headwear member without requiring the use of through-holes passing through the body of the headwear member.

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Attachment apparatus

5 The present invention relates to attachment apparatus.
In particular, though not exclusively, the present
invention relates to means for attaching/connecting a
harness/support attachment to equipment to be worn about
the person of a user.

10 Conventional headset apparatus, such as hearing
protectors and communications headsets, generally
comprise earshells whose external surfaces act as a
platform for mounting other elements or articles to the
15 headset. Such other articles include head retention
mechanisms for retaining the earshells in place on the
user's head, microphones for use with communications
headsets, speakers or electro-acoustic transducers within
the earshell of communications headsets, and electrical
20 signal conduit cables for serving the microphones and/or
transducers of a communications headset.

Current methods for attaching these articles to an
earshell of a headset include the drilling of a hole into
25 and through the body of the earshell thereby to generate
a suitable means of attachment. For example, screws,

rivets or plug attachments may be passed through the drilled through-hole to attach the article to the earshell. Head retention mechanisms, such as a neck band or a head band and signal conduit cables, for example often include parts arranged to pass through the body of an earshell by means of a through-hole and grommet assembly.

Such penetration of the body of the earshell seriously compromises the ability of the earshell to effectively attenuate the amount of external acoustic noise which is able to pass through the body of the earshell to the ear of the headset wearer. Leakage of air, or gaps in general, caused by such through-holes, as discussed above, allow external acoustic noise to pass through the earshell with little attenuation. This often occurs due to poor integrity of the sealing mechanism via which a through-hole is supposed to be sealed when a given article is attached to the earshell via that through-hole. Such leaks often occur around grommets and screw fixings.

Articles intended to be attached to an earshell of a headset, such as the boom arm of a headset microphone, are often connected to an earshell by means of a rigid and non-detachable attachment mounted on one side of only

one earshell of a pair of earshells³ of a headset. This permanency of attachment renders the headset lacking in versatility since the microphone mounted to an earshell intended to cover the left-hand (or right-hand) ear of a user can only ever be used to the left-hand side (or right-hand side) of the head of the user in use. Thus, the permanency of the means of attachment of the article (in this case a microphone) to an earshell of a headset limits the versatility of that headset.

10

It is common for communications headsets to connect to their host equipment by means of a cable emerging from the headset body and connected to the host equipment by means of an interface connector. Types of host equipment include radio or communications consoles. Often, the host equipment requires that the user is able to remotely control the functions of the host. Such functions include, for example, transmit, mute, monitor, and override control functions of a host console.

20

The remote activation often requires the user to perform a hand operation on an external control device. The control device typically takes the form of a dedicated switchbox located in-line with the headset cable. The switchbox typically contains one or more manually operated switching devices as a means for controlling the desired

operation of the host equipment remotely, and these switching devices are generally positioned on the switchbox to enable ease of user access thereto.

5 In an attempt to maximise ease of user access to the switching device of the switchbox, switchboxes often include a clothing clip arranged to enable the switchbox to be clipped to an item of apparel worn by the user. However, due to the typically non-central location of the switching device upon the switchbox, the
10 switchbox most advantageously requires to be clipped to the user's clothing such that the switching device faces generally towards the hand intended to be used by the user in operating that switch device. Thus, the location of the switch device on the switchbox, and the location of the clothing clip on the
15 switchbox, together inherently pre-determine which hand of the user is most suited to accessing the switch device in such situations or at least limits the regions about the person of the user to which the switch box could suitably be clipped. This greatly reduces the versatility of the switchbox in use.

20

Embodiments of the present invention aim to address the aforementioned problems.

At its most general, it is proposed a headset apparatus having a
25 headwear member (e.g. an earshell) possessing a surface formation to which a separate attachment device is reciprocally shaped to attach by a push-fit (e.g. by sliding, slotting or

clipping) into engagement with the surface formation. In this way the attachment means may be fitted to the surface formation on the headwear member without requiring the use of through-holes passing through the body of the earshell. The attachment
5 means may carry, harness, convey or include any number of articles which are intended to be used with the headwear apparatus and which might otherwise have required attachment to the earshell via the use of through-holes. Preferably the attachment device attaches to the earshell solely by means of
10 its engagement with the surface formation thereof.

In this way, the attachment means may comprise any number of through-holes via which articles are attached to it, or may have such articles attached to it, or formed with, in any other way
15 such as would be readily apparent to the skilled person. Most importantly, those articles are not themselves directly attached to the earshell, but are indirectly attached via the attachment means.

20 Accordingly, in a first of its aspects, the present invention may provide a headset apparatus (e.g. a communications headset containing communications means) to be worn about the head of a user including: a first earshell and an oppositely facing second earshell, each earshell being shaped and arranged to be worn
25 over an ear of a user and having a surface portion shaped to define a headwear connection means; an article to an aforesaid headwear member earshell, the further attachment means having a

reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond
with a shaping of the surface portion defining, an aforesaid
headwear connection means to allow the headwear connection means
and reciprocal connection means to push-fit together thereby to
5 connect the further attachment means to the surface of the
headwear member earshell without penetrating that surface
attachment means to be worn on either a user's left hand side or
right hand side and for indirectly attaching the article to the
first or second earshell via the attachment means, the
10 attachment means being attached to the article, wherein each of
two opposite sides of the attachment means has a reciprocal
connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a
shaping of a surface portion defining a respective headwear
connection means to allow the headwear connection means and the
15 respective reciprocal connection means to push-fit together
without penetrating said surface portion thereby allowing the
article to be indirectly attached by the attachment means to the
surface portion of either one of the oppositely facing first and
second earshells whilst retaining the orientation of the article
20 relative to the oppositely facing first and second earshells.

This permits extended reciprocal connection means to push-fit to
it along an extended surface formation rather than into the body
of the earshell thereby obviating the need for a hole or deep
25 recess extending into the earshell for receiving reciprocal
connection means by deep insertion.

In this way, attachment of an article to an earshell of a headset, may be achieved without requiring any through-holes for the purposes of achieving attachment. Instead, attachment of an article to a earshell may simply be achieved by connecting or
5 attaching that article to the attachment means, then push-fitting the surface formation of the headwear connection means together with the reciprocally-shaped connection means of the attachment means thereby to connect the attachment means to the surface of the earshell and thereby attach the article to the
10 earshell in the process. Of course, the present invention in a further aspect also may provide a headset apparatus in a fully assembled form comprising the headwear member and the attachment means in the aforementioned connected state. Most preferably the attachment means and the earshell are detachably connectable to
15 each other.

In one form, the article comprises a microphone boom arm carrying a microphone apparatus.

20 In one form, each one of the two sides of the attachment means presents a respective reciprocal connection means having substantially the same shaping as that of the reciprocal connection means presented by the other said side of the attachment means.

25 The body of one of the headwear connection means and reciprocal connection means preferably defines a channel, recess or opening

therein and the body of the other of the headwear and reciprocal connection means is preferably shaped and arranged to fit intimately within said channel, recess or opening to abut the body of the connection means where it defines said channel,
5 recess or opening.

For example, an aforementioned channel may preferably extend across the body of the connection means in which it is formed. For example, the channel may be formed across the surface
10 portion of the earshell defining the headwear connection means, the reciprocal connection means being reciprocally shaped to push-fit within at least a part of the channel. The aforesaid opening may, for example, be an opening to a recess or a harness structure. Preferably a given connection means (e.g. the
15 reciprocal connection means) is shaped to extend across the body of the other item to which it is to connect (e.g. the headwear member) when received e.g. by a surface formation in a channel formed on the other item in connection therewith so as to extend
20 along the direction in which that surface formation (channel) extends across the other item when push-fitted thereto. This allows the received given connection means to abut against or urge against the surface formation (channel) in a direction transverse to it and the other item generally towards the body of the other item (e.g. earshell) in use. Thus, e.g. a channel
25 or protusion across a surface permits an extended interface between connection means without extending into the body of

either to a great extent (e.g. as a hole would require) and enable firm fixture without holes.

Most preferably, the headwear connection means and the
5 reciprocal connection means are mutually shaped to permit the one to form an interference fit with the other when the two are connected. A friction fit and/or a snap-fit are preferable, and most preferably this also permits the attachment means to be detachable from the earshell without being loosely connected
10 thereto.

Preferably, the reciprocal connections means is shaped to extend from the body of the earshell across the body of the headwear member generally in the direction in which a surface formation
15 (e.g. channel wall ridge) of the headwear connector means generally extends across the earshell.

The headset apparatus may also include said article, being a signal conduit means (e.g. electrical cable, optical fibre etc)
20 connected to the attachment means for conveying (e.g. electrical) signals to/from the attachment means, or being a headset retention apparatus connected to the attachment means for retaining the

headset about the head of the user. The article or articles may be one or more of a communication apparatus (e.g. microphones, transducers, speakers, switching apparatus, junction boxes etc) contained in or
5 connected/attached to the attachment means. The article(s) may include a microphone boom arm attached to the attachment means and carrying thereon a microphone apparatus. Of course, it is most preferable that each/any such communications apparatus is electrically connected
10 to said signal conduit means for conveying communications signals thereon.

The attachment means may contain an electrical signal conduit junction means (e.g. a junction box) having a
15 given one or more electrical signal ports electrically connected to a plurality of other electrical signal ports for conveying electrical signals from the given signal ports to one or more of the other electrical signal ports, and vice-versa. Thus, where the article is one or
20 more electrical items (e.g. transducers, microphones, earphones) the signal conduit junction means is preferably arranged to connect to each of said items via a respective one of the plurality of other signal ports and to provide a signal output port from the attachment
25 means using one or more of the given signal ports).

Preferably a signal input/output cable is attachable, or electrically connectable, to the given signal port(s).

5 Preferably, the headset apparatus contains two earshells (e.g. two earshells, one for each of the user's ears) and each earshell most preferably has a surface formation shaped to permit the attachment means to be push-fitted thereto. Thus, a headset may be provided comprising only one earshell/cover, or providing two earshells/covers.

10

The headset apparatus may include a further e.g. a second) earshell shaped and arranged to be worn about the head of a user and having a surface portion shaped to define a further headwear connection means, most preferably the reciprocal connection means (or another reciprocal connections means) of the attachment means is shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of the surface portion of the further headwear connection means to allow the further headwear connection means and reciprocal connection means to push-fit together thereby to connect the attachment means to the further earshell without penetrating the surface of the further headwear member. Thus, the attachment means may be operable to fit to each of two or more earshells, such as each one of as set of two earshells/covers.

25

It is most preferable, in order to increase the versatility of the headset apparatus, that the attachment means includes

reciprocal connection means which are not only shaped to fit to a corresponding surface shaping in either of two headwear means (e.g. left and right earshells), but which is/are shaped to permit the attachment means to maintain the same orientation
5 relative to the headset apparatus as a whole irrespective of which one of the two earshells it is attached to. This enables the attachment means to be worn on either the user's left-hand side or right-hand side. Furthermore, it may be preferable that the surface formation defining a given headwear connections
10 means defines a shape which is symmetrical across or about at least one axis generally transverse to the direction in which the attachment means push-fits to the earshells. The reciprocal connection means of the attachment means may be in the form of a harness shaped to push-fit over the headwear connection means
15 from one side of the harness and to push-fit over the further headwear connection means from the other side of the harness. In this way the orientation of the harness is not required to be altered in order to allow the harness to fit to either of the headwear connection means and the further headwear connection
20 means.

The reciprocal connection means is preferably arranged to connect to the connection means of either one of the earshells and the further headwear means to place the attachment means in
25 the same orientation relative to the headset in use. This enables articles connected to the attachment means to retain their orientation (e.g. forward-facing) relative to the head of

the user irrespective of which of the earshells the article is attached to. For example, a microphone attached to an earshell via a given attachment means may retain its forward-facing orientation adjacent a user's face.

5

In one embodiment there is provided a headset apparatus to be worn about the head of a user may include: a earshell and a further earshell each shaped and arranged to be worn about the head of a user and each having a surface portion shaped to
10 define a respective headwear connection means; attachment means for attaching an article to the earshell and for attaching an article to the further earshell, and having a reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of a surface portion defining the respective headwear
15 connection means to allow the headwear connection means and reciprocal connection means push-fit together thereby to connect the attachment means to the surface of either one of the earshell and the further earshell to place the attachment means in the same orientation relative to the headset in either case
20 without penetrating said surface.

Preferably, each of two sides (e.g., opposite sides) of the attachment means has a reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of the surface portion
25 defining a respective one (or each) of the respective headwear connection means. For example, each one of said two (e.g., opposite) sides of the attachment means may present a respective

reciprocal connection means having substantially the same shaping as that of the reciprocal connection means presented by the other said side of the attachment means.

5 Each one of the two reciprocal connection means may be positioned about the attachment means such that an axis of the attachment means along which the reciprocal connection means may be push fitted to the earshell, is substantially parallel to an axis of the attachment means along which the other reciprocal
10 connection means may be push fitted to the further earshell. The aforesaid axes may be collinear.

The two reciprocal connection means may together define a single continuous shaping (e.g., a through-hole).

15 The headset apparatus may also include a further attachment means (e.g., such as is described above) for attaching an article to an aforesaid earshell having reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of the
20 surface portion defining an aforesaid headwear connection means to allow the headwear connection means and further reciprocal connection means to push-fit together thereby to connect the further attachment means to the surface of the headwear member without that surface being penetrated. Thus, articles may be
25 attached to each of two or more earshell using dedicated separate attachment means.

In this way, a complete headset assembly may be provided including not only two earshells (e.g. two earshells) but also two corresponding attachment means for use in attaching articles separately to either one of the two earshells.

5

The attachment means may be connected to the further attachment means.

For example, the first attachment means may be connected to the
10 further attachment means by way of a resiliently deformable
brace of limb shaped to receive the head of a user and arranged
to urge against opposite sides of a user's head by action of the
resilient deformation thereof. In this way, a head brace or neck
band may connect the first and second attachment means and may
15 serve as a headwear retention device for retaining the
attachment means, and the headwear members (earshells) connected
to them, to the head of the user. Alternatively, where the
attachment means carry articles such as electrical signal
conduits (e.g. for use in communications headsets), then the
20 attachment means and the further attachment means may be
connected via a signal conduit cable for conveying electrical
signals between the two attachment means in use.

Preferably, the further reciprocal connection means is arranged
25 to connect to the connection means of either one of the
earshells and the further earshell to place the further

attachment means in the same orientation relative to the headset
in use.

An aforesaid reciprocal connection means may define an aperture
5 through which an aforesaid headwear connection means is shaped
to extend, for example.

The headset apparatus may include communications means connected
to an aforesaid attachment means for attachment to an aforesaid
10 headwear member thereby, and means for conveying from the
headset apparatus via the attachment means electrical
communications signals generated by the communications means.

For example, the headset apparatus may provide an aforesaid
15 earshell arranged to be worn against the head of a user to cover
an ear of the user.

An aforesaid headwear member may preferably be integrally formed
with its headwear connection means.

20

In one form the attachment means may comprise an articulation
portion via which said article is connected to the reciprocal
connection means in use and which is moveable relative to both
the earshell and the reciprocal connection means when the
25 earshell is fitted to the reciprocal connection means thereby to
permit movement of the article relative to both the earshell and

the reciprocal connection means when attached to the earshell in use.

For example, where the article in question is a head strap or a
5 head band/neck band via which the headset apparatus is to be retained on the user's head, the articulation portion permits the headwear means (e.g. earshells) to be moved/adjusted in their position relative to the head strap/neck band etc.

10 Preferably the articulation portion includes a resiliently deformable member rigidly connected to and extending from the reciprocal connection means and being arranged to permit said relative movement of said article connected to the attachment means in use by resilient deformation of the articulation
15 portion.

The articulation portion may include a first articulation limb which is resiliently joined to a second articulation limb of the articulation portion at a join therebetween such that the first
20 articulation limb may be moved from its quiescent position relative to the second articulation limb by resilient flexure and/or torsion of either limb and/or of the join therebetween.

The second articulation limb preferably extends from the first
25 articulation limb in a direction generally transverse to the direction in which the first articulation limb extends.

The articulation portion may include a third articulation limb which is resiliently joined to the second articulation limb at a join therebetween such the third articulation limb may be moved from its quiescent position relative to the second articulation limb by resilient flexure and/or torsion of either limb and/or of the join therebetween, preferably the third articulation limb extends from the second articulation limb in a direction generally transverse to the directions in which the first and second articulation limbs respectively extend.

5
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The headset apparatus may include said article, being a head-strap means for extending across a part of the head of a user thereby to strap the earshell to the head of the user, and the head-strap means is preferably attached to the articulation portion of an aforesaid attachment means.

15

The head-strap means may be attached to any one, some or all of the first and second and third articulation limbs.

20 The first, second and third articulation limbs are preferably collectively arranged to extend in respective directions which are substantially coplanar.

The articulation portion may be integrally formed with the reciprocal connection means.

25

The attachment means may define a harness shaped to embrace the headwear connection means of an aforesaid earshell. The harness may be shaped to surround peripheral parts of said earshell.

- 5 The harness may be shaped to fit within one or more channel(s) formed in the surface of the headwear member by the headwear connection means thereof.

The harness preferably includes connector means to which e.g. a
10 retention strap is connectable and from which the strap may extend across a part of the head of a user thereby to strap an aforesaid headwear member to the head of the user. Most preferably the strap connector means is defined by a portion of the harness shaped to be raised and separated from the surface
15 of the headwear member when the harness is fitted thereto, thereby to enable an article (e.g. the strap) to pass between the strap connector means and the surface of the headwear member over which the connector means is raised thereby to permit attachment of the strap thereto.

20

The harness preferably defines a resiliently deformable collar member shaped and arranged to urge against opposing peripheral parts of the headwear member defining the headwear connection means thereof when fitted thereto. Most preferably the harness
25 is symmetrically shaped about a line/axis such that the harness presents the same shape or profile to the earshell when rotated through 180 degrees about that line/axis. This permits the same

harness to be used on either a left-hand earshell and a right-hand earshell.

Preferably, an aforesaid reciprocal connection means is shaped
5 to fit to an aforesaid headwear connection means substantially
to prevent movement of the reciprocal connection means relative
to the headwear connection means being other than the relative
movement via which the reciprocal connection means is detachably
attachable to the headwear connection means.

10

The headset apparatus may include locking means arranged to
engage with an aforesaid headwear apparatus and/or an aforesaid
attachment means of the headset to retain the aforesaid
attachment means connected to the earshell when the two are
15 fitted together.

The locking means is preferably arranged to prevent movement of
an aforesaid reciprocal connection means relative to an
aforesaid headwear connection means being the relative movement
20 via which the reciprocal connection means is detachably
attachable to the headwear connection means.

The headset apparatus may, in the present or in another aspect
of the invention include the aforesaid article being a cable,
25 and in which an aforesaid earshell includes a cable stowage
member which projects therefrom and is located adjacent the
headwear connection means so as to project over a part of the

reciprocal connection means when fitted to the headwear
connection means in use thereby to define therewith a stowage
channel dimensioned to stow portions of the cable. This feature
also represents another invention, separate from or combinable
5 with, any other aspects of the invention discussed herein.

Preferably, the width of the stowage channel is dimensioned to
substantially match the width of the cable. More preferably, the
depth of the stowage channel is dimensioned to be equal to or
10 greater than the width of the cable.

The depth of the stowage channel may be dimensioned to be equal
to at least twice the width of the cable.

15 Preferably, the earshell defines a body having headwear signal
conduit means embedded therein and extending through a part of
the body of the earshell from one surface part of the body to a
different surface part thereof so as to provide a conduit for
electrical headwear signals through the body part between the
20 different surface parts. This feature also represents another
invention, separate from and combinable with, any other aspects
of the invention discussed herein.

The headwear signal conduit means is preferably an electrically
25 conductive element embedded directly within the body of the
earshell.

The body of the earshell is preferably formed by molding and the headwear signal conduit means is embedded within the body by the molding.

5 Preferably, the headwear signal conduit means is exposed at a surface part of the earshell adjacent or within the surface portion of the earshell defining the headwear connection means, and the attachment means includes signal conduit means arranged to make electrical contact with the headwear signal conduit
10 means when connected to the surface of the earshell thereby to permit electrical signals to be conveyed between the between the earshell and the attachment means.

Preferably, the earshell is arranged to be worn over an ear of
15 the user and includes electrical communications means for providing audible signals to the ear of the user generated thereby from electrical signals conveyed thereto from the attachment means via said headwear signal conduit means.

20 The earshell is preferably arranged to be worn over an ear of the user and includes electrical communications means for providing audible signals to the ear of the user generated thereby from electrical signals.

25 In another of its aspects, the present invention may provide a headset apparatus substantially as described above. The invention in its aspects described above epitomises a method of

attaching an article to a earshell in a headset apparatus, and it is to be understood that the invention in other aspects thereof, provides such a corresponding method.

5 In one embodiment there is provided a method of attaching an article to a earshell in a headset apparatus (e.g. a communications headset containing communications means) to be worn about the head of a user the method including: providing an earshell shaped and arranged to be worn about the head of a user
10 and having a surface portion shaped to define a headwear connection means; providing attachment means for attaching an article to the earshell having a reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of the surface portion defining the headwear connection means (e.g. which
15 shaping extends along the surface of the headwear member); push-fitting the headwear connection means and reciprocal connection means together thereby to connect the attachment means to the surface of the headwear member (e.g. so as to extend thereacross) without penetrating said surface. Additional
20 features of the headset apparatus described above epitomise corresponding additional features of the corresponding method of attaching an article to an earshell.

In yet another embodiment there is provided a communications
25 headset apparatus to be worn about the head of the user, including communications means (e.g. for conveying electrical communication signals or the like), a headwear member (e.g. an

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earshell or earcup) , and an attachment member arranged to be detachably attachable to a part of the headwear member outwardly facing of the user in use, wherein some or all of the one or more said communications means are attached to the attachment member only, and are attachable to the headwear member via the attachment member. It is to be understood that the manner via which the attachment member attaches to the headwear member may be such as is set out in any of the aspects of the present invention discussed above. The communications means may include electrical/optical signal conduit cables, transducer means (e.g. acoustal-electrical transducers such as speakers), a Boom arm for a Boom microphone, microphone circuit boards, electronic chips, junction boxes and switching devices.

In one form there is provided a headset apparatus further comprising a manual switch apparatus to be worn about the

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body of a user including: a switch box means having a
body with a manually operable switch device for
controlling the operation of a remote communications
apparatus; a support means having attachment means for
5 attaching the support means about the body of a user, the
support means being shaped to releasably receive at least
a part of the body of the switch box means thereby to
selectively retain the switch box means in either of two
different positions in which the orientation of the
10 switch device relative to the support means is
substantially reversed as between said two positions.

Preferably, the at least a part of the body of the switch
box means arranged to be received by the support means is
15 substantially symmetrical as between said two positions,
and the support means is shaped to reciprocally
correspond with the shaping of the part of the switch box
thereby to intimately fit in abutment therewith when the
part is received in either of the two positions.

20 The connection means may define a platform member upon
which the switch box means is arranged to be supported
when the at least a part of the switch box means is
received by the support means.

25

The connection means preferably defines a recess shaped to receive at least a part of the switch box means.

The manual switch apparatus preferably includes a signal
5 conduit cable(s) extending from the body of the switch box means such that in either one of the two different positions the orientation of the signal conduit cable(s) relative to the support means is substantially reversed relative to the other of the two different positions.

10

Preferably, the location(s) on the switch box body from which the signal conduit cable (s) extend is positioned in one of the two different positions and the manually operable switch device is located on the switch box body to be
15 positioned in the other of the two different positions when the at least a part of the switch box is received by the support means.

Preferably, the attachment means is arranged to attachment
20 to an item of apparel of the user. It is to be understood that the manual switch apparatus described above epitomises a method or methods of supporting/attaching a switch box and it is to be understood that the invention in other aspects thereof, provides such a corresponding method. Thus in one
25 embodiment, there is provided a method of wearing a manual switch apparatus about the body of a user, the method including: providing a switch box means having a body with a

manually operable switch device for controlling the
operation of a remote communications apparatus; providing a
support means having attachment means for attaching the
support means about the body of a user, - providing the
5 support means shaped to releasably receive at least a part
of the body of the switch box means; selectively retaining
the switch box means in either of two different positions in
which the orientation of the switch device relative to the
support means is substantially reversed as between said two
10 positions .

There now follows a description of examples of the present
invention with reference to the accompanying drawings in
which:

15

Figure 1 illustrates a pair of attachment harnesses
for a headset apparatus, the attachment harnesses carrying
communications apparatus and being connected together via an
electrical signal conduit cable;

20

Figure 2 illustrates a pair of earshells arranged to
receive the pair of attachment harnesses of Figure 1;

Figure 3 illustrates a headset including a pair of
earshells of Figure 2 to each of which is attached a

respective one of the pair of attachment harnesses of Figure 1, a head-strap and a neck band are attached to the pair of harnesses;

Figure 4 schematically illustrates the reversibility of positioning of the harnesses of Figures 1 and 3 relative to the pair of earshells of Figures 2 and 3 conserving the orientation of harnesses;

Figure 5 illustrates a harness joining, and integrally formed with, a pair of attachment members so as to form a neck band for receiving the lower head or neck of a user in use;

Figure 6 illustrates the harness of Figure 5 connected to a surface formation of an earshell as illustrated in Figures 2 to 4 via a reciprocally shaped attachment member;

Figure 7 illustrates the arrangement of Figure 6 and indicates the direction of a torsional movement of the harness relative to the attachment member;

Figure 8 illustrates the arrangement of Figure 6 and indicates a direction of a flexing movement of the harness relevant to the attachment member;

Figure 9 illustrates a peripheral attachment harness arranged for attachment to a surface formation of an earshell;

Figure 10 illustrates the attachment harness and earshell of Figure 9 in assembled form;

Figure 11 illustrates the harness of Figures 9 and 10;

Figure 12 and Figure 13 illustrate an earshell and attachment harness;

5 Figure 14 illustrates a surface formation in an earshell defining an attachment member for attachment of a harness thereto.

Figure 15 illustrates a communications headset to which is connected a headset connector cable along which 10 is located a switchbox;

Figure 16 illustrates a support platform for a switchbox;

Figure 17 illustrates the switchbox of Figure 15 in greater detail;

15 Figure 18a and Figure 18B illustrate the switchbox of Figure 17 in each one of two opposite orientations;

Figure 19 schematically illustrates the positioning of the switchbox of Figure 17 in each of the two different orientations thereof illustrated in Figure 18A 20 and Figure 18B.

Referring to Figure 1, there is illustrated a pair of attachment harnesses (1) each shaped to define an opening (2) passing through the body of the harness and being 25 accessible from opposite sides thereof. The two harnesses of the pair are substantially identical and the

following description of the features of one harness of the pair applies equally to the same-numbered features of the other harness of the pair.

5 In passing through the body of the harness, the opening (2) extends from one side of the harness to an opposite side thereof. At each such side of the harness is formed a harness ridge (100A, 100B) which substantially circumscribes the periphery of the opening (2) as it
10 appears at the side of the harness in which the respective harness ridge is formed. Thus an outward harness ridge (100A) circumscribes the periphery of the opening (2) which faces outwardly of the head of the user in use, while an identically shaped inner harness ridge
15 (100B) on the opposite side of the harness (1) circumscribes the periphery of the opening (2) which faces towards the head of the user in use. Each harness ridge (100A, 100B) extends from the body of the respective harness generally along the direction in which
20 the harness (1) is moved when push-fitted to an earshell member as discussed below.

Recesses (150) are formed within each harness ridge and are shaped so as to intimately receive reciprocally
25 shaped formations in the surface of an earshell to which the harness is arranged to be attached. Through-holes

(8) pass through the body of each harness member (1) and are dimensioned to receive screws which engage with blind screw holes (15) formed within (but not penetrating through) the body of the earshell in question.

5

A microphone (5) is connected to one of the harnesses via a boom arm (4) containing electrical signal conduit means which pass from the microphone along the boom arm and into the body of the harness to which the boom arm is connected. A separate microphone (6) is embedded within a recess formed in the body of the harness means carrying the boom arm being insulated from immediate contact with the internal surface of the recess within which it is embedded by means of a rubber cushion surround which serves to attenuate acoustical noise propagating through the body of the harness thereby substantially acoustically isolating the embedded microphone (6) from the body of the harness in which it is embedded. A similar embedded microphone (and method of embedding) may be provided in the other of the two harnesses illustrated in Figure 1.

10
15
20

An electrical signal input/output conduit (7) is connected to the body of the harness which carries the boom arm (4) and serves as the means via which electrical signals are conveyed to and from electrical components

25

carried by or within either or both of the harnesses of Figure 1. An electrical signal junction box (not shown) is provided with the body of at least the harness to which the input/output signal cable (7) is connected.

5 The signal junction box contains one or more input/output electrical signal ports directly electrically connected to the input/output cable (7) and electrically connected to a plurality of other electrical signal ports for conveying electrical signals between the input/output

10 signal cable (7) and one or more of the other electrical signal ports. These other electrical signal ports are each connected, respectively, to signal conduit lines extending along the boom arm (4) to the microphone (5) located at the end thereof, to signal conduit lines for

15 conveying signals from the embedded microphone (6) embedded in each of the two harnesses (1). A signal conduit cable (3) is also connected to the signal junction means and extends from the harness containing the junction box to the other harness of the pair whereat

20 it electrically connects to electrical articles attached to or carried by that other harness. In this way the interconnecting signal conduit cable (3) enables electrical signals to pass between the two harnesses. The interconnecting signal conduit cable (3) is of

25 sufficient length to form a semi-circular shape

dimensioned to receive the head of a headset wearer in use.

Figure 2 illustrates a pair of ear cups to which the pair
5 of harnesses illustrated in Figure 1 are arranged to be attached in use. Each ear cup comprises an earshell (9), which is shown in greater detail in Figure 14 (which shall be referred to hereafter), and an annular cushion member (10) attached to the earshell and arranged to be
10 pressed to those parts of the head of the user surrounding the ear which the earshell (9) is designed to simultaneously cover.

In the surface of the earshell (9) intended to face
15 outermost in use is defined a surface formation comprising a projecting portion (11), which projects outwardly of the body of the earshell (9), a circumferential recess (200) circumscribing the projecting portion (11) and outwardly extending lug
20 portions (175) which intersect parts of the circumferential recess (200). Each of these three respective surface formations is shaped in correspondence with the opening (2) extending through the body of a harness, with a circumferential harness ridge (100A,
25 100B), and with a harness ridge recess (150) respectively. Consequently, the opening (2) of a harness

is shaped to reciprocally correspond with the shaping of the sides (16) of the projecting surface formation (11) of the earshell (9) to allow the projecting portion (11) of the earshell and the opening (2) of a harness to push-fit together thereby to connect the harness (1) to the surface of the earshell (9) without requiring the use of a through-hole to achieve such attachment. Similarly, the circumferential harness ridge (100A, 100B) is shaped to reciprocally correspond with the shaping of the circumferential earshell recess (200) to allow the harness ridge and earshell recess to push-fit together thereby to connect the harness and earshell together. Also, the earshell ridge recesses (150) are each shaped to reciprocally correspond with the shaping of a respective lug portion (175) intersecting the circumferential recess (200) of the earshell such that each such lug may be push-fitted into a corresponding harness ridge recess thereby to permit the harness to attach to the surface of the earshell. Thus, it will be understood that each one of these three reciprocating formations provides a means of allowing the harness (1) to push-fit onto the surface of the earshell (9). Each of these corresponding shapings is dimensioned such that the respective push-fit is a close interference fit, and preferably a snap-fit, rather than a loose fit. The cross-section of the projecting portion (11) of the

surface formation of the earshell (9), as viewed along the direction in which the harness (1) is arranged to push-fit thereto, has a periphery (defined by surface 16) shaped to match the shape of the periphery of the opening (2) formed in the harness (1). The surface formation of the earshell intermediate the outwardly projecting portion (11) and the circumferential recess (200) is preferably shaped to reciprocally correspond with the shaping of the surface intermediate periphery of the opening (2) of the harness (1) and the circumferential harness ridge (100A, 100B). In this example both intermediate surfaces are substantially flat.

Referring to Figure 2, a fixing plate (12) is provided which is shaped to cover the outwardly facing parts of the harness (1) when connected to the earshell in use. Fixing screws (13) are provided to extend through apertures (14) formed within the fixing plate (12) and to engage with blind screw-holes (15) formed within (but not penetrating the body of) the earshell. In this way the fixing plate (12) in combination with the fixing screws (13) serves to prevent movement of the harness (1) relative to the earshell (9) in the only direction which would enable detachment of the former from the latter. The surface formation defined by the earshell, and the reciprocally shaped parts of the harness push-fitted

thereto, are shaped to prevent rotational movement of the harness (1) relative to the earshell. Figure 3 illustrates the pair of harnesses of Figure 1 attached to and fully assembled with the ear cups and accessories illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 4 illustrates the harness pair illustrated in Figure 1 in each of two opposing orientations relative to the assembled headset apparatus. The headset assembly illustrated in figure 3 is also illustrated as one of the two opposite headset assembly configurations illustrated in Figure 4. Consequently as between Figures 1, 3 and 4, like articles are assigned like reference numerals.

An opening (2), a circumferential harness ridge (100A, 100B) and a harness ridge recesses (150) is formed on each one of the two sides of a given harness (1) at which the opening (2) appears. This means that either of those two sides of a given harness may be push-fitted with a reciprocally shaped surface formation of an earshell (9) as discussed above. The surface formation defined by each of the left-hand and right-hand earshells (9) of the headset is shaped to be symmetrical across a line passing through the surface formation in a direction generally transverse to the direction in which a given harness (1) is arranged to move relative to the earshell (9) when

being push-fitted thereto. This means that the reciprocal shaping of a given harness (1) is similarly symmetrical. Thus, reversal of the orientation of a given earshell surface formation relative to a selected harness (1) has no effect on the ability of the former to push-fit to the latter. As a result of this a selected harness (1) may be push-fitted to either of two oppositely facing earshells (9) such as illustrated in Figure 4. In a first position "A" the harness of Figure 1 bearing the boom arm (4) is configured to push-fit to a left-hand earshell while the other harness of the pair is configured to push-fit to the right-hand earshell. This configuration may simply be reversed by swapping the location of one of the pair of harnesses with that of the other, as is shown in configuration "B" of Figure 4 in which the harness carrying the boom arm is attached to the right-hand earshell while the other harness of the pair is attached to the left-hand earshell.

Figure 5 illustrates another example of an attachment member according to the present invention shaped to push-fit to a shaping in the surface of each of a pair of earshells.

Two attachment members are illustrated in the arrangement of Figure 5 and to each one of this pair of attachment

members is attached a neckband article (54) which is integrally formed with the structure of each of the pair of attachment members.

5 Referring to Figure 14 in conjunction with Figure 5, an attachment member (50) of the attachment means of Figure 5 is shaped to reciprocally match the shaping of the pair of aligned recesses (18, 19) formed within the outer surface of an earshell (9) to which the attachment member
10 (50) is arranged to be push-fitted. Each attachment member (50) of the attachment means comprises a U-shaped bend (50) formed within a length of resiliently deformable wire. The U-shaped bend comprises a first limb (55) joined to a second limb (56) which extend along
15 one side of the first limb (56) parallel thereto and terminates at an end. The width (i.e. gauge) of the wire of each of the two limbs, and the separation between the two limbs are dimensioned such that the U-bend matches the width of the aligned channel formations (18, 19)
20 defined by the surface formation of the earshell (9) to which the U-bend attachment member is to be push-fitted in use. The attachment member may also be shaped to ensure that both of the first and second (55, 56) U-bend limbs abut the same surface of a given channel (18 or 19)
25 when fitted therein in use. This configuration permits the second limb (56) of the U-bend to urge against the

surface of the channel within which it is received in reaction to, and in resistance to, a twisting force applied about the axis of the first limb (55) of the attachment member in use. This renders the attachment member resilient against such twisting forces in use. In alternative embodiments the second limb (56) may be provided in other than a U-shape configuration, such as an L-shaped configuration in conjunction with the first limb (55), and any other suitable configuration may be employed whereby the second limb extends generally transversely from the direction in which the first limb extends. This transverse extension provides the means for resisting the aforementioned twisting forces. Alternatively, the U-bend may be dimensional to freely rotate (or be rotatable in response to a small turning force) about the axis of the first limb (55) and may be rotatable through 360 degrees, or through a limited range of angles determined by the dimensions or shaping of the recess in which it is fitted in use.

Preferably the attachment member (55, 56) is dimensioned to snap-fit or interference-fit, with one or both of the aligned channel formations (18, 19) formed on the surface of the earshell (9) to which the former is to be attached in use.

The attachment means also includes an articulation portion (52, 53, 57) via which the neck-strap article (54) is connected to the U-shaped connection member. The articulation portion is also integrally formed within the same length of wire from which the U-bend and the neck-strap (54) are formed. The articulation portion comprises a three-limb co-planer lobe formation comprising four bend joins in the wire.

- 10 A first articulation limb (52) is joined at a bend formation to the end of the first limb (55) of the attachment member (55, 56) other than the one which joins to the second limb (56) of the aforementioned U-bend. The first articulation limb (52) extends in a direction
- 15 generally transverse to the direction in which the attachment member (55, 56) extends. Movement of the first articulation limb (52) relative to the attachment member (55, 56) is permitted by resilient flexing of the former relative to the latter about the bend join
- 20 therebetween, or by a torsional/twisting or turning movement of the first articulation portion around/about the long axis of the limb (55) of the attachment member to which it is joined.
- 25 A second articulation limb (53) is joined to the first articulation limb by a bend formed in the same wire which

forms the first articulation limb. Movement of the second articulation limb relative to the first articulation limb is permitted by resilient flexing of the former relative to the latter at the join
5 therebetween, or by a twisting/tortional movement or turning action therebetween.

The end of the second articulation limb not joined to the first articulation limb is joined to a third articulation
10 limb by means of a bend in the wire forming both the second and third articulation limbs. The third articulation limb (57) extends generally transversely to the direction in which the second articulation limb extends, and the second articulation limb extends in a
15 direction generally transverse to that in which the first articulation limb extends. Each of the first, second and third articulation limbs extend in substantially the same plane. Movement of the third articulation limb(57) relative to the second articulation limb (53) is
20 permitted by resilient flexing of the two about the bend therebetween or by a tortional/twisting or turning movement of the third articulation limb around the second articulation limb at the aforementioned join
therebetween.

25

In this way, multiple resiliently deformable articulation joints are provided by the attachment means intermediate the U-bend attachment member (55, 56) and the neck-brace/band (54) connected thereto via the intermediate articulation portion. This permits many degrees of freedom of movement of the neck-brace/band (54) relative to each earshell (9) to which it is attached in use.

Figure 6 illustrates such a connection. It is to be noted that the surface channels (18, 19) defined by the surface formation of the earshell (9), to which the attachment member (55, 56) is to be push-fitted, is not obscured by the harness member (1) when fitted to other such surface formations of the earshell.

As shown in Figure 6, the location (6) on the outer surface of the earshell (9) of the surface channels (18, 19), within the attachment member is to fit, is off-set (by an amount Δ) from the axis (600) of symmetry of the earshell. This means that the attachment member of the attachment means fits to the earshell at a location which is generally not directly over the ear of the user when the earshell is placed over his/her ear in use. It has been found that this off-set fitment positioning assists in applying a suitably directed force to the head of the user for maintaining the earshell in position when worn.

In particular, it is preferable that the attachment member of the attachment means is fitted to the earshell at one side of its axis of symmetry (600) such that the neck-brace/band (54) extends over and around the half of the earshell on the other side of the symmetry axis. This means that, when worn, the neck brace/band will be attached to, and will apply a resilient clamping force at, the earshell at a location forward of the ear of the user when worn thereby directing a greater part of the clamping force to those parts of the head of the user in front of his ear rather than behind it. Suitably directing this clamping force in this way better assists in maintaining the earshells on the user's head when worn.

15

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the arrangement illustrated in Figure 6 and like articles as between those figures are assigned like reference numerals. Figure 7 schematically illustrates the rotational/tortional movement (700) permitted by the articulation portion (52, 53, 57) and/or the attachment member (55, 56) when attached to the earshell (9). Figure 8 illustrates schematically the movement permitted by the flexing (800) of parts of the articulation portion discussed above.

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Figure 11 illustrates an alternative form of attachment means providing a harness (70, 80) shaped to embrace a headshell (9) and to surround peripheral parts of the headshell when attached thereto. In Figures 9, 10 and 5 11 like items are assigned like reference numerals. Similarly, in Figures 9 and 10 apparatus illustrated and described with reference to earlier figures is also shown, and like items therein are assigned like reference numerals in Figures 9 and 10 accordingly.

10

The peripheral earshell harness of Figure 11 comprises a collar structure formed from a single length of resiliently formable wire shaped to form a flattened loop with an opening (75) defined by opposing and separated 15 terminal ends of the wire. Lobe portions (80) are formed within the harness by shaping portions of the wire to deviate from the general sense of curvature of the harness as a whole over a limited region of the harness so as to define a lobe portion which is generally raised 20 from and outwardly radially displaced from the other parts (70) of the harness to which it is connected.

Thus, the harness of Figure 11 defines a collar structure possessing four equally spaced lobe portions (80) of 25 substantially the same shape and dimension, joined together by, and raised from, intermediate harness

portions (70). The terminal opposing ends of the wire forming the collar structure each possesses a terminal lug (90) which extends inwardly of the harness towards opposing inwardly-facing parts of the collar structure thereof. The length of wire defining the harness is sufficiently resiliently deformable to permit the opening (75) between the separated opposing terminal ends of the wire to be increased by a splaying action, whereby the resilience of the wire urges those splayed terminal ends to return to their quiescent positions.

The earshell (9) is provided with a groove or channel formed in the surface thereof which substantially circumscribes the outermost periphery of the edge of the earshell. The width of the wire defining the harness (70, 80), and the shape, dimensions and curvature of the collar structure defined thereby is shaped to reciprocally correspond with the shaping of the surface portion of the earshell (9) defining the groove (85) to allow the portions (70) of the harness intermediate the lobe portions (80) thereof to push-fit intimately within the groove (85) circumscribing the earshell (9) thereby to permit the harness to similarly circumscribe the earshell when so connected. The surface formation of the earshell also includes a pair of blind holes (not shown) which extend into, but do not penetrate, the earshell

surface and which are each dimensioned to receive a respective one of the two terminal lug portions (90) located at the terminal ends of the wire forming the harness.

5

Figure 9 schematically illustrates the manner in which the harness is connectable to the earshell in question. That is to say, the harness may be simply pushed over the periphery of the earshell where the peripheral surface groove (85) is located, a slight splaying of the resiliently deformable wire forming the harness being required to permit the portions (70) intermediate the lobe portions of the harness to slip over the edge of the circumferential recess (85) and to subsequently clip-fit into the recess by the resilient urging of the wire of the harness once the splaying force has been removed. The same splaying and clipping action enables the terminal lug portions (90) to be slid over and to clip into the respective recesses provided in the surface of the earshell (9) therefore. In this way, the earshell at those portions intermediate its lobe portions, fits into and urges against the base of the groove (85) formed within the surface of the earshell (9) thereby to fit the former to the latter in use.

25

The depth of the circumferential recess (85) is preferably equal in value, or greater in value, to the diameter of the wire forming the harness. This enables those parts of the harness wire received within the
5 groove to be fully received therein. The raised lobe portions (80) of the harness are raised from those parts of the harness which urge against the earshell in use, by an amount which exceeds the depth of the peripheral groove (85). This ensures that the lobe portions are
10 also raised from, and separated from, the outermost adjacent surface of the earshell (9) at the periphery of the groove therein when the harness is fitted thereto. Consequently a gap is defined in between the raised loop portion and the outermost adjacent surface of the
15 earshell member over which the lobe portion is raised which permits e.g. a strap or other article to be threaded therethrough to enable that article to be attached to the headshell via the lobe portion of the harness.

20

In the present examples, the lobe portion is shaped to define, in collaboration with the earshell, a gap suitable for receiving a head retention strap, the strap being shaped to extend across a part of the head of the
25 user thereby to strap the earshell to the head of the user when worn. Figure 10 illustrates the harness

attached to an earshell as discussed above in which a lobe portion (80) thereof is raised from the outermost adjacent surface of the earshell therewith to define a gap (95) through which a strap, for example, may be threaded.

Figure 12 illustrates an earshell (9) including a cable stowage member (130) which projects from the surface thereof (outwardly facing in use) and is located adjacent the outwardly projecting surface portion (11) of the surface formation of the earshell which is shaped to be received by the opening (2) formed in the body of the harness member (1) discussed with reference to Figures 1 to 4 above. The stowage member (130) is also a surface formation of the earshell and is dimensioned to project over a part of the harness member (1) when that harness is push-fitted to the earshell in use thereby to define therewith a stowage channel (140) dimensioned to stow portions of cable (3) which extend from the harness member (1). In particular, the stowage channel (140) is dimensioned and positioned to receive portions of a cable which electrically connects one harness member (1) of a pair of switch harnesses to the other harness member of the pair such as is shown in Figure 4.

25

The width of the stowage channel is dimensioned to substantially match the width of the cable (3) it is intended to stow, and the depth of the stowage channel is dimensioned to exceed twice the width of such cable
5 thereby to enable a loop (135) of such cable to be stowed therein.

Figure 14 illustrates an earshell (9) for use in a communications headset apparatus. The earshell of Figure
10 14 possesses features substantially identical to the features of the headshell or headshells discussed above with reference to the preceding drawings of this application. Consequently, as between Figure 14 and the preceding drawings, like articles are assigned like
15 reference numerals.

In Figure 14 the earshell (9) defines a body having an earshell signal conduit means (21) embedded therein and extending through a part of the body of the earshell from
20 the outer surface (shown) thereof to the inner surface (not shown) thereof so as to provide a conduit for electrical signals through the earshell between the inner and outer surfaces in question.

25 The signal conduit means comprises a plurality of electrical contact portions each of which is electrically

isolated from the other such portion, and each of which provides a separate electrical signal conduit between the inner and outer surfaces of the earshell. This enables a given one of a plurality of electrical articles located within the earshell in use to be placed in separate electrical connection with one of a separate plurality of electrical articles attached to the outer surface of the earshell (e.g. attached by a harness). The earshell (9) is preferably injection moulded and the electrical conduit means (21) is embedded directly within the body of the earshell during the injection moulding process thereby to enable the signal conduit to be integrally formed with the earshell without requiring through-holes to be formed in the earshell for the purposes of attaching the signal conduit thereto.

The signal conduit (21) is exposed at a surface part of the earshell (9) within the surface portion of the earshell which defines the connection means (11) used to push-fit with a harness member (1) such as is discussed with reference to Figures 1 to 4 above. The attachment harness (1) may include a signal conduit means arranged to make electrical contact with the signal conduit (21) embedded in the earshell when the former is push-fitted to the earshell in use thereby to permit electrical signals to be conveyed between the earshell and the

attachment harness (1). This enables electrical signals to be conveyed between electrical items (e.g. circuit boards, electro-acoustic transducers etc.) within an earshell and communications hardware (e.g. microphones, 5 signal conduit cables, junction boxes etc) attached to or contained within the attachment harness (1).

Figure 15 illustrates a communications headset (500) having attached to it electrical communications apparatus 10 (such as that described above in relation to Figures 1 to 14). The headset is operably connectable to a host radio or communications console (not shown) via a headset connector cable (7, 515) which permits electrical communications signals to pass between the headset (500) 15 and the remote radio or communications console.

The headset connector cable comprises a first cable portion (7) connected to the headset apparatus (500) via a suitable connection (526) to electrical components 20 (e.g. a junction box) located on the headset apparatus (500), and connected to switching apparatus housed within a switchbox (510) via a suitable connection (527) with the body of the switchbox. Similarly, a second headset cable portion (515) is connected to the same switching 25 apparatus (internal to the switchbox) and extends from a suitable connection (528) with the body of the switchbox

and terminates at a console connector means (525) at the distal end thereof.

The switchbox (510) comprises a body with two manually operable switch devices accessible at the surface of the switchbox body. A first manually operable switch device is a Pressell switch (520) and a second switch device is a push-button switch (521). Each such switching device is operably connected to the switching apparatus internal to the body of the switchbox (not shown) so as to enable remote control of operation functions of the remote console (not shown) to which the switchbox (510) is connected remotely via the second portion (515) of the headset cable.

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The internal switching apparatus, and the functions of the remote console which may be remotely controlled via operation of either or both of the switching devices (521, 520) may be any suitable such apparatus and control functions as would be readily apparent to the skilled person. For example, such functions include the remote control of the transmit function of the console, remote control of a mute function thereof, or control of monitoring or override functions of operations of the remote console for example. Indeed, virtually any function or operation of the remote console may be

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arranged to be remotely controllable by operation of the switching devices of the switchbox (510).

Figure 17 illustrates the switchbox (510) in greater
5 detail. The body of the switchbox is substantially
symmetrical across a "Centre Line" (560) indicated in
Figure 17. However, the push-button switch (521) and the
Pressell switch (520) are each positioned to one side of
the Centre Line (560), while each of the first portion
10 (7) and second portion (515) of the headset connector
cable are connected to the body of the switchbox at the
other side of the Centre Line. This positioning enables
a user to gain manual access to either or both of the
switching devices of the switchbox without being impeded
15 or obstructed by the presence of the first and second
headset cable portions extending from the switchbox.

The base of the body of the switchbox (510) possesses a
shaping (555) which is also substantially symmetrical
20 about the aforementioned Centre Line. Figure 16
illustrates a support platform (530) having an attachment
means (535) for attaching the support platform to an item
of clothing of the wearer of the headset apparatus (500)
in use. The attachment means may be any suitable
25 attachment means such as would be readily apparent to the
skilled person, and may include a clip, catch, hook or a

pin or the like (not shown). The support platform comprises a back plate (540) to which the attachment means (not shown) is connected, and a platform member (545) extending outwardly from an edge of the back plate
5 lowermost in use, and extends generally transversely to the face of the back plate outwardly presented in use.

The support platform (545) defines a bowl formation (550) the cavity of which is shaped to reciprocally correspond
10 with the shaping of the symmetrical base formation (555) of the switchbox body (510) thereby to releasably receive the switchbox base formation to enable that formation to intimately fit into the cavity of the support platform bowl (550). The switchbox base formation (555) is
15 thereby able to intimately fit in abutment with surfaces of the bowl cavity (550) thereby to enable the switchbox to snap-fit, or at least grip-fit, therewith.

A consequence of the symmetry of both the switchbox body
20 base formation (555), and the reciprocally shaped support platform bowl cavity (550) is the reversibility of the positioning of the switchbox body relative to the support platform (530). Figure 18A, 18B and Figure 19 schematically illustrate this reversibility. Like items
25 as between Figures 18A, 18B, 19 and Figures 15 to 17 are assigned like reference numerals.

Figure 18A illustrates the switchbox in a first orientation (orientation "A") thereby presenting the front side of the switchbox to the viewer, while Figure 5 18B illustrates the switchbox in a reverse orientation in which the reverse side of the switchbox body is presented to the viewer (orientation "B"). It is to be noted that in either of these two orientations the formation (555) formed in the base of the switchbox body presents the 10 same profile to the support platform bowl cavity (550) when the former is received in the latter as is schematically illustrated in Figure 19.

In this way, the headsets connector cable portions (7, 15 515) extending from the body of the switchbox, and both of the two manually operable switch devices (520, 521) on the body of the switchbox are reversed in their orientation relative to the support platform (530) as between the two opposite orientations "A" and "B". This 20 enables the switchbox body to be positioned in a most convenient orientation relative to the user of the headset apparatus (500), and the wearer of the support platform (530) without requiring any relocation of, or modification to, the support platform in its attachment 25 to the wearer's clothing. For example, when positioned in orientation "A" the switching devices of the switchbox

may be optimally positioned for access thereto by the right hand of the user, while orientation "B" may provide optimal access by the left hand of the user. Thus, the user may simply switch between these two orientations, as
5 and when required, merely by detaching the switchbox from the support platform, reversing its orientation relative to the support platform, and reconnecting the switchbox to the support platform.

10

It is to be understood that modifications and variations, such as would be readily apparent to the skilled person, may be made to the embodiments described above (which are purely exemplary) without departing from the scope of the
15 present invention disclosed herein.

20

25

CLAIMS:

1. Headset apparatus to be worn about the head of a user comprising:

5 a first earshell and an oppositely facing second earshell, each earshell being shaped and arranged to be worn over an ear of a user and each having a surface portion shaped to define a respective headwear connection means;

10 an article to be attached to the first or second earshell; and

15 an attachment means to be worn on either a user's left hand side or right hand side and for indirectly attaching the article to the first or second earshell via the attachment means, the attachment means being attached to the article;

20 wherein each of two opposite sides of the attachment means has a reciprocal connection means shaped to reciprocally correspond with a shaping of a surface portion defining a respective headwear connection means to allow the headwear connection means and the respective reciprocal connection means to push-fit together without penetrating said surface portion, thereby allowing the article to be indirectly attached by the attachment means to the surface portion of either one of the oppositely facing first and 25 second earshells whilst retaining the orientation of the article relative to the oppositely facing first and second earshells.

2. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the article comprises a microphone boom arm carrying thereon a microphone apparatus.

5

3. Headset apparatus according to claim 1 in which each one of said two sides of the attachment means presents a respective reciprocal connection means having substantially the same shaping as that of the reciprocal connection means presented by the other said side of the attachment means.

10

4. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which the body of one of the headwear connection means and reciprocal connection means defines a channel, recess or opening therein and the body of the other of the headwear and reciprocal connection means is shaped and arranged to fit intimately within said channel, recess or opening to abut the body of the connection means where it defines said channel, recess or opening.

15
20

5. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said article is a signal conduit means for conveying electrical signals to/from the attachment means.

25

6. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said article is a headset retention apparatus for use in retaining the headset about the head of the user.

7. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim
comprising a further attachment means for attaching an
article to an aforesaid earshell, the further attachment
5 means having a reciprocal connection means shaped to
reciprocally correspond with a shaping of the surface
portion defining, an aforesaid headwear connection means to
allow the headwear connection means and reciprocal
connection means to push-fit together thereby to connect the
10 further attachment means to the surface of the earshell
without penetrating that surface.

8. Headset apparatus according to claim 7 in which the
attachment means is connected to the further attachment
15 means.

9. Headset apparatus according to claim 7 or 8 in which
the reciprocal connection means of the further attachment
means is arranged to connect to the headwear connection
20 means of either one of the earshells to place the further
attachment means in the same orientation relative to the
first and second earshells of the headset in use.

10. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in
25 which an aforesaid reciprocal connection means is an
aperture through which an aforesaid headwear connection

means is shaped to extend when the attachment means is connected to the earshell.

11. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim
5 comprising communications means connected to an aforesaid attachment means for attachment to an aforesaid earshell thereby, and means for conveying from the headset apparatus via the attachment means electrical communications signals generated by the communications means.

10

12. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which an aforesaid earshell is arranged to be worn against the head of a user to cover an ear of the user.

15 13. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which an aforesaid earshell is integrally formed with its headwear connection means.

14. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim
20 wherein the attachment means comprises an articulation portion via which said article is connected to the reciprocal connection means to be moveable relative to both the earshell and the reciprocal connection means when the earshell is fitted to the reciprocal connection means in
25 use.

15. Headset apparatus according to claim 14 in which the articulation portion comprises a resiliently deformable member connected to and extending from the reciprocal connection means and being arranged to permit said relative
5 movement of said article connected to the attachment means in use by resilient deformation of the articulation portion.

16. Headset apparatus according to claim 14 or 15 in which said articulation portion includes a first articulation limb
10 which is resiliently joined to a second articulation limb of the articulation portion at a join therebetween such that the first articulation limb may be moved from its quiescent position relative to the second articulation limb by resilient flexure and/or torsion of either limb and/or of
15 the join therebetween.

17. Headset apparatus according to claim 16 in which the second articulation limb extends from the first articulation limb in a direction generally transverse to the direction in
20 which the first articulation limb extends.

18. Headset apparatus according to claim 16 or 17 in which said articulation portion comprises a third articulation limb which is resiliently joined to the second articulation
25 limb at a join therebetween such the third articulation limb may be moved from its quiescent position relative to the second articulation limb by resilient flexure and/or torsion

of either limb and/or of the join therebetween wherein the
third articulation limb extends from the second articulation
limb in a direction generally transverse to the directions
in which the first and second articulation limbs
5 respectively extend.

19. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 14 to 18
wherein said article is a head-strap means for extending
across a part of the head of a user thereby to strap the
10 earshell to the head of the user, and the head-strap means
is attached to said articulation portion of an aforesaid
attachment means.

20. Headset apparatus according to claim 18 and 19 in
15 which said head-strap means is attached to any one, some or
all of the first and second and third articulation limbs .

21. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 18 to 20
in which the first, second and third articulation limbs are
20 collectively arranged to extend in respective directions
which are substantially coplanar.

22. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 15 to 21
in which said articulation portion is integrally formed with
25 the reciprocal connection means.

23. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which an aforesaid attachment means defines a harness shaped to embrace the headwear connection means of an aforesaid earshell.

5

24. Headset apparatus according to claim 23 in which said harness is shaped to surround peripheral parts of said earshell.

10 25. Headset apparatus according to claim 23 or 24 in which the harness is shaped to fit within one or more channel(s) formed in the surface of the earshell by the headwear connection means thereof.

15 26. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 23 to 25 in which said harness comprises connector means to which a retention strap is connectable and from which said strap may extend across a part of the head of a user thereby to strap an aforesaid earshell to the head of the user, wherein the
20 connector means is defined by a portion of the harness shaped to be raised and separated from the surface of the earshell when the harness is fitted thereto, thereby to enable said strap to pass between the strap connector means and the surface of the earshell over which the connector is
25 raised thereby to permit attachment of said strap thereto.

27. Headset apparatus according to claim 25 or 26 in which
the harness defines a resiliently deformable collar member
shaped and arranged to urge against opposing peripheral
parts of the earshell defining the headwear connection means
5 thereof when fitted thereto.

28. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in
which an aforesaid reciprocal connection means is shaped to
fit to an aforesaid headwear connection means substantially
10 to prevent movement of the reciprocal connection means
relative to the headwear connection means being other than
the relative movement via which the reciprocal connection
means is detachably attachable to the headwear connection
means.

15
29. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim
comprising locking means arranged to engage with an
aforesaid earshell and/or an aforesaid attachment means of
the headset to retain the aforesaid attachment means
20 connected to the earshell when the two are fitted together.

30. Headset apparatus according to claim 29 wherein the
locking means is arranged to prevent movement of an
aforesaid reciprocal connection means relative to an
25 aforesaid headwear connection means being the relative
movement via which the reciprocal connection means is
detachably attachable to the headwear connection means.

31. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said article is a cable, and in which an aforesaid earshell includes a cable stowage member which projects
5 therefrom and is located adjacent said headwear connection means so as to project over a part of the reciprocal connection means when fitted to the headwear connection means in use thereby to define therewith a stowage channel dimensioned to stow portions of said cable.

10

32. Headset apparatus according to claim 31 in which the width of the stowage channel is dimensioned to substantially match the width of said cable.

15 33. Headset apparatus according to claim 32 in which the depth of said stowage channel is dimensioned to be equal to or greater than the width of said cable.

20 34. Headset apparatus according to claim 33 in which the depth of said stowage channel is dimensioned to be equal to at least twice the width of said cable.

25 35. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which an aforesaid earshell defines a body having headwear signal conduit means embedded therein and extending through a part of the body of the earshell from one surface part of the body to a different surface part thereof so as to

provide a conduit for electrical headwear signals through said body part between said different surface parts.

36. Headset apparatus according to claim 35 in which said
5 headwear signal conduit means is an electrically conductive element embedded directly within said body of the earshell.

37. Headset apparatus according to claim 35 or 36 in which
said body of the earshell is formed by molding and said
10 headwear signal conduit means is embedded within said body, by said molding.

38. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 35 to 37
in which the headwear signal conduit means is exposed at a
15 surface part of the earshell adjacent or within the surface portion of the earshell defining said headwear connection means, and said attachment means includes signal conduit means arranged to make electrical contact with said headwear
signal conduit means when connected to the surface of the
20 earshell thereby to permit electrical signals to be conveyed between the earshell and the attachment means.

39. Headset apparatus according to any of claims 35 to 38
in which the earshell is arranged to be worn over an ear of
25 the user and includes electrical communications means for providing audible signals to and/or from a surface of the earshell (e.g. a cavity wall) facing the ear of the user

generated thereby from electrical signals conveyed thereto from the attachment means via said headwear signal conduit means.

5 40. Headset apparatus according to any preceding claim in which the earshell is arranged to be worn over an ear of the user and comprises electrical communications means for providing audible signals to and/or from a surface of the earshell (e.g. a cavity wall) facing the ear of the user
10 generated thereby from electrical signals.

41. A headset apparatus according to any preceding claim comprising a manual switch apparatus to be worn about the body of a user, the manual switch apparatus including:

15 a switch box means having a body with a manually operable switch device for controlling the operation of a remote communications apparatus;

a support means having attachment means for attaching the support means about the body of a user, the support
20 means being shaped to releasably receive at least a part of the body of the switch box means thereby to selectively retain the switch box means in either of two different positions in which the orientation of the switch device relative to the support means is substantially reversed as
25 between said two positions.

42. A headset apparatus according to claim 41 in which
said at least a part of the body of the switch box means
arranged to be received by the support means is
substantially symmetrical as between said two positions, and
5 said support means is shaped to reciprocally correspond with
the shaping of said part of the switch box thereby to
intimately fit in abutment therewith when said part is
received in either of said two positions.

10 43. A headset apparatus according to any of claims 41 to
42 in which said connection means defines a platform member
upon which said switch box means is arranged to be supported
when said at least a part of the switch box means is
received by said support means.

15 44. A headset apparatus according to any of claims 41 to
43 in which said connection means defines a recess shaped to
receive at least a part of the switch box means.

20 45. A headset apparatus according to any of claims 41 to
44 including a signal conduit cable(s) extending from the
body of the switch box means such that in either one of said
two different positions the orientation of the signal
conduit cable(s) relative to the support means is
25 substantially reversed relative to the other of said two
positions.

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46. A headset apparatus according to claim 45 in which the
location(s) on said switch box body from which said signal
conduit cable(s) extend is positioned in one of said two
positions and said manually operable switch device is
5 located on said switch box body to be positioned in the
other of said two positions when said at least a part of
said switch box is received by said support means.

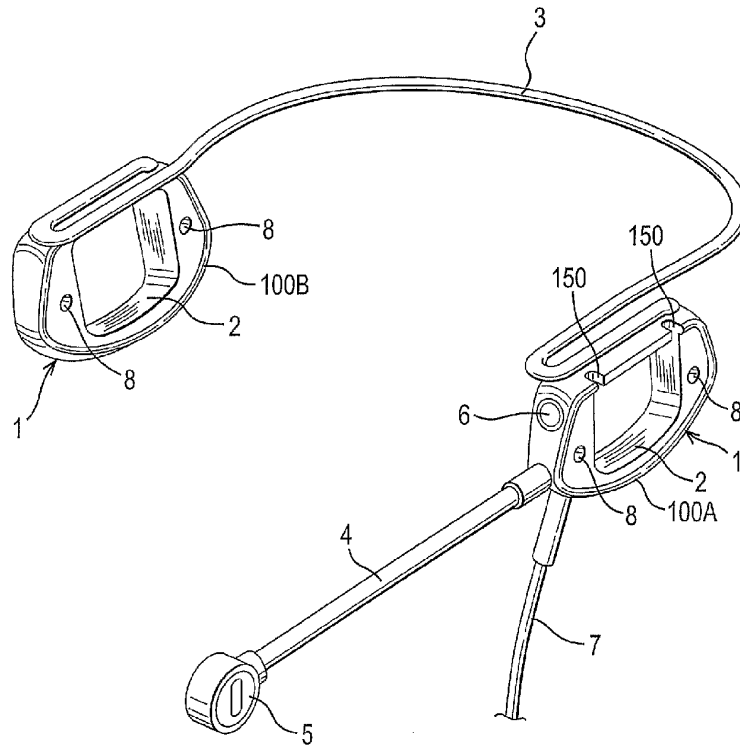
47. A headset apparatus according to any of claims 41 to
10 46 in which said attachment means is arranged to attachment
to an item of apparel of the user.

48. A headset apparatus substantially as herein described
with reference to the accompanying drawings.

15

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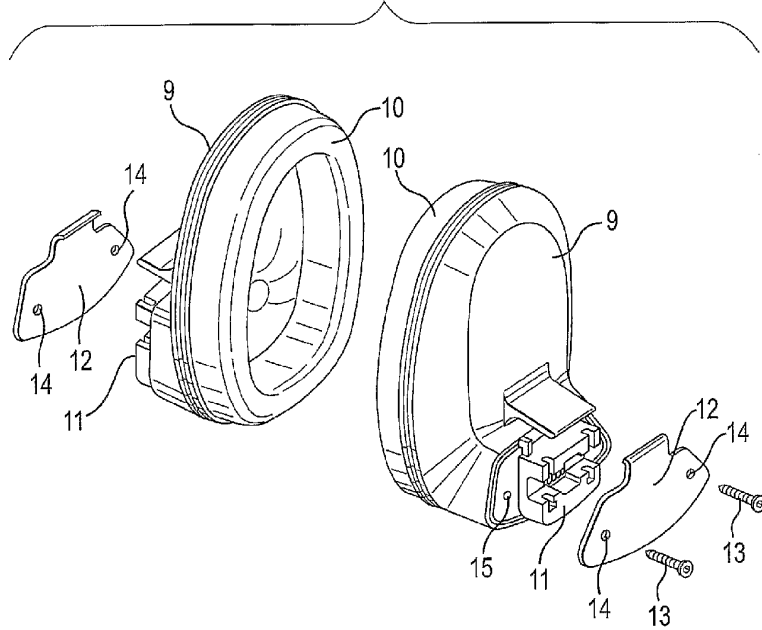
FIG. 1



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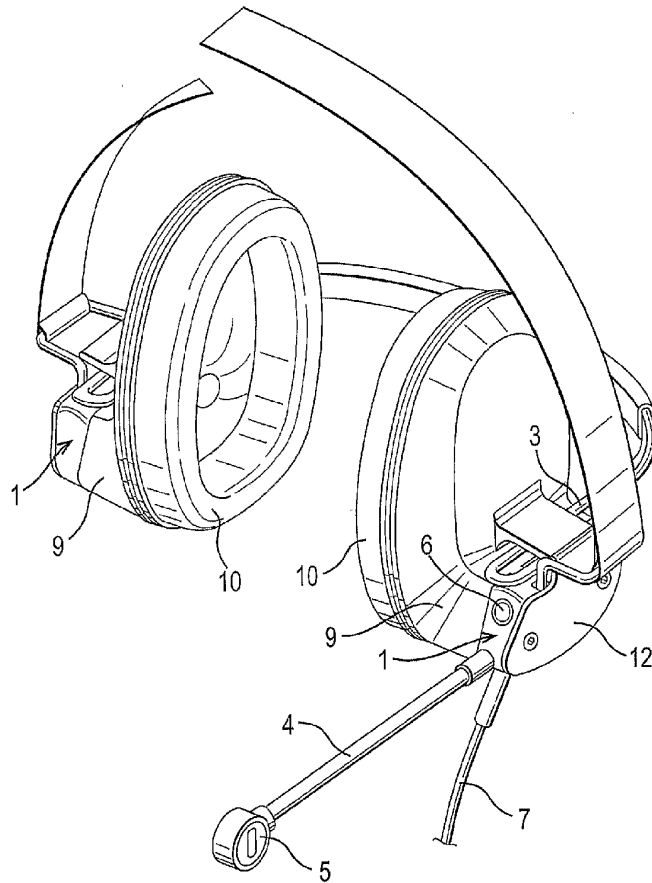
FIG. 2



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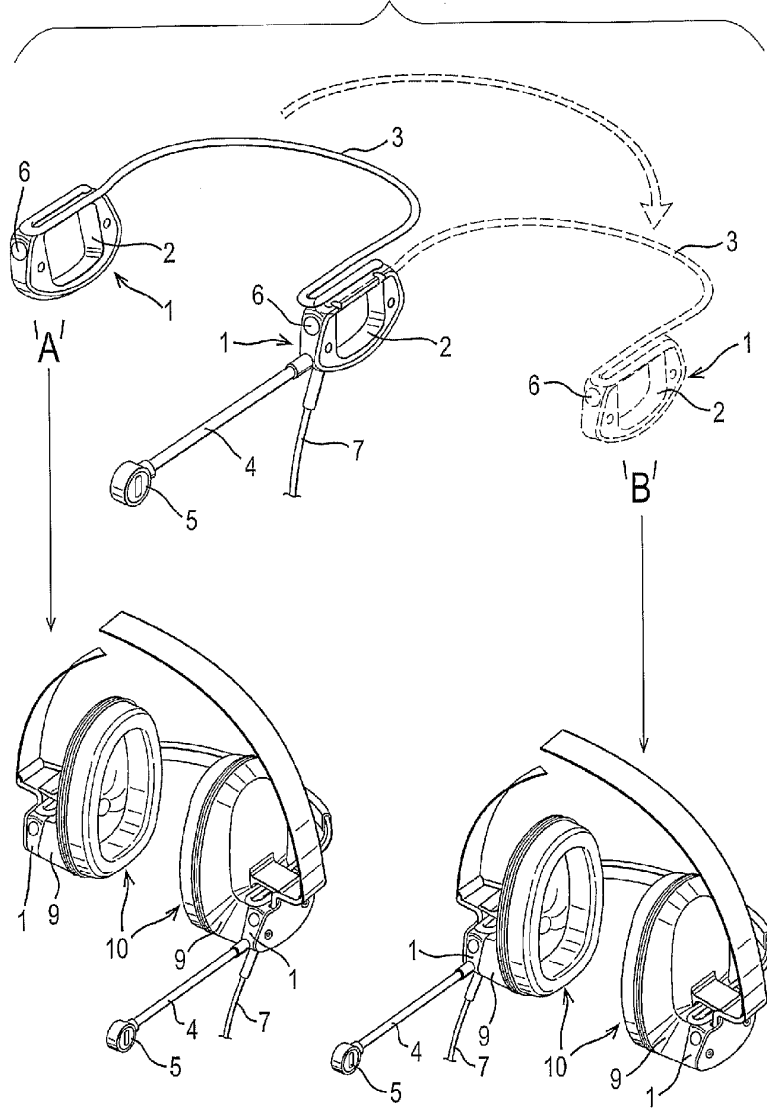
FIG. 3



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FIG. 4



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FIG. 5

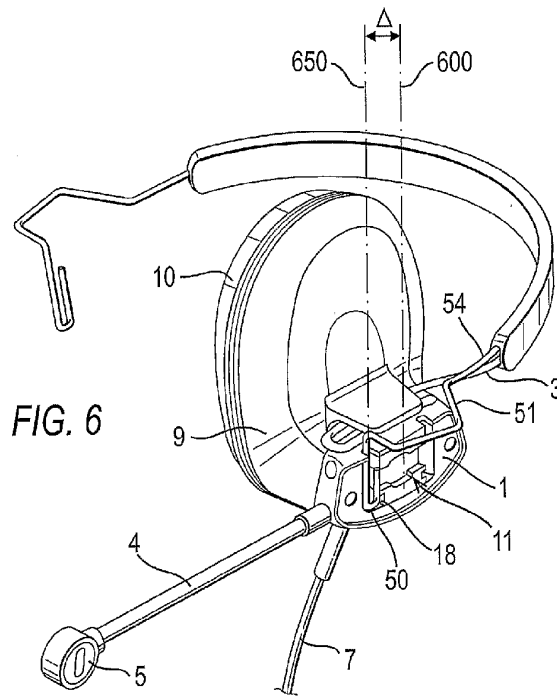
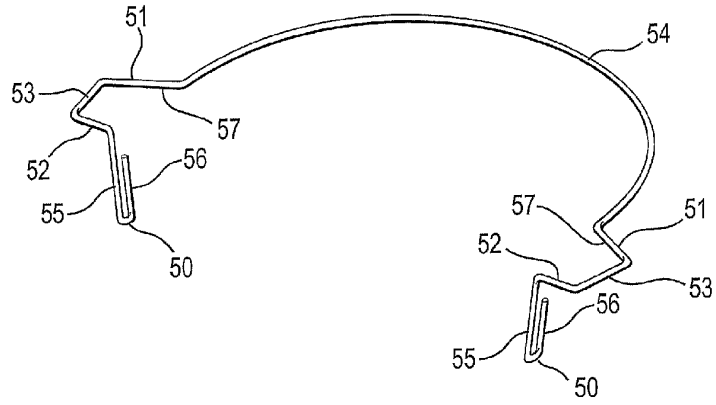
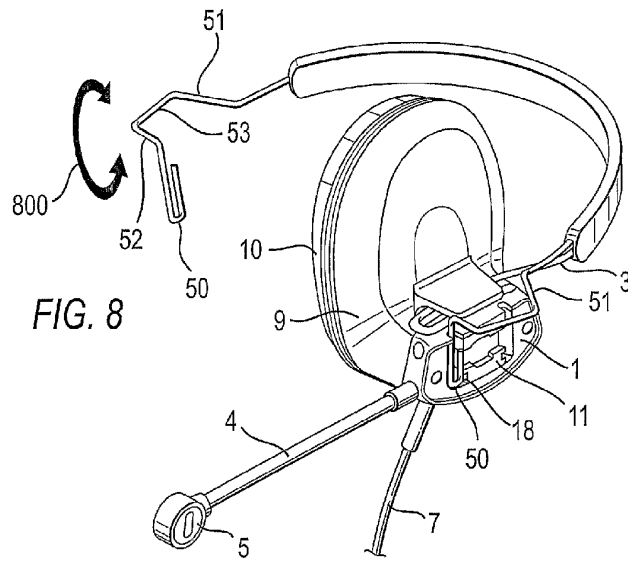
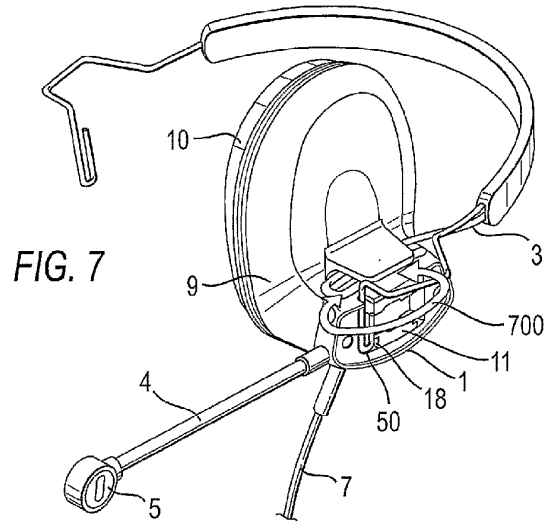


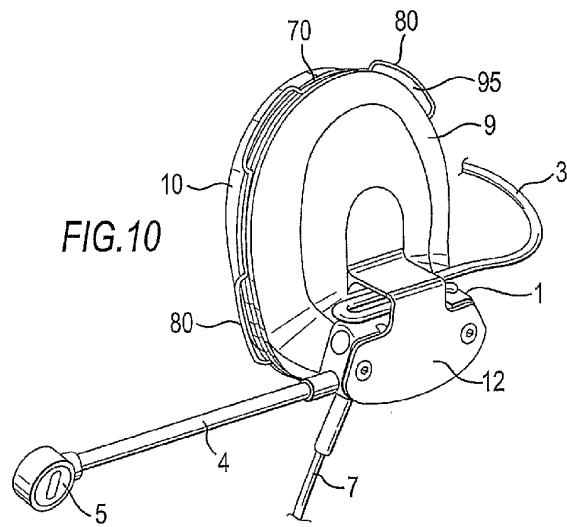
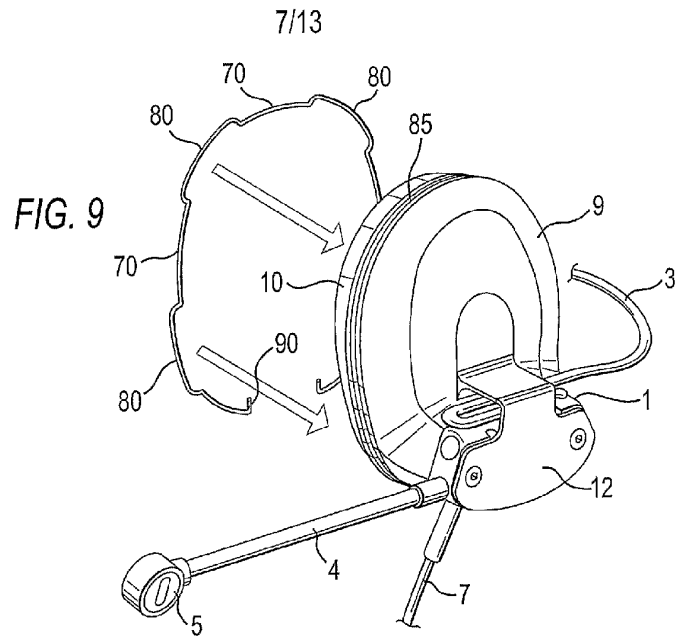
FIG. 6

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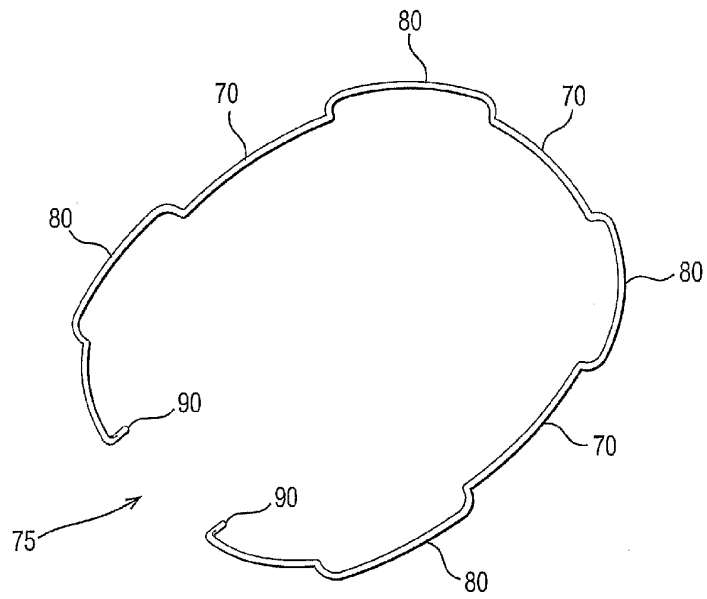


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FIG.11



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FIG. 12

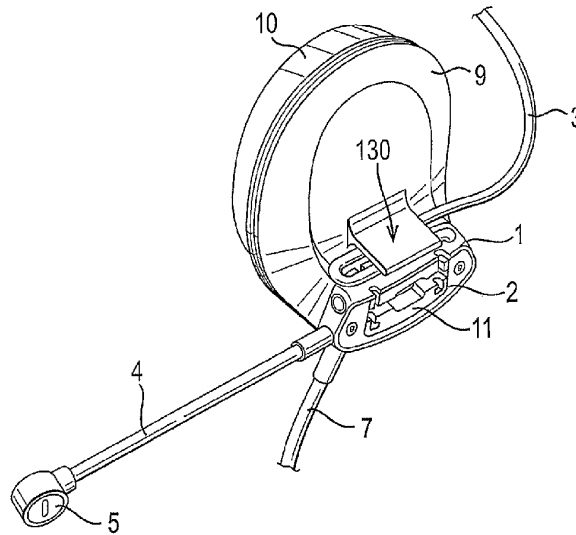
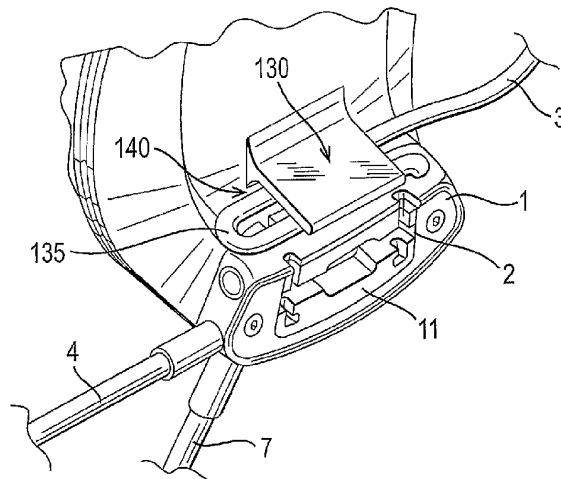
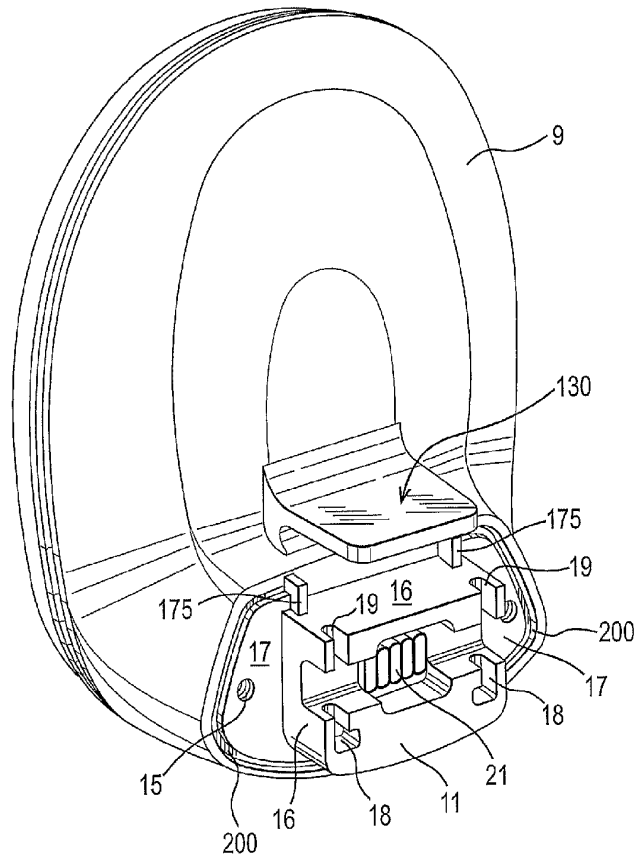


FIG. 13



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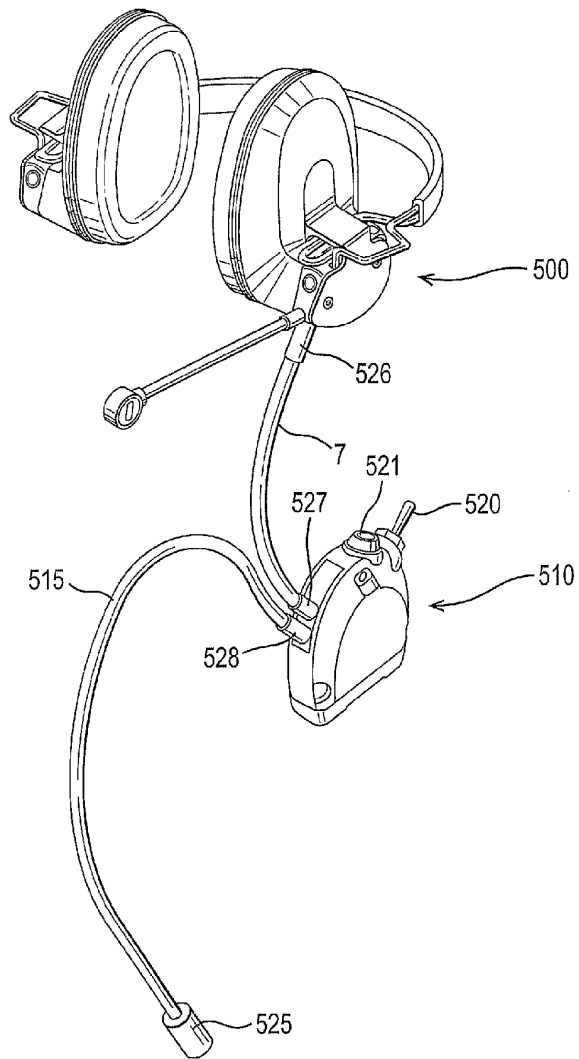
FIG. 14



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FIG. 15



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FIG. 16

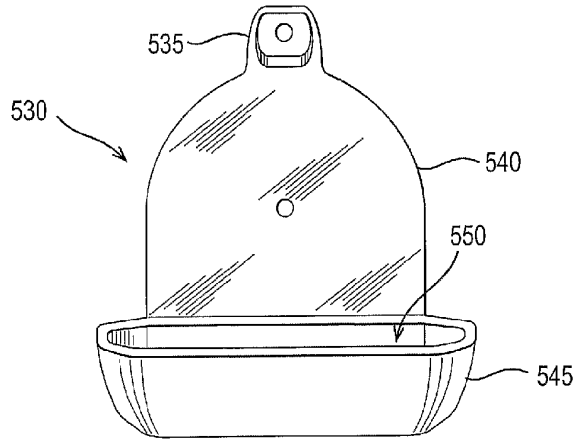
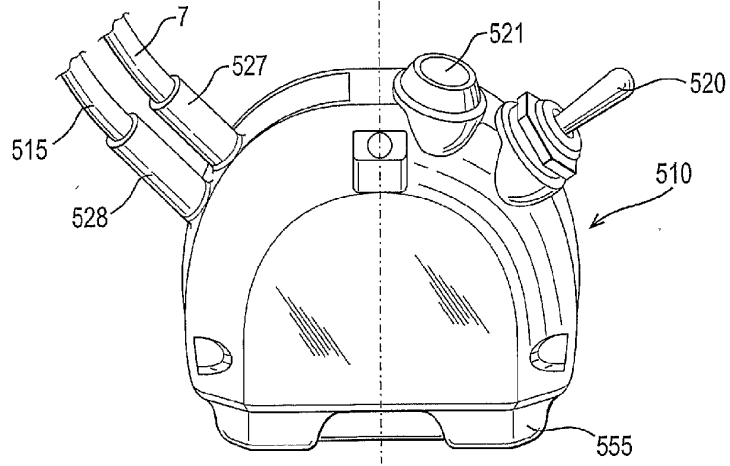
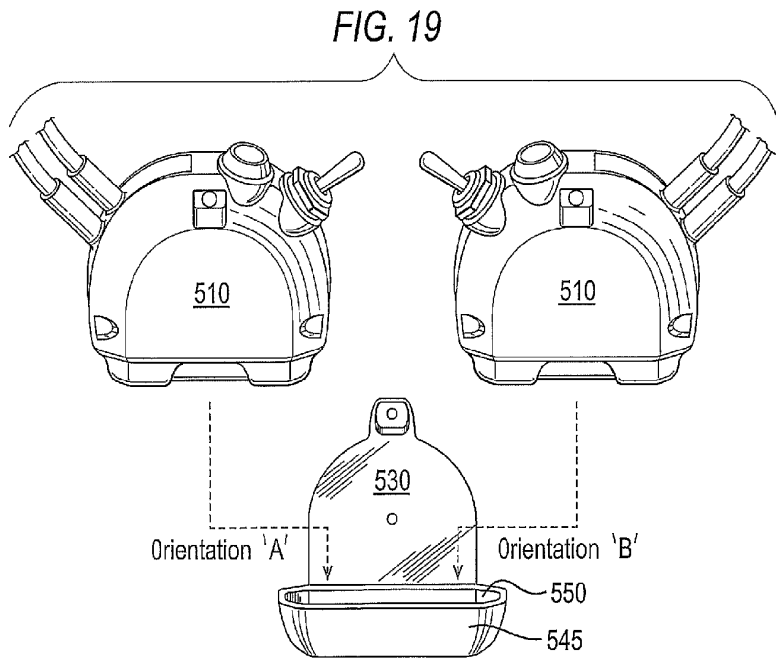
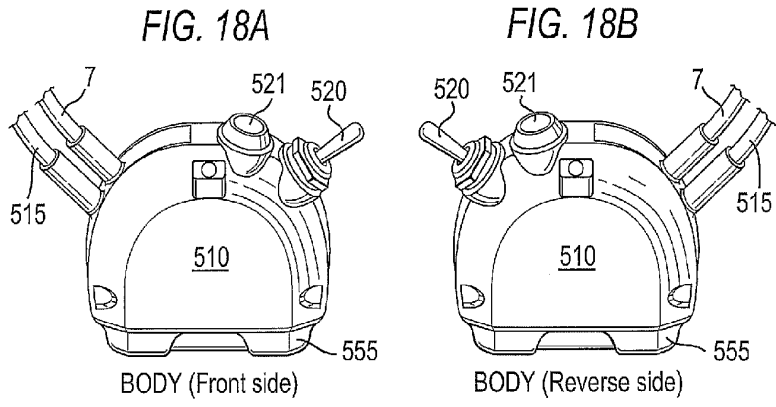


FIG. 17

Centre Line
(560)



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