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71 Applicant: Stourton, Virginia
 3 Elm Lodge River Gardens Stevenage Road
 London SW6(GB)

71 Applicant: Clear, Michael Charles
 44 Green Street
 London W1Y 3FJ(GB)

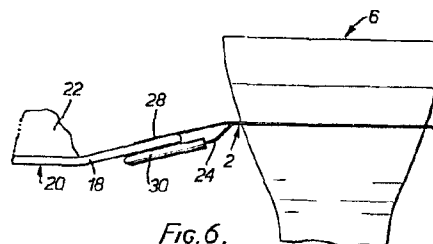
72 Inventor: Stourton, Virginia
 3 Elm Lodge River Gardens Stevenage Road
 London SW6(GB)

72 Inventor: Clear, Michael Charles
 44 Green Street
 London W1Y 3FJ(GB)

74 Representative: Eyles, Christopher Thomas et al,
 BATCHELLOR, KIRK & EYLES 2 Pear Tree Court
 Farringdon Road
 London, EC1R 0DS(GB)

54 Handling aid.

57 A handling device to enable a user to support at one time, with one hand, a plate (20) and drinking vessel (6). The device has a plate-gripping portion (12) having resilient means to releasably grip the rim of the plate, and a drinking vessel supporting portion (2), which when in use projects beyond the plate and is dimensioned to support the bowl (8) of the drinking vessel in a substantially vertical position when the bowl is horizontal. The device may be, for example, of suitably bent wire or manufactured from sheet material with suitable cut-outs.



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HANDLING AID.

This invention relates to handling aids intended to assist a user in holding at the same time a plate and a drinking vessel.

It can be extremely difficult when standing or sitting out of reach of an independent supporting surface, such as a table, to hold both a plate and a drinking vessel such as a glass in one hand so that the other hand is left free. Such conditions frequently apply, for example, at buffet parties, where the guests are expected to stand with a plate and glass in one hand, using the other hand to pick up food from the plate, manipulate a fork or spoon, wield a serving implement while actually collecting the food or even shake hands with a fellow guest. Holding a plate and glass in one hand can be hazardous, especially under the crowded conditions usual at such a gathering. The present invention seeks to overcome this problem.

According to this invention we provide a handling device intended to allow a plate and drinking vessel to be supported at one time and held in one hand comprising a plate-gripping portion provided with resilient means to releasably grip the rim of the plate and a drinking vessel supporting portion, which, in use, projects beyond the plate and is dimensioned to support the bowl of the drinking vessel in a substantially vertical position when the plate is horizontal.

The plate-gripping portion may be provided by one or two pairs of jaws of a resilient material such as metal wire. Each pair of jaws may conveniently be provided by a pair of integral wire loops presenting a mouth opening of less height than the thickness of the plate rim to be received so that the plate is a push fit between the jaws and held therein by the resilience of the wire. The jaws may likewise be constructed of spring steel. Alternatively a single clip with a horizontal spring in the manner of a

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bulldog clip may be employed.

The drinking vessel supporting portion may be conveniently of the same material as the plate-gripping portion and may be in the form of a wire suitably joining two pairs of jaws for gripping the plate, and contoured to receive therethrough the lower portion of the drinking vessel, such as the stem of a wine glass, but support the bowl of the vessel. Alternatively, the drinking vessel supporting portion could be provided by a plate provided with a suitably sized aperture.

In an alternative form of the invention, the aid may be constructed from a single sheet of a material having portions cut out to provide the drinking vessel supporting means and the resilient portions to grip the rim of the plate. The gripping means may suitably comprise a central part flanked by arms cut out of the sheet and the arms and/or the central part bent out of the plane of the sheet so that the plate may be gripped between the arms and the central part. Suitable materials for such a construction are metals such as stainless steel and plastics having sufficient rigidity to be self-supporting.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:-

Figure 1 is a plan view of a first embodiment of the handling aid;

Figure 2 is a side view of the handling aid of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a side view showing the aid of Figure 1 in use;

Figure 4 is a plan view of a second embodiment of handling aid;

Figure 5 is a side view of the handling aid of Figure 4; and

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Figure 6 is a side view showing the aid of Figure 4 in use.

The handling aid shown in Figures 1 to 3 consists of a length of wire, the middle portion of which is bent to provide a substantially circular drinking vessel supporting portion 2. In use, as shown in Figure 3, portion 2 can receive the stem 4 of a wine glass 6, but is of sufficiently small diameter to support the bowl 8 of the glass 6. Obviously the portion 2 could also receive a drinking vessel with a handle, such as a cup or beer mug, with the handle projecting through aperture 10 in portion 2, or a stemless glass, such as a tumbler diverging towards its rim.

The two ends of the length of wire form the plate-gripping portion of the handling aid and are formed as pairs of jaws 12 by suitable bending of the wire to form integral upper and lower jaws 14 and 16 respectively, as best seen in Figures 2 and 3. The gap between jaws 14 and 16 is less than the thickness of a conventional plate, so that the rim 18 of such a plate 20 can be received as a push fit between jaws 14 and 16 and is held by the resilience of the bent wire.

It will be seen from Figures 2 and 3 that the pairs of jaws 12 are angled downwardly with respect to the portion 2 to allow for the angling of a conventional plate rim. This ensures that both the plate 20 and glass 6 can be supported together substantially horizontally.

An alternative form of the invention is shown in Figures 4 to 6, with like parts to those of Figures 1 to 3 having the same reference numerals. Thus the handling aid is constructed from a single sheet of a suitable rigid material but having satisfactory resilience such as stainless steel or plastics, the sheet being cut out to provide a supporting portion 2 for a glass 6; the handling aid can also be moulded in plastics material. The

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plate-gripping portion is provided by cutting the rigid sheet to give two arms 24, bent out of the plane of the sheet as best seen in Figure 5, which co-operate with the adjacent portion 28 of the sheet, which is angled slightly downwardly, to form upper and lower gripping members which resiliently and releasably grip the plate as shown in Figure 6. The arms 24 are fitted with plastics caps 30 which help grip the plate and also prevent damage thereto. The caps could be of other relatively flexible material such as rubber.

It will of course be understood that the dimensions shown are not critical and the handling aid may be manufactured in a range of sizes.

The user needs only one hand to hold the plate 20 and, consequently, also the glass 6. The other hand is free to manipulate food 22 on the plate 20 or remove the glass 6 from its supporting portion 2 for drinking. Because portion 2 projects beyond the plate 20, there is no danger of the food adhering to the glass, as is the case if one supports the glass over or on the plate, as one usually does when trying to cope without the benefit of the handling aid of the invention.

CLAIMS.

1. A handling device, intended to allow a plate and drinking vessel to be supported at one time and held in one hand, characterised in that the device comprises a plate-gripping portion provided with resilient means to releasably grip the rim of the plate and a drinking vessel supporting portion, which, in use, projects beyond the plate and is dimensioned to support the bowl of the drinking vessel in a substantially vertical position when the plate is horizontal.

2. A handling device according to claim 1, wherein the plate-gripping portion comprises at least one pair of jaws of resilient material.

3. A handling device according to claim 2, wherein the plate-gripping portion comprises two pair of jaws each pair being of wire folded to provide a pair of wire loops having a mouth opening of less height than the thickness of the rim of the plate to be received so that the plate can be push fitted between the jaws.

4. A handling device according to claim 3, wherein the jaws are of a single length of wire, the mid portion of which is bent to provide the drinking vessel supporting portion.

5. A handling device according to claim 1 comprising a sheet of self-supporting material having a cut out drinking vessel supporting portion and a plate-gripping portion having a central part flanked by arms cut out of the sheet, the arms and/or the central part being cut out

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of the plane of the sheet so that, in use, the plate may be gripped between the arms and the central part.

6. A handling device according to claim 5, wherein the arms are bent out of the plane of the sheet and intended, in use, to lie below the plate.

7. A handling device according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the arms have caps fitted thereon.

8. A handling device according to claim 5, 6 or 7, made of stainless steel.

9. A handling device according to claim 5, 6 or 7, made of moulded plastics.

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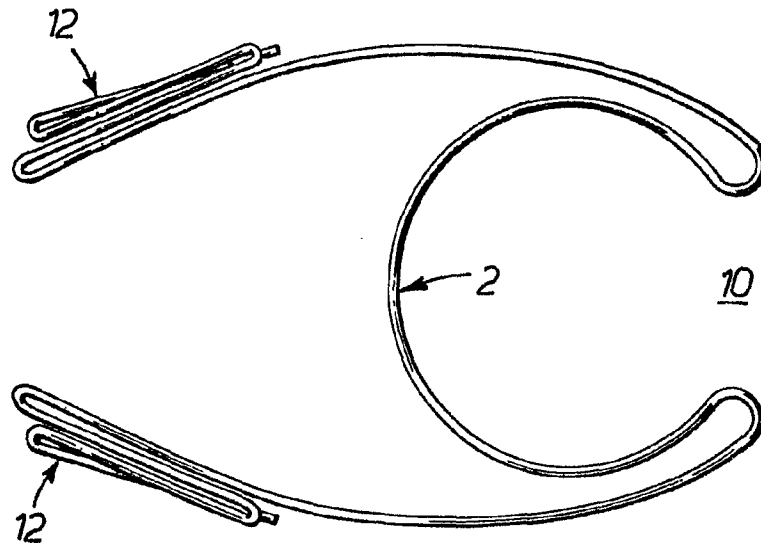


FIG. 1.

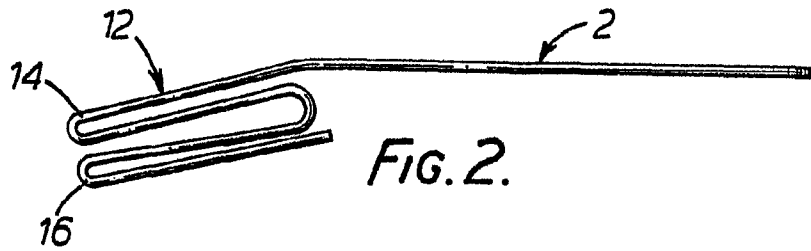


FIG. 2.

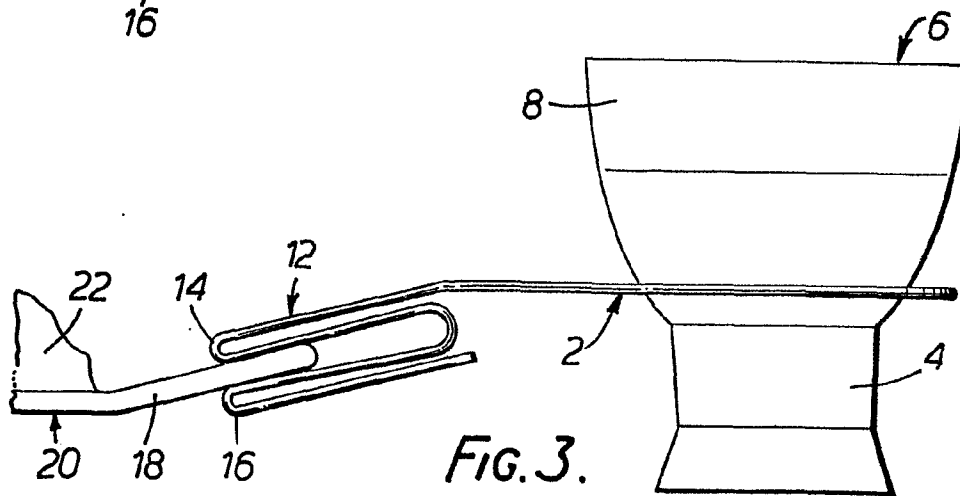
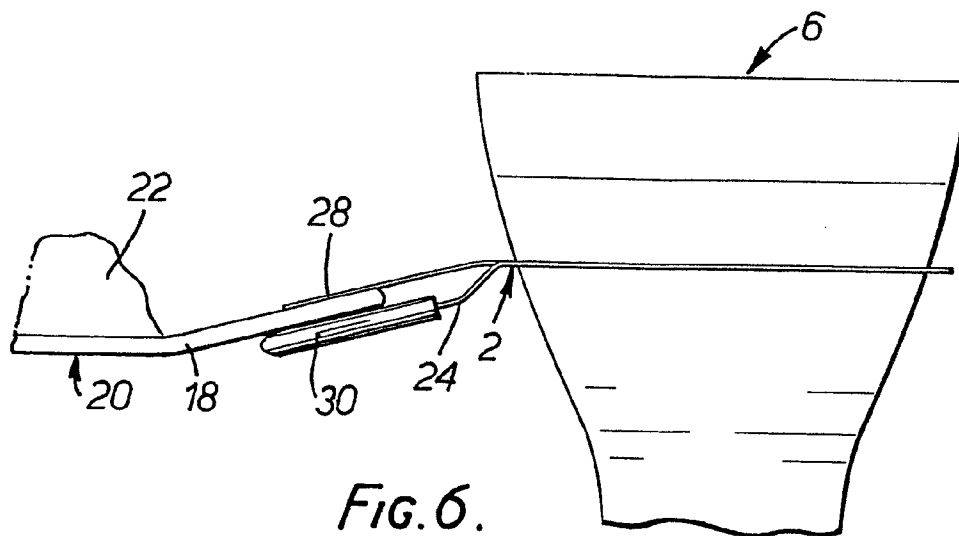
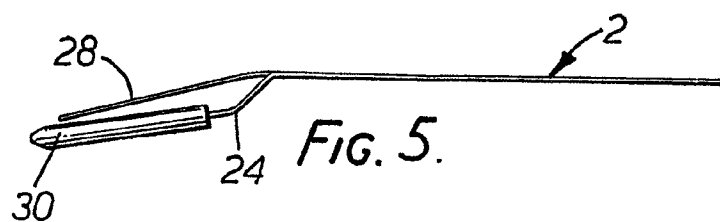
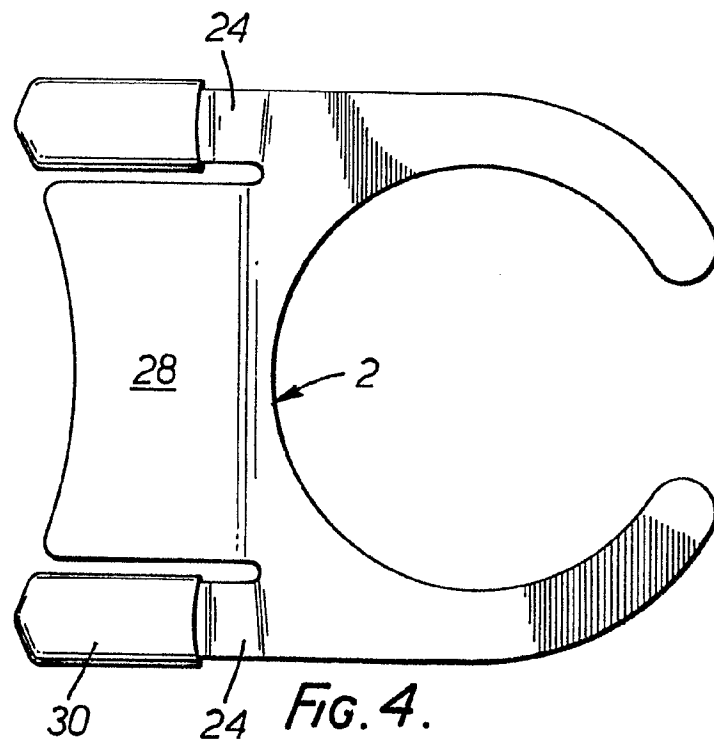


FIG. 3.

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European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

0066025

Application number
EP 81 30 6117

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 3)
X	<u>US - A - 2 719 414 (DAVIS)</u> * the entire document * --	1-3,5, 6,8,9	A 47 G 19/06// A 47 G 19/04 A 47 G 23/02
A	<u>US - A - 2 427 697 (WEIDLER)</u> * column 2, lines 44-55; column 3, lines 1-45; claims; figures 3-5 --	1,2,5, 8,9	
A	<u>US - A - 2 960 251 (MARIOTTI)</u> * claim; figures * --	1,2,5, 8,9	
X	<u>US - A - 1 996 856 (CRANE)</u> * page 1, left-hand column, lines 52-55; right-hand column, lines 1-19; figures 1,5,6 * --	1-4,8, 9	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 3) A 47 G
X	<u>FR - A - 387 873 (DEHEC)</u> * the entire document * -- ./	1-4,8, 9	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search June 10, 1982	Examiner BOURSEAU
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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