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(54) **Garment hanger.**

(57) A garment hanger has a support structure (1) of plastics material and a hook (2) which is integrally formed with the support structure or is a metal hook. The hook is connected to a part (7) integral with the support structure. The part (7) is sufficiently rigid to support the hook in an upward direction but also bendable to allow the hook to be moved to a downwardly extending direction. Preferably the part (7) has two portions of reduced thickness, with bevelled edges, to facilitate bending. The bevelled edges are on both sides of the part (7). Conveniently, the support structure (1) has a portion (3) which is concave in form to allow the hanger to be placed adjacent the throat of a user when inspecting a garment for length and appearance.

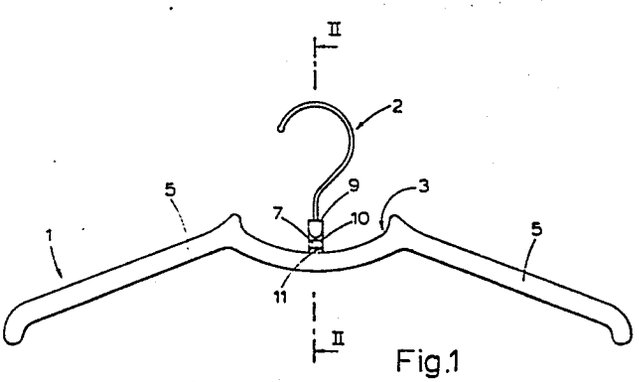

Fig.1

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GARMENT HANGER

This invention relates to garment hangers.

It is usual for a garment hanger to comprise a support structure on which the garment can be supported and a hook by which the support structure can be suspended from a rail. When the support structure is formed from plastics material, it is usual for the hook to be formed of plastics material and to be integral with the support structure or for a separate metal hook to have one end moulded into the support structure. In both cases, the hook is laterally rigid with respect to the support structure.

When a hanger is used to support a garment, such as a lady's dress, it is usual for a prospective purchaser to hold the hanger with the garment on it against her body to judge the length and appearance of the garment. This normally means that the hanger, and especially the hook, is close to the face of the prospective purchaser who cannot then easily look down to ascertain the length and appearnce of the garment. Sometimes, the prospective purchaser angles the hanger towards one shoulder to remove the hook away from the face, but this distorts the position of the garment relative to the body.

One known garment hanger designed to overcome these disadvantages is a wire loop hanger having sloping shoulder portions and a straight trouser bar interconnecting the shoulder portions. A metal bracket is permanently and rigidly connected to a flat central portion interconnecting the shoulder portions, and is provided with a hollow tubular portion the longitudinal axis of which is parallel to the said flat central portion. The tubular portion of the bracket supports for free pivotal movement therein a bent end of a wire hook. However, whilst the hook is movable to a downwardly extending position the bracket does not have any control over the pivotal movement of the hook. In other words there is insufficient rigidity in the construction to maintain the hook in an upright position. The bracket also extends some distance outwardly from the central portion of the wire hanger and is dangerous to a user. Furthermore, parts of the metal hook in the region of the

pivotal connection with the bracket form protections which can catch on the garment and pull threads in the garment and damaging the same beyond repair.

Therefore, it is desirable to provide a garment hanger in which these disadvantages are substantially alleviated.

According to the present invention a garment hanger comprises a support structure of plastics material and a hook, the hook being connected to the support structure by a part integral with the support structure, so that in an extended position the hook projects upwardly from the support structure and in a retracted position the part of the hanger interconnecting the hook and support structure is bent wherein the hook extends downwardly from the hanger.

With a hanger in accordance with the present invention, the hook can be moved so that it extends downwardly from the support structure and, in this way, it is unlikely to contact the face of the prospective purchaser when she attempts to hold the garment against her body. Furthermore, it is particularly convenient for the part of the support structure to which the hook is attached to be of concave form on its upper surface as this enables the perspective purchaser to hold the hanger with the hook projecting downwardly and the concave portion extending across her throat. In this way, the shoulders of the garment take up the position relative to her shoulders as they would do if the garment was worn.

In order that the invention may be more readily understood, it will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a front elevation of a garment hanger,

Figure 2 is a section on the line II-II of Figure 1, and

Figure 3 is an enlarged sectional view of the part circled in Fig. 2.

A garment hanger consists of a support structure 1 for supporting a garment and formed of plastics material and a metal hook 2 by which the hanger can be suspended from a rail. The hook has one end embedded in a part of the support structure 1 and is rotatable relative to the support structure.

In the arrangement shown in the figures, the hanger is designed to support a long garment, such as a lady's dress. The structure is of

plastics material and consists of a central part 3 having a concave upper surface and, from this central part, projecting from opposite ends thereof, are a pair of limbs 5.

Extending from the concave surface 3 of the support structure, and integral with the structure, there is a thin strip 7 of plastics material which has an enlarged head 9 integral with it. The hook 2 is embedded in the head 9. The strip 7 is sufficiently rigid to support the metal hook 2 in the position shown in Figure 1 but also sufficiently flexible for it to be bent so that it is of U-shaped form and the hook extends downwardly with respect to the concave surface 3, that is to a retracted position displaced by 180° from the extended position shown in Figure 1.

The strip 7 is provided with at least one and preferably two transversely extending portions 10,11 of reduced thickness formed by bevel edged indentations on one (as shown by broken line 14 in Figure 3) or both sides of the strip. The movement of the hook to the downwardly extending position achieved by the strip being bendable along the portions of reduced thickness, and by the spacing provided by the bevelled edges of the indentations.

In normal use, the hook projects upwardly from the concave surface 3 to support the hanger from a rail. This position is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Figure 2 also shows the position where the hook 2A has been moved relative to the support structure so that the hook is extending downwardly. As mentioned above, this is particularly convenient when a number of garment hangers of this type are being packed in a box. A prospective purchaser can take the hanger with a garment on it off the rail and bend the hook downwardly to the position shown at 2A to enable the concave surface 3 of the hanger to be brought close to her throat so that the shoulders of the garment supported on the hanger take up the correct position against her body so that she can ascertain whether the garment on the hanger is of the required length and appearance.

The strip 7 extending between the concave portion 3 and the head 9 may be of a constant thickness, the strip being simple bendable to achieve the required movement of the hook to the downwardly extending position.

However, to maintain the extended position of the hanger the strip 7 of this construction must have sufficient rigidity which disadvantageously provides a spring effect when the hook is bent into the retracted position, making the hanger difficult to handle.

In an alternative embodiment in accordance with the invention the strip 7 is provided with a single area of reduced thickness. Whilst this construction reduces the spring effect in the retracted position of the hanger just described above, it is necessary to obtain the required degree of bending for the portion of reduced thickness to be long relative to the length of the strip 7. This results in the hook being held with insufficient rigidity and being "floppy" relative to the support structure 1.

The strip 7 of the preferred embodiment of the invention as described above with reference to Figures 1, 2 and 3 has two spaced reduced portions 10, 11 each of which is very short in length relative to the length of the strip 7. The shortness of these portions ensures the rigidity required to keep the hook in an upright position and yet allowing bending of the strip without any substantial spring effect. Bending of the strip is further facilitated by the bevelled edges 12, 13 at the sides of the portions of reduced thickness. In the bent position of the strip 7 the bevelled edges at each reduced portion abut or lie substantially parallel with each other to provide an approximate 90^{o} bent at each reduced portion causing the hook to project downwardly.

Whilst the hook 2 has been described as being a metal hook, the hook may be of plastics material and is integrally formed with the support structure. In either event the hanger can be made by a single injection moulding.

CLAIMS:

1. A garment hanger comprises a support structure (1) of plastics material and a hook (2), the hook being connected to the support structure by a part (7) integral with the support structure, so that in an extended position the hook projects upwardly from the support structure and in a retracted position the part (7) of the hanger interconnecting the hook (2) and support structure (1) is bent wherein the hook extends downwardly from the hanger.

2. A garment hanger as claimed in claim 1, wherein the part (7) integral with the support structure (1) includes at least one portion (10,11) of reduced thickness to facilitate bending of the part.

3. A garment hanger as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the part (7) integral with the support structure has two portions (10,11) of reduced thickness to facilitate bending of the integral part.

4. A garment hanger as claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein the at least one or both portions (10,11) of reduced thickness have bevelled edges (12,13) to facilitate bending of the integral part.

5. A garment hanger as claimed in claim 4, wherein the bevelled edges (12,13) are provided on both sides of the part integral with the support structure.

6. A garment hanger as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the hook (2) is a metal hook.

7. A garment hanger as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the hook (2) is of a plastics material and is integrally formed with the support structure (1).

8. A garment hanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the part (7) integral with the support structure (1) has an enlarged head portion (9) with which the hook is connected, the enlarged head portion constituting a label support.

9. A garment hanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the part (7) integral with the support structure (1) is connected to a portion (3) of the support structure which is of concave form on its upper surface.

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Fig.3

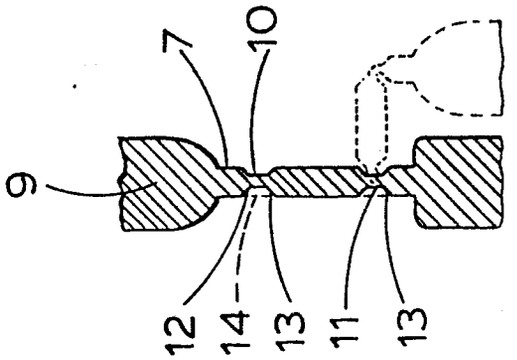

Fig.1

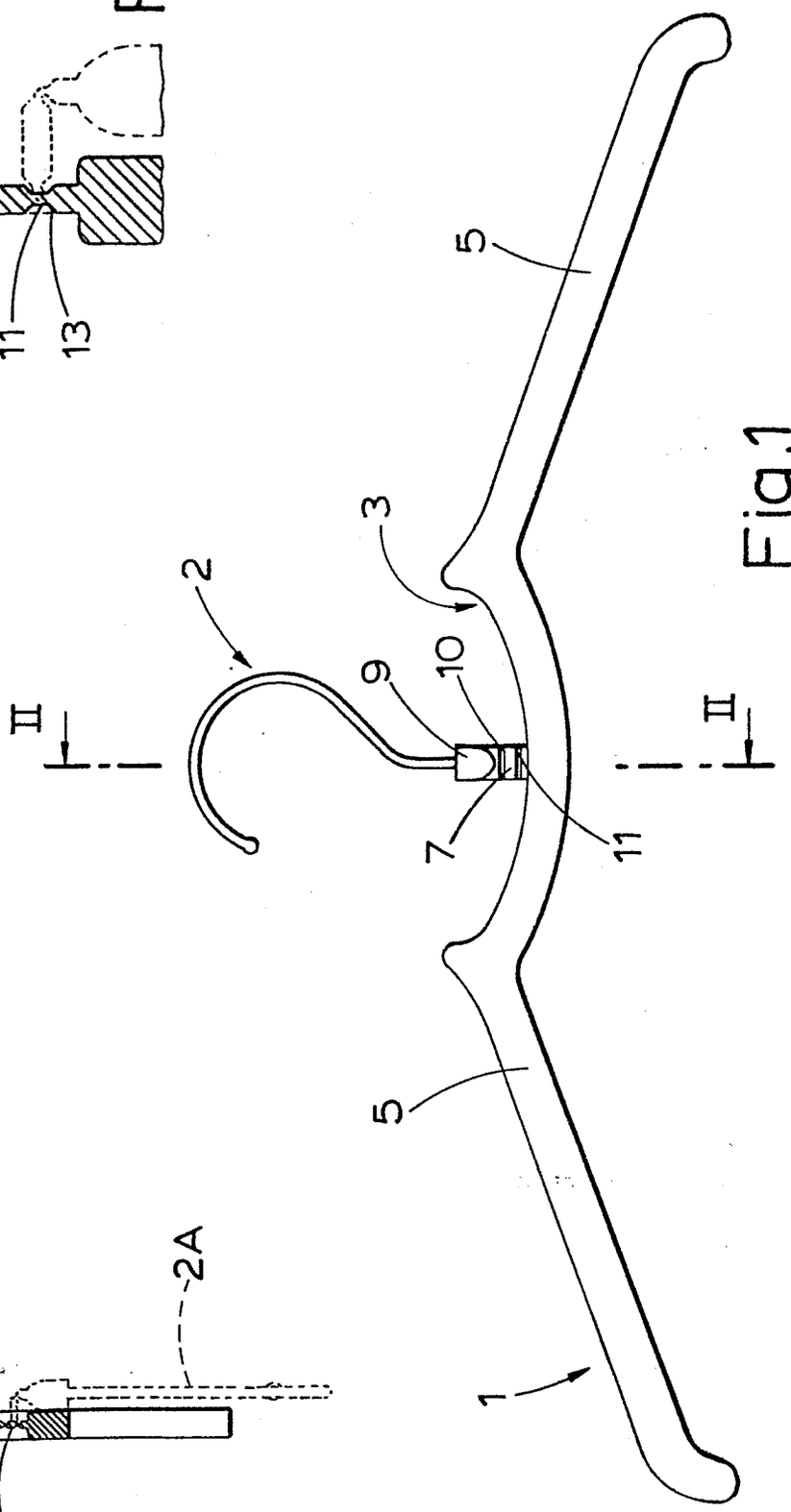

Fig.2