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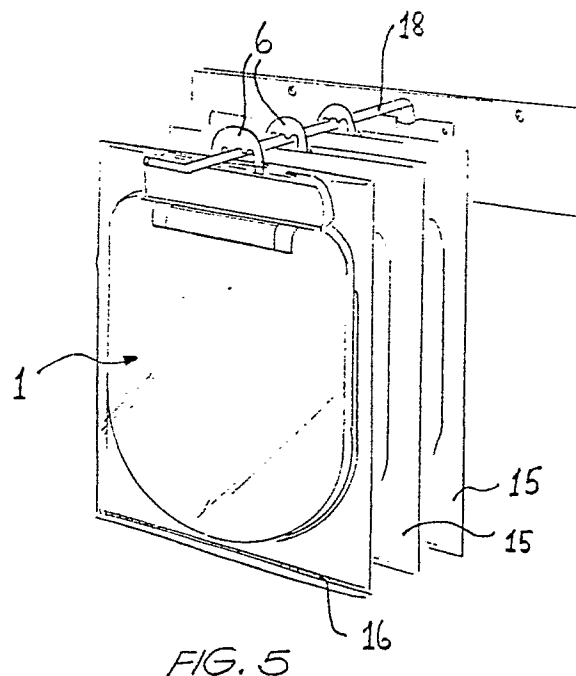
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54 **Moulded plastic article with tag.**

57 The present invention discloses a moulded plastic article having a hinged tag (6) from which the article can be displayed for sale. The article can be packed within a transparent sheet plastics tube (11). A method of packaging and a method of point of sale marketing are also disclosed.



**EP 0 317 244 A1**

The present invention relates to moulded plastic articles intended to be displayed together with like articles at point of sale, and to a method of packing such articles. In the preferred embodiment of the invention the moulded article is a plastic toilet seat.

In accordance with modern retailing methods, many items such as moulded plastic articles are displayed at point of sale for selection by intending purchasers. In making such selection, intending purchasers are very substantially influenced by price since factors such as the recommendation of salesmen cannot be brought into play because the purchaser normally makes the selection completely unaided by such sales staff. Indeed, the retail establishment often only provides staff at checkout counters.

It is therefore highly desirable that the article be able to be displayed easily and in a tasteful manner and that the packaging itself be of low cost. Where the article to be displayed comes in several colours, it is also desirable that the packaging be transparent in order that the desired colour of the article can be selected in addition to selecting the type of article to be purchased.

It is known to meet these desiderata by the provision of so called blister packs. Such blister packs have a cardboard base upon which an article is located and a transparent covering which holds the article to the base. A hole or other aperture in the top of the cardboard provides a means by which the entire package may be suspended from a long rod or other hook arrangement.

However, the foregoing arrangement suffers from a substantial disadvantage in that the weight of the article able to be displayed thereby is limited by the strength of the cardboard. Accordingly, this method of display and packaging is not able to be used with relatively heavy and bulky items such as moulded plastic toilet seats.

It is known from U.S. Patent No. 4,460,143 to provide a flexible tag on the base of a blood or plasma containing bottle which enables the bottle to be inverted to dispense the contents by means of gravity flow. However, this arrangement is not suitable for displaying such articles for sale since the liquid may leak through the bottle cap or the arrangement be subject to practical jokers opening the bottle cap whilst the bottle was thus inverted. Furthermore, such prior art tags are clearly not intended to be detachable by rupturing the material between the tag and the remainder of the article, since the tag is intended to support the article in use where the article may be knocked, bumped or otherwise subjected to physical forces.

It is also known from U.S. Patent No. 4,545,521 to provide an envelope with a detachable tag. This

tag has openings permitting the tag to be hung from the door knob of a hotel, for example, so that a message for hotel guests can be retained within the envelope. Such an arrangement is essentially analogous to the abovementioned blister pack in that only light weight articles e.g. paper messages, are able to be used. Also the article itself is contained within the envelope and thus the tag and article are not integrally formed.

It is the object of the present invention to provide a solution to the above problem by using a portion of the article as a means whereby the entire article may be suspended for display.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is disclosed a moulded plastic article intended to be displayed together with like articles at point of sale for selection by intending purchasers, said article having a tag integrally moulded with said article and joined thereto by a portion of reduced thickness comprising a hinge, and said tag having an aperture therein through which a hook means can pass to suspend said article from said hook means. Preferably the tag is detachable from the article after sale by rupturing the hinge and/or being foldable against the article in use.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is disclosed a method of packaging a moulded plastic article having an apertured tag protruding therefrom and by which said article can be suspended from hook means for display, said method comprising the steps of transversely sealing a tube of sheet plastics material to thereby substantially close said tube at one end and forming an opening at a predetermined location, inserting said article into said tube from the other end thereof and passing said tag through said opening, and transversely sealing said tube other end.

According to a third aspect of the present invention there is disclosed a method of point of sale marketing comprising the step of suspending from hook means by engagement thereof with the tag, the article specified above or an article packaged in accordance with the method specified above.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to the drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a toilet seat assembly of the preferred embodiment,

Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 2-2 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 3 is a view similar to Fig. 2 but showing how the tag can be folded under the article in use,

Fig. 4 is an exploded perspective view illustrating the method of packaging the article, and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view illustrating the articles displayed for sale.

As seen in Fig. 1, the preferred article of the present invention takes the form of a toilet seat assembly 1 having a lid 2, a hinge plate 3, and a seat 4 (Fig. 4).

As best seen in Figs. 1 and 2, a tag 6 having an aperture 7 is integrally moulded with the hinge plate 3 and joined thereto by means of two hinge portions 8 each of which is of substantially reduced cross-section.

As a result, the tag 6 can be removably detached from the hinge plate 3 after sale of the article, by removing the tag 6 from the hinge plate 3 by rupturing or cutting through the hinge portions 8.

Because the hinge portions 8 are of relatively small cross-sectional thickness, the tag 6 is also able to be folded under the hinge plate as indicated in Fig. 3 during final installation of the toilet seat assembly 1, thereby hiding the tag 6 from view.

The method of packaging the toilet seat assembly 1 is illustrated in Fig. 4. A tube 11 of transparent sheet plastics material is transversely heat sealed at its upper end 12. Then an opening 13 is formed, for example by cutting, at a central location. The toilet seat assembly is inserted into the open lower end 14 of the tube 11 until the tag 6 passes through the opening 13. Then the lower end 14 is transversely heat sealed so as to form the tube 11 into a transparent package 15 (Fig. 5), the lower end of which comprises a seal 16.

As seen in Fig. 5, a number of the toilet seat assemblies 1, each in their individual package 15 are displayed for sale by means of hanging the assemblies 1 from a long rod 18 which is formed into a cantilever hook. The rod 18 passes through each of the apertures 7 in the corresponding tags 6.

It will be apparent from Fig. 5 that the above described arrangement enables an intending purchaser to select which of the individual toilet seat assemblies he wishes to purchase, this selection being based possibly upon the colour of the assembly which is apparent through the transparent package 5. In addition, the hinge portions 8 enable those assemblies 1 towards the front to be pivoted relative to the tags 6 by the intending purchaser in order to enable a better view to be obtained of those assemblies 1 towards the rear. Such flexing of the hinge portions 8 is easily accommodated without breakage.

It will also be apparent to those skilled in the art that the above described arrangement is of extremely low cost and therefore the total cost of the article for sale is able to be reduced to a

minimum. Furthermore, the weight of the article is carried by the tag 6 and not by the package 15. Thus the thickness (and hence strength) of the tag 6 and hinge portions 8 can be adjusted by the manufacturer to suit the weight of the remainder of the article. In this way, identical packaging can be used for diverse articles each of a different weight.

The foregoing describes only one embodiment of the present invention and modifications, obvious to those skilled in the art, can be made thereto without departing from the scope of the present invention.

For example, the package 15 can be used to include extraneous items such as mounting fasteners and/or instruction sheets.

## Claims

1. A moulded plastic article intended to be displayed together with like articles at point of sale for selection by intending purchasers, said article having a tag integrally moulded with said article and joined thereto by a portion of reduced thickness comprising a hinge, and said tag having an aperture therein through which a hook means can pass to suspend said article from said hook means.

2. An article as claimed in claim 1 wherein said tag is detachable from said article by rupturing said hinge.

3. An article as claimed in claim 1 or 2 wherein said tag is foldable into an unobservable position during use of said article.

4. An article as claimed in claim 3 and comprising a toilet seat, said tag being positioned at one end of said seat and foldable underneath said seat during installation thereof.

5. An article as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 packaged within a tube of sheet plastics material, said tube being closed at its lower end and being closed at its upper end save for a small opening through which said tag protrudes.

6. An article as claimed in claim 5 wherein said tube is transparent.

7. A method of packaging a moulded plastic article having an apertured tag protruding therefrom and by which said article can be suspended from hook means for display, said method comprising the steps of transversely sealing a tube of sheet plastics material to thereby substantially close said tube at one end and forming an opening at a predetermined location, inserting said article into said tube from the other end thereof and passing said tag through said opening, and transversely sealing said tube other end.

8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said sheet plastics material is transparent.

9. A method of point of sale marketing comprising the step of suspending from hook means by engagement thereof with said tag, the article as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 or an article packaged in accordance with the method of claim 7 or 8.

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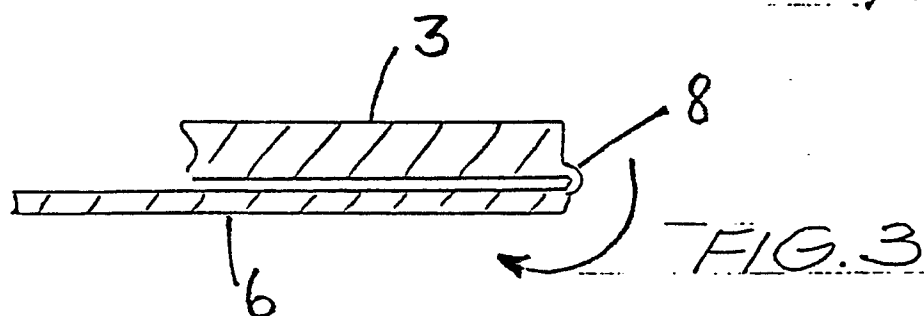
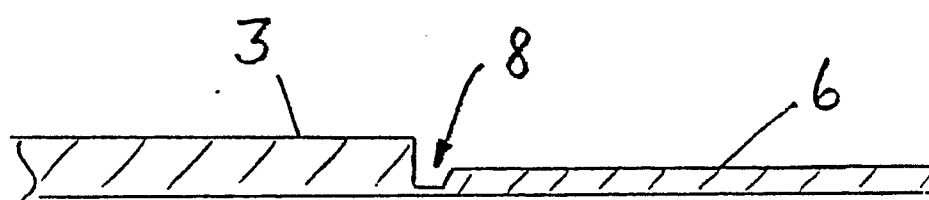
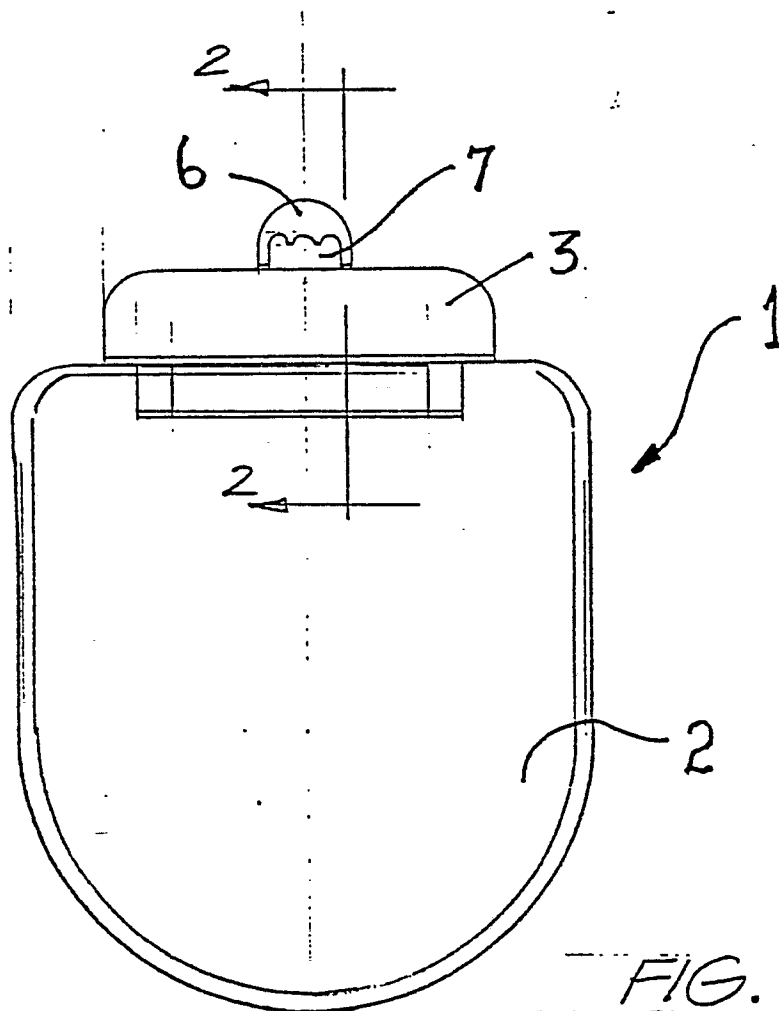
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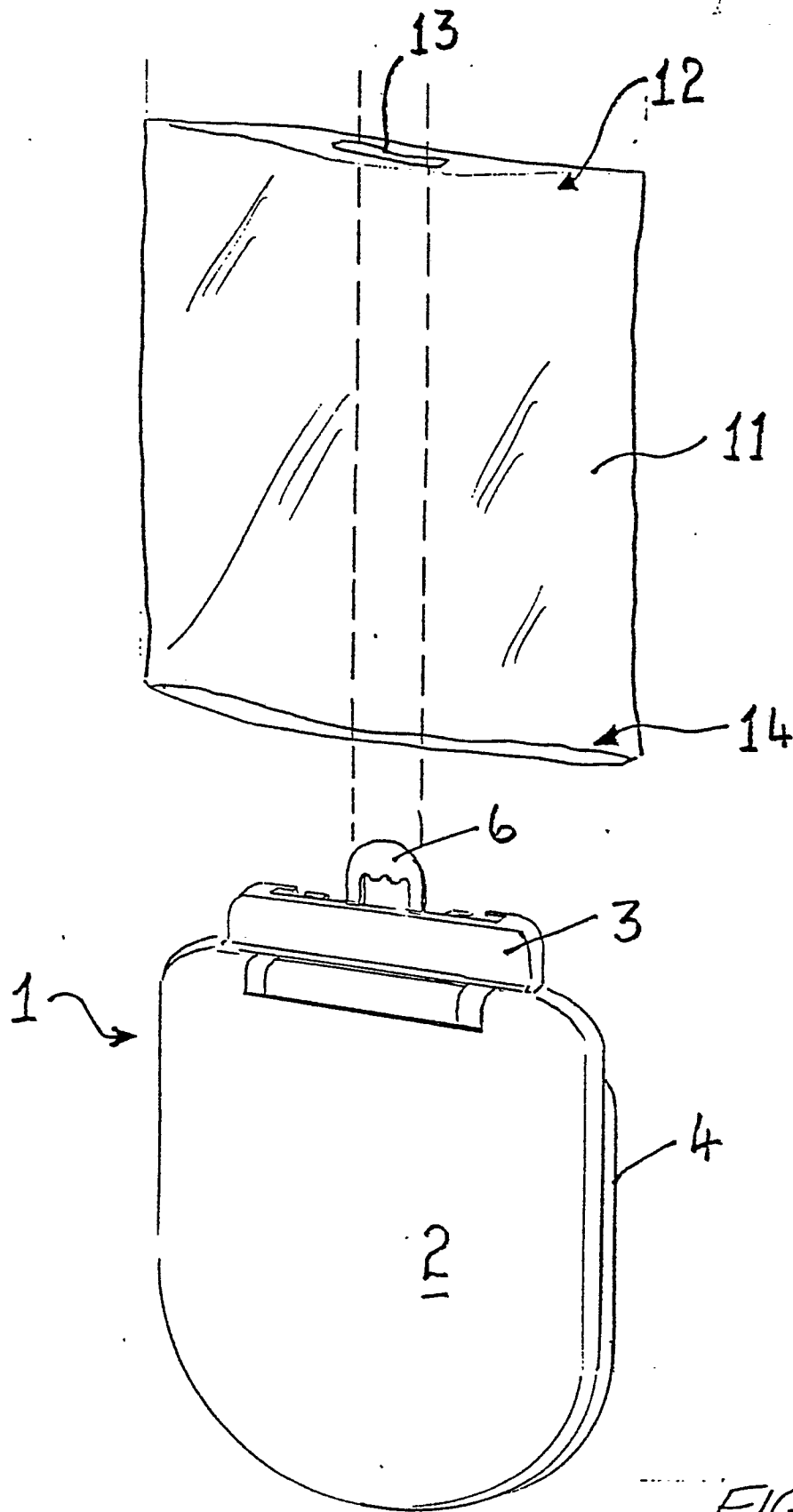


FIG. 4

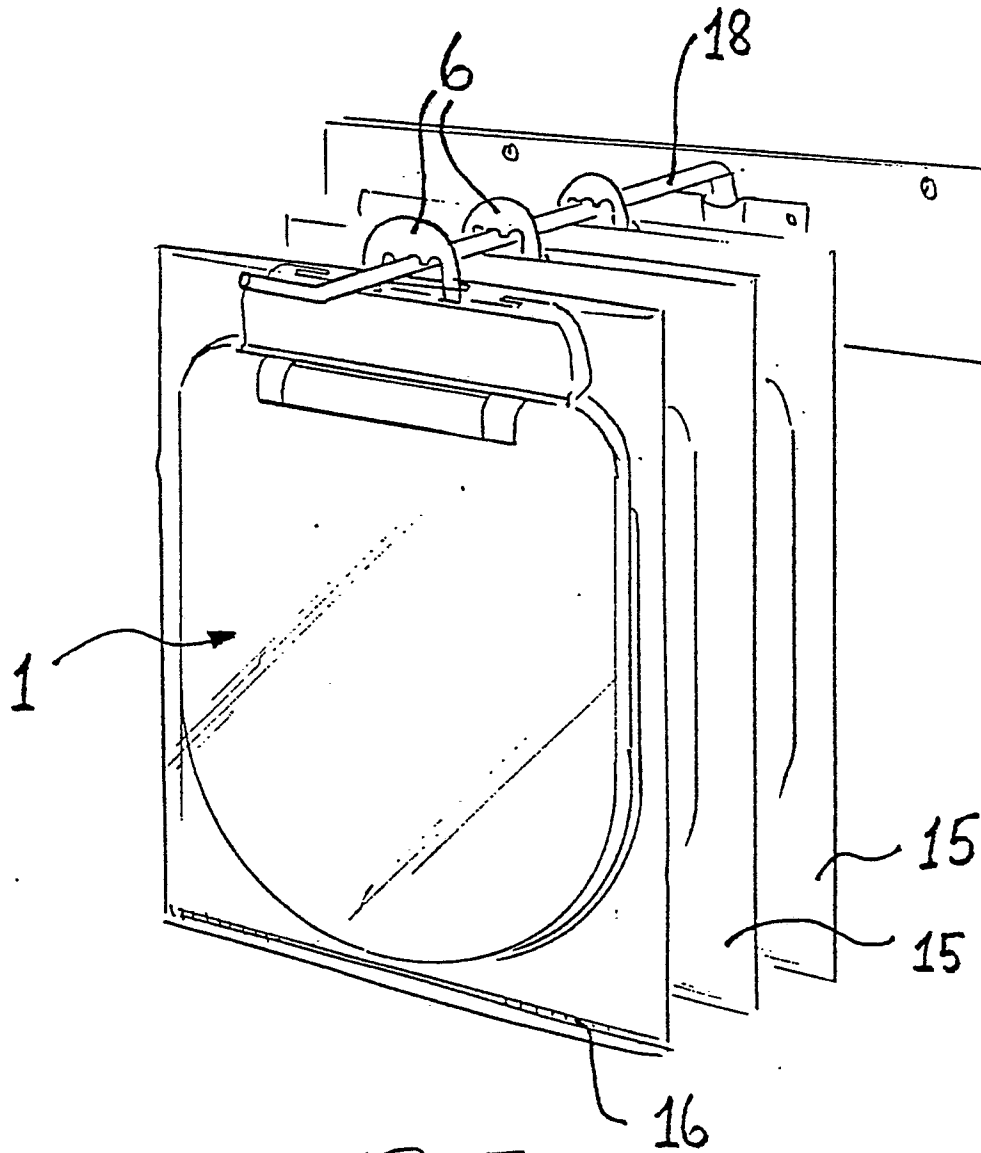


FIG. 5



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.4)
X	FR-A-2 541 885 (DUBOURGEL-GRANGE)	1-4,9	B 65 D 85/00
Y	* Whole document *	5-8	B 65 D 75/56
	---		A 47 K 13/02
Y	GB-A-1 330 290 (SOCIETE C.E.V. CENTRAL EMBALLAGE DU VETEMENT)	5-8	
	* Page 1, lines 65-85; figure 1 *		
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)
			B 65 D
			A 47 K
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		15-02-1989	NEWELL P.G.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone		T : theory or principle underlying the invention	
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A : technological background		D : document cited in the application	
O : non-written disclosure		L : document cited for other reasons	
P : intermediate document		.....	
		& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	