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(71) Applicant: **AKERLUND & RAUSING LIMITED**
Chichester House, 278/282 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HA(GB)

(72) Inventor: **Kearns, Sean**
22 Laxton Way
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3JN(GB)
Inventor: **Jeffery, Graham**
16 Bonningtons, Hutton
Brentwood, Essex CM13 2TN(GB)

(74) Representative: **Hughes, Brian Patrick et al**
Graham Watt & Co. Riverhead
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2BN(GB)

(54) Food container.

(57) A container for a snack or light meal comprises a base 10 which has walls 12 which can flex inwardly to allow a tapered skirt 22 on a lid 20 to pass down outside the walls 12, the walls resiliently expanding behind the skirt to lock the lid in position.

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FOOD CONTAINERS

This invention is concerned with a food container and in particular to such a container for snacks or light meals, the container serving not only to package the food but also as the dish from which the meal is eaten.

Containers for snack foods are normally made out of plastics coated carton board and suffer from two problems. The first problem is to provide adequate protection for the contents until use while allowing easy access to the contents. The second problem is that after heating of the food the container can be uncomfortably hot to hold or handle.

It is an object of the present invention to obviate or mitigate these problems.

The present invention is a food container comprising a body and a lid, the lid being provided with an inwardly tapering peripheral skirt and the body being provided with peripheral walls having a resiliently variable outward inclination, the walls being movable inwardly to allow the skirt to pass down outside the walls and being resiliently expansible outwardly behind the skirt to lock the lid in position.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 is an exploded perspective view of a container according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 diagrammatically illustrates the container with the lid on; and

Fig. 3 diagrammatically illustrates the use of the lid as a stand for the body of the container.

As shown in Fig. 1 the body 10 of the container is made from a sheet of plastics coated carton board, the plastics used for the coating being for example a polyester, polyethylene or polypropylene. Each corner of the flat sheet of carton board is provided with four score lines in the general shape of a 'W' so that when the sheet is folded at the score lines upstanding walls 12 are provided surrounding a base area 14. The folded score lines 16a to 16d are visible in the upper left hand corner 16 of the body.

The walls 12 are not at right angles to the base but are inclined outwardly, the angle of inclination being resiliently variable about a mean figure i.e. the walls can be held in any position between the horizontal and the vertical but in the absence of any applied force will return to an intermediate position at say forty five degrees to the horizontal.

The lid 18 comprises an upper portion 20 with a surrounding peripheral skirt 22 and is formed from a blank of plastics coated carton board cut, folded and secured, in this embodiment by glue, in the desired shape. The peripheral skirt 22 is not vertical but as seen in the drawing is inwardly tapered, the angle of taper being less than the angle of inclination of the walls in the intermediate position. The dimensions of the lid are such that the skirt 22 can be fitted over the walls 12 only after the walls have been flexed inwardly to a near vertical position, but when this has been achieved the lid can move easily down until the tops of the walls 12 engage the underside of the portion 20. In this position when the walls are released they will tend to return by natural resilience to their intermediate position and in so doing will expand outwardly behind the skirt 22 to lock the lid in position as indicated in Fig. 2.

At at least two opposed portions of the skirt 22 are provided securing tabs 24 only one of which is visible in Fig. 1. Each tab consists of a depending portion 26 which can be glued to a wall 12 when the lid is applied to the body, the portion 26 being attached to the rest of the skirt by frangible lines of weakness 28. Preferably as shown in Fig. 1, a cutout 30 is provided in the skirt to facilitate breaking of the frangible lines 28 by for example a thumb.

When the container with its food contents is ready for use the frangible lines 28 are broken and the lid can then be removed, the walls moving resiliently inwardly to allow the skirt to pass upwardly past them and expose the contents of the container. The lid can then be inverted as shown in Fig. 3 to provide a stand for the body of the container, the bottom of the container being spaced from the portion 20 of the lid thus insulating the bottom of the container.

Claims

1. A food container comprising a body and a lid, the lid being provided with an inwardly tapering peripheral skirt and the body being provided with peripheral walls having a resiliently variable outward inclination, the walls being movable inwardly to allow the skirt to pass down outside the walls and being resiliently expansible outwardly behind the skirt to lock the lid in position.

2. A food container as claimed in Claim 1, in which the body is made of plastics coated carton board.

3. A food container as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, in which the lid is provided with securing tabs for securing the lid to the body, the tabs being attached to the lid by a frangible line of weakness.

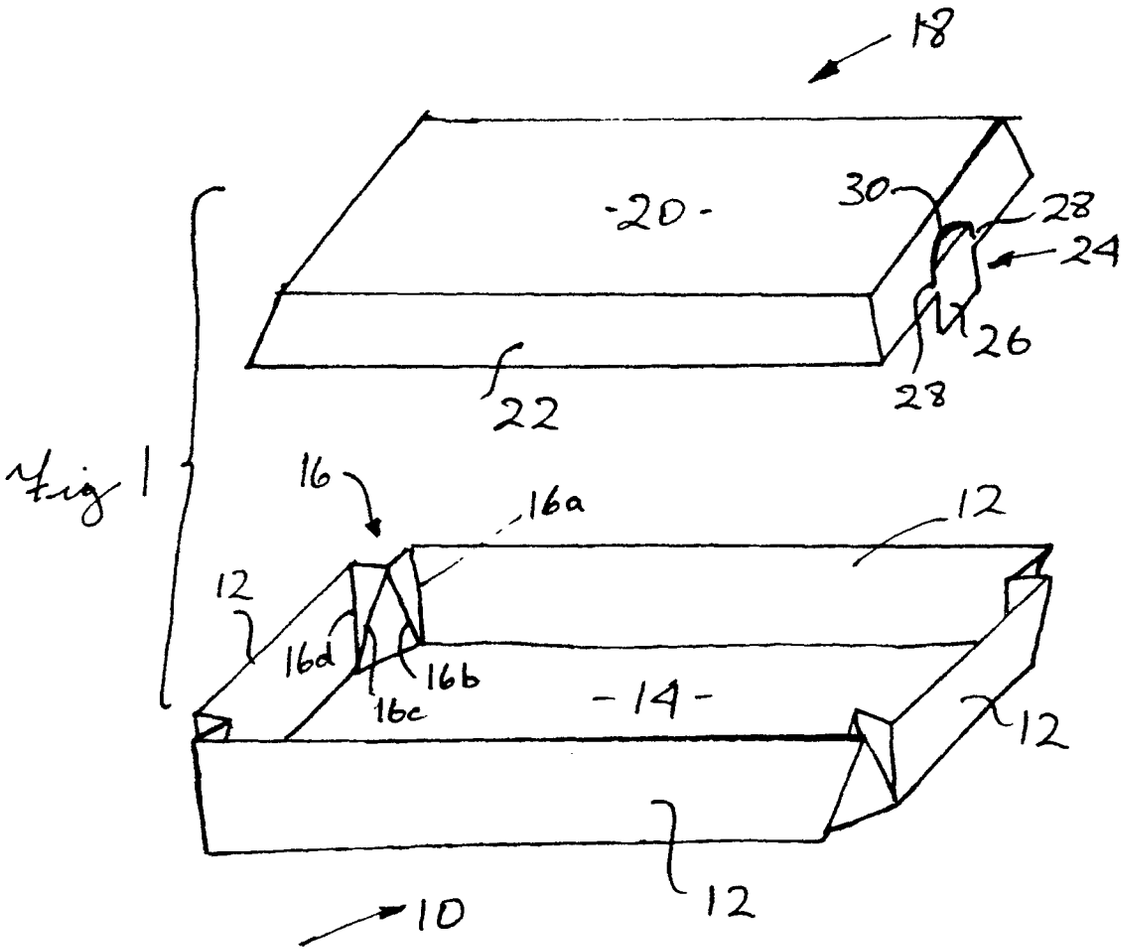

Fig 1

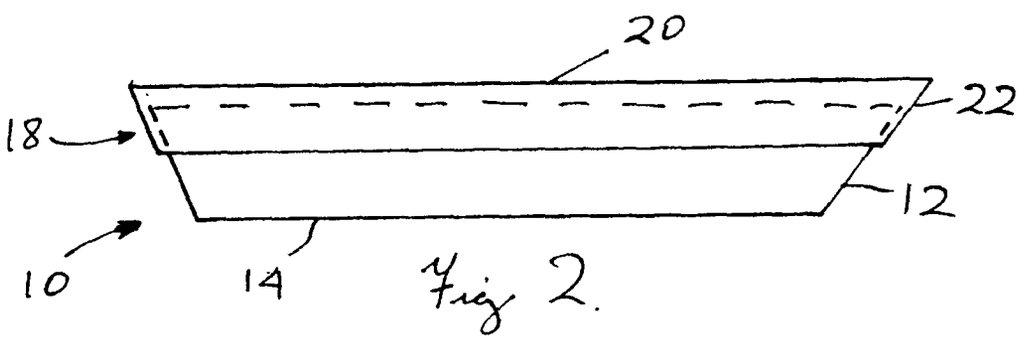

Fig 2.

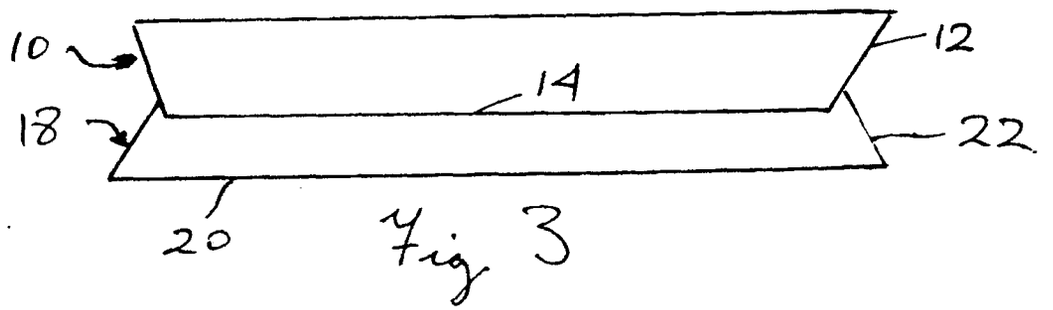

Fig 3

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 90 31 1587

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.5)
Y	US-A-3 377 017 (ROSENFIELD) * Column 2, lines 24-41; figures 1,3 *	1,2	B 65 D 5/68 B 65 D 5/24
Y	US-A-3 423 007 (CHRISTENSSON) * Column 3, lines 11-37; figures 1,3,5 *	1,2	
A	DE-A-2 425 694 (DETZEL) * Page 4, paragraph 2; figure 1 *	3	
A	WO-A-8 702 008 (PERSSON) * Figures 1,2 *	1	

TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)

B 65 D

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of search	Examiner
The Hague	26 November 90	MARTINEZ NAVARRO A

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X: particularly relevant if taken alone
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A: technological background
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