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(54) **Watercraft having an elevated platform**

(57) A watercraft (11) comprising a shell (13) having an upper skin (23) incorporating an aperture (43) therein and adapted to support at least one person, a lower skin (24) defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skins. The watercraft (11) also comprises a cylinder (47) having at least one end closed and adapted to be positioned with respect to the aperture (43) such that the cylinder (47) is moveable from an elevated position, whereby it provides an elevated platform, or an inverted position.

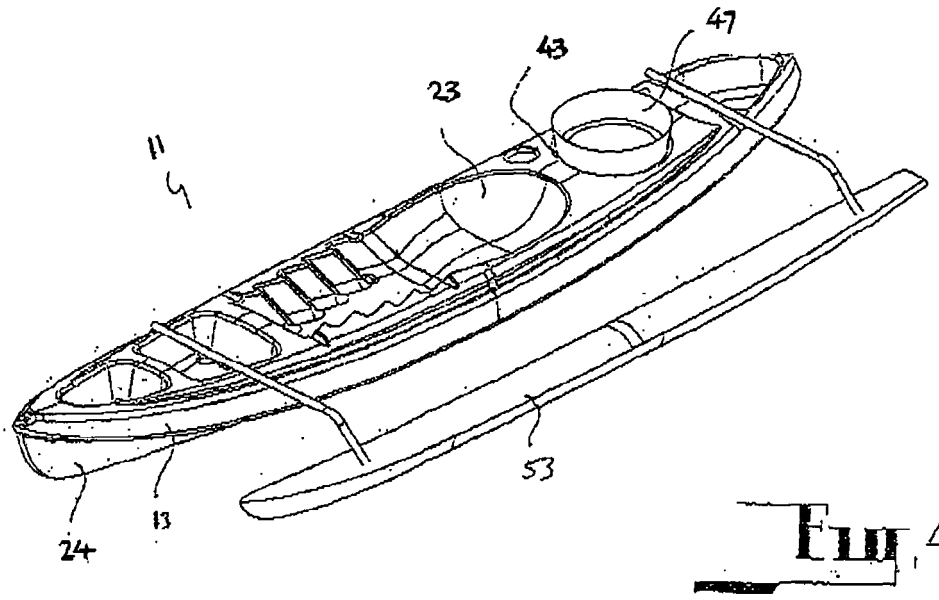

Fig. 4

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Description

Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention generally relates to a watercraft. In particular the present invention relates to a watercraft capable of supporting a person on top of the craft in an elevated position.

Background Art

[0002] With the increasing popularity in recreational water activities the sit-on-top kayak has become increasingly popular due to its ease of use.

[0003] Typically, kayaks are of the conventional sit-in kayak construction wherein the operator is positioned in an enclosed cockpit incorporated within the shell of the kayak, entering through an opening in the upper deck of the kayak.

[0004] Sit-on-top kayaks which include surf-skis and wave-skis, have become very popular for those people who do not enjoy being confined in a traditional kayak, preferring a floating platform that gives the operator easy access to disembark or board the craft, particularly after the craft has capsized.

[0005] Typically, a sit-on-top kayak is characterised by a watertight shell having an upper and lower skin, and an open cockpit area with seating and footrests moulded or provided on the upper skin of the shell.

[0006] Several types of sit-on-top kayaks are much wider across the beam and do not possess the narrow bow and streamlined hull dynamics of the traditional enclosed kayak, resulting in a more stable, user-friendly kayak for all to enjoy.

[0007] Sit on top kayaks are often used as fishing platforms whereby the operator may cast a line either from a rod or hand reel. However, due to the stability of the kayak this can sometimes prove difficult. Furthermore, casting may be ineffectual due to the low position of the operator relative to the water, which may also hinder the landing of a fish caught on the line, particularly where the fish puts up a fight.

[0008] The preceding discussion of the background to the invention is intended only to facilitate an understanding of the present invention. It should be appreciated that the discussion is not an acknowledgement or admission that any of the material referred to was part of the common general knowledge in Australia as at the priority date of the application.

[0009] It is an object of this invention to provide a sit-on-top kayak having an improved platform and which can be easily transported and stored.

Disclosure of the Invention

[0010] The present invention provides a watercraft comprising:

a shell having an upper skin incorporating an aperture therein and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin, the shell having a pocket therein extending from the aperture into the cavity;

an insert adapted to be positioned with respect to the aperture such that in one position the insert is in an elevated position so as to provide an elevated platform, and in another position is in an inverted position such that the insert is substantially received in the pocket.

[0011] In the elevated position the insert may provide a seat above the upper skin for the operator, whilst in an inverted position the insert may provide a container such as a bucket.

[0012] Preferably when in an inverted position the insert is substantially flush with the upper skin.

[0013] The insert may be releasably locked in position relative to the pocket.

[0014] Preferably the insert is cylindrical in shape. Preferably the cylinder is closed at one end. The closed end of the cylinder may provide a cushion when the cylinder is in an inverted position.

[0015] When in an inverted position the watercraft may be easily transported and stored.

[0016] The watercraft may also comprise at least one floatation assembly mounted on the shell. The at least one floatation assembly may be removably mounted. The at least one floatation assembly may be in the form of an outrigger.

[0017] The present invention further provides a watercraft comprising:

a shell having an upper skin incorporating an aperture therein and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin;

a cylinder having at least one end closed and adapted to be positioned with respect to the aperture such that the cylinder is moveable from an elevated position, whereby it provides an elevated platform, or an inverted position.

[0018] In use, when the cylinder is in an elevated position an operator may position themself on the cylinder so as to be seated above the upper skin of the watercraft. When the cylinder is in an inverted position the cylinder can be used as a bucket. In this position the watercraft may also be easily transported or stored.

[0019] Preferably the cylinder is releasably locked with respect to the aperture. The closed end of the cylinder may provide a cushion.

[0020] In one aspect of the invention, the aperture extends inwardly from the upper skin terminating a distance

from the lower skin and is defined by a bottom surface and a sidewall enclosure between the upper skin and the bottom surface to ensure the cavity remains watertight.

[0021] In another aspect of the invention, the aperture extends from the upper skin to the lower skin and is defined by a sidewall enclosure between the lower skin and the upper skin to maintain the integrity of the shell and ensure the cavity remains watertight.

[0022] Preferably the aperture is adapted to removably secure a propulsion means for propelling the watercraft, the propulsion means being configured to cooperate with the watercraft to maintain the shallow draught.

[0023] The cylinder may be placed in the inverted position when the propulsion means is in place.

[0024] As the watercraft is watertight, it is capable of being propelled by the paddling action of one or more of the operators when the propulsion means is removed.

[0025] The watercraft may also comprise at least one floatation assembly mounted on the shell. The at least one floatation assembly may be removably mounted. The at least one floatation assembly may be in the form of an outrigger.

[0026] The watercraft may be the sit-on-top type.

[0027] The present invention further provides a watercraft comprising:

a shell having an upper skin incorporating a securing means therein, and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin;

a body adapted to be releasably secured with respect to the securing means of the upper skin, whereby when the body is secured to the securing means the body provides an elevated platform.

[0028] The body may be in the form of a cylinder having at least one end closed. The at least one end may provide a seat. The at least one closed end may have a cushion attached thereto.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0029] The invention will be better understood by reference to the following description of several embodiments thereof as shown in the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a watercraft according to a first embodiment showing an insert in an inverted position;

Figure 2 is a view similar to figure 1 with the insert in an elevated position;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a watercraft according to a second embodiment without outriggers and having the insert removed from the watercraft;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a watercraft according to a third embodiment showing an insert in an inverted position;

Figure 5 is a view similar to figure 4 but from a bottom perspective; and

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a cylinder according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0030] Referring to the figures 1 and 2, the invention according to a first embodiment is a watercraft in the form of a sit on top kayak 11 comprising a shell 13 having an upper skin 23, a lower skin 24 and a cavity between the upper and lower skins (23, 24).

[0031] The upper skin 23 has an aperture 43 extending inwardly and terminating a distance from the lower skin 24 to define a pocket 45. The pocket 45 has a sidewall and a bottom surface to ensure the cavity remains watertight.

[0032] The kayak 11 also comprises an insert or body in the form of a cylinder 47. The cylinder 47 is lockable with respect to the aperture 43 in either an inverted position, as shown in figure 1, or an elevated position, as shown in figure 2.

[0033] The aperture 43 serves as a securing means to releasably secure the insert or body.

[0034] The cylinder 47 is closed at one end, providing a cushion 49 at that end.

[0035] In use the cylinder 47 can be positioned in an elevated position to provide an elevated platform for the operator (or passenger). In this position the operator is above the level of the water providing a better platform for activities such as fishing. When the cylinder 47 is not being used as an elevated platform, the cylinder 47 may be positioned in an inverted position and used as a bucket.

[0036] To increase the stability of the kayak 11, the shell may have an outrigger 51 mounted either side thereof in a rearward position.

[0037] Figure 3 show a second embodiment of the invention without outriggers 51.

[0038] Figure 4 and 5 shows a further embodiment of the invention with an outrigger 53 connected to the shell 13 in a rearward and forward position. This outrigger 53 provides stability to the shell 13 in one direction due to the buoyancy effect of the outrigger 53, and in the other direction due to the weight of the outrigger 53.

[0039] In this embodiment, the aperture 43 extends through the shell 13 as best shown in figure 5. The aperture 43 is adapted to receive a removable propulsion means, not shown, when the cylinder 47 is removed therefrom. Due to the shell 13 being watertight, the kayak 11 can be used with or without the propulsion means or cylinder 47 in place.

[0040] In this embodiment, the cylinder may be positioned with respect to the aperture 43 in an elevated position even when the propulsion means is in position.

[0041] Modifications and variations such as would be apparent to the skilled addressee are considered to fall within the scope of the present invention.

[0042] Throughout the specification, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or group of integers but not the exclusion of any other integer or group of integers.

Claims

1. A watercraft (11) comprising:

   a shell (13) having an upper skin (23) incorporating an aperture (43) therein and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin (24) defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin (23, 24), the shell (13) having a pocket (45) therein extending from the aperture (43) into the cavity; an insert (47) adapted to be positioned with respect to the aperture (43) such that in one position the insert (47) is in an elevated position so as to provide an elevated platform, and in another position is in an inverted position such that the insert (47) is substantially received in the pocket (45).

2. The watercraft according to claim 1 wherein when in an inverted position the insert is substantially flush with the upper skin.

3. The watercraft according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the insert is releasably lockable in position relative to the pocket.

4. The watercraft according to claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the insert is cylindrical in shape.

5. The watercraft according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the insert comprises a cylinder closed at one end.

6. A watercraft (11) comprising:

   a shell (13) having an upper skin (23) incorporating an aperture (43) therein and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin (24) defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin (23, 24);
   a cylinder (47) having at least one end closed and adapted to he positioned with respect to the aperture (43) such that the cylinder (47) is moveable from an elevated position, whereby it provides an elevated platform, or an inverted position.

7. The watercraft according to claim 6 wherein the cylinder is releasably locked with respect to the aperture.

8. The watercraft according to claims 6 or 7 wherein the aperture extends inwardly from the upper skin terminating a distance from the lower skin and is defined by a bottom surface and a sidewall enclosure betwccn the upper skin and the bottom surface to ensure the cavity remains watertight.

9. The watercraft according to claims 6 or 7 wherein the aperture extends from the upper skin to the lower skin and is defined by a sidewall enclosure between the lower skin and the upper skin to maintain the integrity of the shell and ensure the cavity remains watertight.

10. The watercraft according to claim 9 wherein the aperture is adapted to removably secure a propulsion means for propelling the watercraft, the propulsion means being configured to cooperate with the watercraft to maintain the shallow draught.

11. The watercraft according to claim 10 wherein the cylinder can be placed in the inverted position when the propulsion means is in place.

12. The watercraft according to any preceding claim further comprising at least one floatation assembly mounted on the shell.

13. The watercraft according to claim 12 wherein the at least one floatation assembly is removably mounted.

14. The watercraft according to claim 12 or 13 wherein the at least one floatation assembly is in the form of an outrigger.

15. A watercraft comprising:

   a shell (13) having an upper skin (23) incorporating a securing means (43) therein, and adapted to support at least one person; a lower skin (24) defining a hull for contact with the water; and a cavity between the upper and lower skin (23, 24);
   a body (47) adapted to be releasably secured with respect to the securing means (43) of the upper skin (23), whereby when the body (47) is secured to the securing means (43) the body (47) provides an elevated platform.

16. The watercraft according to claim 15 wherein the body is in the form of a cylinder having at least one end closed, the at least one end providing a seat

when the body is in an elevated position.

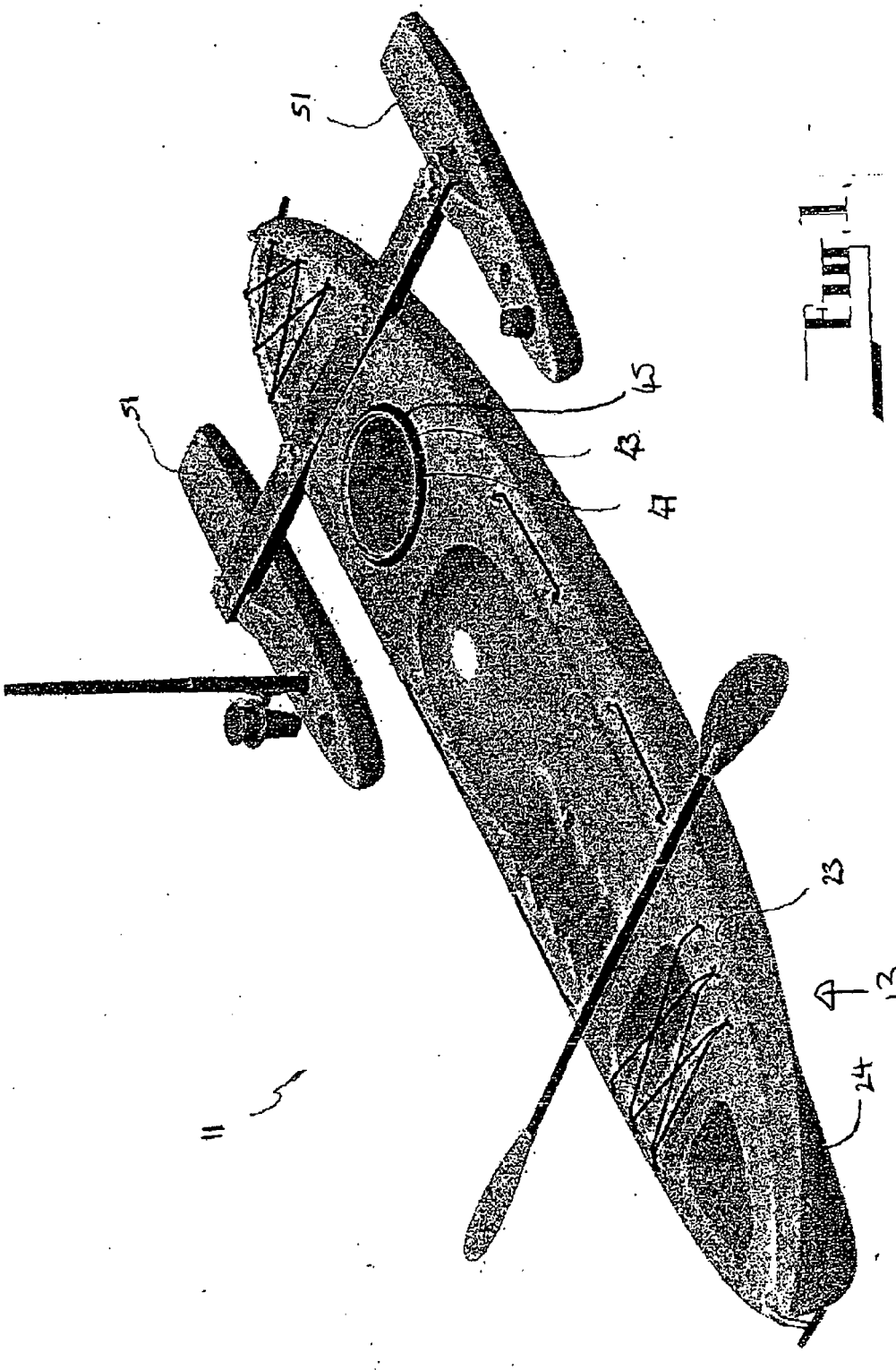

Fig. 1

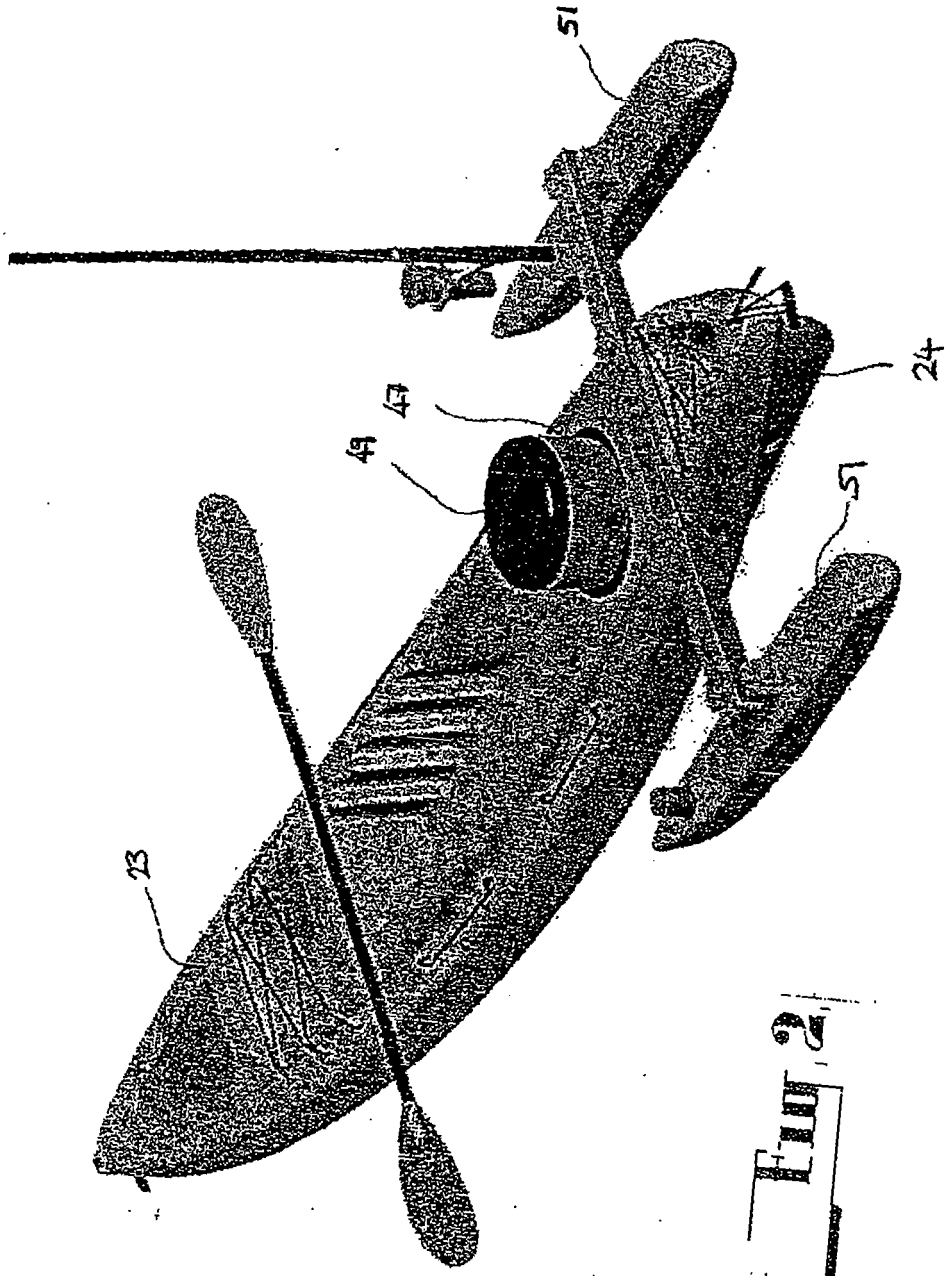

Fig. 2

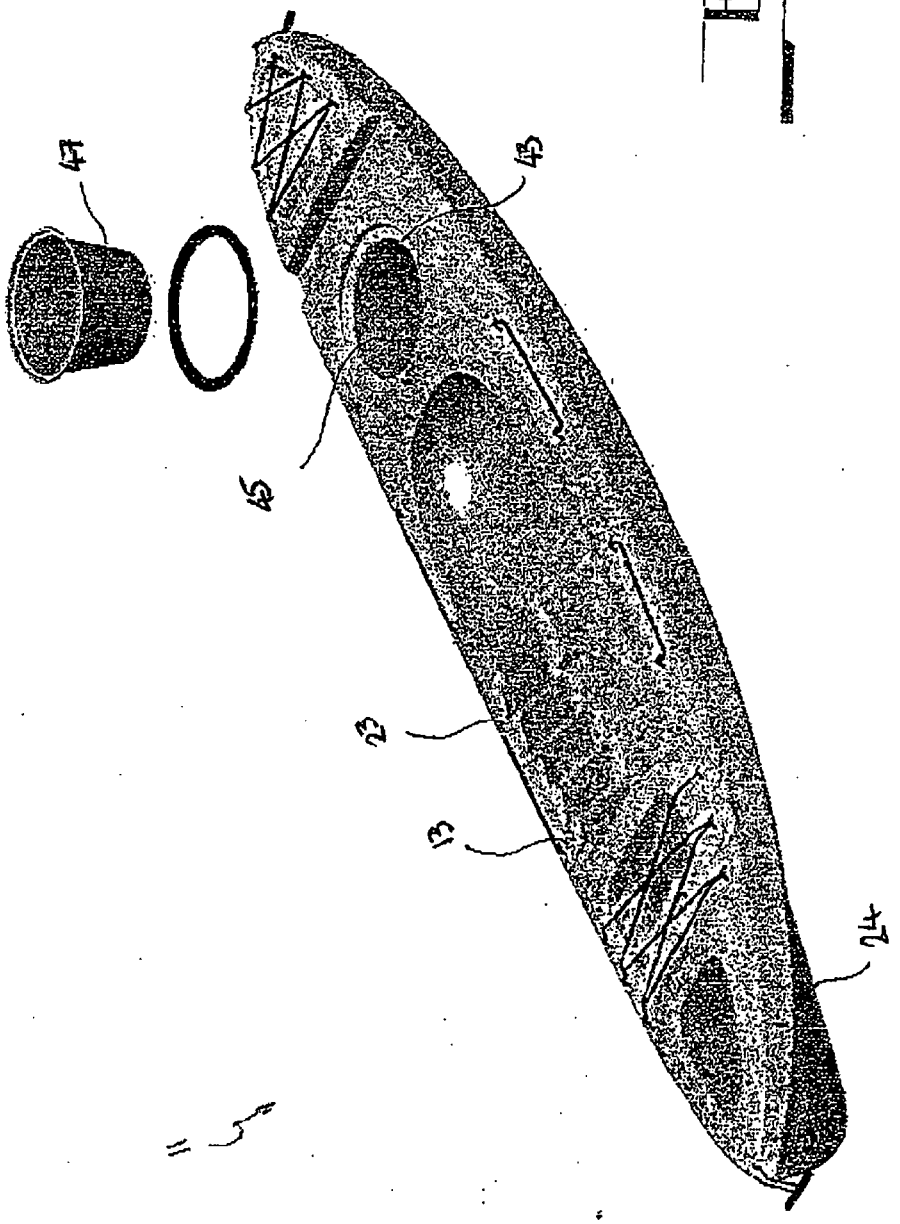

Fig. 3

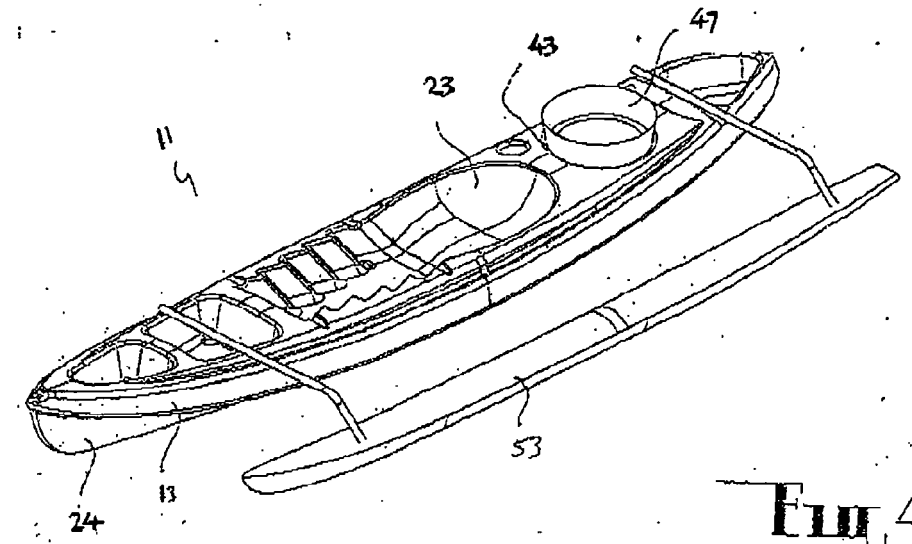

Fig. 4

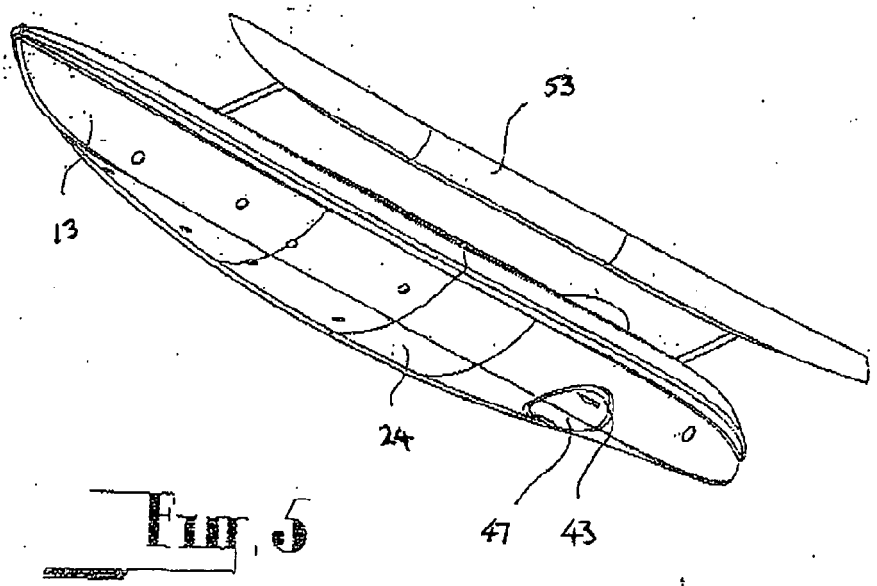

Fig. 5

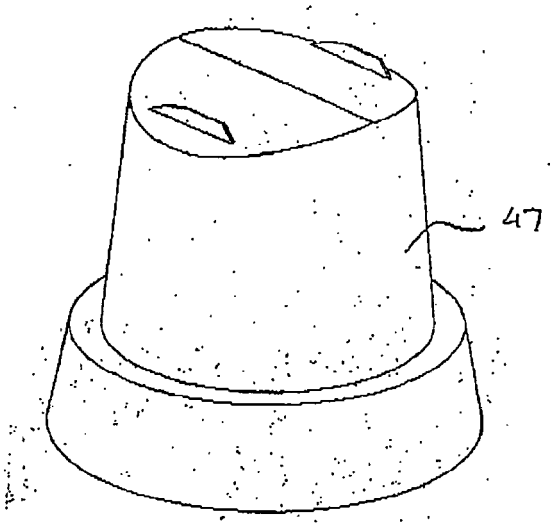

Fig 6

European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 05 25 7407

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	WO 2004/005130 A (CARNEGIE RECREATIONAL WATERCRAFT PTY LTD; HOPKINS, ALAN) 15 January 2004 (2004-01-15) * page 12, line 10 - line 24; figures *	1,6, 10-15	B63B35/71
A	US 2002/166493 A1 (SORENSEN JOHN D. ?APOS ET AL) 14 November 2002 (2002-11-14) * abstract; figures *	1-9,15, 16	
A	US 2004/107890 A1 (JERABEK JESSE J ET AL) 10 June 2004 (2004-06-10) * abstract; figures *	1,6,15	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			B63B

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	10 March 2006	Moya, E

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO. EP 05 25 7407

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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10-03-2006

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 2004005130 A	15-01-2004	NONE	
US 2002166493 A1	14-11-2002	NONE	
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82