

Marks and Meanings

Decoding inscriptions on artefacts

Social History
Curators Group



Further reading and websites

Patents

Esp@cenet patents database (covers c.1890s onwards for UK patents)
<http://gb.espacenet.com/>

History of patents
<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-history.htm>

Old patent numbers
<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-oldnumbers.htm>

National Archives guide to researching pre-1853 patents
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/rdleaflet.asp?sLeafletID=77>

Patent Information Centres in the UK
<http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/patlib/directory/unitedkingdom.html>

US Patent and Trademark Office Databases
<http://patft.uspto.gov/>

Review of Esp@cenet including details of coverage and tips for advanced searches
<http://www.istl.org/06-summer/electronic3.html>

Esp@cenet Assistant (e-learning module)
<http://www.european-patent-office.org/wbt/espacenet/>

Esp@cenet user forum
<http://forums.epo.org/espacenet/>

Registered Designs

National Archives guide to researching Registered Designs and Trademarks
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/ExternalRequest.asp?RequestReference=ri2207>

National Archives guide to researching Diamond Marks
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/ExternalRequest.asp?RequestReference=ri2208>

Design Registers: online exhibition from the National Archives featuring 300 Victorian ceramic designs and other curiosities
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/designregisters/>

Hallmarks

Database of Early Silver Hallmarks (1753 to 1858) registered with the Birmingham Assay Office (covers Birmingham marks only)
<http://www.theassayoffice.uk.com/esh/>

Table of Birmingham date letters 1773 to 2009
http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk/date_letters.html

There are many books on hallmarks; the important thing is to check that they have good reproductions of the marks as there are traps for the unwary. The serifs on letters are not always reproduced accurately. An easy way to check is to look at the year letter for Birmingham hallmarks of 1885. There should be a small pip on the left hand side of the letter 'l':

BIRMINGHAM										
										
1849	A	"		1867	S	"		1883	i	"
1850	B	"		1868	T	"		1884	k	"
1851	C	"		1869	U	"		1885	l	"
1852	D	"		1870	V	"		1886	m	"
1853	E	"		1871	W	"		1887	n	"
1854	F	"		1872	X	"		1888	o	"

Some examples of reliable books on hallmarks:

- Frederick Bradbury, *Bradbury's book of hallmarks*, multiple editions 1975-2004
- ed. Ian Pickford, *Jackson's Hallmarks*, 1991
- T.R. Poole, *Identifying Antique British Silver*, 1988

CODE NUMBERS FOR REGISTERED DESIGNS AND PATENTS

Designs registered from 1842 until 1883 carry a diamond symbol with codes shown in collectors' books, see below. Thereafter a continuing numbering system was introduced as detailed below.

Patents granted between 1617 and 1852, a total of 14,360 were only numbered and officially published in the 1850s. Patent numbers from 1852 to 1915 consist of up to five digits plus at least the last two digits of the year – thus 15374/07 would be 1907. From 1916 a continuing numbering system was introduced as detailed below. These various numbers can be looked up in the *Patents Journals*.

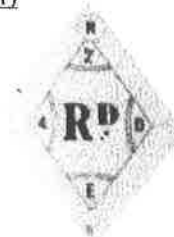
End of	R.D.No.	End of	R.D.No.	Patent No.
1883	zero	1916	658,000	102,811
1884	19,772	1917	662,000	112,130
1885	40,479	1918	665,000	121,130
1886	64,519	1919	673,000	136,851
1887	90,570	1920	679,000	155,800
1888	116,647	1921	686,000	173,240
	number is now about	1922	693,000	190,731
1889	140,000	1923	701,000	208,730
1890	163,000	1924	709,000	226,570
1891	183,000	1925	717,000	244,800
1892	204,000	1926	724,000	263,500
1893	224,000	1927	732,000	282,700
1894	243,000	1928	742,000	302,940
1895	262,000	1929	751,000	323,170
1896	290,000	1930	760,000	340,323
1897	308,000	1931	769,000	364,153
1898	330,000	1932	778,000	385,637
1899	346,000	1933	788,000	403,717
1900	365,000	1934	798,000	421,826
1901	384,000	1935	808,000	440,483
1902	402,000	1936	816,000	459,083
1903	423,000	1937	823,000	477,515
1904	447,000	1938	832,000	498,136
1905	460,000	1939	837,000	516,337
1906	493,000	1940	838,000	531,238
1907	517,000	1941	839,000	542,236
1908	534,000	1942	840,000	550,278
1909	546,000	1943	841,000	558,349
1910	573,000	1944	842,000	566,450
1911	593,000	1945	844,000	574,316
1912	612,000	1946	849,000	583,834
1913	630,000	1947	852,000	596,285
1914	642,000	1948	856,000	615,103
1915	650,000			

Registered Design Coding 1842 to 1867 (top corner) and then 1868 to 1883 (right corner)



1842/67

1842 X	1849 S	1856 L	1863 G	1870 O	1877 P
1843 H	1850 V	1857 K	1864 N	1871 A	1878 D
1844 C	1851 P	1858 B	1865 W	1872 I	1879 Y
1845 A	1852 D	1859 M	1866 Q	1873 F	1880 J
1846 I	1853 Y	1860 Z	1867 T	1874 U	1881 E
1847 F	1854 J	1861 R	1868 X	1875 S	1882 L
1848 U	1855 E	1862 O	1869 H	1876 V	1883 K



1868/83

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Searching the Esp@cenet database

General points to remember

- UK patents dating from the 1890s onwards are included in the database
- Search the Worldwide database for historical patents – the GB database only covers patents issued from 1979 onwards

Searching by number

Numbers from c.1890s to 1915

- You will need to know the year as well as the number of the patent. For more information on how numbers relate to years, see the list supplied or the list at <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-oldnumbers/p-oldnumbers-1852.htm>
- Choose Number Search from the left menu
- Ensure the database selected is Worldwide
- Enter (without any spaces): GB, the year of publication (4 digits) and the number (padded out to 5 digits where it is lower than 10000). For example, if your patent is number 6259 and the year is 1897, you should enter GB189706259

esp@cenet Number Search - Windows Internet Explorer provided by Millennium Point

http://gb.espacenet.com/search97cgi97.cgi.exe?Action=FormGen&Template=gb/en/number.htm

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Home: Birmingham Stories Customize Links List Management - SHCG-LIST List Management - STI-SSN Thinktank Helpdesk

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Quick Search
Advanced Search
Number Search
Last Results list
My patents list
Classification Search
Help

Quick Help
What numbers can I search for
Can I search for more than one number at a time?

Number Search

1. Select database
Select the database in which you wish to search

Select patent database: Worldwide

2. Enter number
Enter either an application, accession, publication or priority number with country code prefix

Publication number: GB189706259 W003075829
 Including family

SEARCH CLEAR

http://gb.espacenet.com/search97cgi97.cgi.exe?Action=FormGen&Template=gb/en/home.htm Internet 100%

Numbers from 1916 onwards

- Choose Number Search from the left menu
- Ensure the database selected is Worldwide
- Enter GB and the full number (no spaces or punctuation)
- Example:

esp@cenet Number Search - Windows Internet Explorer provided by Millennium Point

http://gb.espacenet.com/search/97.cgi?97_sq.exe?Action=FormGen&Template=gb/en/number.htm

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Quick Search
Advanced Search
Number Search
Last Results list
My patents list
Classification Search
Help

Quick Help
Which numbers can I search for
Can I search for more than one number at a time?

Number Search

1. Select database
Select the database in which you wish to search:

Select patent database: Worldwide

2. Enter number
Enter either an application, accession, publication or priority number with country code prefix

Publication number: GB188297 WO03075629
 Including family

SEARCH CLEAR

Done Internet 100%

Viewing and printing the document

When a result has been found, click on the title to go through to the record:

esp@cenet - results view - Windows Internet Explorer, provided by Millennium Point

http://v3.espacenet.com/searchResults?locale=en_GB&PN=GB518696&compact=false&DB=EPODOC

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

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esp@cenet 1993-1997

Compact | Print | Export Refine search

RESULT LIST
1 result found in the Worldwide database for:
GB518696 as the publication number
(Results are sorted by date of upload in database)

Improvements in or relating to devices for closing tins and like containers in my patents list

Inventor: Applicant: HERMANN GRABHER
EC: B21D51/32 IPC: B21D51/32; B21D51/30
Publication Info: GB518696 (A) — 1940-03-05

Data supplied from the esp@cenet database — Worldwide

Quick Help
Why is the list limited to 500 results?
Why is the number of results sometimes approximate?
Why could it be that a certain patent document is not displayed in the results list?
Why do I sometimes get results having a title which is not in English?

When the record appears, choose the Original document tab:

esp@cenet - Bibliographic data - Windows Internet Explorer, provided by Millennium Point

http://v3.espacenet.com/publicationDetails/biblio?adjacent=true&C=A&date=19400305&NR=518696A&DB=EPODOC&loca

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Home | Contact | English

esp@cenet 1993-1997

In my patents list | Print Return to result list

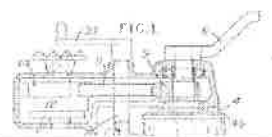
Improvements in or relating to devices for closing tins and like containers

Bibliographic data	Description	Claims	Mosaics	Original document	INPADOC LEGAL status
Patent number: GB518696 (A) Publication date: 1940-03-05 Inventor(s): Applicant(s): HERMANN GRABHER Classification: - international: B21D51/32; B21D51/30 - european: B21D51/32 Application number: GB19380025819 19380903 Priority number(s): GB19380025819 19380903					

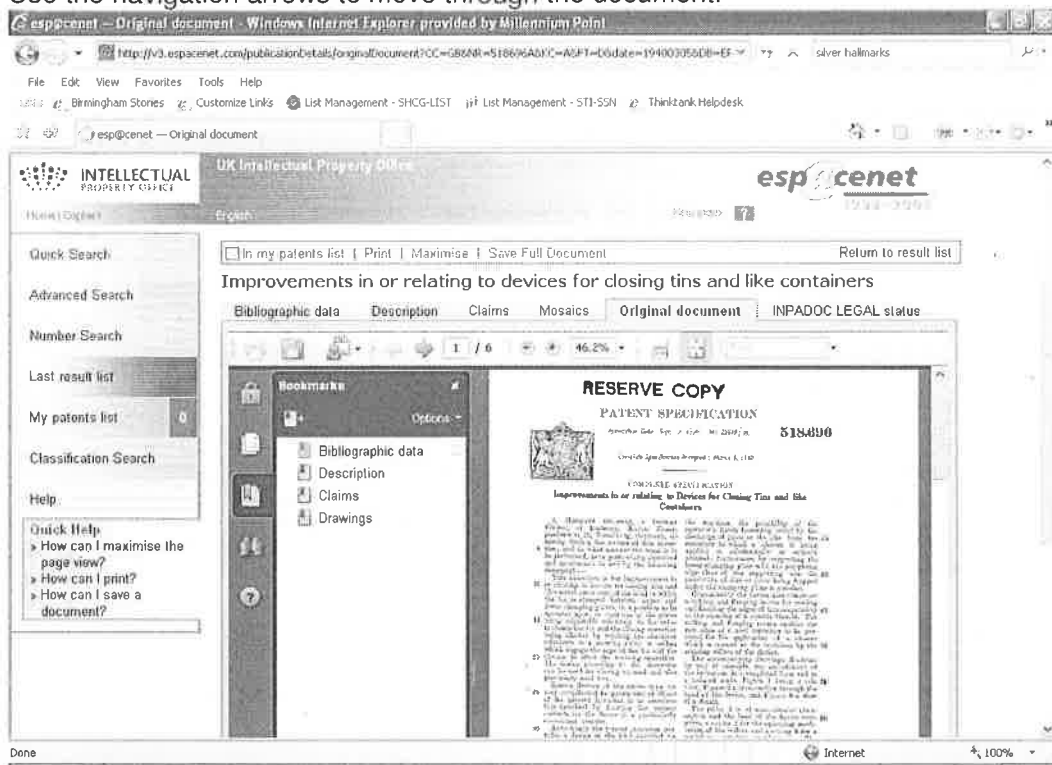
View INPADOC patent family
View list of citing documents

Report a data error here

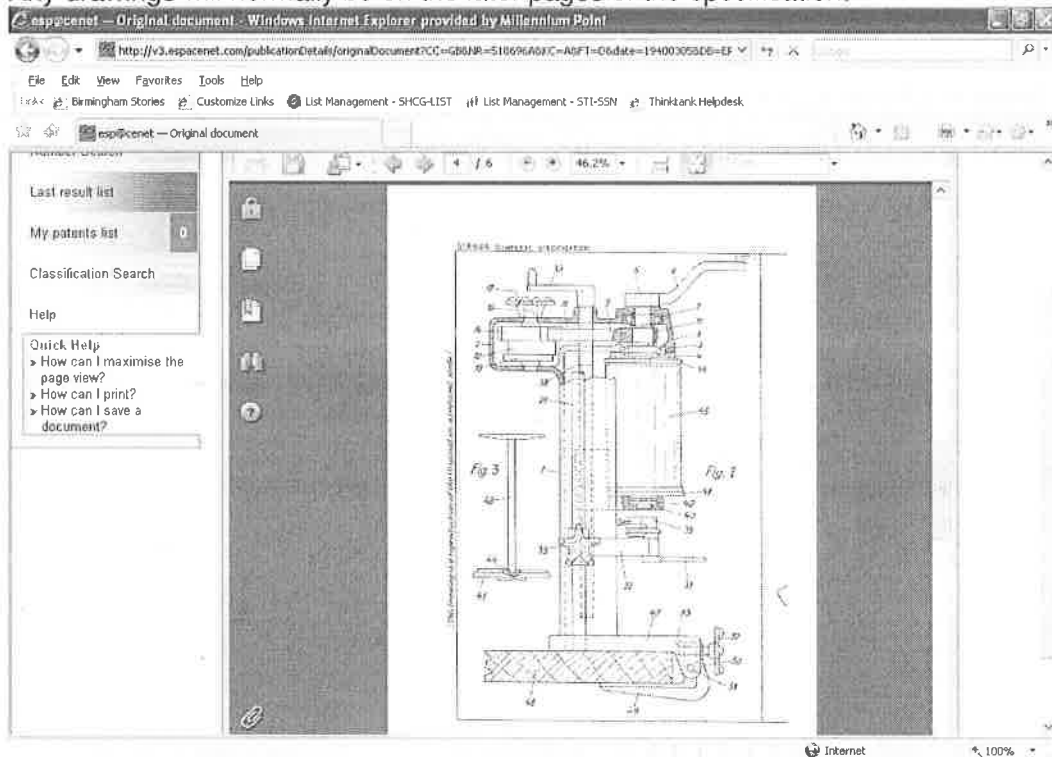
Abstract of GB 518696 (A)
518,696. Seaming. GRABHER, H, Sept 3, 1938, No 25819 [Class B3 (iv)] In a device for closing tins and like metal containers of the kind in which the tin is clamped between upper and lower clamping plates and rotated relatively to the seaming roller or rollers which engage the edge of the tin and closure, the lower clamping plate is vertically adjustable on the frame of the device and the operating means for the device, including an operating member for the clamping means, are mounted at the



Use the navigation arrows to move through the document.



Any drawings will normally be on the later pages of the specification:



It can be fiddly to view specifications on screen, so you may want to save or print them. You can print individual pages, but if you want to print more than one, it's easiest to use the 'Save Full Document option' (or disk icon) to save the document as a PDF onto your computer, and then open in Adobe Reader for viewing and printing.

Searching for people

It can sometimes be possible to trace patents by a particular inventor (and sometimes company, although for a long time patents were registered only in the inventor's name – if the inventor has the same name as the company it helps!). However, quite a distinctive name is needed (as you have to search the worldwide database), and even then you may have to comb through pages of results as it's not possible to search a date range. Negative results of searching cannot be treated as proof that a person or company did not take out any patents, because its name may have been entered in a way that is difficult to pick up on the database (or in the case of a company not recorded at all).

Example:

An 1897 trade directory gives the name and address of Walter Griffiths & Co. Ltd., Highgate Square, Birmingham. Did 'Walter Griffiths' register any patents at this time?

Search:

- Choose Quick Search from the left menu
- Ensure the database selected is Worldwide
- Select the Persons or Organisations option
- Enter the simplest distinctive form of the name (omit '& Co. Ltd')

The screenshot shows the 'esp@cenet Quicksearch' interface. On the left is a navigation menu with options like 'Quick Search', 'Advanced Search', 'Number Search', 'Last Results list', 'My patents list', 'Classification Search', and 'Help'. The main area is titled 'Quick Search' and has three numbered steps:

- 1. Select database**: 'Select the database in which you wish to search'. A dropdown menu shows 'Worldwide' selected.
- 2. Select type of search**: 'Select whether you wish to search with simple words in the titles and abstracts (where available) or with the name of an individual or organisation:'. Two radio buttons are present: 'Words in the title or abstract' (unselected) and 'Persons or organisations' (selected).
- 3. Enter search terms**: 'Enter case insensitive search terms in English:'. A text input field contains 'walter griffiths' and another field contains 'Insititl Pasteur'. Below the fields are 'SEARCH' and 'CLEAR' buttons.

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows 'Done' and 'Internet' with a 100% zoom level.

This example gives (at the time of writing) approximately 174 results. Using the Next button to go through the pages, eventually several patents of the right period are found:

esp@cenet — results view — Windows Internet Explorer provided by Millennium Point

http://v3.espacenet.com/searchResults?page=7&JA=walter+griffiths&DB=EPODOC&locale=en_GB&compact=False

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esp@cenet — results view

116	Improvements in Cabinets, Drawers, and Pigeon Holes, and in the Manufacture of the same.	in my patents list <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventor:	GRIFFITHS WALTER	Applicant: GRIFFITHS WALTER
EC:		IPC:
Publication info:	GB189725873 (A) — 1898-10-29	
117	Improvements in Tea or Coffee Urns.	in my patents list <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventor:	GRIFFITHS WALTER	Applicant: GRIFFITHS WALTER
EC:		IPC:
Publication info:	GB189720505 (A) — 1898-08-27	
118	Improvements in Lubricators for Cycle Hubs and other purposes.	in my patents list <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventor:	GRIFFITHS WALTER	Applicant: GRIFFITHS WALTER
EC:		IPC:
Publication info:	GB189716119 (A) — 1897-08-28	
119	Improvements in Cycle Pedals.	in my patents list <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventor:	GRIFFITHS WALTER	Applicant: GRIFFITHS WALTER
EC:		IPC:
Publication info:	GB189716118 (A) — 1898-05-20	
120	Improvements in Cycles.	in my patents list <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventor:	GRIFFITHS WALTER	Applicant: GRIFFITHS WALTER
EC:		IPC:
Publication info:	GB189706259 (A) — 1898-03-05	

Data supplied from the esp@cenet database — Worldwide

Compact | Print | Export Refine search | previous | 567 | next

Internet 100%

Checking the patents, they have the correct address:

esp@cenet — Original document — Windows Internet Explorer provided by Millennium Point

http://v3.espacenet.com/publicationDetails/originalDocument?CC=GB&NR=189716119A&KC=A&FT=D&date=18970828&DB

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Birmingham Stories Customize Links List Management - SHCG-LIST List Management - STI-SSN Thinktank Helpdesk

esp@cenet — Original document

Number Search

Last result list

My patents list 0

Classification Search

Help

Quick Help

- How can I maximise the page view?
- How can I print?
- How can I save a document?

Bibliographic data Description Claims Mosaics Original document INPADOC LEGAL STATUS

Bookmarks

- Bibliographic data
- Claims
- Description
- Drawings

N^o 16,119 A.D. 1897

Date of Application, 7th July, 1897—Accepted, 28th Aug., 1897

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

Improvements in Lubricators for Cycle Hubs and other purposes.

I WALTER GRIFFITHS of Highgate Square, Birmingham in the County of Warwick Manufacturer do hereby declare the nature of this invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, to be particularly described and ascertained in and by the following statement:—

My invention has for its object improvements in lubricators, and refers more particularly to those for cycle hubs by which I obviate the necessity of removing the dust protector from the lubricating hole during the process of lubrication while at the same time my device is perfectly dust proof and can be attached to any existing hub with as much ease as an ordinary dust protector it is also cheap and simple to manufacture, and free from any liability to get out of order.

In order that my invention may be clearly understood, I have appended a sheet of drawings upon which

Figure 1 is an enlarged view of my guard.
 Figure 2 is a section through same.
 Figure 3 is a side elevation and
 Figure 4 is a plan.

In carrying my invention into effect, I have shown my improvement applied to the lubrication of a cycle hub from which its application to any other purpose will be readily understood. The spring clip A having the usual ends a' is provided with the projection a' which is stamped or pressed out of the metal of the clip A and is provided with the aperture a' at its end. Within this projection the cup D is fixed the ball B and spring E being first inserted within the cup so that the ball fits a seat against the edge of the aperture a' of the projection at the lower end of the cup being perforated at a' with a projecting nose, which enters the lubricating hole formed in the hub being retained therein by the spring of the clip A.

It will thus be seen that while the ball B prevents the entrance of any dust to the

Done

Internet 100%

What this doesn't tell us is whether the inventor put his/her ideas into production. In this case, the search was prompted by an enquiry about a camera marked 'Griffiths Camera Co., Highgate Square, Birmingham and there are also patents relating to cameras.