first polariser; outputting, from said birefringence measurement detector, a signal corresponding to a measured birefringence characteristic.

54. A method according to claim 53, comprising communicating said output signal corresponding to a measured birefringence characteristic to a processor; and comparing, in said processor, a value of said output signal with said predetermined birefringence characteristic.

55. A method according to claims 53 or 54, wherein said predetermined birefringence characteristic comprises one of: a first range of values corresponding to expected birefringence measurement detector output signal values if an opaque or semi-opaque region of said item is located in said measuring region; a second range of values corresponding to expected birefringence measurement detector output signal values if a transparent or semi-transparent region of said item is located in said measuring region; and a third range of values corresponding to expected birefringence measurement detector output signal values if no item is present in said measuring region.

56. A method according to any one of claims 50 to 55, the method comprising: determining, by way on an optically-based reflectance measuring apparatus of said item detection arrangement, if an item authentication region of an item is located in said measuring region, said determining step implemented by: illuminating, by way of a reflectance measurement emitter of said reflectance measuring apparatus, said measuring region of said apparatus with electromagnetic radiation; receiving, by way of a reflectance measurement detector of said reflectance measuring apparatus, electromagnetic radiation reflected from said measuring region of said apparatus; outputting, from said reflectance measurement detector, a signal corresponding to a measured characteristic of said electromagnetic radiation reflected from said measuring region and indicative of presence or otherwise of an item