CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for separating solids from solids laden drilling fluid, the apparatus comprising a shale shaker and a screen assembly, the shale shaker comprising a base and a basket isolated from said base, a flow tray arranged in said basket for directing screened drilling fluid, the screen assembly comprising at least one layer of screening material~~,~~ and a screen support having a perimeter with at least one support point within said perimeter, characterised in that the flow tray comprises a plurality of contours, said plurality of contours forming a plurality of ~~at least one~~ raised portions to support said screen assembly.

2. An apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~each raised portion of said plurality of raised portions comprises at least one wear strip.

3. An apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein said flow tray is made from a composite material.

4. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the ~~at least one~~plurality of raised portions defines flow channels for directing said screened drilling fluid along said flow tray.

5. An apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the flow channels are tapered to facilitate flow of screened drilling mud.

6. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the flow tray is rigidly fixed to the basket.

~~7. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said flow tray comprises a plurality of contours, at least one of said contours forms the at least one of the raised portion.~~

~~8. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the at least one raised portion is a plurality of raised portions~~.

~~9~~7. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said screen support comprises a tapered surface.

~~10~~8. An apparatus as claimed in Claim ~~9~~7, wherein ~~said at least one~~each raised portion of said plurality of raised portions comprises a tapered support surface to receive said tapered surface of said screen support.

~~11~~9. An apparatus as claimed in Claim ~~9~~7 or ~~10~~8, wherein said tapered surface is formed from a sheet material.

~~12~~10. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the screen assembly lies in a first plane and the flow tray lies in a second plane, the screen assembly in the first plane diverging from the flow tray in the second plane.

~~13~~11. An apparatus as claimed in any of Claims 1 to ~~12~~10, wherein the basket further comprises a second screen deck, the flow tray directing solids laden drilling fluid thereon.

~~14~~12. A method of using the apparatus as claimed in any of Claims 1 to ~~13~~11, the method comprising the step of placing the screen assembly in the basket of the shale shaker, flowing solids laden drilling fluid on to the screen assembly, at least a proportion of the solids flowing over the screen assembly and at least a proportion of said drilling fluid passing through said screen assembly.