

SCREW FIXING

This invention relates to screw fixings of the kind in which a screw (or threaded bolt) screws into a female threaded member (a nut) that is distinct from the major members fixed together thereby, and which is capable of being adjusted along the length of a slot in one of the major members.

One important instance is in the fixing of brackets or other fittings to channels of the kind (for example that sold by the Applicants through their subsidiary BICC Components Ltd. under the Trade Mark "Leprack" as Leprack channel) having inturned flanges at the free ends of the limbs of the channel, to which fixings are commonly made by using a rectangular nut (usually with two rounded corners) that can be passed through the open slot between the inturned flanges and then rotated through 90° to engage behind those flanges, the screw and the nut then being tightened.

This arrangement has the disadvantage that when the screw and nut are being tightened and sometimes after it is tightened and under load, the screw and nut may slide longitudinally in the channel.

In accordance with the present invention, a screw fixing comprises a screw having a nut threaded on it, the screw head and the nut each having a bearing surface facing the other, and a channel having at the free ends of the limbs of the channel inturned flanges directed towards the

base of the channel, the flanges defining a slot which is open at both ends, characterised in that the channel is rolled from a strip of metal having preformed teeth in at least one of its edges so as to form teeth in the free edge of a flange, directed towards the base of the channel, and the bearing surfaces that engages it has preformed parallel ribs that interlock with the teeth to prevent the screw and nut sliding longitudinally in the channel.

The teeth in the inturned flanges preferably have rectilinear apices which are perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the channel, although they may be set at a small angle thereto. Further, when there are teeth on both edges of the slot, the ribs may sometimes be engageable with alternative teeth on one edge for each position of engagement on the other, so providing firm engagement in several angular positions of the nut or screw head.

The pitch of the ribs is preferably the same as the pitch of the teeth. Alternatively the pitch of the ribs may double that of the teeth, or another small multiple thereof.

Where the bearing surface having parallel ribs is on the nut, the ribs may be formed by any suitable method, for example the nut may be forged or stamped, in which case the ribs preferably extend only part way across the bearing surface. Alternatively the ribs may be formed as a section from which the nut is to be formed is rolled or extruded, before the ends of the nut are machined and a hole is drilled and tapped; in this case the ribs will normally extend longitudinally right across the surface.

Preferably the nut or screw head, as the case may be, is non-circular (for example it may be of the usual basically rectangular shape with two opposite corners rounded or otherwise relieved) so that it can be passed through the slot and rotated to engage the inturned flanges of the channel; in this case the apices of the ribs will extend at least approximately parallel to the greatest transverse dimension of the nut or screw head (as the longer side of the rectangle).

The invention also includes a method of making a screw fixing comprising presenting to a channel having at the free ends of the limbs of the channel inturned flanges directed towards the base of the channel, the flanges defining a slot which is open at both ends, the channel having been rolled from a strip of metal having preformed teeth in at least one of its edges so as to form teeth in the free edge of a flange directed towards the base of the channel, a device comprising a screw having a nut threaded on it, the screw head or the nut constituting a non-circular abutment member, passing the abutment member through the slot, rotating the screw and the nut together until the abutment member engages the inturned flanges of the channel, the abutment member having parallel ribs which interengage with the teeth in one or both of the inturned flanges and then rotating the screw relative to the nut to screw the nut towards the screw head, the ribs and teeth interlocking to prevent the screw and nut sliding longitudinally in the channel.

In most cases the sides of the slot will be parallel, but this is not essential.

Preferably the device comprises a fitting having the screw passing (and preferably pre-inserted) through a clearance hole therein and having the nut threaded on it.

In this case the clearance hole preferably has a diameter equal to or slightly greater than the sum of the screw diameter and the pitch of the teeth. This allows the fitting to be located longitudinally of the slot in any required position relative to the major member despite the finite size of the ribs and teeth.

Preferably the screw and the nut are engaged by means which offer resistance to but do not prevent, screwing of the nut towards the screw head, preferably as described in our publication no. 804.

The teeth on the inturned flanges can be formed in any convenient manner but preferably they are formed by knurling, punching or otherwise shaping the edge of the channel preform (or at least one of them) before the preform is folded into the shape of the channel. Preferably this operation is carried out in-line with the folding of the preform, or it could be done during slitting of metal to form the flat preform.

The invention is now described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a cross-section through the line I-I in Figure 2 of a nut for use in one aspect of the invention;

Figures 2 and 3 are top and perspective views respectively of the nut;

Figures 4 and 5 are part sectional views of a channel; and

Figure 6 is a view of this aspect of the invention.

The nut 1 shown in Figures 1 to 3 has an approximately rectangular shape with two of the opposite

corners 2 and 3 rounded. Ribs 4 have been formed on one surface of the nut 1 in stamping of the nut. The apex of each rib has an approximate angle of 90° , and the ribs have a pitch of approximately 2mm.

The channel 5 shown in Figures 4 and 5 has inturned flanges 6 at the free ends of the limbs of the channel directed towards the base 8 of the channel, each flange having teeth 7 formed in its free edge. The teeth 7 are perpendicular to the face of the flange 6, are directed towards the base 8 of the channel 5, and are complementary in shape and size to the ribs on the nut.

Figure 6 shows the position of two nuts 1, one of which has a screw 9 threaded to it, in the channel 5, with the ribs 4 interengaging with the grooves 7 on the flanges 6 of the channel. The flanges 6 define a slot 10, which is open at both ends, in the channel 5. The nuts 1 may be provided with a biasing spring positioned between each nut and the base 8 of the channel to urge the nut towards the inturned flanges 6 of the channel.

Although in this example the ribs have an apex of 90° , a wide range of alternative values can be used successfully.

CLAIMS:

1. A screw fixing comprising a screw having a nut threaded on it, the screw head and the nut each having a bearing surface facing the other, and a channel having at the free ends of the limbs of the channel inturned flanges directed towards the base of the channel, the flanges defining a slot which is open at both ends, characterised in that the channel is rolled from a strip of metal having preformed teeth in at least one of its edges so as to form teeth in the free edge of a flange, directed towards the base of the channel, and the bearing surface that engages it has preformed parallel ribs that interlock with the teeth to prevent the screw and the nut sliding longitudinally in the channel.

2. A screw fixing as claimed in Claim 1 in which the pitch of the ribs is double the pitch of the teeth of another small multiple thereof.

3. A screw fixing as described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

4. A method of making a screw fixing comprising presenting to a channel having at the free ends of the limbs of the channel inturned flanges directed towards the base of the channel, the flanges defining a slot which is open at both ends, the channel having been rolled from a strip of metal having preformed teeth in

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at least one of its edges so as to form teeth in the free edge of a flange directed towards the base of the channel, a device comprising a screw having a nut threaded on it, the screw head or the nut constituting a non-circular abutment member, passing the abutment member through the slot, rotating the screw and the nut together until the abutment member engages the inturned flanges of the channel, the abutment member having parallel ribs which interengage with the teeth in one or both of the inturned flanges, and then rotating the screw relative to the nut to screw the nut towards the screw head, the ribs and teeth interlocking to prevent the screw and nut sliding longitudinally in the channel.

5. A method as claimed in Claim 4 in which the device comprises a fitting having the screw pre-inserted through a clearance hole therein and having the nut threaded on it.

6. A method as claimed in Claim 5 in which the clearance hole has a diameter equal to or slightly greater than the sum of the screw diameter and the pitch of the teeth.

7. A method of making a screw fixing as described with reference to the accompanying drawings.