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GARMENT HANGER

This invention relates to garment hangers.

The modern practice in display of garments such as lingerie, scarves and ties in retail stores is to hang these garments from a rail. The garment hangers employed need to be inexpensive, as they may be given away with the goods. They need to be sufficiently robust that they can be used more than once. The garments need to be adequately secured to the garment hanger so that they cannot easily become detached, there being nothing so disconcerting to a shopper than finding a garment display rail with several garments on the floor beneath the rail where they have fallen off or become detached from the garment hangers. At the same time, since shoppers may wish to detach an individual garment from its hanger to hold it up against them before a mirror before purchase, the means by which the garment is fastened to its hanger needs to be sufficiently simple and reliable that a customer can readily see how to replace it without damaging the garment. To save tooling costs for the hanger manufacturer and labour costs for the retail store owner the fastening arrangement needs to allow staff quickly and simply to fasten garments of different sizes to a single size of hanger.

These have proved to be conflicting requirements which it is not easy to reconcile. The present invention has arisen out of our work seeking to provide new and better embodiments of garment hanger which go further towards satisfying all these requirements simultaneously.

In accordance with the present invention, we provide a garment hanger comprising a base; hook, ring or like support means integral with the base and adapted in

use to allow the base to hang in a generally vertical plane beneath a rail or the like; and at least one clip integrally formed with the base and adapted for releasable fastening of a garment or the like to the base; the or each such clip comprising a clip member having opposite sides defining an opening therebetween, and being hingedly connected to the base and adapted to be brought into generally planar confrontation with the base; the base including a projection to one side of said plane, the distal end portion of which projection has a width in one direction which exceeds the corresponding width in the same direction of the opening defined by the clip member; and the clip member and/or the region of the hinged connection between the clip member and the base being sufficiently flexible that in use the clip member may be manually forced over the said distal end thereby to trap a thickness of material of a garment placed between the base and the clip member, and the clip member may be subsequently manually released from the said distal end of the projection to release the said thickness of material.

The projection may comprise a stud projection effectively having a head providing the said distal end portion, and having a width greater than the corresponding width of the remainder or neck of the stud projection. In an alternative arrangement the projection may be provided by a portion of the base displaced forwardly of the general plane thereof.

In one preferred embodiment described in detail hereinbelow, for example for the retail display of a pair of knickers, the base comprises an elongate member with a clip mounted at either end, the hook, ring or like support means being mounted centrally. The elongate member has sufficient rigidity and is chosen to have a length, such that even the largest size of knickers to be mounted thereon needs to be stretched slightly to be

mounted with the elongate member within the waist opening. Clips of the kind called for in the present invention effectively hold the pair of knickers in place by an interference fit between parts of the clip and the material of the garment and without actually clipping or stretching the material. The grip or holding effect is made just sufficient to prevent the knickers from becoming detached from the hanger without deliberately detaching the clips. Additionally, each clip member may have an arm integrally formed therewith, which with the clip fastened lies against the elongate body of the hanger increasing the holding effect. The arm also helps the user to position and clip a garment onto the hanger making the whole more "user-friendly". The elongate member may have one or more ridges integrally formed along its length.

In an alternative embodiment suitable, for example, for mounting scarves or ties, only a single clip is provided which is located immediately beneath the hook, ring or like support in use, the base being of similar overall dimension to that defined by the hook, ring or the like support.

The hanger is preferably integrally moulded of a relatively hard plastics material such as polypropylene or polyamide. The clip member is hingedly connected to the base by an integral live plastics hinge.

The invention is hereinafter more particularly described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 shows an embodiment of hanger constructed in accordance with the present invention and suitable for the display of a pair of knickers, the hanger being shown in a front elevational view with the clips open;

Fig. 2 shows the hanger of Fig. 1 in a side elevational view;

Fig. 3 shows the hanger of Figs. 1 and 2 in a rear elevational view with both clips closed;

Fig. 4 shows a sectional view to an enlarged scale taken along the line IV-IV in Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a view generally similar to Fig. 4 but showing how a thickness of material of a garment may be held in place;

Fig. 6 shows a sectional view, again to an enlarged scale, taken along the line VI-VI in Fig. 1;

Fig. 7 is a view corresponding to Fig. 2 but with the clip closed;

Fig. 8 is a rear elevational view of the hanger of Figs. 1 to 7 with a pair of knickers mounted thereon;

Fig. 9 is a rear elevational view of a garment hanger constructed in accordance with the present invention suitable for mounting a scarf thereon for retail display;

Fig. 10 is a corresponding front elevational view;

Fig. 11 shows the hanger of Figs. 9 and 10 with the clip closed;

Fig. 12 is a view corresponding to Fig. 11 showing the garment held in place;

Fig. 13 is a sectional view taken along the line XIII-XIII in Fig. 10;

Fig. 14 is a similar view with the garment held in place;

Fig. 15 is a side elevational view of the hanger of Fig. 9 as seen in the direction of the arrow XV;

Fig. 16 is an enlarged sectional view taken along the line XVI-XVI in Fig. 10;

Fig. 17 shows an embodiment of a knicker hanger constructed in accordance with the present invention being shown in a rear elevational view with the clips open; and

Fig. 18 shows the hanger of Fig. 17 in a side elevational view.

Referring first to the embodiment of Figs. 1 to 8, there is shown a garment hanger, generally indicated 1, integrally moulded from plastics material, preferably polypropylene or polyamide. The hanger is provided with a hook 2, though it could equally well be provided with a closed ring (indicated in dashed lines in Fig. 1) or alternative support means adapted to allow the hanger to hang in a generally vertically plane beneath a rail or the like. At either end of an elongate member 3, to which the hook is connected centrally, is a clip generally indicated 4 comprising a clip member 5 which is hingedly connected to the remainder of the hanger (as best shown in Figs. 2, 6 and 7, by a reduced thickness portion 6 in effect providing a live plastics hinge. The elongate member 3, here in the form of a substantially rigid bar, and portions 7 at either end thereof, associated with the respective clips 4 in a manner to be explained below, effectively define a base which lies substantially in a generally vertical plane beneath the rail or the like when the hanger is

supported. The elongate member 3 may be provided with ridges 20 as shown in Figs. 17 and 18.

Each clip member 5 has opposite sides 8 between which is defined an opening 9. In the embodiment illustrated, the opening 9 is both elongate in form and closed by virtue of the two opposite sides 8 of the clip member 5 being connected by a bight portion 10, though this need not always be necessary. The bight portion need not be closed in some embodiments. The clip member 5, by virtue of the hinge 6, is adapted to be brought into generally planar confrontation (as shown in Fig. 7) with element 7 of the base portion.

As best shown in Fig. 6, in each of the portions 7, a central portion thereof is dished so as to project forwardly from the general plane of the base member. The distal end 11 of such projected portion has a width W which is greater than the separation between opposite sides 8 of opening 9 in clip member 5, as can best be seen in Fig. 4.

Clip member 5 is of lesser thickness than the base member and so has more flexibility. In addition there is flexibility in the hinge 6. As a result, the clip member may be manually forced over the wider distal end 11 of the projection into the configuration shown in Figs. 4 and 7. As can best be seen in Figs. 5 and 8, this enables a thickness of material to be releasably trapped by the clip member. The same flexibility allows the clip member 5 to be subsequently manually released from distal end 11 of the projection, thereby releasing the thickness of material.

The clip operates essentially by interference with little or no direct gripping of the material causing it to stretch. In use, as best shown in Fig. 8, with the clips open, the hanger is first placed within the waist

opening of the pair of knickers. Small knob shaped projections 12 are provided on the sides of portions 7 at each extreme end of the hanger. The knicker elastics is placed just above these projections 12 (preventing the knickers slipping from the hanger while the clips are fastened, the projections 12 also serving as locating elements) and the clip members 5 are brought into clipping engagement with distal end portions 11 of the projections from the rear outside the pair of knickers. As a result, when viewed from the front, no clips are visible at all to break the line of the garment.

We have found this construction of clip to be simple and reliable in use and in frequent re-use. This construction of clip appears substantially to prevent garments becoming accidentally detached. To snap the clip open, a deliberate intention to do this is required. Because the construction is so simple, the clip can readily be snapped back into place again to hold the garment. Additionally, because the whole hanger can be made as a one piece moulding, the hanger can be relatively cheaply produced.

Figs. 17 and 18 illustrate a modified form of the hanger described above. The modified hanger has arms 21 integrally formed with clip members 5'. Arm 21 is positioned such that as clip member 5' is brought down over projection 11' the arm is positioned adjacent to elongate member 3'. In use, the arms 21 serve to hold the material of a garment against the bar 3'. The presence of the arms 21 increases the holding effect of the clips. The garment is more securely attached to the hanger and is less likely to slip off or to be knocked off while still being easily releasable. The garment is held more closely against the body of the hanger and is less likely to sag, making the overall display more attractive. The arms also make it easier to place a

garment on the hanger and clip the garment in place so that the hanger becomes more user-friendly. The arms confront the ridges 20 in the clipped position, again enhancing the grip, and tending to prevent garment sag toward the centre of the hanger.

Figs. 9 to 16 illustrate an alternative embodiment adapted for mounting a scarf as best shown in Fig. 12. For like parts to parts described above in relation to the first embodiment, the description below uses the same reference numerals, but increased by 100.

The embodiment of hanger, generally indicated 101 illustrated in Figs. 9 to 16 is adapted for mounting, for example, a scarf, as is best shown in Fig. 12.

The hanger 101 has only a single clip member 105 hingedly connected at 106 to a base member 13 which has similar overall dimensions to the overall dimensions of the hook, ring or like support (here a simple hook 102). Base 13 has a central opening 14 across which extends a bar 15 upstanding from which is a stud projection 16, the head or distal end portion 111 of which has a width W greater than the width of opening 109 defined between opposite sides 108 of the clip member 105. The neck or remainder of stud projection 16 is of lesser width than the corresponding width of opening 109. Clip member 105 can be bent about its hinge 106 to bring it into generally planar confronting relation with base 12, as shown in Figs. 11 and 13. If a scarf is placed across base member 13 and the clip 105 brought into such confronting relation and forced over the head or distal end 111 of stud projection 15, then the scarf will become releasably held in position as best shown in Figs. 12 and 14. As with the previously described embodiment suitable for mounting a pair of knickers, the material of the scarf is neither tightly held nor stretched in this arrangement.

Other configurations for the clip member and the projection from the base to those illustrated in the above two described embodiments are feasible. Neither the clip member nor the distal end of the projection need have straight sides. It need not be the marginal side edges of the clip member which cooperate with the distal end portion of the projection; instead near and far side edges (relative to the hinge) may interfere with corresponding edges of the projection.

The hanger may be adapted for display of other garments. For example, it may be given a more robust construction with a view to displaying skirts. It may be provided with more than two clips, for example if it is to be used to display a bikini top and pants or a set of lingerie such as a camisole top and French knickers.

With the configurations of clip described the weight of the garment when hanging assists the interference and hence the hold. Pulling on the garment without undoing the clip causes a greatly increased hold. Hangers constructed in accordance with the present invention thus make it difficult for shoplifters to quickly pull a garment from the hanger without requiring a normal holding grip which might damage the material of the garment. One and the same hanger can readily accommodate garments of significantly different thickness.

CLAIMS

1. A garment hanger comprising a base; hook, ring or like support means integral with the base and adapted in use to allow the base to hang in a generally vertical plane beneath a rail or the like; and at least one clip integrally formed with said base and adapted for releasable fastening of a garment or the like to said base, the or each said clip comprising a clip member having opposite sides defining an opening therebetween, and being hingedly connected to said base and adapted to be brought into generally planar confrontation with said base; said base including a projection to one side of said plane, the distal end portion of which projection has a width in one direction which exceeds the corresponding width in the same direction of said opening defined by said clip member; and said clip member and/or the region of said hinged connection between said clip member and said base being sufficiently flexible that in use said clip member may be manually forced over the said distal end thereby to trap a thickness of material of a garment placed between said base and said clip member, and said clip member may be subsequently manually released from the said distal end of said projection to release the said thickness of material.

2. A garment hanger according to Claim 1, wherein said projection comprises a stud projection effectively having a head providing the said distal end portion, and having a width greater than the corresponding width of the remainder or neck of the stud projection.

3. A garment hanger according to Claims 1 or 2, wherein said projection is provided by a portion of said base displaced forwardly of the general plane thereof.

4. A garment hanger according to any preceding claim,

wherein said base comprises an elongate member with a clip mounted at either end, said hook, ring or like support means being mounted centrally.

5. A garment hanger according to any preceding claim, wherein said clip member has an arm adapted to be adjacent to said base when said clip member is forced over said distal end of said projection, thereby further assisting in retaining the material of said garment in position against said base portion.

6. A garment hanger according to Claim 5, wherein the dimensions of said arm are chosen so that said arm may be readily grasped to facilitate manual manipulation of said clip between its respective positions in which a thickness of material of said garment is trapped by said clip and in which said thickness of material is released.

7. A garment hanger according to any of Claims 4, 5 or 6 wherein said elongate member has one or more ridges integrally formed along its length, which ridge(s) is (are) adapted for cooperation with said garment whereby to assist in holding said garment in place on the hanger.

8. A garment hanger according to any of Claims 1 to 3, wherein there is but a single clip located beneath said hook, ring or like support in use, said base being of similar overall dimension to that defined by said hook, ring or like support.

9. A garment hanger according to to any preceding claim, wherein said hanger is integrally moulded of a relatively hard plastics material.

10. A garment hanger according to any preceding claim, wherein said clip is hingedly connected to said base by an integral live plastics hinge.

11. A garment hanger substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.
