

PATENT SPECIFICATION

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DRAWINGS ATTACHED

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(54) IDENTIFICATION ASSEMBLY

(71) We, THOMAS DE LA RUE AND COMPANY LIMITED, a British Company of 84/86 Regent Street, London, W.1, do hereby declare the invention for which we pray that

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a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:

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The present invention relates to an identifying assembly, for example, a pass, a passport or a part thereof, comprising a printed sheet and a bearer-identifying means such as a photograph. Passports are typically representative of such identifying assemblies and most commonly the identifying means is a photograph of the bearer. The printed sheet usually carries one or more forms of security printing (as hereinafter defined) in order that it may be identified as genuine and the photograph is necessarily a good likeness of the bearer with particular reference to its clarity and detail. However, the separate security features are of no avail in the event that a dishonest person can separate the printed sheet from the photograph and replace the latter by another in an undetectable or not readily detectable manner. For example, passports lost or stolen can be acquired by an unauthorised user who can select one relating to a person of similar height and colouring and replace the photograph by his own. This invention relates to identifying assembly in the form of a book having an improved facility for rendering difficult such fraudulent uses.

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Furthermore, since the photograph-bearing page of a passport is generally the most used page it tends to become soiled or even torn. This may be aesthetically or hygienically unpleasant but additionally it may lessen the security value by reducing the clarity of the photograph or of the security printing. This invention further provides an identifying assembly in the form of a book less likely to

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suffer from these disadvantages or some or them.

According to the present invention there is provided an identification assembly such as a pass or passport, such an assembly comprising a plurality of folded sheets joined together to form a book, one of said sheets being adapted to receive identifying means, the sheet adjacent to the said one sheet being in the form of a composite sheet of an at least partially transparent pressure-sensitive adhesive-coated sheet and a strippable protective sheet for the adhesive, the at least partially transparent sheet being adapted to adhere to the said one sheet on removal of the strippable sheet to enclose but leave clearly visible identifying means received on the said one sheet and to render the identifying means inaccessible without damage being caused to either the said one sheet or the at least partially transparent sheet.

In one form the edges of the at least partially transparent sheet are adapted to coincide with the edges of the said one sheet.

In a preferred form with the identifying means superimposed upon the said one sheet and enclosed by the at least partially transparent sheet there is included security means arranged between on the one hand the said one sheet and the identifying means and on the other hand the at least partially transparent sheet, the security means being such that the visibility of at least the essential portion of the identifying means is unaffected thereby.

Preferably, the said one sheet hereinafter referred to as the backing sheet is provided with printing on the surface thereof on which the identifying means is superimposed. The identifying means may be of any suitable form such as a photograph, a signature or fingerprints.

Two or more photographs or other identifying means may be used in which cases both are preferably covered by the top layer or

sheet. The identifying means may be present on one, or both sides of the printed sheet.

The printing of the backing sheet is preferably security print, at least in part. The sheet may be so printed on both sides. By security print we mean print designed or produced to render copying or altering difficult, for example, colour gradations and variations, fine line print, heavy print which stands proud of the surface (e.g. intaglio print), the use of water- and-solvent-sensitive inks (including those sensitive to ink removers and to solvents, softeners or extenders for the adhesive used to bond the transparent sheet to the backing sheet, and the use of fluorescent, magnetic or other inks which will reveal their properties when suitably tested, in general terms, the inks used should not react with the adhesive deleteriously to affect the quality or desired appearance of the security print. However, it is preferable to avoid using on the parts of the printed backing sheet which are to be covered by the top sheet or layer, print having security characteristics which would be diminished or lost when so covered; for example intaglio print if used, is best employed on the reverse side of the printed backing sheet if such is not covered by the top sheet or layer. The security print can be applied by any suitable printing process, including silk screen. The printed backing sheet may also include conventional print e.g. that indicative of the bearer and/or the date and place of issue.

The physical form of the identifying means is preferably such that it can lie flat between the printed backing sheet and at least partially transparent sheet. The identifying means may be applied directly to the printed backing sheet or otherwise form a part thereof but it is most conveniently in the form of or mounted on a separate component, e.g. it may be conventional photograph or carrier for the identifying means. When in the form of such a separate component the identifying means is preferably adhesively secured by its rear face to the surface of the printed backing sheet.

When a photograph is used it is most conveniently of a conventional directly-produced type but photographic or likeness-representations of other kinds and produced in other ways may be used. To cite but one example, a decalcomania bearing a photograph printed by say a silk screen process could be used to some advantage save only that the expense of producing the same would probably be excessive for normal use.

The at least partially transparent sheet is preferably flexible and is conveniently of a plastics material; for example, transparent polyvinyl chloride, an orientated polyethylene terephthalate film (those sold under the registered trade marks MELINEX and MYLAR for example) or films of other polyesters. The sheet is preferably of a thickness of the same order as that of the printed backing sheet but

no significant limit needs to be applied to this dimension provided the identifying means is visible therethrough and that the separation of the printed backing sheet and the flexible transparent sheet is not facilitated by the thickness ratio thereof. Most desirably the sheet is wholly transparent where it overlies the identifying means and other portions of the printed backing sheet must be visible but elsewhere it may carry printing, and security printing in particular.

The adhesive for bonding the transparent sheet to the backing sheet is of the pressure-sensitive type; thus pressure-sensitive adhesive-coated plastics sheets are particularly suitable, for example, that supplied by Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. as "No. 853 "Special" Polyester Tape". For ease of handling such self-adhesive coated transparent sheets are supplied with a strippable protective sheet e.g. siliconised paper, to cover the adhesive until the sheet is required for use to thereby form the composite sheet. Suitable adhesives includes those of the polymethyl methacrylate type and those which are polyisobutylene based; both of these types are particularly useful when the transparent sheet is of polyvinyl chloride. Generally, however, the adhesive must be of such a nature and/or thickness to provide a good bond between the transparent sheet and the other components of the assembly to which it is to adhere. There is a strong preference for water-insoluble adhesives.

It is possible to include between the printed sheet and the identifying means on the one hand, and the transparent sheet on the other, additional security means or components which do not deleteriously affect the adhesion of the transparent sheet to the printed sheet. Such components are preferably transparent or of such a nature and/or size that they do not significantly affect the visibility of the identifying means or the important parts thereof. Specifically a printed decalcomania is one suitable such component but other printed (and preferably security printed) films, sheets or layers may be used; decalcomania are useful because of their mechanical weakness and thus the alternative components preferably have or are afforded (e.g. by perforating) the same property. Decalcomanias of any type may be used but are preferably those adapted to be secured to a surface by means of a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

Preferably a decalcomania or other component is adhered to an identifying means prior to the application of a transparent sheet thereby to enclose the identifying means and the decalcomania and to render the same inaccessible without damage being caused to at least the printed sheet, or the transparent sheet. The decalcomania is preferably in the form of a strip; most satisfactorily it is applied across a part of the identifying means which may

be covered wholly or in part without any loss in the recognition factor thereof, and also to the printed sheet on either side of the identifying means.

5 The decalcomania by its very nature, or the other components by virtue of their having similar mechanical weaknesses, are not capable of being removed from the identifying means or the identifying means and printed sheet in
10 such a condition that they can be re-used, i.e. they are not capable of being removed and attached to another identifying means or assembly in such a manner as to appear to be a genuine undamaged article. However, the
15 transparent sheet also mechanically protects the decalcomania and it is at least possible that upon any removal of the transparent sheet (which would of itself cause damage to the printed sheet) the decalcomania would adhere to the transparent sheet and this would be best
20 avoided. It is possible to separate the transparent sheet or to make it non-adherent to the decalcomania over at least a significant part of their areas of contact. This may be accomplished by removal of the adhesive from a suitable area or areas of the transparent sheet or by inserting a transparent barrier film or layer, preferably one bearing no adhesive or one having
25 adhesion resistant properties, in respect of either or both any adhesive material incorporated in the body of the decalcomania and the adhesive material borne by the transparent sheet. Alternatively a combination of transparent insert and omission or removal of adhesive
30 from the transparent sheet may be used.

35 A cut-out window may be provided in the portion of the printed sheet behind the identifying means, said window preferably being of smaller area than the said means, and to apply
40 a decalcomania strip as hereinbefore defined across the exposed reverse surface of the identifying means and the reverse surface of the printed sheet. Preferably the reverse surface is then also covered with an adhesively coated
45 transparent sheet in accordance with any of procedures described above the applying a transparent sheet to the front face of the printed sheet.

50 The present assemblies may be used, for instance, as passes for identifying humans or animals or parts or details thereof, or inanimate valuable articles capable of being identified via a representation thereof or critical information relating thereto. Other uses for the present assemblies may well occur to those having security problems. Further, the book assembly when in the form a passport, may include the conventional components of such a document. When used as a passport the photograph is
60 applied to the backing sheet and the issuing official removes the strippable sheet and presses the adhesively coated transparent sheet firmly down on to the photograph-bearing printed sheet; in some cases gentle heat may
65 additionally be used to ensure that the trans-

parent sheet is properly affixed and that a good bond is formed.

The issuance of the passport would necessitate the usual identity-checking operations and, according to the requirements of the issuing authority, the entry of the personal details of the holder onto printed sheet which may or may not be the sheet bearing the photograph; in the event that a different sheet is used for the said personal details the latter may be regarded as identifying means and when covered by a transparent sheet an assembly within the scope of this invention.

After the transparent sheet has been applied to the backing sheet its edges should preferably coincide with those of the printed backing sheet in order to reduce the facility with which attempts may be made to separate the same. This may be by careful positioning of an exactly dimensioned transparent sheet or by edge-trimming when the assembly is complete.

In all cases the assemblies may be embossed by a die which overlaps both the identifying means and the printed sheet, this operation being performed either before or after the transparent sheet is applied.

If the transparent sheet is of polyvinyl chloride or some other stretchable material, the subsection of a finished assembly to strain will tend to stretch the plastics sheet and cause the printed sheet, which is usually paper, to tear. This may provide an undesirable aid to unauthorised separation of the components and it thus is sound practice to decrease the thickness of the paper so that it becomes more difficult to use the paper as a base for stretching the transparent sheet. Alternatively, a more rigid transparent sheet may be used or a potentially stretchable one of greater thickness. The ideal combination of properties is a matter for experiment. Alternatively again, the printed sheet may be made of paper which, by the inclusion of precrimped fibres or otherwise, has acquired an enhanced degree of stretchability. Normal paper fibres may be partially or completely replaced by plastics fibres, or the printed sheet may be of other than paper construction. For example it may be of stretchable woven, non-woven or knitted construction. The construction of the printed sheet may alternatively be non-fibrous e.g. of continuous sheet form and may even be of the same material as the transparent sheet but suitably treated or coated to provide one or more opaque or relatively opaque faces more suited to bear security print and to display it clearly.

The possibility of unauthorised separating of the transparent sheet from the printed sheet may also be reduced by weakening the printed sheet. This is possible because of the strength afforded by the transparent sheet, which strength would be lost from the printed sheet during separation. The weakness may be of two kinds, viz, that resulting in delamination

or a weakness at right angles to the plane of the sheet.

5 Delamination-type weakness may be attained by the use of coated paper or other coated sheet, the coating being but weakly adherent and the security printing being performed on and borne by the coating; attempts at removal will result in the coating adhering at least in part to the transparent sheet, at least in such degree that the loss of printing or coating is obviously visible. The relative bond strengths of the transparent sheet to the adhesive layer, the adhesive layer to the print sheet and to the unprinted sections of the coating, and of the coating to the base material of the printed sheet should preferably be selected to accomplish this.

20 Delamination weakness can also be promoted by weakening the paper, e.g. by reducing the rag content and/or by reducing the content of long-fibre wood in the pulp from which the paper is made.

25 Weakening at right angles to the plane of the paper can be achieved also by reducing the paper strength in the manner described above but alternatively or additionally by providing the paper with interrupted slits, perforations, slots, grooves etc.

30 However, by careful selection of the components the need for weakening the printed sheet is much reduced and in some applications may be quite unnecessary. For example, when the transparent sheet is Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.'s "No. 853 Special Polyester" (which includes a pressure-sensitive adhesive), the problem is not very evident.

40 In addition to forming an essential security function in the assemblies, the transparent sheet also provides mechanical protection to the underlying components, ie it safeguards them from accidental damage. Furthermore, it facilitates the retention of the surface of the assembly in a clean condition, for the transparent sheet is readily wipable to remove dirt for example with a cloth moistened with soap or other suitable cleansing agent.

45 As previously mentioned the top layer or sheet may alternatively be in the form of a decalcomania overlying the identifying means and at least the portion of the backing sheet adjacent the periphery of the identifying means.

55 In all cases, where the decalcomania overlies the essential portions of the identifying means it is transparent in the areas corresponding thereto. Otherwise the decalcomania includes decorative elements and/or printing, for example, as a border surrounding the transparent area or areas thereof. The printing in the decalcomania may be of any kind but in a preferred form it comprises security printing; it or the other decorative elements may include indicia peculiar to an issuing government or authority but in any event, the decalcomania

used in any given case is preferably distinctive and one of a group of identical such decalcomanias chosen by the issuing authority for its identifying assemblies.

70 Decalcomanias of any kind may be used provided that they are of such a nature that, as a result of their structure or the combination of their structure and their adhesive components, it is impossible at all readily to remove them from the surface to which they have been applied, in a condition suitable for re-use. Thus a suitable selection of decalcomania needs to be made in order most satisfactorily to produce the most secure identifying assemblies.

80 Decalcomanias which require moisture prior to their transference and include water-activatable adhesives will generally be unsuitable for use in the present assemblies unless their structure is such as to cause them to disintegrate or to tear when attempts are made to remove them from surfaces to which they have been applied by the moistening or wetting thereof. Generally we prefer to use decalcomanias which include pressure-sensitive adhesives for these have the advantages of being applied dry and of requiring the use of solvents, for attempts at removal, which are more likely to damage the sheet and to cause damage to the decalcomania itself.

95 In order further to enhance the security of the assemblies the printing upon the backing sheet is deleteriously susceptible to solvents for the adhesive in or on the decalcomanias; thus with this combination even if, by the exercise of extreme care, an applied decalcomania is treated with a solvent and removed in a condition suitable for re-use, damage, for example the smudging or running of ink, caused to the print will indicate that fraudulent processes have been applied to the assembly.

105 The decalcomanias must also necessarily be of such a kind that when transferred to the backing sheet and identifying means they adhere thereto positively with the application of but a small pressure, the adhesion between the decalcomania and the receiving surfaces being accounted for by the adhesive in or on the decalcomania.

115 One type of pressure-sensitive adhesive-containing decalcomania broadly suitable for use in connection with this invention is described and claimed in the specification of British Patent No. 896,012 (John Waddington Limited). According to that patent decalcomania transfers are made by applying a layer of cellulosic plastics material over a polythene layer, the plastics material having relatively poor adhesion to the polythene layer, printing one or more colours on to the cellulosic layer to form the image to be transferred, applying a layer of cellulose lacquer over the image and applying a layer of pressure-sensitive adhesive over the said lacquer layer.

125 The present assemblies do not necessarily prevent the removal of an identifying means 130

and its replacement by another but provided such assemblies are properly constructed, the result will be such as to leave sufficiently obvious traces for a reasonably careful examination of the assembly to reveal that it has been tampered with. When such an assembly is inspected, further measures for identifying the bearer must necessarily be taken. However, by combining the most basic elements of this invention with other security measures and features, including those described herein, the possibility of a fraudulent assembly being presented as genuine is still further reduced.

Illustrative embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 illustrates a front view of one form of identification sheet of a book with a transparent top sheet partially affixed,

Figure 2 illustrates an exaggerated section taken along the line II—II of Figure 1, but with the top sheet fully affixed,

Figure 3 illustrates a front view of a second form of identification sheet of a book with its transparent top sheet partially affixed,

Figure 4 illustrates a rear view of a third form of identification sheet,

Figure 5 illustrates a complete identification book assembly in the form of a passport, and

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate respectively a photograph-bearing page of a passport and a transfer element as a decalcomania adapted to be applied to the page of Figure 6 to constitute a further form of assembly.

Referring first to Figures 1 and 2, a printed paper sheet 1 carries a photograph 2 bonded thereto by an adhesive (for example, a starch-based adhesive) 3. The front face of the sheet 1 bears printing 4 indicative of the manner in which the assembly is to be used and, where appropriate, written entries 5. The remaining portion of the visible face of the sheet 1 is provided with security print markings which are indicated for draughtsman's convenience only as a small area 6. The security print preferably extends also beneath the photograph 2 and similar printing may be present on the reverse sides of the sheet.

A transparent polyvinyl chloride sheet 7 provided with a coating of a pressure-sensitive adhesive 8 (see Figure 2) is shown in a partly affixed position. To complete the assembly the remainder of the sheet needs to be moved so as to cover the photograph and the residue of the sheet, pressure being applied to force the components together to establish a satisfactory bond.

The security print 6 is preferably derived from an ink or inks sensitive at least in part to any solvent capable of dissolving the adhesive 8, to such an extent that the ink will run sufficiently to be readily observable if a solvent is applied in a quantity sufficient to weaken the adhesive. Since the edges of the assembly are most susceptible to the applica-

tion of a solvent, it is preferable that the markings should extend thereto.

Figure 3 is generally identical to that of Figure 1 but it additionally includes a decalcomania 9, preferably of the type including a pressure-sensitive adhesive, adhered to the photograph 2 across a corner thereof and to the sheet 1 at each of its ends. Over a portion of the decalcomania 9 is applied a thin transparent barrier strip 10 adapted to isolate the adhesive 8 of the transparent sheet from the area of the decalcomania 9 beneath it when the transparent sheet is completely affixed.

In the event that the unauthorised efforts are made to remove the transparent sheet not only will damage be caused to the print sheet but also, the powerful adhesive 8 will remove the decalcomania from the photograph except where it is covered by the barrier strip 10. Thus the decalcomania will break and a part will adhere to the transparent sheet and another part will remain on the photograph. Should the breaking of the decalcomania be clean enough for the separate parts to appear re-usable it would still be necessary to transfer the portion on the photograph 2 to another photograph and then to replace the transparent sheet so that the separate portions of the decalcomania are in register. It is extremely unlikely that all these stages could be successfully accomplished.

Figure 4 shows the reverse side of a printed sheet 1, which is itself preferably provided with security print markings (not shown). The rear of the photograph 2 is visible through a window 11 formed in the sheet 1 and across the back of the window is applied a decalcomania 9 adhered to the back of the photograph and to the sheet on opposite sides of the window. On the decalcomania is a transparent barrier strip 10, of the type referred to in conjunction with Figure 3. The function of the arrangement of Figure 4 is generally similar to that described in conjunction with Figure 3. The front of the sheet is preferably in accordance with the general arrangement shown in Figure 1 or Figure 3. If decalcomanias are present on both the front and back of the sheet, an even more secure assembly results.

Referring now to Figure 5, a complete identification assembly in the form of a passport is shown. This passport includes a cover 12, visa leaves 13, a photograph-carrying leaf 14 and adjacent thereto a composite sheet comprising an adhesively coated transparent sheet 15 and a strip-able protective sheet 16 over the adhesive sheet 15. The transparent sheet is bound into the passport and the protective sheet 16 is adapted to be stripped from the transparent sheet at the time of usage and discarded so that the latter can be pressed down to cover the whole of the sheet 14 after the photograph has been applied.

Referring now to Figure 6, the page is pro-

vided with an all-over background security print tint 2. In a delineated area 3 is stuck a photograph 4. The decalcomania of Figure 7 comprises a transparent area 5 and decorated areas 6 and 7, the former embracing a design distinctive of the fictional state Bratishavia and including the Bratishavia and latter comprising markings of the security print type. A security assembly is obtained by applying the decalcomania of Figure 7 to the page of Figure 6 in such a manner that the essential portions of the photograph 4 are visible through the transparent area 5 of the decalcomania.

In the drawings the transparent sheets of the embodiments of Figures 1 to 5 are generally indicated to be of the same size as the printed sheets. As stated elsewhere in this specification, edge coincidence may be obtained by edge trimming but alternatively the free edges of the transparent sheet may, when appropriate, be folded over so that they adhere to the rear side of the sheet.

Pressure-sensitive adhesives are mentioned above but heat-settable adhesives may be used wholly or in part to bond the photograph to the printed sheet.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. An identification assembly such as a pass or passport, such an assembly comprising a plurality of folded sheets joined together to form a book, one of said sheets being adapted to receive identifying means, the sheet adjacent to the said one sheet being in the form of a composite sheet of an at least partially transparent pressure-sensitive adhesive-coated sheet and a strippable protective sheet for the adhesive, the at least partially transparent sheet being adapted to adhere to the said one sheet on removal of the strippable sheet to enclose but leave clearly visible identifying means received on the said one sheet and to render the identifying means inaccessible without damage being caused to either the said one sheet or the at least partially transparent sheet.

2. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 in which the edges of the at least partially transparent sheet are adapted to coincide with the edges of the said one sheet.

3. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 or 2 with an identifying means superimposed upon the said one sheet and enclosed by the at least partially transparent sheet and including security means arranged between on the one hand the said one sheet and the identifying means and on the other hand the at least partially transparent sheet, the security means

being such that the visibility of at least the essential portion of the identifying means is unaffected thereby.

4. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 3 in which the security means is in the form of a printed decalcomania and/or a series of perforations.

5. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 4 in which the decalcomania is of the type which is secured to a surface by means of a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

6. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 4 or 5 in which the decalcomania is in the form of a strip.

7. An identification assembly as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6 in which the decalcomania is not bonded to the at least partially transparent sheet.

8. An identification assembly as claimed in any of claims 3 to 7 in which the said one sheet is provided with a cut-out window in the portion thereof behind the identifying means, the window being of smaller area than the area of the identifying means.

9. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 8 in which a decalcomania strip is applied across the exposed reverse surface of the identifying means and the reverse surface of the said one sheet.

10. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 9 in which a transparent sheet is adhesively bonded to the reverse side of the said one sheet.

11. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 or 2 in which the at least partially transparent sheet is a decalcomania adapted to overly the identifying means and at least the portion of the said one sheet adjacent the periphery of the identifying means.

12. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 11 in which the decalcomania includes decorative elements and/or printing.

13. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 3 and including an identification sheet constructed and arranged substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown by Figures 1 and 2, Figure 3 or Figures 6 and 7 of the accompanying drawings.

14. A passport constructed and arranged substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown by Figure 5 of the accompanying drawings.

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vided with an all-over background security print tint 2. In a delineated area 3 is stuck a photograph 4. The decalcomania of Figure 7 comprises a transparent area 5 and decorated areas 6 and 7, the former embracing a design distinctive of the fictional state Bratishavia and including the Bratishavia and latter comprising markings of the security print type. A security assembly is obtained by applying the decalcomania of Figure 7 to the page of Figure 6 in such a manner that the essential portions of the photograph 4 are visible through the transparent area 5 of the decalcomania.

In the drawings the transparent sheets of the embodiments of Figures 1 to 5 are generally indicated to be of the same size as the printed sheets. As stated elsewhere in this specification, edge coincidence may be obtained by edge trimming but alternatively the free edges of the transparent sheet may, when appropriate, be folded over so that they adhere to the rear side of the sheet.

Pressure-sensitive adhesives are mentioned above but heat-settable adhesives may be used wholly or in part to bond the photograph to the printed sheet.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. An identification assembly such as a pass or passport, such an assembly comprising a plurality of folded sheets joined together to form a book, one of said sheets being adapted to receive identifying means, the sheet adjacent to the said one sheet being in the form of a composite sheet of an at least partially transparent pressure-sensitive adhesive-coated sheet and a strippable protective sheet for the adhesive, the at least partially transparent sheet being adapted to adhere to the said one sheet on removal of the strippable sheet to enclose but leave clearly visible identifying means received on the said one sheet and to render the identifying means inaccessible without damage being caused to either the said one sheet or the at least partially transparent sheet.

2. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 in which the edges of the at least partially transparent sheet are adapted to coincide with the edges of the said one sheet.

3. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 or 2 with an identifying means superimposed upon the said one sheet and enclosed by the at least partially transparent sheet and including security means arranged between on the one hand the said one sheet and the identifying means and on the other hand the at least partially transparent sheet, the security means

being such that the visibility of at least the essential portion of the identifying means is unaffected thereby.

4. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 3 in which the security means is in the form of a printed decalcomania and/or a series of perforations.

5. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 4 in which the decalcomania is of the type which is secured to a surface by means of a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

6. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 4 or 5 in which the decalcomania is in the form of a strip.

7. An identification assembly as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6 in which the decalcomania is not bonded to the at least partially transparent sheet.

8. An identification assembly as claimed in any of claims 3 to 7 in which the said one sheet is provided with a cut-out window in the portion thereof behind the identifying means, the window being of smaller area than the area of the identifying means.

9. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 8 in which a decalcomania strip is applied across the exposed reverse surface of the identifying means and the reverse surface of the said one sheet.

10. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 9 in which a transparent sheet is adhesively bonded to the reverse side of the said one sheet.

11. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 1 or 2 in which the at least partially transparent sheet is a decalcomania adapted to overlie the identifying means and at least the portion of the said one sheet adjacent the periphery of the identifying means.

12. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 11 in which the decalcomania includes decorative elements and/or printing.

13. An identification assembly as claimed in claim 3 and including an identification sheet constructed and arranged substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown by Figures 1 and 2, Figure 3 or Figures 6 and 7 of the accompanying drawings.

14. A passport constructed and arranged substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown by Figure 5 of the accompanying drawings.

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