The present invention seeks to mitigate the above-mentioned problems. Alternatively and/or additionally, the present invention seeks to provide improved seals for dock levelling systems, and methods of sealing gaps in dock levelling systems.

Summary of the Invention

In accordance with a first aspect of the invention there is provided a seal for a dock levelling system comprising a movable hinged ramp arranged within a recess, wherein the seal is for sealing a horizontal gap between the hinged end of the movable ramp and a wall of the recess, the seal comprising:

a rod; and

a tube of flexible material surrounding the rod,

wherein the flexible material of the tube is a metal wire mesh.

The tube of flexible material is able to fill the gap between the hinged end of the movable ramp and the wall of the recess, so sealing the gap and providing a barrier to rodents or the like. Further, the seal is held in place by friction between the tube of flexible material and the surfaces of the movable ramp and the wall of the recess. The rod within the tube of flexible material provides support and helps maintain the shape of the tube of flexible material, enabling it to maintain its shape when being positioned in the gap, ensuring that it seals the full horizontal length of the gap. The rod also helps the tube of flexible material exert sufficient force against the surfaces of the movable ramp and the wall of the recess for there to be sufficient friction to keep the seal in position.

The flexible material of the tube may be a wire mesh. Preferably, the flexible material is a metal wire mesh. This provides a suitably flexible and resilient material to form the seal, but also provides a good barrier against damage by rodents or the like, in particular by chewing. Alternatively, the flexible material may be textile, Kevlar, or another suitable material.

Advantageously, the rod comprises a plurality of rod sections connected by connectors. In this case, advantageously the outside surfaces of the rod sections

Claims

1. A seal for a dock levelling system comprising a movable hinged ramp arranged within a recess, wherein the seal is for sealing a horizontal gap between the hinged end of the movable ramp and a wall of the recess, the seal comprising:

a rod; and

a tube of flexible material surrounding the rod,

wherein the flexible material of the tube is a metal wire mesh.

2. A seal as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rod comprises a plurality of rod sections connected by connectors.

3. A seal as claimed in claim 2, wherein the outside surfaces of the rod sections comprise a thread, and are arranged to screw into threaded recesses in the connectors.

4. A seal as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising a bush on at least one end of the rod.

5. A seal as claimed in claim 4, wherein the tube of flexible material is fixed to the bush.

6. A seal as claimed in claim 5, wherein the bush has a circumferential recess, and the flexible material is fixed to the bush by a fixing that clamps the flexible material in the recess.

7. A seal as claimed in claim 6, wherein the fixing is an elasticated ring.

8. A dock levelling system comprising a movable hinged ramp arranged within a recess, wherein there is a horizontal gap between the hinged end of the movable ramp and a wall of the recess, the dock levelling system further comprising a seal as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the seal is arranged in the horizontal gap

with the tube of the seal in contact with the hinged end of the movable ramp and the wall of the recess.

9. A method of sealing a gap in a dock levelling system using a seal as claimed in any of claim 1 to 7, wherein the dock levelling system comprises a movable hinged ramp arranged within a recess, and wherein there is a horizontal gap between the hinged end of the movable ramp and a wall of the recess, the method comprising the step of inserting the seal into the horizontal gap so that the tube of the seal is in contact with the hinged end of the movable ramp and the wall of the recess.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the step of, prior to inserting the seal into the horizontal gap, assembling the seal by inserting the rod into the interior of the tube of flexible material.

11. A method as claimed in claim 9 or 10, further comprising the step of, prior to inserting the seal into the horizontal gap, cutting the rod to a length that allows the seal to fit within the horizontal gap.

12. A kit of parts for assembly into a seal for a leveller as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7, comprising a rod and a tube of flexible material.

13. A kit as claimed in claim 12, wherein the rod comprises a plurality of rod sections and connectors.

14. A kit as claimed in claim 12 or 13, further comprising two bushes and two elasticated rings.