



(19) **United States**
(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Sergi et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2014/0021039 A1**
(43) **Pub. Date: Jan. 23, 2014**

(54) **APPARATUS FOR CATHODIC PROTECTION SYSTEM USING AN IMPRESSED CURRENT ANODE AND A SACRIFICIAL ANODE**

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *C23F 13/14* (2013.01)
USPC **204/196.27; 204/196.36**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

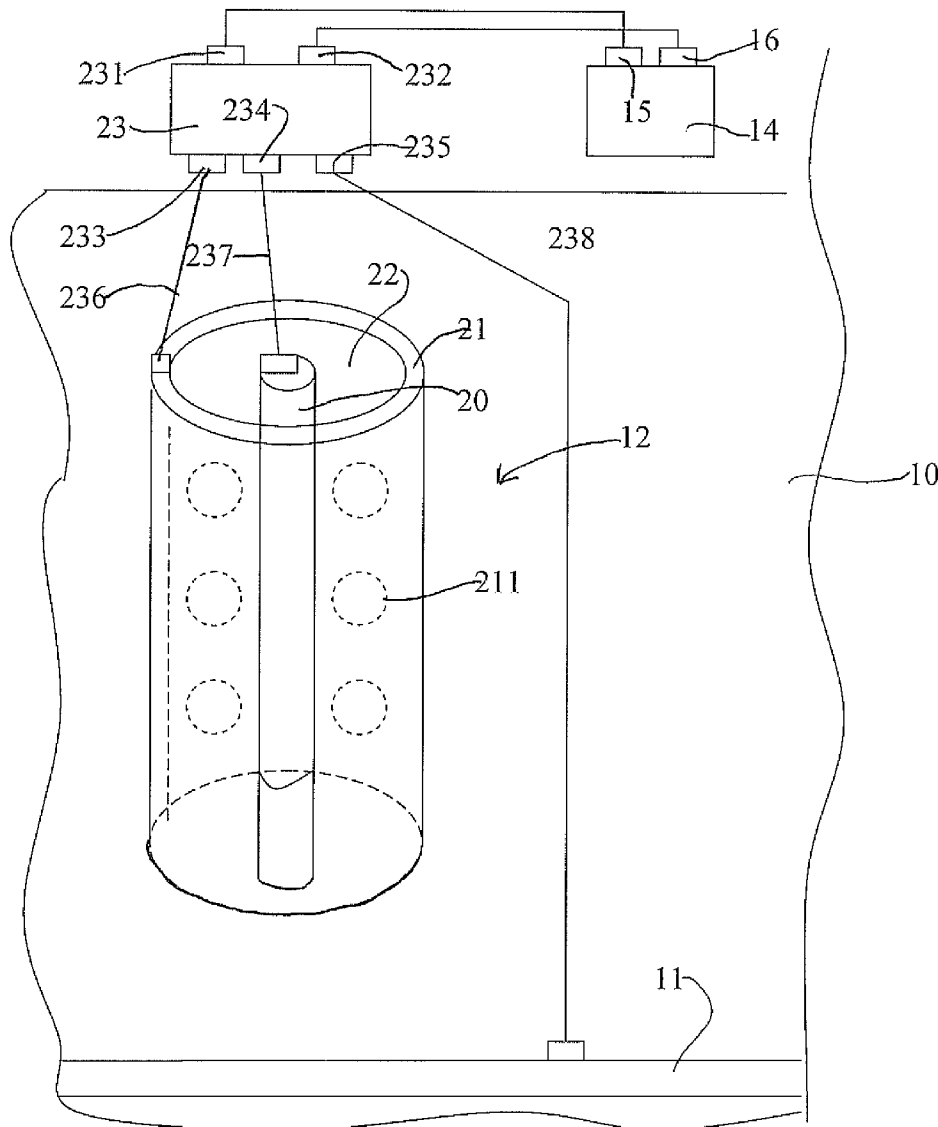
Cathodic protection of steel in concrete is provided by locating an anode assembly including both a sacrificial anode and an impressed current anode in contact with the concrete and providing an impressed current from a power supply to the anode. The impressed current anode forms a perforated sleeve surrounding a rod of the sacrificial anode material with an activated ionically-conductive filler material between. The system can be used without the power supply in sacrificial mode or when the power supply is connected, the impressed current anode can be powered to provide an impressed current system and/or to recharge the sacrificial anode from sacrificial anode corrosion products.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/553,489**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 19, 2012**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
C23F 13/14 (2006.01)



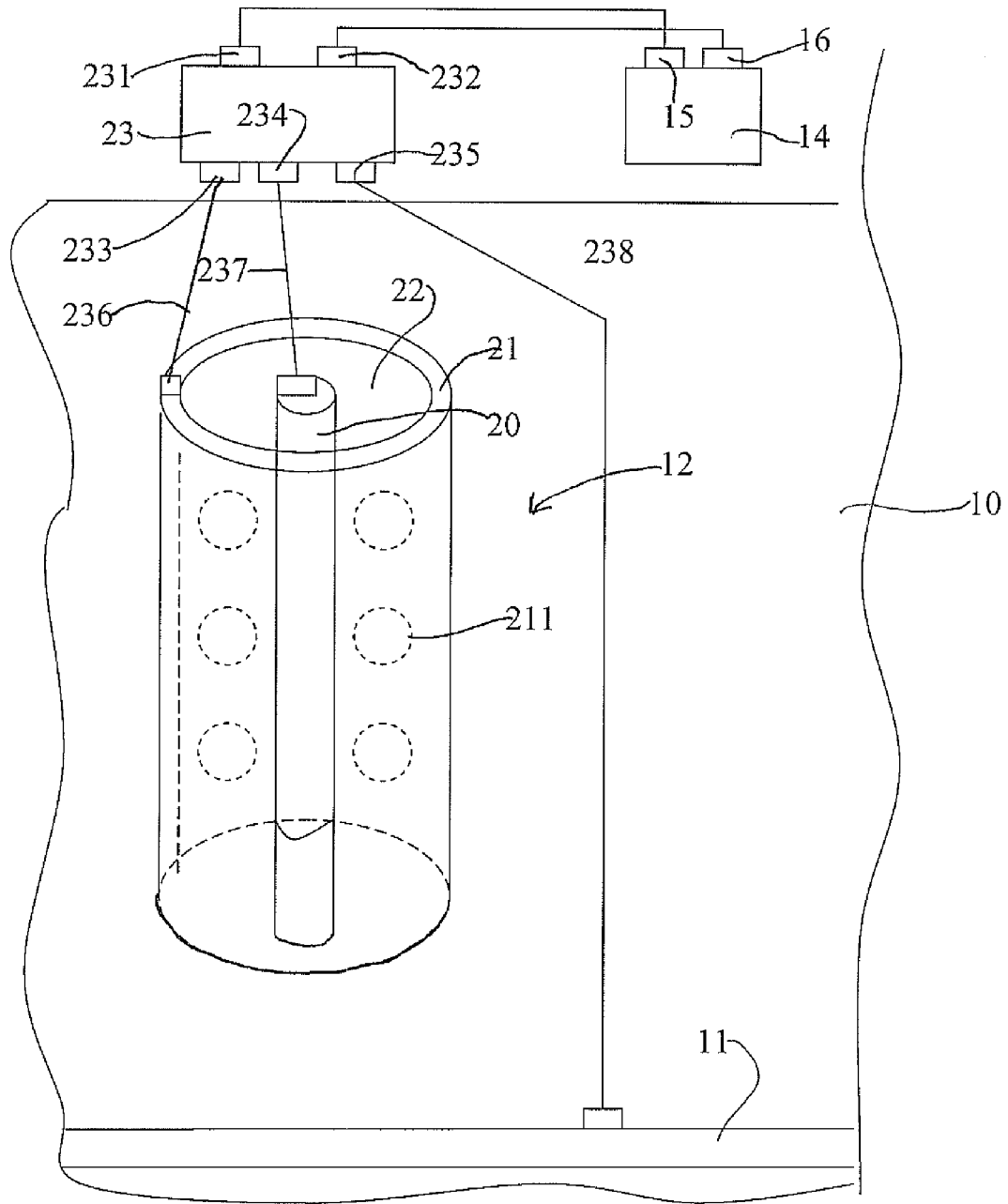


FIG.1

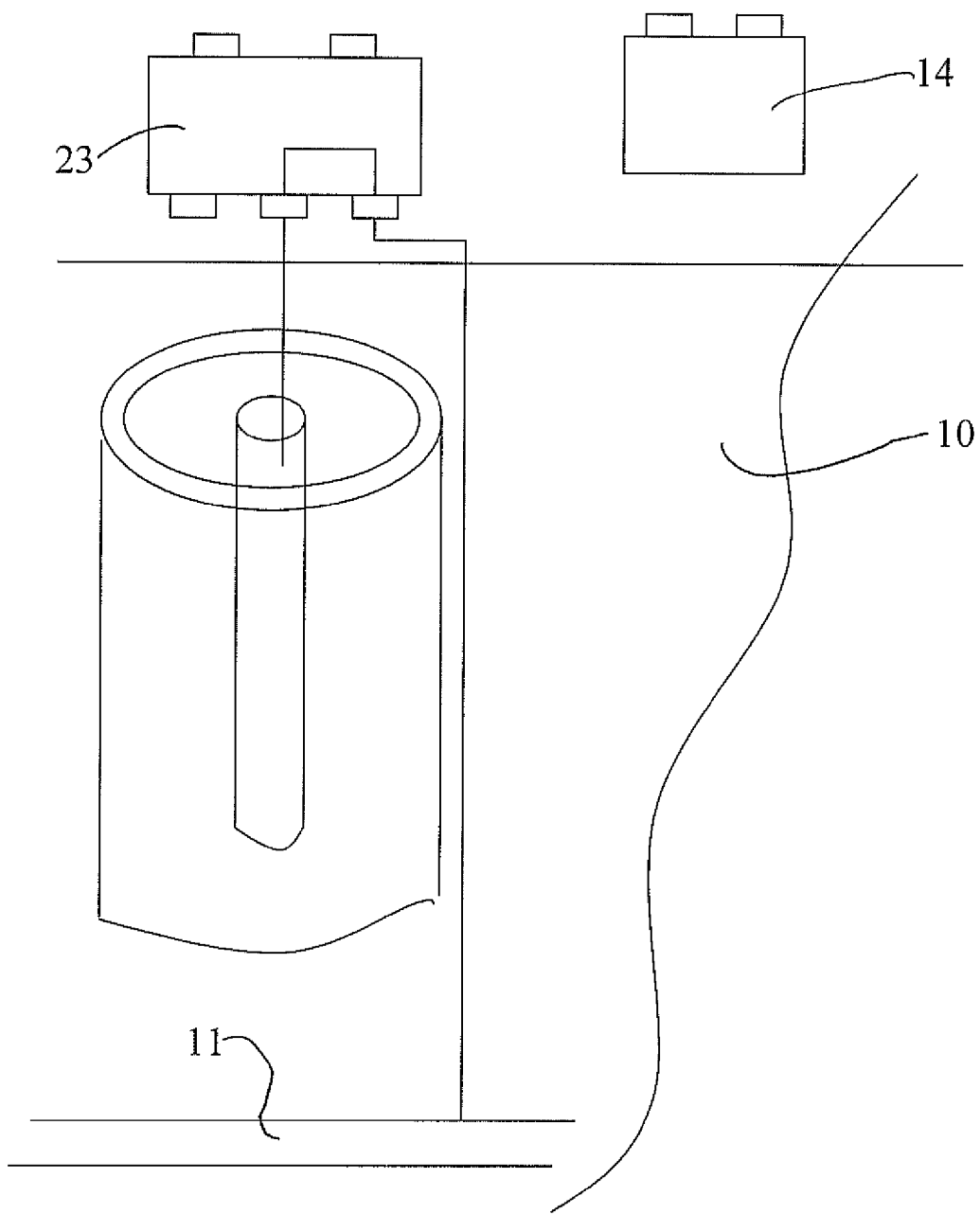


FIG.2

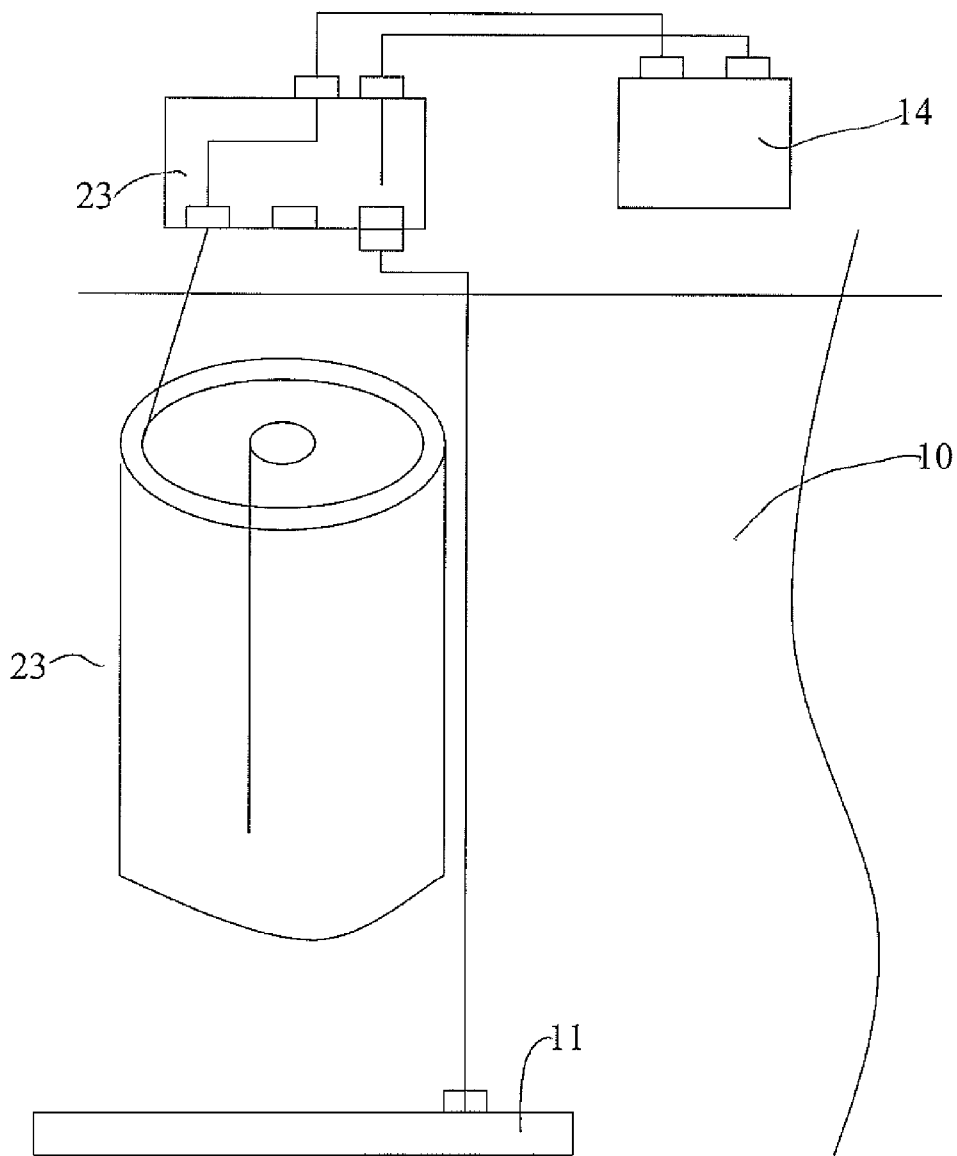


FIG.3

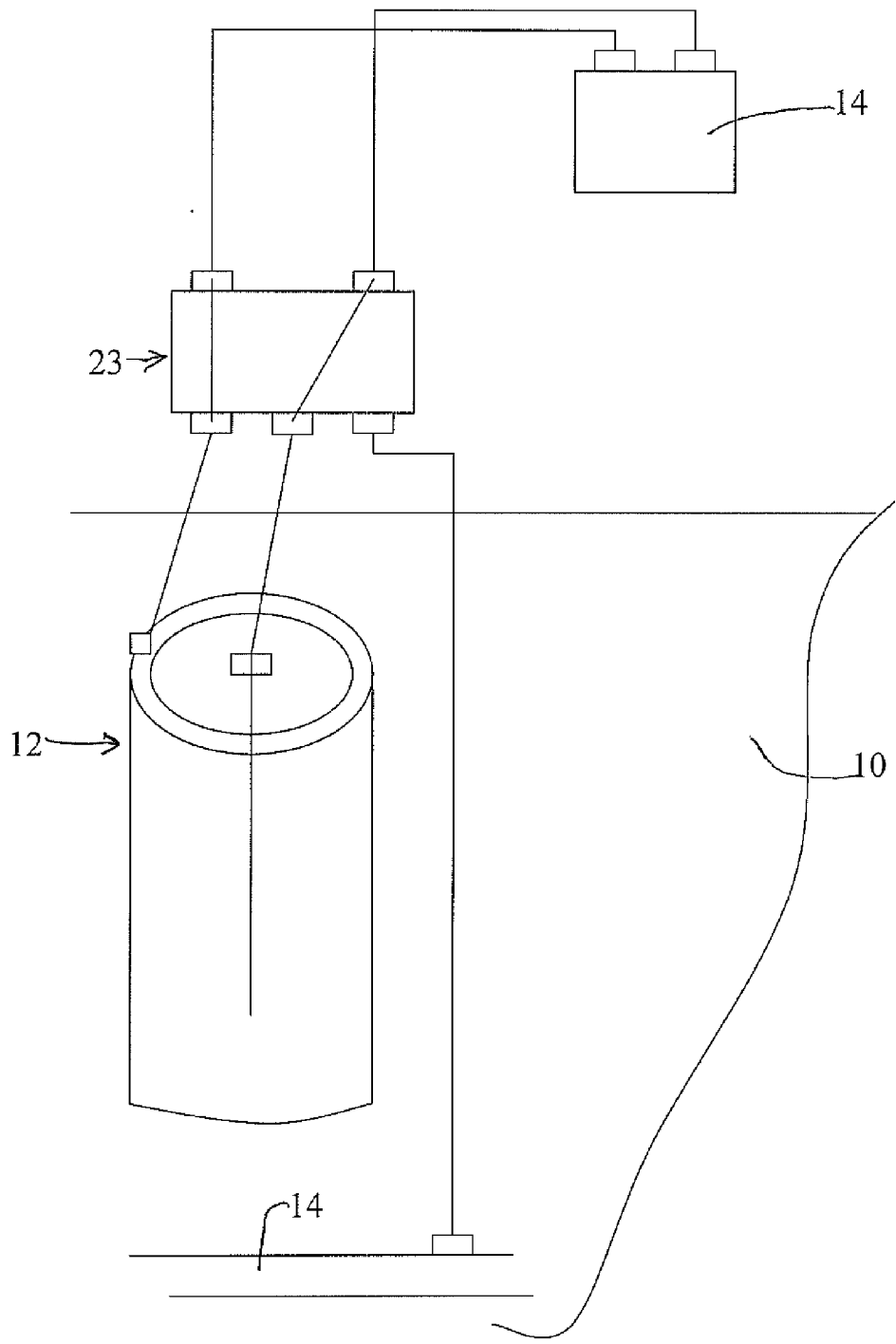


FIG.4

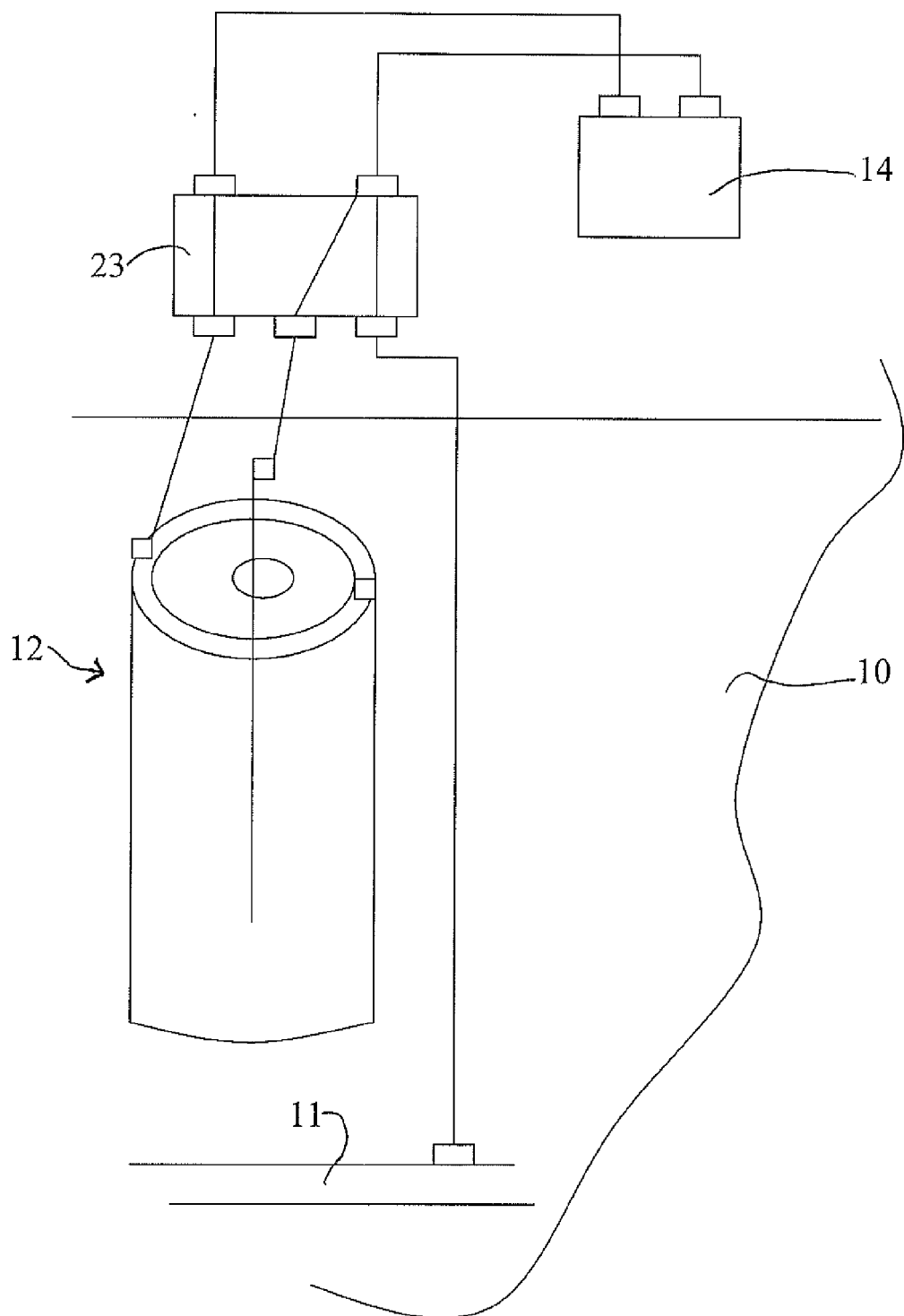


FIG.5

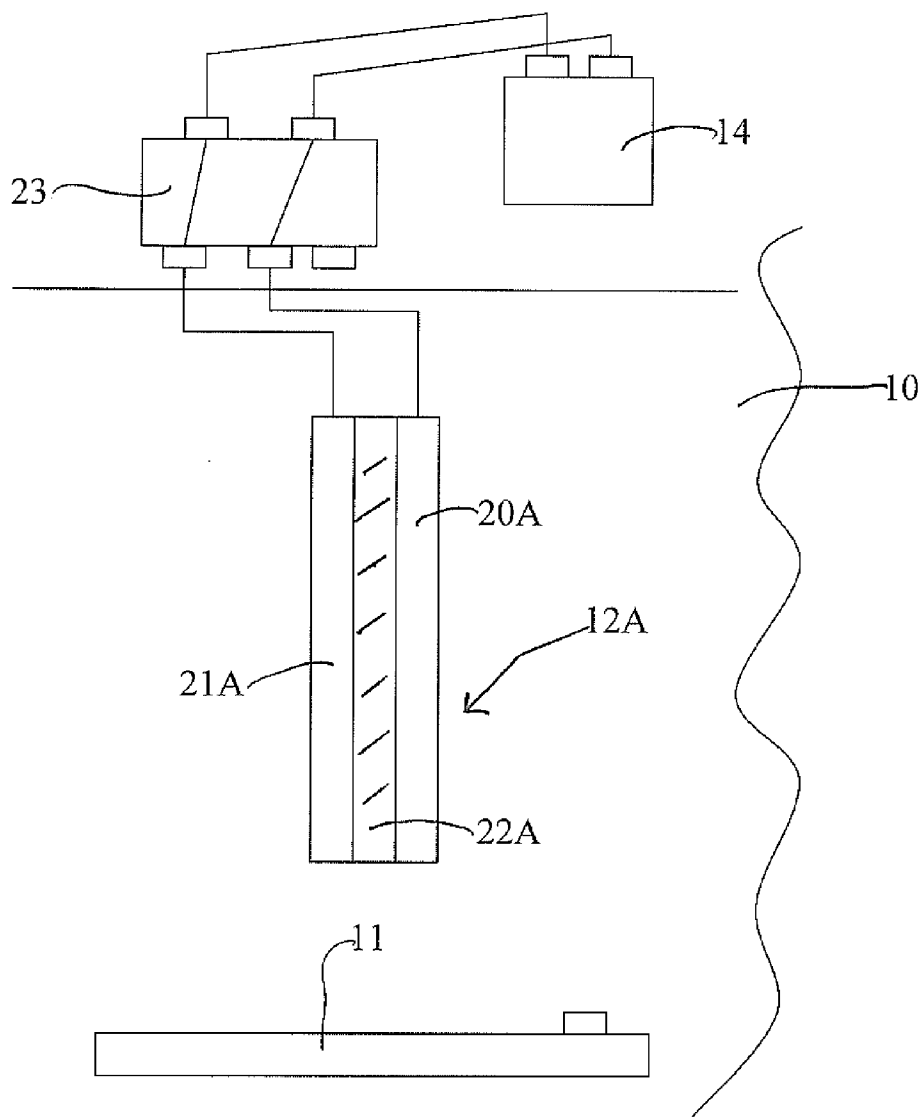


FIG.6

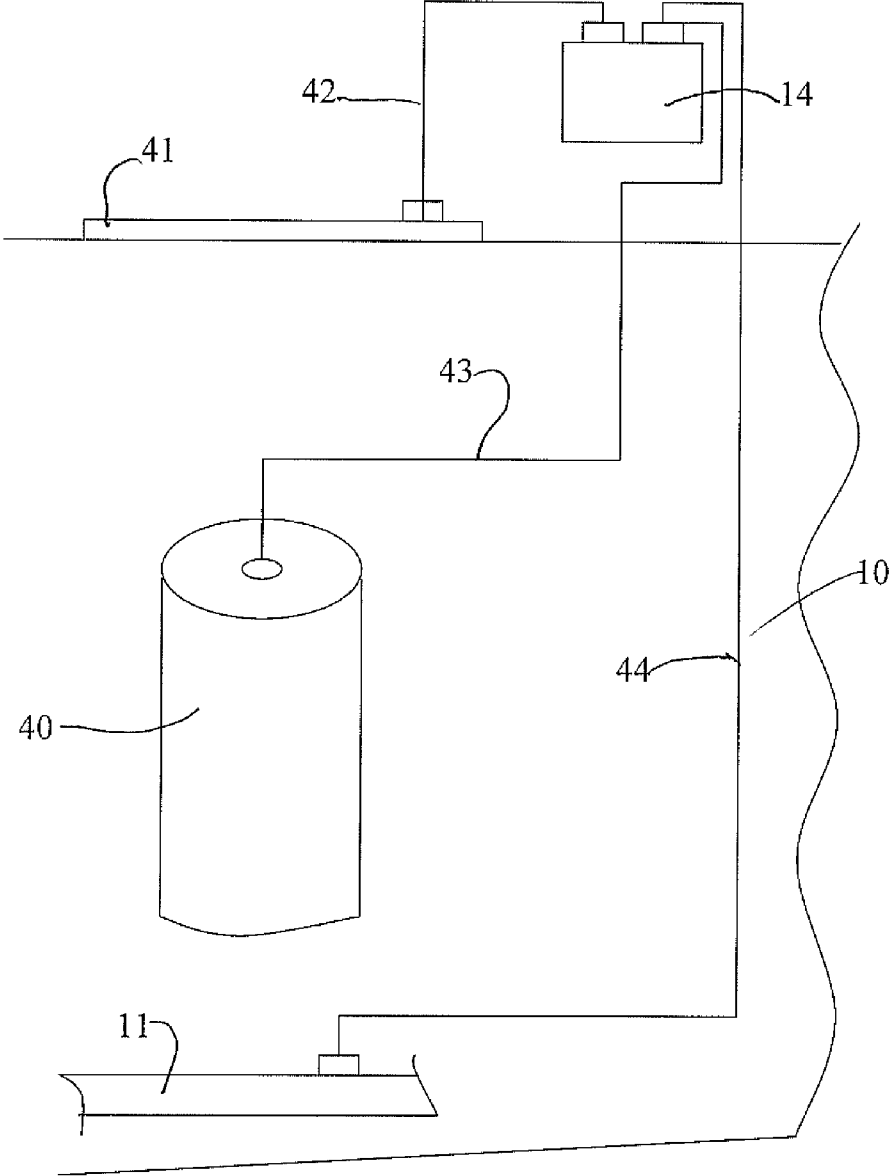


FIG.7

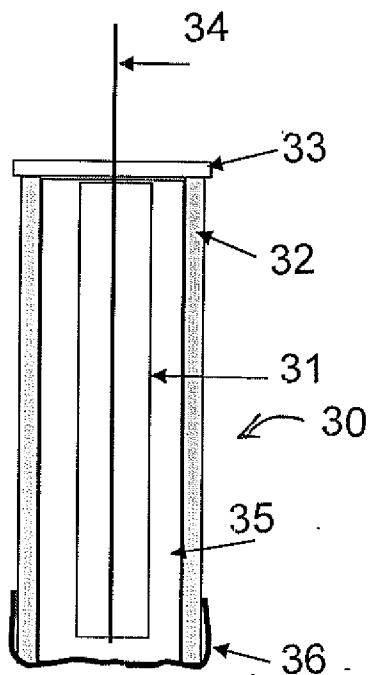


FIG.8

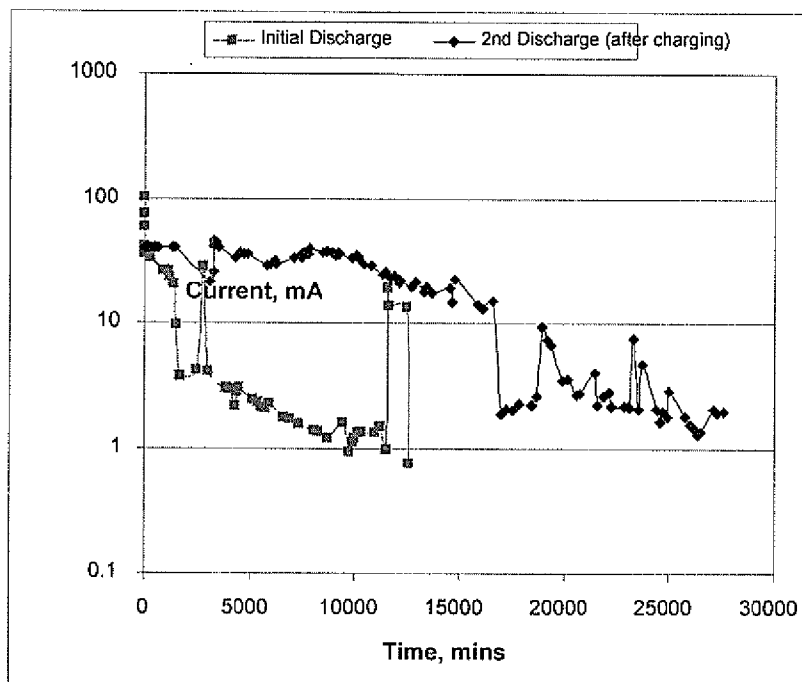


FIG.9

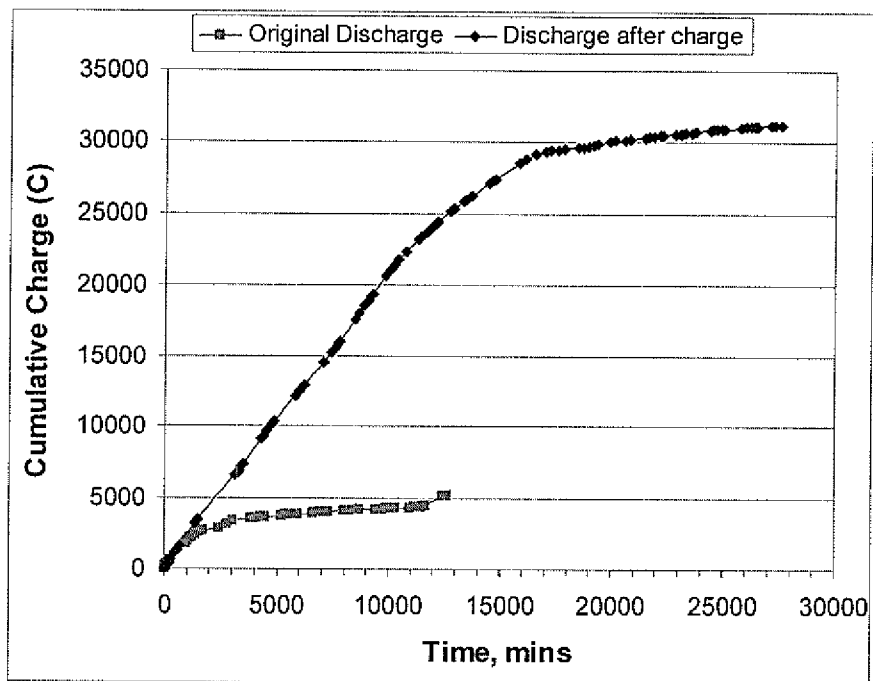


FIG.10

APPARATUS FOR CATHODIC PROTECTION SYSTEM USING AN IMPRESSED CURRENT ANODE AND A SACRIFICIAL ANODE

[0001] This invention relates primarily to a cathodic protection system using an impressed current anode a sacrificial anode.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] U.S. Pat. No. 6,346,188 (Shuster) assigned to ENSER Corporation and issued Feb. 12, 2002 discloses a method for cathodic protection of marine piles in which an anode is located within a jacket surrounding the pile at water level and a battery is mounted on the pile above the water level for providing an impressed current between the anode of the jacket and the steel of the pile. The anode is preferably formed of titanium or other non-corroding materials which are high on the Noble scale. However the patent mentions that other materials such as zinc can be used but these are disadvantageous since they tend to corrode. The intention is that the battery have a long life and be maintained effectively so that the impressed current remains in place during the life of the marine pile bearing in mind that the salt water in the marine environment is particularly corrosive.

[0003] Such impressed current systems can use other types of power supply including common rectifiers which rectify an AC voltage from a suitable source into a required DC voltage for the impressed current between the anode and the steel. It is also known to provide solar panels for charging batteries to be used in a system of this type.

[0004] In all cases such impressed current systems require regular maintenance and checking of the status of the power supply to ensure that the power supply does not fail leading to unexpected and unacceptable corrosion of the steel within the structure to be protected. While such maintenance can be carried out and the power supply thus ensured, this is a relatively expensive process.

[0005] Alternatively galvanic systems can be used which avoid necessity for any power supply since the voltage between the steel and the anode is provided by selecting a suitable material for the anode which is sufficiently electro-negative to ensure that a current is generated to provide a cathodic protection. These systems have obtained considerable success and are widely used.

[0006] There are two primary limitations of ordinary galvanic anodes as used in steel reinforced concrete. The first relates to the mass of zinc per anode which, depending on the required current output, limits the useful life of the anode. The second is the actual current output of the anode which may or may not be sufficient to halt corrosion of the steel. The current output is limited by the driving voltage, which is essentially a fixed property and varies with exposure conditions, age of the anode and build up of corrosion products over time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] It is one object of the invention to provide an improved method for cathodic protection.

[0008] According to one aspect of the invention there is provided an anode apparatus for cathodically protecting a metal section in an ionically conductive material, the anode apparatus comprising:

[0009] a sacrificial anode of a material which is less noble than the metal section;

[0010] an impressed current anode;

[0011] the sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode comprising components of the anode apparatus so that, when the components of the anode apparatus are located in contact with the ionically conductive material, each of the sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode is in ionically conductive communication with the other and with the metal section;

[0012] the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode being electrically separated to prevent electrical communication therebetween;

[0013] a first electrical connector arranged for connection to the sacrificial anode;

[0014] and a second electrical connector arranged for connection to the impressed current anode.

[0015] According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided an anode apparatus for use in cathodically protecting a metal section in an ionically conductive material, the apparatus comprising:

[0016] a sacrificial anode of a material which is less noble than the metal section arranged for engagement with the ionically conductive material;

[0017] and a second anode arranged for engagement with the ionically conductive material;

[0018] the sacrificial anode and the second anode being arranged such that when the second anode is connected to a DC power supply the sacrificial anode is charged or re-charged with ions of the sacrificial anode material.

[0019] The second anode can be an impressed current anode of a character which is used also for cathodic protection by impressed current. However there is no restriction on the character of the material of this anode provided that it can act to charge the sacrificial anode with the with ions of the sacrificial anode material.

[0020] This anode apparatus can be used in a method for corrosion protection of a metal section in an ionically conductive covering material where the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode are both located in contact with the ionically conductive material and a DC power supply is connected between the impressed current anode and the metal section so as to create a current between the metal section and the impressed current anode which is used to passivate the metal section and, while the first step is terminated, there is a connection between the sacrificial anode and the metal section so that the sacrificial anode continues to provide cathodic protection.

[0021] This anode apparatus can be used in a method for corrosion protection of a metal section in an ionically conductive covering material where a first terminal of a DC power supply is connected to the impressed current anode and a second terminal of the DC power supply is connected to the sacrificial anode so as to cause ionic current to flow through the ionically conductive material to thereby cause sacrificial anode ions from the ionically conductive material to be deposited on the sacrificial anode.

[0022] Preferably this is used where, in a first step, the sacrificial anode is connected to the metal section to provide corrosion protection of the metal section by corrosion of the sacrificial anode which generates corrosion products of the sacrificial anode material in the ionically conductive material and wherein, in a second step after corrosion of the sacrificial anode has occurred, the current applied by the DC power supply through the ionically conductive material causes the sacrificial anode ions, from the corrosion products of the sacrificial anode material, to be re-deposited on the sacrificial

anode. In a similar manner, sacrificial anode ions may be deposited to create a sacrificial anode or to increase the size of an existing sacrificial anode.

[0023] In this method the recharging or deposition process can be used repeatedly and periodically to ensure continued operation of the anode apparatus over a much longer period than would be possible with the given quantity of the zinc or other galvanic material such as aluminum, magnesium or other material (which is less noble than the metal section to be protected) in the anode. This can be done, for example, using a solar cell where the re-charging occurs each day. Alternatively and more typically, this is done by periodic maintenance where a worker visits the site periodically and applies a power supply for a period of time necessary to effect the re-charging.

[0024] Preferably, simultaneously with the connecting of the second terminal of the DC power supply to the sacrificial anode, the second terminal of the DC power supply is also connected to the metal section such that the first terminal of the power supply is connected to the impressed current anode and the second terminal of the power supply is connected to the sacrificial anode and the metal section. This arrangement can be used not only to cause the recharging action but also acts to provide enhanced protection of the metal section by generating a protective current which may be greater than the galvanic current alone to effect passivation of the steel (metal section) while re-charging the sacrificial anode at the same time.

[0025] Connecting the sacrificial anode to the metal section can provide a galvanic corrosion protection back up to provide corrosion protection to the metal section when the DC power supply or impressed current anode system is not functional. Having the sacrificial anode connected to the metal section provides a simple, automatic corrosion protection back up system should the impressed current system become non-operational.

[0026] The term impressed current anode used herein is intended to distinguish from the sacrificial anode where the sacrificial anode is formed of a material, typically of zinc, which is less noble than the metal section so that it preferentially corrodes relative to the metal section to be protected. The impressed current anode is one which is used in conjunction with an external power supply and does not need to be less noble than the metal section. Typically such impressed current anodes are formed of titanium, carbon and other noble metals and oxides which do not corrode readily, or they can be formed of steel or less noble materials such as zinc.

[0027] The sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode preferably form common components of the anode apparatus. That is, the apparatus as supplied for use includes both components as a common system. However they may or may not be assembled into a common attached construction which can be inserted into the material or applied onto the surface as a common assembly. A common assembly is, of course, preferred for convenience but the components can be inserted separately, for example, in one or in separate drilled holes in a concrete construction, cast separately into new concrete or applied separately to the concrete surface or elsewhere. The impressed current anode for example can be applied temporarily to the outer surface of the ionically conductive material such as a plate attached to the exterior surface of the concrete for recharging sacrificial anodes within the body of the concrete.

[0028] The apparatus preferably includes as a part of the apparatus a DC power supply with positive and negative terminals. This can be any form of device which can provide a DC output at a required voltage such as a battery, solar cell or it can be a rectifier. The power supply may also be supplied separately and/or temporarily so that it is not itself an integral component of the apparatus. However in the method of use of the system a suitable source of DC power must be used at least during a part of the time.

[0029] As a further component of the apparatus, there is preferably provided a switchable junction box having connectors for connection to the positive and negative terminals of the power supply, to the first and second electrical connectors and to the metal section. This can, however, be provided as separate components, again not an integral part of the system. Also connections can be made on site without a specific switchable junction box.

[0030] Preferably the impressed current anode is perforated so to allow passage of ionic current to pass through the impressed current anode. However this is not essential since the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode can comprise separate elements merely located in adjacent relationship for cooperation in the material. The ionic current must pass from the sacrificial anode to the metal section but this can pass through or around the impressed current anode or around parts of the impressed current anode. However, where the sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode are formed as a common assembly, it is preferred that the ionic current passes through or around the impressed current anode. The impressed current anode may therefore be formed as separate pieces or spaced apart to allow current to pass to the metal section. Thus for example the impressed current anode can be perforated by macroscopic holes formed through or cut into the anode.

[0031] In another preferred example, the impressed current anode is formed from electrically conductive components in a matrix and there are provided spaces in the matrix between the conductive components to allow the ionic current to pass through the matrix. This can be achieved, for example, by sintering the anode material and/or other materials or reducing oxides to form an electrically conductive matrix.

[0032] In order to obtain uniform, symmetrical deposition of the anode material on the sacrificial anode during recharging, when that process is being used, it is preferred that the impressed current anode surrounds the sacrificial anode, that is the impressed current anode is arranged in a plane containing the sacrificial anode to fully, substantially fully, partially, or discretely surround the sacrificial anode so that ionic current passing to or from the sacrificial anode around 360 degrees in the plane passes through the impressed current anode. If the impressed current anode is arranged wholly or partly to one side, the deposition will occur preferentially to that side and hence may be less effectively deposited. Therefore preferably, in a coaxial arrangement, the sacrificial anode forms a rod and the impressed current anode forms a sleeve surrounding the rod. Alternatively, the sacrificial anode may be in the form of a plate and the impressed current anode may be placed on one side of the plate such that the deposition will occur primarily on the one side of the plate to which the impressed current anode is placed.

[0033] Preferably there is provided an ionically conductive filler material which is not the ionically conductive material itself which is located between the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode and thus preferably in the coaxial

arrangement, the filler material forms a cylinder surrounding the rod. Preferably, the ionically conductive filler material is in ionic contact with at least part of the surface of the sacrificial anode.

[0034] For use during a sacrificial or galvanic phase of operation of the above method, the ionically conductive filler material preferably contains at least one activator to ensure continued corrosion of the sacrificial anode. However the activator can also be located at other positions in the system. Suitable filler materials can be in the form of solids, gels or liquids. Suitable activators include alkali hydroxides, humectants, catalytic materials and other materials which are corrosive to the sacrificial anode metal. Activators may be used alone or in combination.

[0035] For use during a sacrificial or galvanic phase of operation of the above method, the ionically conductive filler material preferably has a pH sufficiently high for corrosion of the sacrificial anode to occur and for passive film formation on the sacrificial anode to be avoided. Alternatively, the filler may have a lower pH and/or contain activators for corrosion of the sacrificial anode to occur and for passive film formation on the sacrificial anode to be avoided.

[0036] The anode and methods herein are preferably designed for use where the metal section is steel and the ionically conductive material is concrete or mortar.

[0037] The anode apparatus including the impressed current and sacrificial components is typically buried in the concrete or other solid material so that it is fully encased by the concrete, but this is not essential and the anode may be only partially buried or in physical or ionic contact with the concrete.

[0038] The anode apparatus including the impressed current and sacrificial components may be surrounded by an encapsulating material or ionically conducting filler material which may be a porous material or porous mortar material. Suitable encapsulating materials can be inorganic or organic and may be any cementitious, polymer or non-cementitious material or mortar including geopolymers or modified portland cements. The encapsulating material may be solid, gel or liquid and may be deformable.

[0039] The intention is therefore, in the arrangement described in more detail hereinafter, to marry a galvanic anode with an impressed current anode for use with an impressed current and/or re-chargeable galvanic anode system. The configuration allows the impressed current anode to deliver current either to the steel reinforcement or the galvanic anode separately, or to both the steel reinforcement and the galvanic anode concurrently. The anode assembly can be used in three different ways, that is, a) as a normal galvanic anode, b) as an impressed current anode, and c) importantly, as a rechargeable galvanic anode. The assembly preferably includes an inner zinc core acting as the galvanic anode, surrounded by a suitable activating electrolyte. The zinc and activator are preferably encased within a porous or mesh-type impressed current electrode.

[0040] The galvanic anode provided herein can therefore be flexible in operation so that continuous protection can be provided to a structure or structural component over periods compatible with impressed current cathodic protection systems.

[0041] The configuration can allow the impressed current anode to deliver cathodic current either to the steel reinforcement, to the galvanic anode or to the steel reinforcement and galvanic anode together. The anode assembly is to be used in

three different ways, viz., as a normal galvanic anode, as an impressed current anode and most importantly, as a rechargeable galvanic anode. The latter capability allows multiple use of the same mass of zinc as it is recycled into the activating electrolyte and back from the electrolyte in the recharging process, eliminating the need for the use of larger volume anodes for long term protection.

[0042] In a preferred arrangement in an alkaline activator, the corrosion product of zinc is ultimately believed to be primarily zinc oxide. It is possible, therefore, to reverse the corrosion process and redeposit zinc metal back into the anode assembly. The arrangement described herein provides a method of re-depositing zinc metal without having to remove the anode assembly from the structure it is protecting. A counter or impressed current electrode which can be used as an anode for re-charging the zinc is provided. This counter electrode is preferably part of the anode assembly. The same electrode can then be utilised if there is a need to change the setup into an impressed current system.

[0043] The sacrificial anode may be any of the more electro-negative materials such as zinc, aluminum, magnesium or alloys thereof.

[0044] The DC power supply can be a battery. The power supply may be a rectifier generating DC power from an AC supply voltage. Preferably the DC power supply has a potential greater than 1.5V. Where the power supply is a battery it can be rechargeable. Where the power supply is a battery it can be replaceable in the assembly. This is a convenient way periodically to do the recharge and/or provide an additional step of the impressed current to the steel by inserting a new battery and just leaving it until it becomes depleted, whereupon and the system then works galvanically until a later time when the depleted battery is removed and another one is inserted. The battery can be mounted at any convenient location, such as in the junction box or monitoring unit or somewhere convenient. A single battery can supply power to a group of anodes.

[0045] The power supply may include a solar panel which drives the impressed current anode and rechargeable galvanic anode so as to provide long term protection when the solar power is on and off.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0046] One embodiment of the invention will now be described in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0047] FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of a cathodic protection method according to the present invention using a first arrangement of anode apparatus.

[0048] FIG. 2 is the schematic illustration of FIG. 1 showing the connection of the components for operation in the sacrificial protection mode.

[0049] FIG. 3 is the schematic illustration of FIG. 1 showing the connection of the components for operation in the impressed current protection mode.

[0050] FIG. 4 is the schematic illustration of FIG. 1 showing the connection of the components for operation in the re-charging mode.

[0051] FIG. 5 is the schematic illustration of FIG. 1 showing the connection of the components for operation in the combined recharging and impressed current modes.

[0052] FIG. 6 is a schematic illustration of a cathodic protection method according to the present invention using a second arrangement of anode apparatus.

[0053] FIG. 7 is a schematic illustration of a further cathodic protection method according to the present invention using a further arrangement of anode apparatus where an existing sacrificial anode is re-charged by a temporary plate electrode mounted on an exterior surface of the concrete ionically conductive material.

[0054] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view through an example of an anode apparatus according to the invention.

[0055] FIG. 9 is a graph of current output of the anode of FIG. 8 to steel, a) with the anode as originally made, b) with the anode after a period of charging via the porous conductive impressed current anode.

[0056] FIG. 10 is a graph of cumulative charge output of the anode of FIG. 8 to steel, a) with anode as originally made, b) after a period of charging via the porous conductive tube.

[0057] In the drawings, like characters of reference indicate corresponding parts in the different figures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0058] In FIG. 1 is shown a covering material 10 within which is embedded steel material 11 and an anode body 12.

[0059] The covering material 10 is a suitable material which allows communication of ions through the covering material between the anode body 12 and the steel 11. The covering material is generally concrete but can also include mortar or masonry materials, or soil, water or other ionically conductive material, where there is a steel structure which requires cathodic protection to prevent or inhibit corrosion. The steel material 11 is illustrated as being a reinforcing bar arrangement but other steel elements can be protected in the manner of the arrangement shown herein including steel structural members such as lintels, steel beams and columns, pipes, tanks or other elements in contact with the concrete or other covering material.

[0060] The anode member may include or be constructed as the arrangement shown in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,027,633 issued Feb. 22, 2000; 6,165,346 issued Dec. 26, 2000; 6,572,760 issued Jun. 3, 2003; 6,793,800 issued Sep. 21, 2004; 7,226,532 issued Jun. 5, 2007; 7,914,661 issued Mar. 29, 2011, and 7,959,786 issued Jun. 14, 2011 of the present inventor, and in 6,022,469 (Page) issued Feb. 8, 2000 and 6,303,017 (Page and Sergi) issued Oct. 16, 2001 assigned to Vector Corrosion Technologies and in 6,193,857 (Davison) issued Feb. 27, 2001 assigned to Vector Corrosion Tech., Bennett 6,217,742 issued Apr. 17, 2001, 7,160,433 issued Jan. 9, 2007, 8,157,983 issued Apr. 17, 2012 and 6,471,851 issued Oct. 29, 2002 assigned to Vector Corrosion Technologies, Giorgini 7,998,321 issued Aug. 16, 2011, Schwarz 7,851,022 issued Dec. 14, 2010, Glass et al. 8,211,289 issued Jul. 3, 2012, 8,002,964 issued Aug. 23, 2011, 7,749,362 issued Jul. 6, 2010, 7,909,982 issued Mar. 22, 2011, and 7,704,372 issued Apr. 27, 2010 assigned to Vector Corrosion Technologies, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference or to which reference should be made for further details as required.

[0061] A DC power supply 14 is provided which generates a voltage at terminals 15 and 16 of the power supply.

[0062] In the embodiment shown the power supply is formed by a battery which may be a lead acid battery with an output of 6 or 12 volts and a lifetime of 1 to 20 weeks, or may be a zinc air battery well known and commercially available which provides an output voltage of the order of 1.5 volts and has a lifetime of the order of 3 to 5 years. The voltage may drop during current draw in operation from the nominal value of 1.5 volts to as low as 1.0 volts. Such batteries of this type

are commercially available from ENSER Corporation or others. A suitable battery may have a capacity up to 1200 ampere hours.

[0063] Alternative power supplies may be used including solar panels and conventional rectifiers which require an exterior AC supply voltage and which convert the AC supply into a DC voltage at the terminals 15 and 16.

[0064] The anode apparatus 12 includes a sacrificial anode 20 of zinc or other material which is less noble than the metal section together with an impressed current anode 21. The sacrificial anode 20 is in the form of a rod and the impressed current anode 21 is in the form of a sleeve surrounding the rod with an ionically conductive filler material 22 which is generally not the ionically conductive material 10 located as a cylinder between the impressed current anode 21 and the sacrificial anode 20. In this coaxial and combined structure, the impressed current anode is arranged in a radial plane of a central axis of the rod to fully surround the circumference of the sacrificial anode so that ionic current passing to or from the sacrificial anode around 360 degrees in the plane generally passes through the impressed current anode on its path to the steel 11.

[0065] Thus the sacrificial anode 20 and the impressed current anode 21 form common components of the anode apparatus 12 so that each of the sacrificial anode 20 and the impressed current anode 21 is in ionically conductive communication with the other and with the metal section. The filler material is not electrically conductive so that the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode are electrically separated to prevent electrical communication therebetween.

[0066] A switchable junction box 23 is provided having connectors 231 and 232 for connection to the positive and negative terminals of the power supply. The box further includes a connector 233 to a lead 236 to the impressed current anode 21, a connector 234 to a lead 237 to the sacrificial anode 20 and a connector 234 to a lead 238 to the metal section 11. Connectors 233, 237 and 238 are preferably wires and are preferably corrosion resistant. Connector 233 has the greatest need for corrosion resistance as it is connected to an impressed current anode during operation. Examples of corrosion resistant materials for the impressed current connection include titanium, niobium, nickel, platinized wires and insulated wires.

[0067] The impressed current anode is perforated either with macroscopic holes 211 or a microscopic structure so to allow passage of ionic current from the anode 20 to pass through the impressed current anode. Macroscopic holes can be provided by forming the impressed current anode in separate pieces.

[0068] In the arrangement where the anode 21 is perforated microscopically, the impressed current anode has sufficient porosity and ionically conductive material within the spaces between the impressed current anode material to allow the ionic current to pass through the impressed current anode.

[0069] The ionically conductive filler material 22 preferably contains at least one activator to ensure continued corrosion of the sacrificial anode. The ionically conductive filler material preferably has a pH sufficiently high for corrosion of the sacrificial anode to occur and for passive film formation on the sacrificial anode to be avoided or minimized. For zinc, this pH is typically greater than 12 and may be greater than 13, 13.3 or 13.4. It is preferable that the zinc corrosion products remain partially or substantially soluble. This can be achieved

by incorporating ions or other chemicals which are corrosive to the sacrificial anode material and/or prevent the surface of the sacrificial anode material from passivating. Examples of materials which help to produce soluble corrosion products and/or prevent passivation are disclosed in the patent documents referenced above.

[0070] The ionically conductive filler material **22** is also preferably highly ionically conductive, hygroscopic, and will accommodate volume changes as the sacrificial anode is charged and discharged. The ionically conductive filler material may also be porous or deformable to accommodate these changes.

[0071] In FIG. 6 is shown a schematic illustration of the method using a second arrangement of anode apparatus in which the sacrificial anode **20A** and the impressed current anode **21A** are formed as two parallel plates or mesh with the filler material **22A** therebetween. In this case the re-charging of the sacrificial anode occurs primarily on one side. In an alternative construction, the two parallel layers of plates or mesh may be applied to the surface of the covering material.

[0072] In FIG. 7 is shown a schematic illustration of the method using a further arrangement of where an existing sacrificial anode **40** is re-charged by a temporary surface applied electrode (impressed current anode) **41** on an exterior surface of the concrete **10** forming the ionically conductive material. In this case a conductor **42** connects the impressed current anode **41** to one terminal of the power supply **14** and a conductor **43** connects the buried sacrificial anode **40** to the other terminal of the DC power supply. At the same time the second terminal can be connected to the steel if the protection of the steel is intended to continue during the re-charging process. Although the surface applied electrode is a preferred embodiment for recharging an existing sacrificial anode, other impressed current anodes such as embedded impressed current anodes may be used.

[0073] The four separate functions provided by the junction box can be performed simply as follows. These functions may also be performed manually by direct connection of the appropriate connectors without the need for a junction box.

[0074] a) Normal galvanic anode as shown in FIG. 2: the zinc core is connected to the steel via the junction box. The impressed current anode is set at the off position. This allows the anode to perform as a simple galvanic anode.

[0075] b) Impressed current anode as shown in FIG. 3: the zinc anode is set to the off position and the impressed current anode is connected to the steel via the external DC power source. The current output can be regulated by controlling the applied external voltage.

[0076] c) Recharging of galvanic anode as shown in FIG. 4: the impressed current anode is connected via the DC power source to the zinc anode. The steel is set to the off position. This allows the zinc ions or zinc corrosion products present in the electrolyte to be deposited onto the zinc core as zinc metal building up the thickness of the zinc anode. Zinc oxide and zinc hydroxide are two common corrosion products produced while the zinc anode is in operation.

[0077] d) Recharging of galvanic anode and impressed current as shown in FIG. 5: the impressed current anode is connected via the DC power source to both the zinc anode and the steel. This allows the re-charging process described at c) and the impressed current described at b) to proceed concurrently.

[0078] The first two functions are well understood and need no further description. However the arrangement, where both options are available (and operable) concurrently is novel.

[0079] The third function is novel with respect to the use of galvanic anodes for steel reinforcement protection and involves making the zinc anode cathodic allowing deposition of zinc. Zinc may be deposited from a number of zinc compounds and through various reactions and is likely to include Reactions 1, 2 and 3 if zinc is in an alkaline environment.



[0080] Theoretically, all the zinc oxide and other zinc ions and zinc corrosion products can be re-deposited on the core as usable zinc for subsequent consumption. In reality, as with rechargeable alkaline batteries, the level of each subsequent recharge is likely to be reduced.

[0081] A typical reaction at the impressed current electrode is likely to be:



[0082] There is therefore a net balance of the hydroxyl ions which means there is no overall loss in alkalinity within the assembly. There is a net increase in hydroxyl ions at the surface of the zinc anode which is initially beneficial in accommodating large amounts of the soluble zincate ions once the anode is used again, in galvanic mode, to protect the steel reinforcement. The reaction at the impressed current anode (Eq 4 or 5) involves the production of oxygen gas which needs to escape from the assembly and into the concrete pore structure. The impressed current anode, therefore, should be porous, be in the form of a net or be vented.

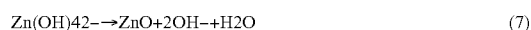
[0083] A preferred way to employ the anode arrangement herein is to initially set it up as a normal galvanic anode, allowing it to run for a period of say 10-20 years according to exposure conditions. Occasional monitoring will determine when recharging of the anode is required. An external power supply is then used to recharge the anode over a relatively short period, preferably no more than 14-60 days. The anode is then able to produce adequate current for a further 5-20 years. The process can be repeated several times until recharging becomes essentially ineffective. If required, the impressed current part of the anode can then be simply used as part of an impressed current cathodic protection system. Protection of the steel reinforcement could therefore be achieved for the whole life of the structure.

[0084] The assembly has great flexibility which allows variable application types. For example, a preliminary use of the impressed current part of the anode can deliver an initial high level of charge over a limited period in order to passivate the steel to virtually stop any ongoing corrosion. Alternatively, the impressed current part of the anode can be operated to deliver a cumulative charge to increase the alkalinity of the concrete surrounding the steel and reduce future corrosion and current demand from the galvanic galvanic anode. Applied charge of 20,000 to 150,000 and more typically, 70,000 to 100,000 Coulombs per square meter of steel has been shown to be sufficient to passivate the steel. Applied charges of around 700,000 Coulombs/m² have been effective at re-alkalizing (increasing the pH) of carbonated concrete.

The charge required to increase the pH of concrete which is not carbonated will be less than 700,000 Coulomb/m². This can then be followed by a lower level of galvanic current to maintain passivity of the steel. Using the impressed current anode to deliver the high initial charge is beneficial as this prevents unnecessary consumption and degradation of the sacrificial anode, allows a smaller sacrificial anode to be used and allows the sacrificial anode to provide higher current to the steel after the high initial charge has been passed to the steel by the impressed current anode. Recharging of the anodes can still be carried out if required. Furthermore, additional externally applied current can be delivered via the impressed current anode of the assembly if steel passivity is lost, if the current from the sacrificial anode is not sufficient to polarize the steel or if either the corrosion potential or the corrosion rate of the steel increases above desired levels. The assembly also has the capability to operate principally as an impressed current anode with a rechargeable galvanic anode backup for periods when the impressed current anode is off line or is otherwise non-functional. Similarly, the impressed current anode can be available to operate as a backup to the sacrificial anode should the sacrificial anode become non-functional.

[0085] In a preferred arrangement, the inert anode may be capable of delivering a high level of current, possibly as high as 1 mA/cm². The resistance of the electrolyte is preferably therefore as low as possible, so that a gel may be more suitable than a solid. Considerable levels of oxygen gas can be produced during charging which need to disperse adequately through the anode walls and surrounding concrete.

[0086] In order for the anode to be rechargeable, the electrolyte is preferably highly alkaline. This allows high concentrations of Zn(OH)₄²⁻ in solution after the dissolution of zinc which, with supersaturation, precipitates out as ZnO. These reactions are believed to be as set out in Equations 5 and 6 below, which are essentially the reverse of Reactions 1 and 2.



[0087] Other electrolytes which are not highly alkaline are also suitable as long as soluble or electrochemically mobile zinc ions are present.

[0088] Preferably the assembly includes sufficient moisture to be highly ionically conductive and to allow sacrificial anode ions to be mobile during charging or recharging. Humectants, gels and other hygroscopic materials can be beneficial in this regard. In an alternative arrangement, charging or recharging of sacrificial anodes can be improved by applying water or another wetting solution to at least a portion of the structure and or specifically the sacrificial anode to keep it sufficiently conductive during the charging or recharging process.

[0089] Testing has shown that zinc can be deposited onto many substrates including; zinc, titanium, steel and stainless steel. As such, partially discharged and fully consumed sacrificial anodes can be regenerated.

Example

[0090] In one example, a cast zinc anode, 8 cm long with a minimum diameter of 0.7 cm, was located in ZnO/thixotropic paste packed inside a conductive ceramic impressed current anode tube. The zinc paste was made from a solution saturated with LiOH with 2M KOH and 20% ZnO along with

carboxymethyl cellulose sodium thickening agent. The paste was packed in the space between the zinc anode and the inner side of the 28 mm tube. Testing has shown that ions can pass through the porous tube walls such that the zinc anode can pass current onto the external steel reinforcing bar even though it is located inside the impressed current anode. Subsequently, charging of the zinc can be accomplished by reversing the flow of ions through the impressed current porous tubular anode by applying an external voltage between the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode. An applied voltage of around 6-8 Volts resulted in a current of up to 1.6 A to be delivered to the inner zinc anode achieving a total charge/recharge of just under 40,000 Coulombs. Surprisingly, the zinc anode performed better after recharging than it did originally. After charging of the zinc anode, when the zinc anode was reconnected to the steel, the current output and cumulative charge output of the recharged zinc anode through the porous tubular impressed current anode to the steel was increased compared to the original zinc anode. The exact reasons for this improvement in performance are not known but the current output of the anode after charging is increased.

[0091] In FIG. 8 shows an example of an anode apparatus 30 as previously described where the apparatus includes a Cast Zinc Core 31 inside a 28 mm diameter porous conductive impressed current anode 32. An upper end is closed by an attached disk 33 forming a porous form and a lower end is closed by a Porous Fabric Cap 36. Between the core 31 and the cylindrical anode 32 is provided a filler material of LiOH+2M KOH+20% ZnO+carboxymethyl cellulose sodium. The core is attached to a steel wire 34 for connection as described above.

[0092] FIG. 9 is a graph of current output of the anode of FIG. 8 to steel, a) with the anode as originally made, b) with the anode after a period of charging via the porous conductive impressed current anode.

[0093] FIG. 10 is a graph of cumulative charge output of the anode to steel, a) with anode as originally made, b) after a period of charging via the porous conductive tube.

[0094] Since various modifications can be made in my invention as herein above described, and many apparently widely different embodiments of same made within the spirit and scope of the claims without departing from such spirit and scope, it is intended that all matter contained in the accompanying specification shall be interpreted as illustrative only and not in a limiting sense.

1. An anode apparatus for cathodically protecting a metal section in an ionically conductive material, the anode apparatus comprising:

- a sacrificial anode of a material which is less noble than the metal section;
- an impressed current anode;
- the sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode comprising components of the anode apparatus so that, when the components of the anode apparatus are located in contact with the ionically conductive material, each of the sacrificial anode and the impressed current anode is in ionically conductive communication with the other and with the metal section;
- the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode being electrically separated to prevent electrical communication therebetween;
- a first electrical connector arranged for connection to the sacrificial anode;

- and a second electrical connector arranged for connection to the impressed current anode.
- 2. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 including a DC power supply with positive and negative terminals.
- 3. The anode apparatus according to claim 2 including switchable connectors for connection to the positive and negative terminals of the power supply, to the first and second electrical connectors and to the metal section.
- 4. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the impressed current anode is perforated so to allow passage of ionic current to pass through the impressed current anode.
- 5. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the sacrificial anode forms a rod and the impressed current anode forms a sleeve surrounding the rod.
- 6. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the impressed current anode and the sacrificial anode comprise side by side plates.
- 7. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein there is provided an ionically conductive filler material adjacent to the sacrificial anode.
- 8. The anode apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the ionically conductive filler material is different from said ionically conductive material.
- 9. The anode apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the ionically conductive filler material contains at least one activator to ensure continued corrosion of the sacrificial anode.
- 10. The anode apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the ionically conductive filler material has a pH sufficiently high for corrosion of the sacrificial anode to occur and for passive film formation on the sacrificial anode to be avoided.
- 11. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein there is provided a plurality of sacrificial anodes and wherein the impressed current anode is separate from said sacrificial anodes.
- 12. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein there is provided a plurality of impressed current anodes and wherein the sacrificial anode is separate from said impressed current anodes.
- 13. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the impressed current anode is arranged to be mounted in or on the covering material temporarily.
- 14. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the impressed current anode is arranged to be mounted on a surface of the covering material to provide current through the surface of the ionically conductive material.
- 16. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the impressed current anode is arranged to be mounted and operated temporarily for re-charging of the sacrificial anode
- 17. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the metal section is steel and the ionically conductive material is concrete or mortar.
- 18. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 wherein there is provided a porous or deformable material to absorb corrosion products from the sacrificial anode.

- 19. The anode apparatus according to claim 1 provided as a preassembled unit.
- 20. The anode apparatus according to claim 19 wherein the anode apparatus including a DC power supply which is provided as a preassembled unit.
- 21. The anode apparatus according to claim 19 wherein the DC power supply is a photovoltaic cell or battery so as to provide an intermittent DC power supply.
- 22. An anode apparatus for use in cathodically protecting a metal section in an ionically conductive material, the apparatus comprising:
 - a sacrificial anode of a material which is less noble than the metal section arranged for engagement with the ionically conductive material;
 - and a second anode arranged for engagement with the ionically conductive material;
 - the sacrificial anode and the second anode being arranged such that when the second anode is connected to a DC power supply the sacrificial anode is charged or re-charged with ions of the sacrificial anode material.
- 23. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the apparatus includes a DC power supply with positive and negative terminals.
- 24. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the second anode is perforated so to allow passage of ionic current to pass through the impressed current anode.
- 25. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the sacrificial anode forms a rod and the second anode forms a sleeve surrounding the rod.
- 26. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the second anode and the sacrificial anode comprise side by side plates.
- 27. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein there is provided an ionically conductive filler material adjacent to the sacrificial anode.
- 28. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the impressed current anode is arranged to be mounted in or on the covering material temporarily.
- 29. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the impressed current anode is arranged to be mounted on a surface of the covering material to provide current through the surface of the ionically conductive material.
- 30. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the metal section is steel and the ionically conductive material is concrete or mortar.
- 31. The anode apparatus according to claim 22 provided as a preassembled unit.
- 32. The anode apparatus according to claim 31 wherein the anode apparatus including a DC power supply which is provided as a preassembled unit.

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