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FIG. 1

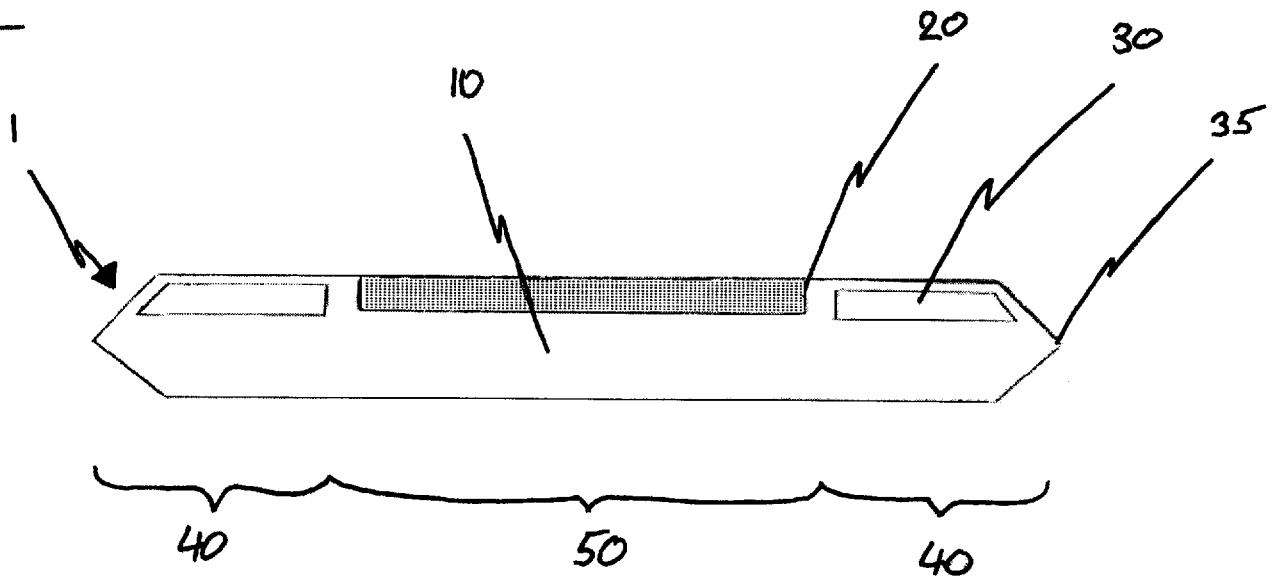


FIG. 2

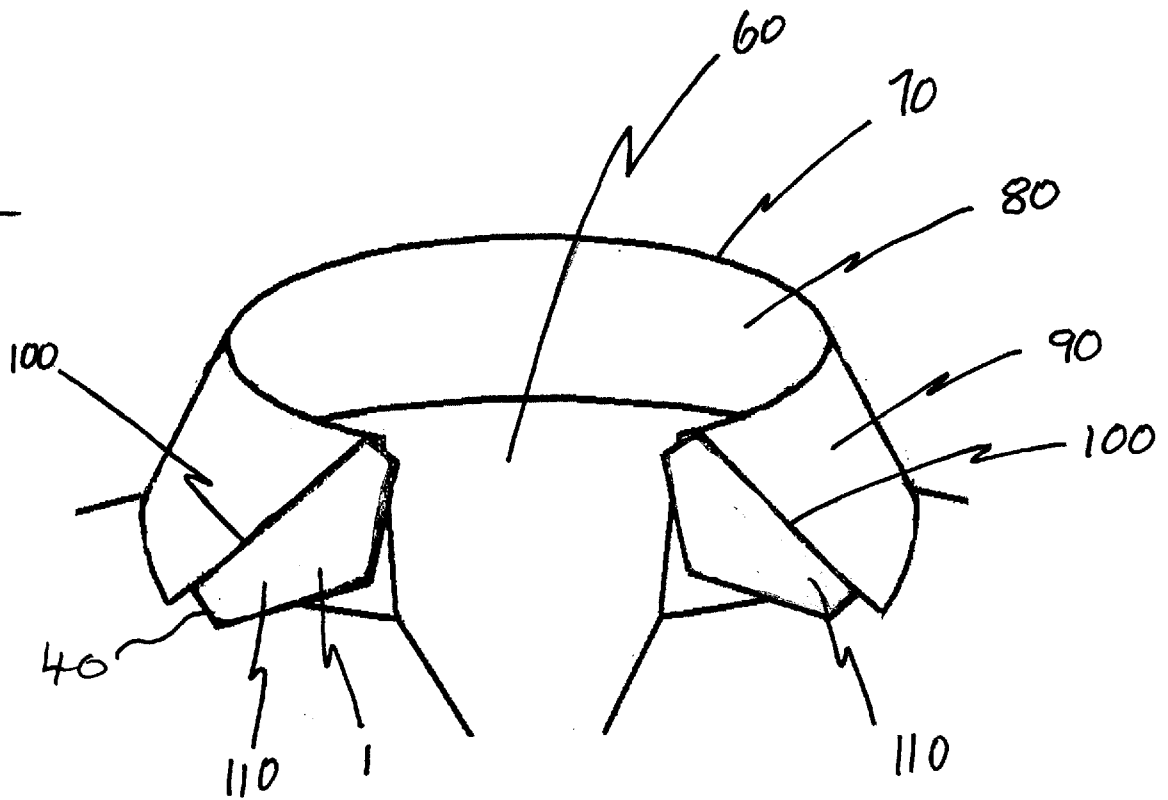


FIG. 3

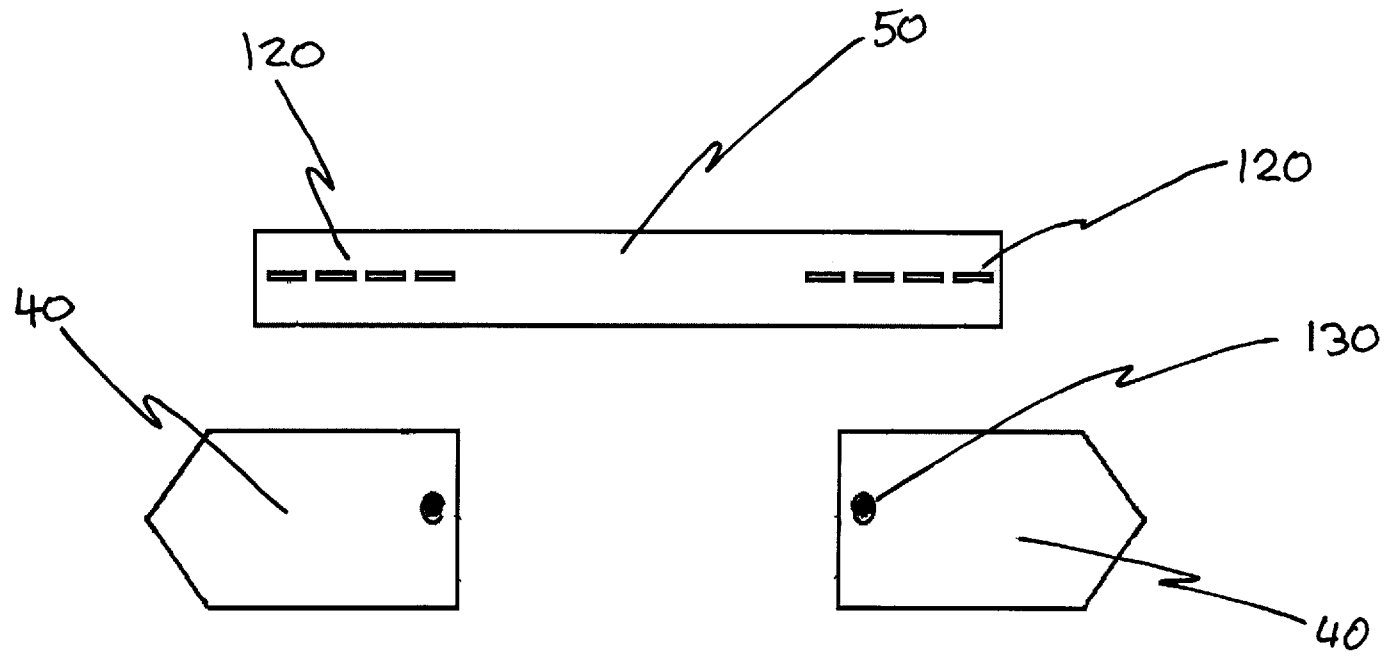


FIG. 4

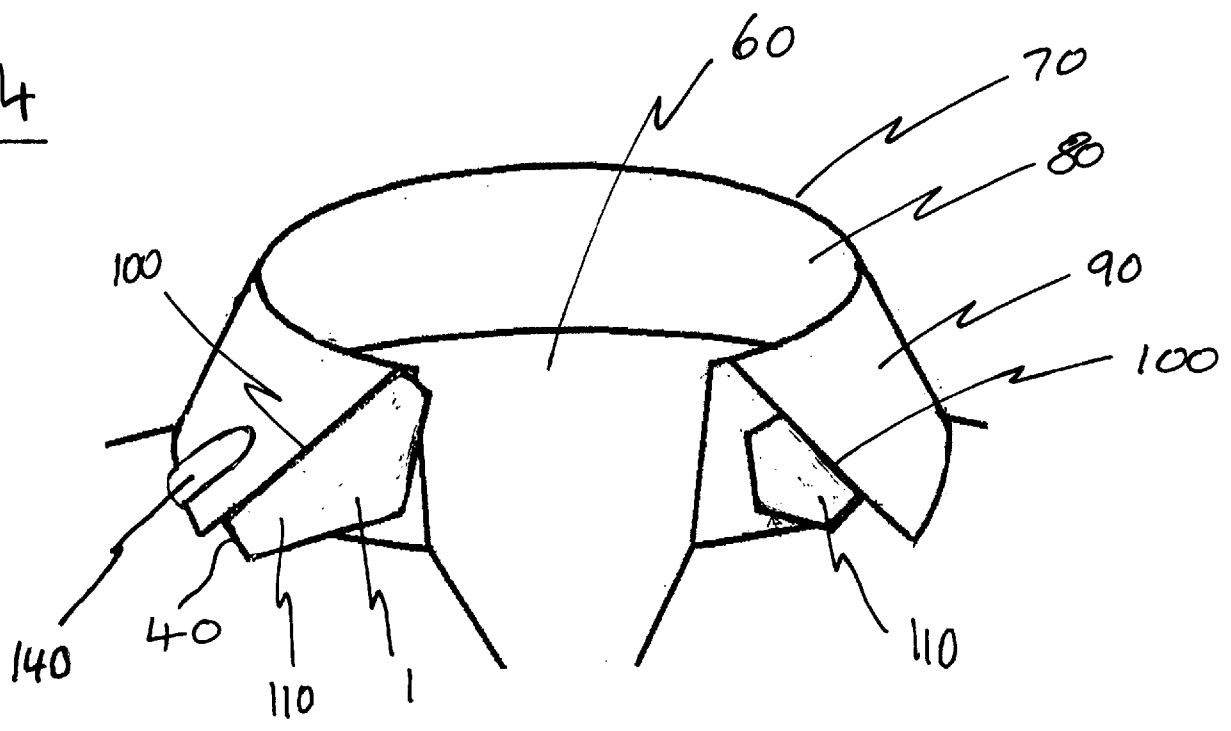


FIG 5

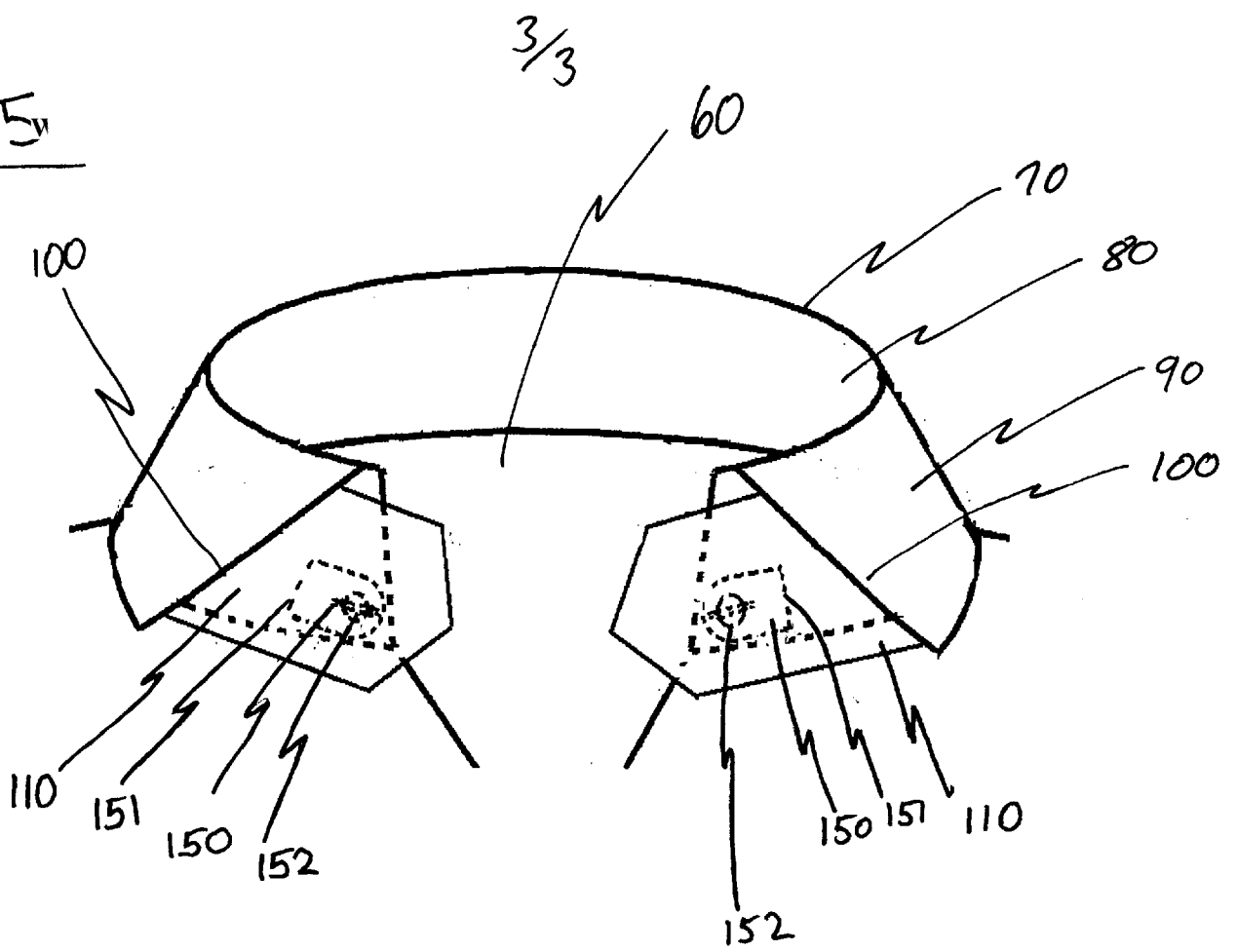
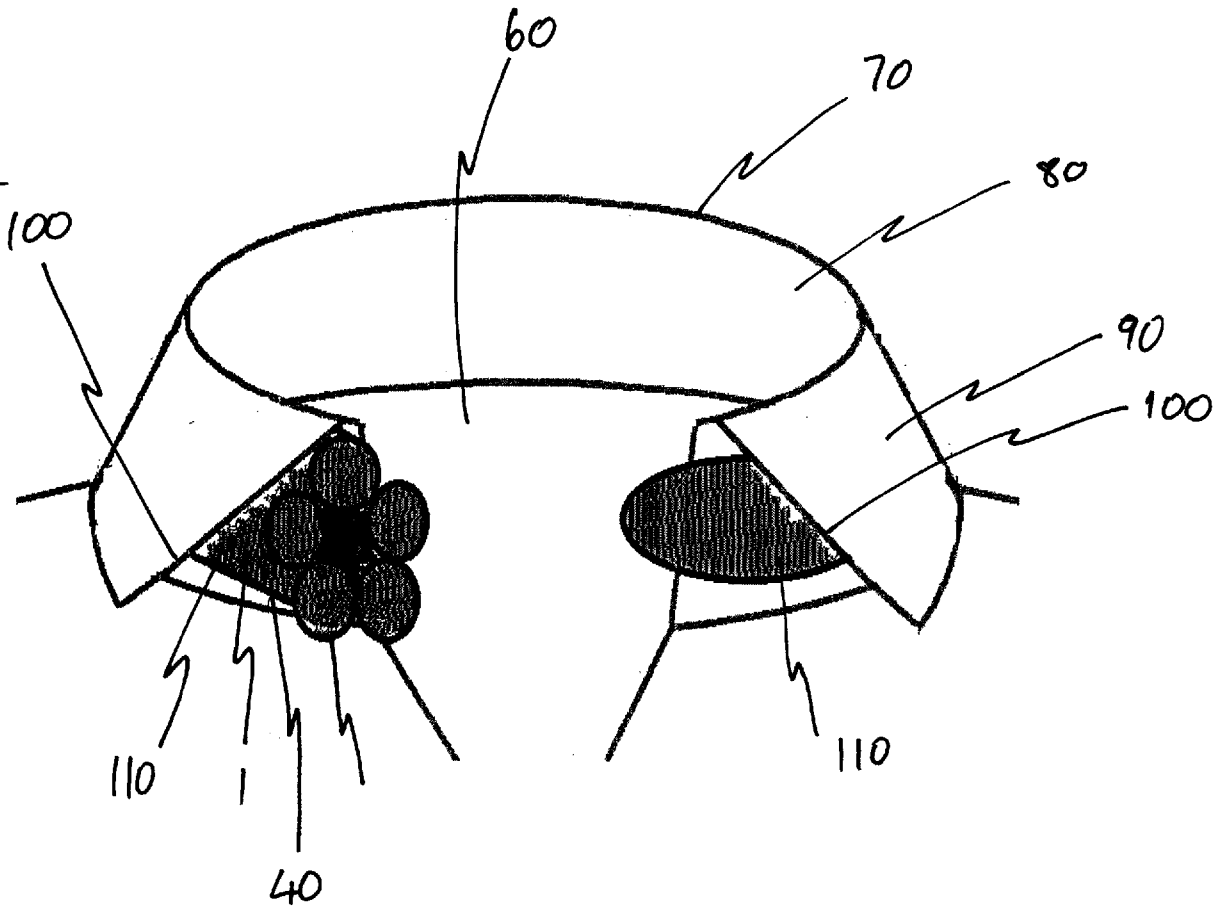


FIG 6



CLOTHING ITEM

[001] The present invention concerns an item of clothing, wearable with a shirt having a collar. In particular, the
5 invention concerns a clothing accessory to be worn in the collar of a shirt in replacement of a conventional necktie.

[002] The necktie was once considered to be a flexible item of clothing. While ubiquitous in formal settings and often
10 mandatory under various dress codes, it also afforded individuals the opportunity to express themselves by selecting different colours, patterns and design features; it could also feature emblems to show an association with a group or body. While there is no doubt that wearers can
15 express themselves with other items of clothing, finished in a similar range of colours and patterns, the necktie makes such expressions in a relatively subtle manner. By virtue of being a clothing accessory, and possibly as a consequence of a longer term association with smart dress, flamboyant
20 neckties are much more likely to be accepted in formal settings than any other item of clothing having a similarly outlandish finish.

[003] In recent times, although neckties have remained
25 commonplace in most formal settings and in certain professions, they are no longer considered to be an everyday item of clothing by the majority of the population. Part of the reason for this decline in popularity stems from the growing preference to wear a shirt with an open-neck, as
30 people look for increased comfort and practicality. Nevertheless, there remains a desire for individuals to be able to express themselves, whilst retaining the smart appearance offered by a collared shirt or blouse.

35 [004] To address the above issue, various new shirt and tie

arrangements have been proposed. GB 2 469 812 discloses one example where a modified shirt is provided in which a cut away portion is provided at the back of the collar leaf for allowing an associated decorative band worn underneath to be seen from the rear. The decorative band is designed to be attached to a shirt by appropriate fastenings installed on the collar or using the shirt top button and button hole. However, this arrangement has not been popular with the general population. This may be, in part, because it can only be used with a specially modified shirt. Furthermore, the decorative band is only visible from the rear, which limits its effectiveness at fulfilling the function of a conventional tie.

[005] Accordingly, the present invention seeks to solve the above problems with the prior art.

[006] According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a clothing item, wearable with a shirt having a collar, comprising: an elongate body for location between the collar's band and leaf, and being sized such that, in use, the ends of the elongate body are exposed from the ends of the collar leaf to define two separated decorative portions, wherein the elongate body is configured so that, in use, the decorative portions project away from the band of the collar, the ends of the elongate body comprise stiffened sections for supporting the decorative portions, the stiffened sections comprise supporting inserts or a reinforcing material for increasing the stiffness of the ends of the elongate body and the elongate body comprises an increased friction region for retaining the elongate body between the collar's band and leaf.

[007] In this way, a new type of clothing item is provided for adding contrasting colours or designs to a conventional shirt worn with an open collar. Importantly, once fitted to the shirt's collar, the item provides two separated decorative portions that project away from the collar band, with their ends pointing away from the wearer and in substantially the same plane as the ends of the collar leaf. The elongate body may also

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rest against the collar band or in between it and the leaf. This contrasts with a conventional tie where the ends, rather than projecting substantially horizontally in a forward direction, are tied together at the collar band and drape down to form a vertical decorative strip. As such, the present invention allows a user to add colour or design accents next to the front sides of their shirt collar, without compromising their comfort by needing to enclose their neck. At the same time, by holding the decorative portions upwards, above the user's chest, a smart appearance is achieved as these portions project out in a substantially horizontal plane. This avoids the clothing item from draping down on a user's chest, where it might cause obstruction or distraction.

[008] As the ends of the elongate body comprise stiffened sections for supporting the decorative portions, the decorative portions that project from the collar band are held up by the stiffened sections as they extend beyond the front edges of the collar leaf. This helps to support the decorative portions in an elevated position.

[009] In particular, the stiffened sections comprise supporting inserts or a reinforcing material for increasing the stiffness of the ends of the elongate body. In this way, plastic or metal inserts, and/or additional layers of material, may be used to increase the stiffness of the end sections of the elongate body. This helps to maintain the decorative portions in an elevated, substantially horizontal, projection. Furthermore, the increased stiffness also helps to retain a flat surface over these regions, and thereby minimise curling of the fabric at its edges.

[0010] Furthermore, as the elongate body comprises an increased friction region for retaining the elongate body between the collar's band and leaf, the higher coefficient of friction over the increased friction region helps to grip the elongate body between the collar leaf and band. This thereby minimises slippage of the clothing item once it is fitted to the collar.

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[0011] Preferably, the elongate body comprises a resiliently compressible region for compression between the collar's band and leaf for securing the elongate body to the collar. In this way, an improved grip is achieved between the collar leaf and band for minimising slippage of the clothing item once it is fitted to the collar.

[0012] Preferably, the clothing item further comprises an adjustment means for adjusting the length of the elongate body. In this way, the clothing item may be worn with a variety of different shirt collar sizes.

[0013] Preferably, at least one of the ends of the elongate body comprises a decorative element. In this way, the decorative element offers the wearer a further embellishment for displaying their style.

[0014] Preferably, the decorative element is detachable. In this way, the decorative element may be removed for replacement or washing.

[0015] In a further embodiment, the clothing item may further comprise a clip for attaching the elongate body to the collar's outer leaf. In this way, secure attachment to the collar is achieved. In a further embodiment, the elongate body comprises a slot for receiving one side of a tie clip.

[0016] In a further embodiment, the elongate body comprises tabs for attachment to the shirt's top button and button hole. In this way, tabs provided on the inner facing surface of the elongate body may be connected to the shirt's top

button and associated button hole using corresponding a button hole and button provided on the tabs. This thereby allows the clothing item to be securely attached to the shirt collar, with the attachment being hidden beneath the elongate
5 body.

[0017] Illustrative embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

10 Figure 1 shows a plan view of a clothing item according to a first embodiment of the invention;

 Figure 2 shows a front view of the first embodiment of the invention fitted to a shirt;

 Figure 3 shows a plan view of a second embodiment of
15 the invention;

 Figure 4 shows a front view of a third embodiment of the invention fitted to a shirt;

 Figure 5 shows a front view of a fourth embodiment of the invention;

20 Figure 6 shows a front view of a fifth embodiment of the invention fitted to a shirt.

[0018] Figure 1 shows a plan view of a clothing item 1 according to a first embodiment of the invention. The item
25 1 comprises an elongate body 10 formed of a strip of flexible fabric longer in length than in width. The fabric of the elongate body 10 may be coloured or include a decorative pattern. The elongate body 10 has a central region
50 adjacent to two end sections 40.

30

[0019] In this embodiment, the elongate body 10 comprises a gripping region 20 provided along the top edge of the central region 50. The gripping region 20 is elastically compressible and has a higher coefficient of friction relative to the
35 primary fabric of the elongate body.

[0020] The end sections 40 comprise rigid plastic inserts 30 positioned towards the top edge, along the length of the end section 40. The plastic inserts 30 act to increase the 5 stiffness of the end sections 40. The ends of each end section 40 converge to terminate in a point 35, similar to the ends of a traditional neck tie.

[0021] Figure 2 shows a front view of the first embodiment 10 of the invention fitted to a regular shirt 60, with the collar 70 open. The shirt 60 has a collar 70 comprising a collar band 80 and a collar leaf 90. The collar band 80 fits around the neck of a wearer and supports the shirt's top button and button hole. The collar leaf 90 is connected to 15 the collar band 80 and is folded over, forming a space between opposing surfaces of the collar band 80 and collar leaf 90. The collar leaf 90 terminates in two edges 100 provided at the opening at the front of the shirt 60.

[0022] In use, the clothing item 1 is fitted between the 20 space between opposing surfaces of the collar band 80 and collar leaf 90 for attaching the item 1 to the shirt 60. The central region 50 of the elongate body 10 locates under the collar leaf 90, with the gripping region 20 being sandwiched 25 between the opposing surfaces of the collar band 80 and leaf 90 for forming a friction lock for retaining the item 1 in place.

[0023] As shown in Figure 2, the width of elongate body 10 30 is sized such that when worn under the collar leaf 90, the central region 50 is covered by the collar leaf 90. The length of the elongate body 10 is sized such that, once fitted to a shirt in use, at least a portion of the end sections 40 are exposed from both the two front edges 100 of 35 the collar leaf 90. However, the length of the elongate body

10 is not long enough so that the end sections 40 may be tied together around the wearer's neck. The portions of the end sections 40 that protrude from the front edges 100 of the collar leaf 90 thereby define two decorative portions 110
5 of the stiffened end sections 40 that are visible outside of the shirt 60.

[0024] The supporting inserts 30 extend through the end sections 40 from inside the boundary of the collar 70 and
10 outward through the decorative portions 110. In this way, the supporting inserts 30 support the decorative portions 110 such that they are able to project away from the band 80 of the collar 70. This acts to hold the decorative portions 110 of the end sections 40 in an elevated position that projects
15 in a substantially horizontal plane, in line with the plane of the collar 70 itself.

[0025] The above described first embodiment therefore provides a new clothing item that may be worn with an open
20 shirt collar. The end sections 40 are held in place by the central region 50 of the elongate body 10 and this structure supports the end sections 40 as they extend outward a short distance from the front edges 100 of the collar leaf 90 to define the decorative portions 110. The colour or design of
25 the fabric of the decorative portions 110 thereby allows a design accent to be added to a conventional shirt.

[0026] Figure 3 shows a plan view of a second embodiment of the invention. This embodiment is similar to the first
30 embodiment shown in figure 1, but central region 50 and two end sections 40 are provided as separate connectable elements for allowing the overall length of the elongate body 10 to be adjusted for different sized shirts. The two end section elements 40 comprise a button 130 which can be attached to
35 one in an array of corresponding button holes 120 provided

on the central region element 50. The plurality of holes 120 allows for the total length of the elongate body to be adjusted to fit a range of collar sizes, depending on which holes the end section elements 40 are attached to.

5

[0027] Figure 4 shows a front view of a third embodiment of the invention. This embodiment is similar to the first embodiment shown in Figure 1, but the clothing item further comprises a clip 140 for fixing the elongate body 10 to the collar leaf 90. In particular, the clip 140 secures the end sections 40 of the elongate body 10 in place by clamping over the outer surface of the collar leaf 90, with the rear of the clip 140 being secured to the elongate body 10. The clip 140 may be opened to allow the clothing item 1 to be detached from the shirt 60.

[0028] Figure 5 shows a front view of a fourth embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, the item of clothing 1 is further provided with tabs 150 secured to the inner facing surface of the elongate body 10. Each tab 150 is secured at its base 151, with a free end 152 located towards the end sections 40 of the elongate body 10. The tabs are connectable to the top button and button hole of the shirt 60 using a corresponding button hole and button provided on the free end 152 of the opposing tab 150. In this way, the clothing item 1 can be attached to the top button and button hole of the shirt 60 using the tabs 150. In use, the tabs 150 allow the decorative portions 110 to flare away from the attachment point and thereby project away from the collar band 80.

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[0029] Figure 6 shows a front view of a fifth embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, the clothing item 1 provided with a decorative element 160 on one of the decorative portions 110. The decorative element 160 is an embellishment made from an additional piece of material

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connected to the end section 40 of the elongate body 10. It is envisaged that different decorative elements 160 could be provided on one or both end sections 40 and, in alternative embodiments, they may be detachably secured using a fastening 5 to allow decorative elements 160 to be swapped or detached for cleaning.

[0030] It will be understood that the embodiment illustrated above shows applications of the invention only for the 10 purposes of illustration. In practice the invention may be applied to many different configurations, the detailed embodiments being straightforward for those skilled in the art to implement.

15 [0031] In this respect, in the first embodiment disclosed above, the end sections 40 comprise rigid plastic inserts 30 for stiffening the end sections 40. However, alternative stiffening arrangements are also envisaged. For example, pockets for receiving removable metal or plastic inserts may 20 be provided. Furthermore, additional material, such as additional layers of fabric, may be provided over the end sections 40 to form stiffer regions, without compromising the flexibility of the fabric of the central region 50 around the wearer's neck.

25

[0032] In this respect, although in the second embodiment disclosed above, the end sections 40 are connectable at different points to adjust the total length, alternative length adjustment arrangements are also envisaged. For 30 instance, slide and loop adjusters or velcro could be used.

[0033] It will be appreciated that the clip of Figure 3 may be provided in a variety of ways. The clip need not be made of a metal material or have a flat surface. The decorative 35 nature of the clip can be achieved by virtue of the material

selected for the clip, or by any known method of finishing.

[0034] Finally, it is envisaged that the clothing item may comprise a resilient structure shaped to fit around the
5 wearer's neck and for supporting the end sections of the elongate body in an elevated position.

CLAIMS

1. A clothing item (1), wearable with a shirt (60) having a collar (70), comprising:

an elongate body (10) for location between the collar's band (80) and leaf (90), and being sized such that, in use, the ends (40) of the elongate body are exposed from the ends of the collar leaf to define two separated decorative portions (110),

wherein the elongate body is configured so that, in use, the decorative portions project away from the band of the collar;

the ends of the elongate body comprise stiffened sections (40) for supporting the decorative portions;

the stiffened sections comprise supporting inserts (30) or a reinforcing material for increasing the stiffness of the ends of the elongate body; and

the elongate body comprises an increased friction region for retaining the elongate body between the collar's band and leaf.

2. A clothing item (1) according to claim 1, wherein the elongate body (10) comprises a resiliently compressible region (20) for compression between the collar's band (80) and leaf (90) for securing the elongate body to the collar (70).

3. A clothing item (1) according to claim 1, further comprising an adjustment means (130) for adjusting the length of the elongate body (10).

4. A clothing item (1) according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the ends (40) of the elongate body (10) comprises a decorative element (160).

5. A clothing item (1) according to claim 4, wherein the decorative element (160) is detachable.

6. A clothing item (1) according to claim 1, further comprising a clip (140) for attaching the elongate body (10) to the collar's outer leaf (90).

7. An item of clothing (1) according to claim 1, wherein the elongate body

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(10) comprises tabs (150) for attachment to the shirt's (60) top button and button hole.

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