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PREFACE

The last edition of this book was more than 12 years ago at which time case law relating to the Patents Act 1977 was still fairly sparse. Since then the 1977 Act has been amended by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and the Patents County Court has been in operation since 1990. Furthermore the impact of the Patents Act 1949 is less marked today, although it still remains with us. Thus, since the last edition there has been a considerable development of the law.

As a consequence of such changes we have reformulated the book so that generally for each subject the provisions of the 1977 Act (as amended) are addressed first and have been largely rewritten. As regards the 1949 Act we have endeavoured to bring up-to-date those parts of the old edition which are still relevant to existing old Act patents, but have omitted those provisions which no longer seem to be relevant such as the provisions of the 1949 Act relating to extensions of patent term and licences of right. Generally we have endeavoured to state the law as at the end of May 1994.

As this book is intended for those practising in the U.K. courts whilst covering the law regarding applications for and oppositions to European patents it does not deal with detailed European Patent Office practice and procedure. On the practical side we have re-introduced precedents and pleadings to be found in Chapter 14.

In the preparation of this edition we are very grateful for the help given by Guy Burkill, Andrew Waugh, Colin Birss and in particular David Votier of Carpmaels and Ransford for his assistance on the chapter on Applications for European Patents.

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TABLE OF CASES

(References are to Paragraph number)

AEW's Application <i>Re</i> (1924) 41 R.P.C. 529	2.44
AMP Inc. v Hellerman Ltd. [1962] R.P.C. 55	5.27, 7.08, 7.09
Acetylene Illuminating Co. Ltd. v. United Alkali Co. [1902] 1 Ch. 494; 71 L. J. Ch. 301; 50 W.R. 361; 19 R.P.C. 213; affirmed (1903) 72 L.J. Ch. 214; 20 R.P.C. 161 affirmed (1904) 21 R.P.C. 145	5.79
Ackroyd & Best Ltd v. Thomas and Williams (1904) 21 R.P.C. 737	4.41, 5.108, 12.276
Aktiengesellschaft für Anilin Fabrikation v. Levinstein Ltd. (1912) 29 R.P.C. 677	12.64
— v. — (1913) 30 R.P.C. 401; (1913) 30 R.P.C. 673	12.140
— v. — (1915) 32 R.P.C. 140	12.08
— v. — (1921) 38 R.P.C. 277, C.A.	5.11
Aktiengesellschaft für Autogene Aluminium Schivelssung v. London Aluminium Co. Ltd. (1918) 35 R.P.C. 29	8.69
— v. — (1919) 2 Ch. 67; 88 L.J. Ch. 366; 121 L.T. 168; 36 R.P.C. 199	12.64
— v. (No. 2) (1919) 2 Ch. 67 (1920) 37 R.P.C.	12.138, 8.69, 12.202, 12.249, 13.04
— v. — (No. 3) (1922) 39 R.P.C. 296; affirming (1921) 38 R.P.C. 163; affirming (1919) 36 R.P.C. 153	5.87, 5.129
Aktiengesellschaft für Cartonnagen Industrie v. Remus and Burgon (1895) 12 R.P.C. 94	12.35
— v. Temler and Seeman (1901) 18 R.P.C. 6	8.29
Adair v. Young (1879) 12 Ch.D. 13; 41 L.T. 361; 28 W.R. 85, C.A.	6.18, 6.22, 12.214
Adhesive Dry Mounting Co. Ltd. v. Trapp & Co. (1910) 27 R.P.C. 341	6.45, 6.56
Adie v. Clark (No. 2) (1877) 2 App. Cas. 423; 46 L.J. Ch. 598; 37 L.T. 1; 26 W.R. 47; affirming (1876) 3 Ch.D. 134; 35 L.T. 349; 24 W.R. 1007	8.34
Advance Industries Ltd. v. Frankfurter (Paul) [1958] R.P.C. 392	8.49
Aero Carbon Light Co. v. Kidd (1887) 4 R.P.C. 535	5.86
Agreements on Video Cassette Recorders, <i>Re</i> [1978] 2 C.M.L.R. 160; [1978] F.S.R. 376, E.C. Commission	8.78
Aisin Seikik K.K.'s Application [1984] R.P.C. 191	3.29
Alderton and Barry's Application (1941) 58 R.P.C. 56	2.44
Alexander & Co. v Henry & Co. (1895) 12 R.P.C. 360	12.231
Allchin v. Coulthard [1943] A.C. 607	13.36
Allen v. Doulton (1887) 3 T.L.R. 655; 4 R.P.C. 377, C.A.	7.31
— v. Horton (1893) 10 R.P.C. 412	12.128
— v. Jambo Holdings Ltd. [1980] 1 W.L.R. 1252; [1980] 2 All E.R. 502, C.A.	12.46
Allen & Hanbury's Application [1977] R.P.C. 113, P.A.T.	5.137
Allen & Hanburys Ltd. v. Generics (U.K.) and Gist-Brocades NV v. Brocades (GB) Beecham Group; Comptroller of Patents [1986] R.P.C. 203, H.L. 8.19, 9.01, 9.45, 9.53, 9.54, 9.57, 9.58, 9.67	9.54, 9.57, 9.58, 9.67
— v. Generics (U.K.) Ltd. (Case C-434/85) [1988] E.C.R. 1275; [1988] C.M.L.R. 701; [1988] F.S.R. 312, E.C.J.	9.05, 9.07, 9.24, 9.34, 9.51, 9.58
Allen & Hanbury's (Salbutamol) Patent [1987] R.P.C. 372, C.A. 8.54, 9.54, 9.58, 9.59, 9.61, 9.62, 9.63, 9.65, 9.71, 13.08	5.67, 5.80, 6.43
Alliance Flooring Co. Ltd. v. Winsorflor; Winsorflor Ltd. v. Alliance Flooring Co. Ltd., Campbell, Campbell, Campbell and Maison [1961] R.P.C. 375	12.138
Allmanna Svenska Elektriska A/B v. Burntisland Shipbuilding Co., The (1951) 68 R.P.C. 63; [1951] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 211	11.06, 11.07, 11.11
Alpi-Pietro E. Figlio & Co. v. Wright (John) & Sons (Veneers) Ltd. [1972] R.P.C. 125	12.129, 12.266
Alsop Flour Process Ltd. v. Flour Oxidizing Co. Ltd., Re Andrews' Patent (1908) 25 R.P.C. 477; affirming (1907) 24 R.P.C. 349	12.129, 12.266

TABLE OF CASES

Alsop's Patent (1907) 24 R.P.C. 684, 733	5.123, 5.124, 12.266
Aluma Systems Inc. v. Hunnebeck G.m.b.H. [1982] F.S.R. 239	12.113
Aluminium Co. v. Domeiere (1898) 15 R.P.C. 32	12.53
Amalgamated Carburetters Ltd. v. Bowden Wire Ltd. (1931) 48 R.P.C. 105	10.16
Amateur Athletic Association's Application [1989] R.P.C. 717	3.21
American Braided Wire Co. v. Thomson (1890) 44 Ch.D. 274; 59 L.J. Ch. 425; 62 L.T. 616; 6 T.L.R. 251; 7 R.P.C. 152, C.A.	12.231
— v. — (No. 2) (1888) 5 R.P.C. 375	12.245
American Chain and Cable Co. Inc. v. Hall's Barton Ropery Co. Ltd. (1938) 4 All E.R. 129; 55 R.P.C. 287	12.113
American Cyanamid v. Berk Pharmaceuticals [1973] F.S.R. 487; [1976] R.P.C. 231	2.32
— v. Ethicon Ltd. [1975] A.C. 396; [1975] 2 W.L.R. 316; [1975] 1 All E.R. 504; [1975] F.S.R. 101; [1975] R.P.C. 513, H.L.; reversing [1974] F.S.R. 312, C.A.	6.43, 11.20, 12.38
— v. Upjohn Co. [1970] 1 W.L.R. 1507; [1970] 3 All E.R. 785; [1970] F.S.R. 443; [1971] R.P.C. 425	4.39, 5.01, 5.04, 5.18
American Cyanamid Co. (Dann's Patent) [1970] F.S.R. 443; [1971] R.P.C. 425, H.L., reversing [1970] F.S.R. 23; [1970] R.P.C. 306	1.09
American Cyanamid & Co.'s (Fenbufen) Patent [1990] R.P.C. 309; [1991] R.P.C. 409	9.58, 9.59, 9.61, 9.62, 9.64, 9.65, 9.66, 9.71
American Cyanamid's Patent [1974] R.P.C. 349	7.29
American Flange and Manufacturing Co. Inc. v. Van Leer [1948] 2 All E.R. 698; 65 R.P.C. 305	13.06
American Optical Co.'s Application [1958] R.P.C. 40	2.44, 5.106
Amersham International plc v. Corning Ltd. [1987] R.P.C. 53	12.31
Ames v. Kelsey (1852) Bail Ct. Cas. 123; 22 L.J.Q. 84; 20 L.T. (o.s.) 115; 16 Jur. 1047; 1 W.R. 54	12.155
Amon v. Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd. [1956] R.P.C. 29	12.34
Amory v. Brown (1869) L.R. 8 Eq. 663; 38 L.J. Ch. 593; 20 L.T. 654; 17 W.R. 849	12.61
Amplaudio Ltd. v. Snell (1938) 55 R.P.C. 237	3.09
Anchor Building Products Ltd. v. Redland Roof Tiles Ltd. [1990] R.P.C. 283, C.A.	12.70
Andrews' Patent, <i>See</i> Alsop Flour Process Ltd. v. Flour Oxydizing Co. Ltd.	
Antiference Ltd. v. Telerections Installations (Bristol) Ltd. [1957] R.P.C. 31	7.08, 7.24
Antiphon AB's Application [1984] R.P.C. 1	3.18, 3.28, 7.80, 7.81
Anton Piller KG v. Manufacturing Processes [1976]	12.170
Anxionnax v. Ministry of Aviation [1966] F.S.R. 148, [1966] R.P.C. 510	12.116, 13.14
— v. Rolls Royce Ltd. [1965] R.P.C. 122	12.123
— v. — [1967] R.P.C. 419; [1967] F.S.R. 273	5.04
Appeal Practice Decision No. 4[1981] R.P.C. 60	7.96
Apple Corps. Ltd. v. Apple Computer Inc. [1992] R.P.C. 70	12.56
Armstrong Whitworth & Co. Ltd. v. Hardcastle (1925) 42 R.P.C. 543, H.L.	5.51
Armstrong's Patent, <i>Re</i> Yates v. Armstrong (1897) 77 L.T. 267; 14 R.P.C. 747; affirming 13 R.P.C. 501	7.25, 7.32
Arrow Electric Switches Ltd.'s Application (1944) 61 R.P.C. 1	5.141
Asahi Kasei Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha [1991] R.P.C. 485, H.L.; reversing [1990] F.S.R. 546, C.A.	5.04, 5.21, 7.68
Ash Buxted Poultry, <i>The Times</i> , November 29, 1989	12.152
Ashworth v. English Card Clothing Co. Ltd. (1903) 20 R.P.C. 790	5.107, 5.109
— v. — [1904] 1 Ch. 702; 73 L.J. Ch. 274; 90 L.T. 262; 21 R.P.C. 355; 52 W.R. 507	12.265
— v. Law (1890) 7 R.P.C. 231	8.39, 8.40
Astra AB v. Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Co. (1952) 69 R.P.C. 312	12.196
Atterskye v. Scott [1948] 1 All E.R. 469	12.136
Auster Ltd. v. Perfecta Motor Equipments Ltd. (1924) 41 R.P.C. 482 .. 5.77, 12.252, 12.255, 12.258	
Austin Baldwin v. Greenwood (1925) 42 R.P.C. 454	3.82, 8.54
Australian Gold Recovery Co. Ltd. v. Lake View Consols Ltd. [1901] A.C. 142; 18 R.P.C. 105	1.08
Autoliv Development AB's Patent [1988] R.P.C. 425	7.26, 7.28
Automatic Coil Winder & Electrical Equipment Co. Ltd v. Taylor Electrical Instruments Ltd. (1943) 60 R.P.C. 43	5.60, 5.71

TABLE OF CASES

Automatic Weighing Machine Co. v. Combined Weighing Machine Co. (1889) 58 L.J. Ch. 647; 61 L.T. 536; 6 R.P.C. 367; 37 W.R. 636, C.A.	4.48, 12.86
— v. International Hygienic Society (1889) 6 R.P.C. 475	12.254
— v. Knight (1889) 6 R.P.C. 297; 5 T.L.R. 359, C.A.	4.32, 5.107, 5.109, 5.111
Avery v. Ashworth, Son & Co. (1915) 32 R.P.C. 463; on appeal (1916) 32 R.P.C. 560; on appeal 33 R.P.C. 235	12.106, 12.138, 12.143
Avery's Patent (1887) 35 Ch.D. 307; 56 L.J. Ch. 1007; L.T. 506; 3 T.L.R. 775; 4 R.P.C. 152, 322; 36 W.R. 249, C.A.	10.04
Axmann v. Lund (1874) L.R. 18 Eq. 330; 43 L.J. Ch. 655; 31 L.T. 119; 22 W.R. 789 ..	8.40
Aylott's Patent (1911) 28 R.P.C. 227	10.18
 B. & R. Relays Ltd.'s Application [1985] R.P.C. 1	7.65
Babcock and Wilcox Ltd. v. Water Tube Boiler and Engineering Co. (1910) 27 R.P.C. 626	12.264
Babcock and Wilcox Ltd.'s Application (1952) 69 R.P.C. 224	5.140
Badger Co. Inc.'s Application [1970] R.P.C. 36 [1969] F.S.R. 474	2.17
Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik v. Chemische Fabrik Vormals Sandoz (1903) 88 L.T. 490; 19 T.L.R. 382; 20 R.P.C. 413; on appeal 21 R.P.C. 345	12.28
— v. Hickson (1906) A.C. 419; 75 L.J. Ch. 621; 95 L.T. 68; 22 T.L.R. 641; 23 R.P.C. 149	6.14, 12.274
— v. Isler (1906) 23 R.P.C. 633	8.63
— v. Johnson and the Basle Chemical Works (1897) 14 R.P.C. 919	6.14
— v. La Société Chimique des Usines du Rhône and Wilson (1899) 16 R.P.C.; affirming (1898) 14 R.P.C. 875	5.08, 12.128
— v. Levinstein (1883) 24 Ch. D. 156; 52 L.J. Ch. 704; 48 L.t. 822; 31 W.R. 913; on appeal (1885) 29 Ch. D. 366; 2 R.P.C. 73; on appeal (1887) 12 App. Cas. 710; 4 R.P.C. 449	4.39, 5.13, 5.128, 12.159, 12.197, 12.258
— v. Thompson (W.G.) & Co. Ltd (1903) 20 R.P.C. 422	12.28
— v. Thompson (W.G.) & Co. Ltd. (1904) 21 R.P.C. 473	9.02, 12.255
Bagot Pneumatic Tyre Co. v. Clipper Pneumatic Tyre Co. [1902] 1 Ch. 146, 71 L.J. Ch. 158; 85 L.T. 652; 18 T.L.R. 161; 19 R.P.C. 69; 50 W.R. 177, C.A.	8.30
Baird v. Moule's Patent Earth Closet Co. See Edison Telephone Co. v. India Rubber Co.	
Baird Television Ltd. v. Gramophone Co. Ltd. (1932) 49 R.P.C. 227	12.161
Bakelite Ltd.'s Application [1958] R.P.C. 152	10.24
Baker (Martin) Aircraft Co. Ltd. v. Canadian Flight Equipment Ltd. (1955) 72 R.P.C. 236	8.50
Baker's Application (1933) 50 R.P.C. 145	7.11
Baker Perkins Ltd.'s Application [1958] R.P.C. 267	7.08
Barker v. Stickney [1919] 11 K.B. 121; 88 L.J. K.B. 315; 120 L.t. 172, C.A.	8.30
Bartlett's Patent (1899) 16 R.P.C. 641	9.02
Basset v. Graydon (1897) 14 R.P.C. 701	8.40, 8.53
Bates' Patent (1921) 38 R.P.C. 385	8.08
Bates Valve Bag Co. v. Kershaw (B) & Co. (1920) Ltd. (1933) 50 R.P.C. 43	12.05
Batley v. Kynock (No. 2) (1874) L.R. 19 Eq. 229; 44 L.J. Ch. 219; 31 L.T. 573; 23 W.R. 209	12.62
Bayer A.G. v. Harris Pharmaceuticals [1991] F.S.R. 170	12.136
— v. Sullhoffer (Case C-65/86) [1988] E.C.R. 5249; [1990] 4 C.M.L.R. 429; [1990] F.S.R. 300	8.78
— v. Winter (No. 3) [1986] E.C.C. 465; [1986] F.S.R. 357	12.136
Beck and Justice's Patent, Griff L.O.C. 10	7.15
Beecham Group Laboratories Ltd. v. Bristol Laboratories Ltd. [1978] R.P.C. 153; [1977] F.S.R. 2115, H.L.	6.26, 8.60
— v. International Products Ltd. [1968] R.P.C. 129; [1968] F.S.R. 162	6.60, 8.56
— v. Shewan Times (Traders) Ltd. [1968] R.P.C. 268	6.60
Beecham Group Ltd.'s (Amoxycillin) Application [1980] R.P.C. 261, C.A.	5.83
Behr-Thompson Dehnstoffrengler Verwaltungs GmbH v. Western Thompson Controls [1990] R.P.C. 569	12.127
Belegging-en Exploitatiemaatschappij Lavender B.V. v. Witten Industrial Diamonds [1979] F.S.R. 59, C.A.	6.53, 6.56, 12.138
Beloit Corp.'s Application (No. 2) [1974] R.P.C. 478	7.23
Benjamin Electric Ltd. and Igranic Co. Ltd. v. Garnett Whiteley & Co. Ltd. (1929)	

TABLE OF CASES

W.N. 293; 169 L.T.J. 7; (1930) 47 R.P.C. 44	12.243
Benmax v. Austin Motor Co. Ltd [1904] A.C. 73	12.113
— v. — [1955] A.C. 370; [1955] 2 W.L.R. 418; [1955] 1 All E.R. 326; (1955) 72 R.P.C. 39; affirming (1953) 70 R.P.C. 284; reversing (1953) 70 R.P.C. 143	5.77, 5.79, 12.240
Benno- Jaffé und Darmstaedter Lanolin Fabrik v. Richardson & Co. (1893) 62 L.J. Ch. 710; 10 R.P.C. 136	4.32, 12.137, 12.140
Bentley Engineering Co. Ltd's Patent [1981] R.P.C. 361	7.27, 7.28, 7.29
Benton & Stone Ltd. v. Denston (Thomas) & Son (1925) 42 R.P.C. 284	5.82
Bergmann v. Macmillan (1881) 17 Ch. D. 423; 44 L.T. 794; 28 W.R. 890	8.54
Berry's Patent (1915) 32 R.P.C. 350	10.18
Bescol (Electrics) Ltd. v. Merlin Mouldings Ltd. (1952) 69 R.P.C. 159	12.196, 12.279
Bessimier v. Wright (1858) 31 L.T. (O.S.) 213; 6 W.R. 716	8.42
Besson (A.P.) v. Fulleon [1986] F.S.R. 319	6.55
Betts v. De Vitre (1865) 34 L.J. Ch. 289	12.248
— v. Ideal Capsules Ltd. (1951) 68 R.P.C. 23	12.126
— v. Menzies (1957) 10 H.L. Cas. 117; 3 Jur. (N.S.) 357	12.202
— v. Willmott (1871) L.R. 6 Ch. App. 239; 25 L.t. 188; 19 W.R. 369, C.A.	6.60, 8.55, 8.63, 12.75, 12.198
Bibby & Baron Ltd. v. Duerden (1910) 27 R.P.C. 283	12.139
Bio-Digital Science's Application [1973] R.P.C. 668	2.35, 2.54
Birch v. Harrap & Co. (1896) 13 R.P.C. 615	12.263
Birmingham Sound Reproducers Ltd. v. Callaro Ltd. [1956] R.P.C. 141; affirmed [1956] R.P.C. 232	6.41
— v. — [1956] R.P.C. 52	12.259
Birtwhistle v. Sumner Engineering Co. Ltd. (1928) 45 R.P.C. 59	12.128
Black & Decker v. Flymo [1991] 1 W.L.R. 753; [1991] 3 All E.R. 158; [1991] F.S.R. 93	12.158
Blackett v. Dickson and Mann Ltd (1909) 26 R.P.C. 73	1.32, 12.96
Blakey & Co. v. Latham & Co. (1889) 6 R.P.C. 29; on appeal (1889) 5 T.L.R. 301; 6 R.P.C. 184	5.77, 5.79, 12.258
Blendax-Werke's Application [1974] R.P.C. 235	2.40
Bloom v. Shuylman (1934) 51 R.P.C. 308	12.63
Bloxam v. Elsee (1827) 6 Barn. & Cress 169; 9 Dow & Ry. (K.B.) 215; 5 L.J. (o.s.) K.B. 104	4.02
— v. Kee-Less Clock Co. (1922) 39 R.P.C. 195	12.126
Bondax Carpets v. Advance Carpet Tiles [1993] F.S.R. 162	8.22
Boneham and Hart v. Hirst Bros. & Co. Ltd. (1917) 34 R.P.C. 209	11.11
Bonnard v. London General Omnibus Co. Ltd. (1919) 36 R.P.C. 307	12.218
— v. — (1921) 38 R.P.C. 1	4.41, 5.77
Bonzel v. Intervention [1991] R.P.C. 43	12.136, 12.197
— v. — (No. 3) [1991] R.P.C. 553	5.96, 7.65, 7.68, 7.70
Boult's Patent (1909) 26 R.P.C. 383	9.15, 9.16
Boulton v. Bull (1795) 2 H. Bl. 463; 1 Corp. Pat. Cas. 117; 126 E.R. 651	1.08, 2.25, 5.07
Bovill v. Crate (1865) L.R. 1 Eq. 388	12.13, 12.53
— v. Moore (1815) 2 Coop. t. Cott. 56 (n.) ; Dar. P.C. 361	12.152
Bowden Brake Co. v. Bowden Wire Ltd. (1913) 30 R.P.C. 561	7.55
Bowden Controls v. Acco Cable Controls Ltd. [1990] R.P.C. 427	11.07, 11.08, 11.09, 11.16, 11.20
Bowen v. Pearson & Sons Ltd. (1924) 42 R.P.C. 101	12.262
Boyce v. Morris Motors Ltd. (1926) 44 R.P.C. 105, C.A.	5.37
Boyd v. Horrocks (1889) 6 R.P.C. 152	12.262
— v. Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co. Ltd. (1894) 11 R.P.C. 175	12.255
Bradford Dyers' Association Ltd. v. Bury (1901) 19 R.P.C. 125	12.267
Brake v. Radermacher (1903) 20 R.P.C. 631	8.26
Brand's Application (1894) 11 R.P.C. 102	10.24
Braun AG's Application [1981] R.P.C. 21	7.38
Bray v. Gardiner (1887) 34 Ch. D. 688; 56 L.J. Ch. 497; 56 L.T. 292; 3 T.L.R. 352; 4 R.P.C. 40; 35 W.R. 341, C.A.	7.33
Bremner's Patent, <i>Re, ex p. Braulik</i> [1909] 2 Ch. 217; 78 L.J. Ch. 550; 101 L.T. 21; 25 T.L.R. 610; 26 R.P.C. 449	9.19
Briggs & Co. v. Lardeur (G.) and Lambert (J.R.) (1885) 2 R.P.C. 13	12.10
Bristol-Myers Co. v. Manon Freres Ltd. [1973] R.P.C. 823	7.29, 7.35, 7.52, 11.16

TABLE OF CASES

Bristol-Myers Co.'s Application [1969] R.P.C. 146; [1968] F.S.R. 407; reversing [1968] R.P.C. 12 [1967] F.S.R. 444; reversing [1966] F.S.R. 223	5.25
— [1979] R.P.C. 450	7.25
Bristol Myers Co. (Johnson's) Application [1975] R.P.C. 127; [1974] F.S.R. 43, H.L.	5.01, 5.30, 5.33, 5.39
Bristol Myers (Johnson & Hardcastle's) Application [1974] R.P.C. 389	7.09
Bristol Repetition Ltd. v. Fomento [1960] R.P.C. 163	8.37
Britain v. Hirsch (1888) 5 R.P.C. 226, C.A.	12.123
British Actors Film Co. Ltd. v. Glover [1918] 1 K.B. 299; 87 L.J.K.B. 689; 118 L.T. 626; 34 T.L.R. 162	8.47
British and International Proprietaries Ltd. v. Selcol Products Ltd. [1957] R.P.C. 1	3.82,
	12.03
British Association of Glass Bottle Manufacturers v. Foster & Sons Ltd. (1917) 86 L.J. Ch. 489; 116 L.T. 433; 33 T.L.R. 314; 34 R.P.C. 217, C.A.	8.30
British Celanese v. Courtaulds (1932) 49 R.P.C. 345	7.11, 7.43
— v. — (1933) 50 R.P.C. 63; on appeal 50 R.P.C. 259	4.12, 4.47, 5.28, 5.116, 12.112, 12.160, 12.204
— v. — (1935) 152 L.T. 537; (1935) 52 R.P.C. 171, H.L.	5.67, 5.68, 5.92, 6.43, 6.44, 12.154, 12.202, 12.204
British Celanese Ltd.'s Application (1934) 51 R.P.C. 192	5.08, 5.118
British Drug Houses Ltd.'s Application [1964] R.P.C. 237	4.07
British Dynamite Co. v. Krebs (1896) 13 R.P.C. 190	4.31, 5.11, 5.102
British Foreign and Colonial Co. Ltd v. Metropolitan Gas Meters Ltd. [1912] 2 Ch. 82; 81 L.J. Ch. 520; 106 L.T. 834; 29 R.P.C. 303	12.264
British Hartford-Fairmount Syndicate Ltd. v. Jackson Bros. (Knottingley) Ltd. (1932) 49 R.P.C. 495	4.35, 12.205
British Leyland Motor Corp. v. Armstrong Patents Co. [1986] R.P.C. 279	6.62
British Liquid Air Co. Ltd. v. Brit. Oxygen Co. Ltd. (1908) 25 R.P.C. 218; 577 ..	5.77, 12.266
— v. — (1909) 26 R.P.C. 509	6.39
British Motor Syndicate v. Taylor (John) & Sons Ltd. [1901] 1 Ch. 122; 70 L.J. Ch. 21; 83 L.T. 419; (1900) 17 R.P.C. 723	6.22, 12.228
British Mutoscope and Biograph Co. Ltd v. Homer [1901] 1 Ch. 122; 70 L.J. Ch. 21; 83 L.T. 419; 17 R.P.C. 723	8.11
— v. — (1901) 18 R.P.C. 177	13.18
British Nylon Spinners Ltd. v. Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. [1955] Ch. 37; [1954] 3 W.L.R. 505; 71 R.P.C. 327; affirming [1952] Ch. 19; [1952] 2 T.L.R. 669; [1952] 2 All E.R. 780; 69 R.P.C. 288	8.46
British Ore Concentration Syndicate Ltd. v. Minerals Separation Ltd. (1910) 27 R.P.C. 33	5.116
British Oxygen Co. Ltd. v. Gesellschaft für Industriegasverwertung MBH (1930) 47 R.P.C. 130	12.28
— v. Maine Lighting Co. (1924) 41 R.P.C. 604	5.79
British Steel PLC's Patent [1992] R.P.C. 117	3.73, 3.75, 3.76, 13.45
British Syphon Co. Ltd. v. Homewood [1956] 1 W.L.R. 1190; [1956] 2 All E.R. 897; [1956] R.P.C. 225	12.154
British Thomson-Houston Co. Ltd. v. British Insulated and Helsby Cables Ltd. [1924] 2 Ch. 160; 93 L.J. Ch. 467; 131 L.T. 688; 40 T.L.R. 581; 41 R.P.C. 345	12.74, 12.86, 12.202, 12.205, 12.218, 12.267
— v. Charlesworth Peebles & Co. (1925) 41 T.L.R. 259; 42 R.P.C. 180	2.26, 5.76, 6.44, 6.51, 12.198
— v. Corona Lamp Works Ltd. (1921) 38 R.P.C. 49	2.45, 4.32, 5.116, 12.252, 12.253, 12.255
— v. Crompton Parkinson Ltd. (1935) 52 R.P.C. 409	12.102
— v. Duram Ltd. (No. 2) (1920) 37 R.P.C. 121	12.154
— v. G. and R. Agency (1925) 42 R.P.C. 305	12.243
— v. Guildford Radio Stores (1938) 55 R.P.C. 71	4.36
— v. Henry (Philip) & Co. Ltd. (1928) 45 R.P.C. 218	12.48
— v. Irradiant Lamp Works Ltd. (1924) 41 R.P.C. 243	12.249
— v. — (1924) 41 R.P.C. 338	12.13
— v. Metropolitan Vickers Electric Co. Ltd. (1928) 45 R.P.C. 1 5.50, 5.55, 5.57, 5.61, 5.63, 12.112, 12.258	
— v. Naamlooze Vennootschap Pope's Metaaldraad bumpenfabrick (1923) 40	

TABLE OF CASES

R.P.C. 119 (Ct. Sess.)	2.230, 12.228
— <i>v.</i> Sterling Accessories Ltd. [1924] 2 Ch. 33; 93 L.J. Ch. 335; 131 L.T. 535; 40 T.L.R. 544; 41 R.P.C. 311	6.55, 12.12
— <i>v.</i> Stonebridge Electrical Co. Ltd. (1916) 33 R.P.C. 166	5.60, 12.110, 12.113
British Thomson-Houston Co.'s Patent (1919) 36 R.P.C. 251	7.29, 7.31, 7.32
British United Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. <i>v.</i> Collier (Simon) Ltd. (1908) 25 T.L.R. 74; (1909) 26 R.P.C. 21; on appeal 27 R.P.C. 567	5.84, 5.110, 5.111, 6.22, 12.214
— <i>v.</i> Fussell (A.) & Sons Ltd. (1908) 25 R.P.C. 631 . 4.30, 5.19, 5.88, 5.90, 5.111, 7.58, 7.59, 12.124, 12.128	
— <i>v.</i> — (1910) 27 R.P.C. 205	12.230
— <i>v.</i> Gimson Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. (1927) 45 R.P.C. 85; affirmed (1928) 45 R.P.C. 290	12.249
— <i>v.</i> (No. 2) (1928) 46 R.P.C. 137	5.108, 7.59, 12.252
— <i>v.</i> Holdfast Boots Ltd. (1934) 51 R.P.C. 489	12.137
— <i>v.</i> Lambert Howarth & Sons Ltd. (1927) 44 R.P.C. 511	12.250
— <i>v.</i> — (1929) 46 R.P.C. 315	12.245
— <i>v.</i> Johnson (E.A.) & Co. Ltd. (1925) 42 R.P.C. 243	5.76
— <i>v.</i> Pemberton (Albert) & Co. (1930) 47 R.P.C. 134	12.106, 12.201
— <i>v.</i> Standard Rotary Machine Co. (1917) 34 R.P.C. 33	5.111
British Vacuum Co. <i>v.</i> Exton Hotels Co. Ltd. (1908) 25 R.P.C. 617	12.246, 12.255
— <i>v.</i> London and South West Ry. (1912) 29 R.P.C. 309	5.77
— <i>v.</i> Robertshaw (J.) & Sons Ltd. (1915) 32 R.P.C. 424, H.L.	5.109
British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co. Ltd. <i>v.</i> Braulik (1910) 27 R.P.C. 209, 222	5.73, 12.268
— <i>v.</i> Electrical Co. Ltd. (1911) 28 R.P.C. 517	12.249
British Xylonite Co. Ltd. <i>v.</i> Fibrenyle Ltd. [1959] R.P.C. 252	12.153, 12.154
Brooks <i>v.</i> Hall (1903) 21 R.P.C. 29	12.261
— <i>v.</i> Lamplugh (1898) 15 R.P.C. 33	4.41, 5.77
— <i>v.</i> Steele and Currie (1896) 13 R.P.C. 46	4.31, 12.204
Brooks (J.B.) & Co. Ltd. <i>v.</i> Lyckett's Saddle and Motor Accessories Co. Ltd. [1904] 1 Ch. 512; 73 L.J. Ch. 319; 21 R.P.C. 651	7.40, 7.59
— <i>v.</i> Rendall, Underwood & Co. Ltd. (1906) 23 R.P.C. 17	7.59, 12.252, 12.255
Brossmann's Application [1983] R.P.C. 109	3.05
Brown & Hastie & Co. Ltd. (1906) 23 R.P.C. 361	12.84
— <i>v.</i> Sansom, Teale & Co. (1889) 5 R.P.C. 510	12.143
— <i>v.</i> Sperry Gyroscope Co. Ltd. (1925) 42 R.P.C. 111	4.46, 12.258
Brown's Patent (1906) 23 R.P.C. 61	12.145
Brownie Wireless Co. Ltd.'s Application (1929) 45 T.L.R. 584; 46 R.P.C. 457	9.09, 9.30, 9.31
Brunton <i>v.</i> Hawkes (1821) 4 Barn & Ald. 541; 1 Corp. Pat. Cas. 405	4.02
Brupat Ltd. <i>v.</i> Sandford Marine Products Ltd. [1983] R.P.C. 61	12.45
— <i>v.</i> Smith [1985] F.S.R. 156	12.252
Bugges Insecticide Ltd. <i>v.</i> Herbon Ltd. [1972] R.P.C. 197; [1971] F.S.R. 284	12.218
Burrough's Corporation's Application [1974] R.P.C. 147; [1973] F.S.R. 439, D.C.	2.17, 2.47, 2.50, 2.52
 C.'s Application (1920) 37 R.P.C. 247	2.44
CBS Songs Ltd. <i>v.</i> Amstrad Consumer Electronics plc [1987] R.P.C. 417	12.136
C. and P. Development Co. (London) Ltd. <i>v.</i> Sisabro Novelty Co. Ltd. (1953) 70 R.P.C. 277	11.10
C.&W.'s Application (1914) 31 R.P.C. 235	2.08
C.M.'s Application (1944) 61 R.P.C. 63	2.44
CNL-Sucal <i>v.</i> Hag (Case C-10/89) [1990] 1 E.C.R. 3711; [1990] 3 C.M.L.R. 571; [1991] F.S.R. 99	8.55, 8.78
Cabot (Godfrey L.) Inc. <i>v.</i> Philblack Ltd. [1961] R.P.C. 53	12.117
Cabot Safety Corp.'s Patent [1992] R.P.C. 39	9.58, 9.59, 9.61, 9.65, 9.67
Campbell <i>v.</i> Hopkins (G.) & Sons (Clerkenwell) Ltd. (1933) 50 R.P.C. 213; reversing (1931) 48 R.P.C. 38	8.41
— <i>v.</i> Jones (1796) 6 Term Rep. 570	8.47
Camson Paragon Supply Co. Ltd. <i>v.</i> Carter-Davis Ltd. (1931) 48 R.P.C. 133	12.264
Canadian General Electric Co. <i>v.</i> Fada Radio [1930] A.C. 97; 99 L.J.P.C. 58; 142 L.T. 106; T.L.R. 18; 47 R.P.C. 69	4.31, 5.57

TABLE OF CASES

Cannings United States Application [1992] R.P.C. 459	3.21, 3.35, 8.91
Cannington v. Nuttall (1867) L.R. 5 H.L. 205; 40 L.J. Ch. 739	7.55
Canon KK's Application [1982] R.P.C. 550	12.253
Carbonit AG, <i>Re</i> (1923) 40 R.P.C. 360	13.08
— (1924) 41 R.P.C. 203	13.13
Carnegie Steel Co. v. Bell Bros. Ltd. (1907) 24 R.P.C. 82	12.136, 12.145, 12.266
Cascelloid Ltd. v. Miley Star Engineering Co. Ltd. (1953) 70 R.P.C. 28	12.205
Carpenter v. Smith (1841) 1 W.P.C. 530; 9 M. & W. 300	5.35, 5.37
Carpmael's Application (1929) 46 R.P.C. 321	5.132, 5.140
Cars v. Bland Light Syndicate Ltd. (1911) 28 R.P.C. 33	11.01, 11.11, 11.24
Cartsburn Sugar Refining Co. v. Sharp (1884) 1 R.P.C. 181	6.51
Cassel Gold Extracting Co. Ltd. v. Cyanide Gold Recovery Syndicate (1894) 11 R.P.C. 638	12.258
— v. — (1895) 12 R.P.C. 232	4.41, 12.263
Casson's Patent [1971] R.P.C. 91; [1970] F.S.R. 433	9.42, 9.43
Castner-Kellner Alkali Co. Ltd. v. Commercial Development Co. Ltd. (1899) 16 R.P.C. 251	12.263, 12.268
Cathro's Application (1934) 51 R.P.C. 475	9.06, 9.14, 9.22, 9.25, 9.37, 9.58
Catnic Components v. Evans (C.) & Co. [1983] F.S.R. 401	12.233
— v. Hill & Smith [1982] R.P.C. 183 [1981] F.S.R. 60	4.29, 4.36, 6.36, 6.37, 6.38, 6.43
— v. — [1983] F.S.R. 512	12.228, 12.235, 12.238
Cave-Brown-Cave's Application R.P.C. 429	5.37
Cayne v. Global Natural Resources [1984] 1 All E.R. 225	12.46
Celanese Corporation of America's Application (1952) 69 R.P.C. 227	3.20
Cementation Co. Ltd.'s Application (1945) 62 R.P.C. 151	2.29
Centrafarm BV v. Sterling Drug (Case 15/74) [1974] E.C.R. 1147; [1974] 2 C.M.L.R. 480; [1975] F.S.R. 161	6.63, 8.57
Cera v. Centri Spray [1979] F.S.R. 175	6.49
Cerosa Ltd. v. Poseidon Industrie AB [1973] R.P.C. 882; [1973] F.S.R. 223	11.20
Chain Bar Mill Co. Ltd.'s Application (1941) 58 R.P.C. 200	7.23
Challender v. Royle (1887) 36 Ch. D. 425; 56 L.J. Ch. 995; 57 L.T. 734; 36 W.R. 357; 3 T.L.R. 790; 4 R.P.C. 363	11.11, 11.16, 11.20
Chamberlain and Hookham Ltd. v. Bradford (Mayor of) (1903) 20 R.P.C. 673 ..	2.26, 5.111
Chambers v. Crickley (1864) 33 Bear. 374	8.31
Chamber's Application (1915) 32 R.P.C. 416	10.32
Chanter v. Hopkins (1838) 4 M. & W. 399	8.42
— v. Leese (1839) 4 M. & W. 295; 5 M. & W. 698	8.36, 8.42
Chapman and Cook v. Dettaris Ltd. (1930) 47 R.P.C. 163	4.12, 5.28
Chatwood's Patent Safe and Lock Co. v. Mercantile Bank of Lancashire Ltd. (1900) 17 R.P.C. 23	7.34
Cheetham v. Nuthall (1893) 10 R.P.C. 321	8.42, 8.48
Cheetham v. Oldham and Fogg (1888) 5 R.P.C. 624	12.94
Chemidus Warin v. TERI [1978] 3 C.M.L.R. 514; [1977] F.S.R. 181, C.A.	8.73
Chevron Research Co.'s Patent [1970] R.P.C. 580 [1970] F.S.R. 357	7.17
Chinoin's Application [1986] R.P.C. 39	3.19, 4.18, 7.65
Chiron Corp. v. Murex Diagnostics Ltd. (No. 2) [1994] F.S.R. 187	6.64, 8.84
— v. Organon Teknika Ltd. (No. 2) [1993] F.S.R. 324; [1992] 3 C.M.L.R. 813; [1993] F.S.R. 567, C.A.	8.46, 8.65, 8.84
— v. — (No. 3) [1994] F.S.R. 202	5.06, 5.09, 5.66, 5.93, 7.56, 8.23, 8.65
— v. — (No. 4) [1994] F.S.R. 152	8.69
— v. — (Amendment), 1994 (unrep.)	7.27, 7.47, 7.52, 7.80
Christy v. Bell (Arthur) & Sons Ltd., August 19, 1987 (unrep.)	12.152
Christian Salvesen (OT Services) Ltd. v. Odfjell Drilling and Consulting Co. (U.K.) Ltd. [1985] R.P.C. 569	8.23, 8.28, 12.03
Churchill Gear Machines v. National Broach and Machine Co. [1967] 1 W.L.R. 384; [1966] 3 All E.R. 923; [1966] F.S.R. 394; [1967] R.P.C. 99	8.60
Ciba-Geigy (AG) (Dürr's) Application [1977] R.P.C. 83, C.A.	2.16, 2.41
Ciba-Geigy AG's Patent [1986] R.P.C. 403	9.58
Cincinnati Grinders Inc. v. BSA Tools Ltd. (1931) 48 R.P.C. 33 ..	4.41, 5.40, 5.116, 6.10, 6.65, 10.16
Clark v. Adie (1877) 2 App. Cas. 315; 46 L.J. Ch. 585; 36 L.T. 923; 26 W.R. 45	6.42
— v. — (1877) 2 App. Cas. 423; 46 L.J. Ch. 598; 37 L.T. 1; 26 W.R. 47	8.37

TABLE OF CASES

Clay v. Allcock & Co. Ltd. (1906) 23 R.P.C. 745	5.14
Clement Talbot Ltd. v. Wilson (1909) 26 R.P.C. 467	12.233, 12.246
Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co. Ltd. v. Glacier Metal Co. Ltd. (1951) 68 R.P.C. 181	12.234
Clevite Corp.'s Patent [1966] R.P.C. 199	7.38
Clifton's Patent (1904) 2 Ch. 357; 73 L.J. Ch. 597; 91 L.T. 284; 52 W.R. 629; 21 R.P.C. 515	10.15
Clorious v. Tonner (1922) 39 R.P.C. 242	12.264
Clothworkers of Ipswich Case, Godbolt 252	1.06
Clyde Nail Co. Ltd. v. Russell (1916) 33 R.P.C. 291	5.14, 5.91
Cochrane & Co. v. Martins (1911) 28 R.P.C. 284	8.23
— v. Smethurst (1816) 1 Stork 205; Dar. P.C. 354; 2 Coop. temp. Cott. 57	4.02
Codex Corp. v. Racal-Milgo [1983] R.P.C. 369; [1984] F.S.R. 87 .. 6.37, 6.39, 6.40, 6.41, 6.91, 7.58, 12.80, 12.249, 12.233	
Colbourne Engineering Co. Ltd.'s Application (1955) 72 R.P.C. 169	9.33
Cole v. Saqui & Lawrence (1888) 40 Ch. D. 132; 58 L.J. Ch. 237; 59 L.T. 877; 37 W.R. 109; 5 T.L.R. 84; 5 R.P.C. 489	12.253
Colthurst and Hyde Ltd. v. Stewart Engineering Co. Ltd. (1950) 67 R.P.C. 87	12.98
Coloured Asphalt Co. Ltd. v. British Asphalt and Bitumen Ltd. (1936) 53 R.P.C. 89	12.154
Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. v. Murray (1922) 39 R.P.C. 239	6.61, 8.63
— v. Thoms (1924) 41 R.P.C. 294	6.61, 8.63
— v. Vanner (1916) 33 R.P.C. 104	8.63
Combined Weighting and Advertising Machine Co. v. Automatic Weighting Machine Co. (1889) 42 Ch. D. 665; 58 L.J. Ch. 709; 62 L.T. 474; 38 W.R. 233; 6 R.P.C. 502	11.06
Commission v. United Kingdom (Case C-30/90) [1992] 1 E.C.R. 777; [1992] 2 C.M.L.R. 709; [1993] R.P.C. 283; [1993] F.S.R. 1	9.07, 9.09, 9.10, 9.24, 9.26
Commercial Solvents Corp. v. Synthetic Products Ltd. (1926) 43 R.P.C. 185 .. 2.32, 12.221, 12.266, 12.267	
Commercial Solvent Corp.'s Application (1954) 71 R.P.C. 143	5.140
Commission v. United Kingdom [1992] 1 E.C.R. 777	9.05
Compania Naviera Vascongada v. Churchill & Sim [1906] 1 K.B. 237; 75 L.J.K.B. 94; 94 L.T. 59; 54 W.R. 406; 22 T.L.R. 85; 10 Asp M.L.C. 177; 11 Com. Cas. 49	8.31
Compania Uruguaya de Fomento Industrial SA's Petition [1957] R.P.C. 283, 314	10.10
Compulsory Patent Licenses, <i>Re</i> (Case c-30/90)	9.05, 9.07
Condor International Ltd. v. Hibbing [1984] R.P.C. 312	12.40, 12.41
Congoleum Industries Inc. v. Armstrong Cork Co. Ltd. [1977] R.P.C. 77	7.41
Constantinesco v. R. (1926) 11 T.C. 730	13.26
Consolidated Pneumatic Tool Co. v. Lagersoll Sergeant Drill Co. (1908) 25 R.P.C. 574	12.281
Continental Gas Gluhlicht Actien Gesellschaft (Meteor's) Petition (1898) 15 R.P.C. 727	9.02
Contraflo Condenser Co. Ltd. v. Hick, Hargreaves & Co. Ltd. (1920) 37 R.P.C. 89	5.14
Cooper's Application (1902) 19 R.P.C. 53	2.44
Cooper Chasney Ltd. v. Customs and Excise Commissioners [1992] F.S.R. 298	13.46
Cooper Mechanical Joints Ltd.'s Application [1958] R.P.C. 459	10.26
Cooper Patent Anchor Rail Joint Co. Ltd. v. London County Council (1906) 23 R.P.C. 289	12.263
Co-operative Union Ltd.'s Application (1933) 50 R.P.C. 161	9.11, 9.33, 9.38
Coppin v. Lloyd (1898) 15 R.P.C. 373	8.47
Corn Products Co. Ltd. v. NV Schoeton (1939) 56 R.P.C. 59	11.23
Corning Glass Works and Corning Ltd.'s Application [1984] R.P.C. 459	7.15, 7.54
Cornish v. Keene (1835) 1 W.P.C. 501; 2 Corp. P.C. 314	5.41
Cotton v. Gillard (1874) 44 L.J. Ch. 90	8.10
Coventry Radiator Co. Ltd. v. Coventry Motor Fittings Co. Ltd. (1917) 34 R.P.C. 239	12.72
Crabtree & Sons Ltd. v. Hoe & Co. Ltd. [1936] 2 All E.R. 1639; 53 R.P.C. 443	4.41, 4.44
Crampton v. Patents Investment Co. (1888) 5 R.P.C. 382	12.253
Crane v. Price (1842) 4 Man. & G. 580; 5 Scott (N.R.) 338; 12 L.J.C.P. 81; 1 W.P.C. 393	2.25, 5.65
Crest Homes plc v. Marks [1988] R.P.C. 21	12.136
Critchley Bros. Ltd v. Engleman & Buckham Ltd. [1971] R.P.C. 346 [1971] F.S.R. 228	7.41

TABLE OF CASES

Croll v. Edge (1850) 9 C.B. 479; 19 L.J.C.P. 261	4.02
Crompton v. Anglo-American Brush Corp. Ltd. (No. 2) (1887) 35 Ch. D. 283; 56 L.J. Ch. 802; 57 L.T. 291; 35 W.R. 789; 3 T.L.R. 521; 4 R.P.C. 197	12.115
Cropper v. Smith & Hancock (1884) 26 Ch. D. 700; 53 L.J. Ch. 891; 51 L.T. 729; 33 W.R. 60; 1 R.P.C. 81; Griff. P.C. 60, C.A.; on appeal (1885) 10 A.C. 249; (1885) 2 R.P.C. 22	12.128
Cropper Minerva Machines Co. Ltd. v. Cropper, Charlton & Co. Ltd. (1906) 23 R.P.C. 388	6.55, 12.12
Crosfield (Joseph) Ltd. v. Techno-Chemical Laboratories Ltd. (1913) 29 T.L.R. 378; 30 R.P.C. 297	12.204, 12.266
Crossley v. Beverley (1829) 9 Barn. & Cress. 63; 3 Car. & P. 513; 1 W.P.C. 112; 7 L.J. (o.s.) K.B. 127; 109 E.R. 24	5.101, 12.221, 12.248
— v. Derby Gas Light Co., The (1834) 4 L.T. Ch. 25	12.248
— v. Dixon [1863] 10 H.L.C. 293; 1 New Rep. 540; 32 L.J. Ch. 617; 8 L.T. 260; 9 Jur. (n.s.) 607; 11 W.R. 716	8.34, 8.36, 8.40, 8.47
— v. Tomey (1876) 2 Ch. D. 533; 34 L.T. 476	12.144
Croysdale v. Fisher (1884) 1 R.P.C. 17; Griffin's P.C. (1884–86) 73	5.41
Crosthwaite Fire Bar Syndicate Ltd. v. Senior [1909] 1 Ch. 801; 78 L.J. Ch. 417; 100 L.T. 646; 26 R.P.C. 260	12.105
Cummings v. Stewart (1913) 30 R.P.C. 1; 1 I.R. 95	8.41
Curtis v. Platt (1863) 3 Ch. D. 135n; 8 L.T. 657	4.41
Curtis & Son v. Herrard & Co. (1923) 40 R.P.C. 53, 183	5.72
Cutlan v. Dawson & Sons (1897) 13 T.L.R. 213; 14 R.P.C. 249; reversing (1896) 13 R.P.C. 710	8.47
D.A. & K.'s Application (1926) 43 R.P.C. 155	2.15, 2.44, 2.45
Daikin Kogyo Co. Ltd.'s Application [1974] R.P.C. 559 [1973] F.S.R. 272, C.A.	5.134, 5.136, 5.140, 6.48
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TABLE OF CASES

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Evans (C.) & Son v. Spritebrand [1985] F.S.R. 267	6.55, 12.12
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