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(54) **SUB-SURFACE MARKING**

(75) Inventors: **Robert M. Clement**, Swansea (GB); **Neville R. Ledger**, Swansea (GB); **Robert P. Sunman**, Cardiff (GB)

(73) Assignee: **United Distillers PLC**, Edinburgh (GB)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for providing a body of material **(14)** with sub-surface marking in the form of an area of increased opacity to electromagnetic radiation. The method includes directing at a surface of the body **(14)** a high energy density beam **(12, 26)** to which the material **(14)** is transparent, and bringing the beam **(12,26)** to a focus at a location spaced from the surface and within the body **(14)** so as to cause localized ionization of the material **(14)**. In a prefered embodiment the apparatus includes a laser **(10)** as a high energy density beam source and provides means **(36, 38)** to move the focus of the beam **(12,26)** relative to the body **(14)** so as to enable the mark to be of a predetermined shape.