

Description

Background

In petroleum wells, sliding piston sleeve actuators are often used for many purposes. In such wells it is important that pockets, created in the annular spaces between the sleeves and the tubular members with which they coact, not be filled with liquid which would result in a hydraulic lock preventing proper operation of the moving sleeve. The present invention relates to an improved sleeve actuator in which the cavity between the sleeve and the tubular member with which it coacts excludes the well liquids from entry therein so that hydraulic lock does not prevent proper operation.

U. S. Patent No. 4,662,663 discloses a method and apparatus for the forming of one tubular member of a subsea pipeline into another tubular member having internal lands and grooves for receiving the formed member and provides for the filling of the grooves with a structure which compensates for the pressure which tends to build during the forming step. This patent suggests the use of a gas filled tube or the use of a material which is composed of a plurality of microspheres in an epoxy matrix. This material is described in such patent as being suitable to exclude sufficient liquid (sea water) from the grooves so that when the inner tubular member is formed therein that the material collapses to prevent any pressure build-up in the grooves which would interfere with the proper completion of the forming step.

US-A-4076278 describes a flowline connector which has a tubular housing and a mandrel movable axially within the housing. The mandrel can be locked in position within the housing by means of locking dogs which can be wedged into a recess in the tubular housing by means of an actuator sleeve.

According to the present invention there is provided a well structure comprising

a tubular well housing with an internal latching recess and an upwardly facing shoulder above said recess,

a tieback adapted to be landed on said housing shoulder and having an upper internal surface, a lower internal surface of smaller diameter than said upper internal surface and an upwardly facing internal shoulder between said upper and lower surfaces,

an actuator sleeve having an upper outer surface fitting closely within the interior of said tieback upper internal surface,

latching elements having an integral upper surface tapering downwardly and inwardly and carried by said tieback, and

a tapered surface on the lower outer portion of

said actuator sleeve arranged to mate with the tapered surface on said latch elements so that movement of the actuator sleeve downwardly within said well housing wedges said latch elements into said housing internal recess to secure said tieback within said housing, and characterised in that

said actuator sleeve has a lower outer surface with a smaller diameter than that of said upper outer surface and fitting closely within the interior of said tieback lower internal surface, a shoulder being formed between said upper and lower portions facing said tieback shoulder, and

collapsible pressure compensating material substantially filling the volume of the annular space between the tieback shoulder and the sleeve shoulder at its maximum point thereby excluding liquids from said annular space, the arrangement being such that upon said relative movement of said first member and said actuator body shoulders toward each other said material collapses thereby decreasing in volume as said annular space decreases in volume.

The present invention provides an actuator for coaction with a tubular member and a movable element which is not prevented from proper actuation by the influx of liquids into the space between the actuator and the tubular member.

The invention will be described now by way of example only, with particular reference to the accompanying drawings. In the drawings"

FIGURE 1 is a partial sectional view of an actuator sleeve within a well housing having a tieback landed therein wherein the sleeve is moved axially responsive to pressure and actuates the latch elements to secure the tieback to the housing.

FIGURE 2 is similar to FIGURE 1 and shows the actuator in its set position to illustrate the collapse of the pressure compensating material.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

Well structure 10 illustrated in the drawings includes first tubular member or housing 12, second tubular member or tieback 14, and sleeve actuator 16 positioned therein to actuate the locking element, such as latch elements or dogs 18 supported in windows in the lower end of tieback 14 as shown. Sleeve actuator 16 is shown supported on running tool 20 with tieback 14 carried thereby. The assembly is lowered within housing on running string 22. Tieback 14 landed on the upper end of housing 12 and its windows carrying latch elements 18 are positioned within the interior of housing 12 as shown in FIGURE 1. Downwardly facing external shoulder 24 on tieback 14 seats on upwardly facing shoulder 26 of housing 12. Internal surface 28 of housing 12 includes latching recess

30 which is positioned to receive latch elements 18. Seal 32 is positioned within groove 34 on the exterior of tieback 14 below shoulder 24 and, as shown in the figures, seals against the internal surface 28 of housing 12 when tieback 14 is properly positioned therein. Windows 36 extend through the lower end of tieback 14.

Sleeve actuator 16 and tieback 14 are lowered within housing 12 to the position shown in FIGURE 1 on running tool 20 which is supported on running string 22. Sleeve actuator 16 is sized to be positioned within tieback 14 and housing 12 as shown with seal 38 positioned within groove 40 on the exterior upper surface 42 above downwardly facing shoulder 44. Seal 38 engages inner surface 46 of tieback 14. Surface 48 on the exterior of sleeve actuator 16 below shoulder 44 includes groove 50 in which seal ring 52 is positioned for sealing against tieback inner surface 54 below tieback shoulder 56 which faces upwardly. Volume compensating material ring 58 is positioned in surrounding relationship to sleeve 16 below shoulder 44. Material ring 58 is provided to have an outer diameter either the same or slightly smaller than the diameter of surface 42 so that it will readily enter within surface 46 of tieback 14. Any suitable volume compensating material 60 may be used for ring 58 provided it excludes liquids from the annular space 62 between shoulders 44 and 56 and between surfaces 46 and 48 and has the ability to collapse under actuating pressure to allow full movement of actuator sleeve 16 to set latch elements into housing recess 30. A suitable material is microspheres embedded in an epoxy matrix. The function of the pressure compensating material is to exclude the liquids from the annular space 62 without collapsing but to collapse when force above the local environment is applied to create the movement of actuator sleeve 16. Material 60 thus prevents the creation of a hydraulic lock without itself creating any appreciable resistance to the actuation of sleeve actuator 16.

Latch elements 18 are carried in windows 36 in the lower end of tieback with cam surface 64 on the exterior of sleeve 16 mating with upper inner cam surfaces 66 on elements 18. Split ring 68 engages in groove 70 in the lower portion of sleeve 16 to support latch elements 18 in position for actuation.

Sleeve 16 is supported on the exterior of running tool 20 by a plurality of spring loaded retaining pins 72 which are positioned within recesses in the lower exterior of tool 20. The outer ends of pins 72 have a frustoconical shape which mates with the inner tapered surface 74 on the lower end of sleeve 16. Sleeve 16 is positioned around the exterior of tool 20 between pins 72 and upper running tool flange 76. Seal ring 78 is positioned within groove

80 around the exterior of the lower portion to running tool 20 and seals against interior surface 82 of sleeve 16.

With sleeve 16 positioned as shown in FIGURE 1, it is in position to be actuated to force latch elements 18 into engagement with the interior recess 30 of housing 12. Pressure is applied around the exterior of running string 22 above running tool 20. This pressure is sufficient to cause sleeve to be moved downwardly into the position shown in FIGURE 2. Sleeve 16 is subjected to a pressure differential because of seal rings 78 and 38. The downward movement of sleeve 16 causes volume compensating material ring 58 to collapse as the annular space in which it is positioned is reduced in volume by this downward movement of sleeve 16. Latch elements 18 engage the lower portion of their windows 36 in tieback 14 and the mating cam surfaces 64 and 66 on sleeve 16 and latch elements 18 coact to cause latch elements 18 to move outwardly into latching engagement within recess 30. The downward movement of sleeve 16 also causes pins 72 to be cammed inwardly into their recesses so that tool 20 may be retrieved from within sleeve 16 upon completion of the setting of latch elements 18.

Claims

1. A well structure (10) comprising
 - a tubular well housing (12) with an internal latching recess (30) and an upwardly facing shoulder (26) above said recess (30),
 - a tieback (14) adapted to be landed on said housing shoulder (26) and having an upper internal surface (46), a lower internal surface (54) of smaller diameter than said upper internal surface (46) and an upwardly facing internal shoulder (56) between said upper and lower surfaces (46, 54),
 - an actuator sleeve (16) having an upper outer surface (42) fitting closely within the interior of said tieback upper internal surface (46),
 - latching elements (18) having an integral upper surface tapering downwardly and inwardly and carried by said tieback (14), and
 - a tapered surface on the lower outer portion of said actuator sleeve (16) arranged to mate with the tapered surface on said latch elements (18) so that movement of the actuator sleeve (16) downwardly within said well housing (12) wedges said latch elements (18) into said housing internal recess (30) to secure said tieback (14) within said housing (12), and characterised in that
 - said actuator sleeve (16) has a lower outer surface (48) with a smaller diameter than that of said upper outer surface (42) and fitting



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 - a tieback (14) adapted to be landed on said housing shoulder (26) and having an upper internal surface (46), a lower internal surface (54) of smaller diameter than said upper internal surface (46) and an upwardly facing internal shoulder (56) between said upper and lower surfaces (46, 54),
 - an actuator sleeve (16) having an upper outer surface (42) fitting closely within the interior of said tieback upper internal surface (46),
 - latching elements (18) having an integral upper surface tapering downwardly and inwardly and carried by said tieback (14), and
 - a tapered surface on the lower outer portion of said actuator sleeve (16) arranged to mate with the tapered surface on said latch elements (18) so that movement of the actuator sleeve (16) downwardly within said well housing (12) wedges said latch elements (18) into said housing internal recess (30) to secure said tieback (14) within said housing (12), and characterised in that
 - said actuator sleeve (16) has a lower outer surface (48) with a smaller diameter than that of said upper outer surface (42) and fitting



closely within the interior of said tieback lower internal surface (54), a shoulder (44) being formed between said upper and lower portions facing said tieback shoulder (56), and

collapsible pressure compensating material (60) substantially filling the volume of the annular space (62) between the tieback shoulder (56) and the sleeve shoulder (44) at its maximum point thereby excluding liquids from said annular space (62), the arrangement being such that upon said relative movement of said first member and said actuator body shoulders (44, 56) toward each other said material (60) collapses thereby decreasing in volume as said annular space (62) decreases in volume.

2. A well structure (10) according to claim 1 including

means for supporting said latch elements (18) and said tieback (14) on said actuator sleeve (16) exterior below said lower tapered surface during running into the well housing (12).

3. A well structure (10) according to claim 1 or claim 2, including

means (38) for sealing between the upper outer surface (42) of said actuating sleeve (16) and the upper internal surface (46) of said tieback (14), and

means (52) for sealing between the lower outer surface (48) of said actuating sleeve (16) above said lower tapered surface and the lower internal surface of said tieback (14) whereby pressure exerted above said actuator sleeve (16) exerts a downward force on said actuator sleeve (16) to move it downwardly within said tieback (14) moving said latch elements (18) into latching engagement within said recess (30).

4. A well structure (10) according to any one of claims 1 to 3, including

a running tool (20) for lowering said actuator sleeve (16), said tieback (14) and said latch elements (18) into said well housing (12),

said running tool (20) including means for supporting said actuator sleeve (16) on its exterior and means for connecting to a running string (22).

Patentansprüche

1. Bohrlochkonstruktion (10) mit einem rohrförmigen Bohrlochgehäuse (12) mit einer inneren Verriegelungsaussparung (30) und einer nach oben weisenden Schulter (26) oberhalb der Aussparung (30), einem Rückverbindungsrohr-

stück (14), das auf der Gehäuseschulter (26) angeordnet werden kann und eine obere Innenfläche (46), eine untere Innenfläche (54) kleineren Durchmessers als die obere Innenfläche (46) und eine nach oben weisende innere Schulter (56) zwischen der oberen und der unteren Fläche (46, 54) aufweist, einer Betätigungshülse (16) mit einer oberen Außenfläche (42), die dicht in dem Inneren der oberen Innenfläche (46) des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks sitzt, Verriegelungsbauteilen (18) mit einer integralen oberen Fläche, die nach unten und einwärts geneigt ist und von dem Rückverbindungsrohrstück (14) getragen ist, und mit einer geneigten Fläche an dem unteren äußeren Teil der Betätigungshülse (16), die so angeordnet ist, daß sie mit der geneigten Fläche an den Verriegelungsbauteilen (18) übereinstimmt, so daß eine Abwärtsbewegung der Betätigungshülse (16) innerhalb des Bohrlochgehäuses (12) die Verriegelungselemente (18) in die innere Gehäuseaussparung (30) verkeilt, um das Rückverbindungsrohrstück (14) in dem Gehäuse (12) zu befestigen,

dadurch gekennzeichnet,

daß die Betätigungshülse (16) eine untere Außenfläche (48) mit einem kleineren Durchmesser als die obere Außenfläche (42) hat und dicht in dem Inneren der unteren Innenfläche (54) des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks sitzt, wobei eine Schulter (44) zwischen dem oberen und dem unteren Abschnitt gebildet ist, und der Rückverbindungsrohrstückschulter (56) zugewandt ist, und daß ein zusammensinkbares Druckausgleichsmaterial (60) im wesentlichen das Volumen des ringförmigen Zwischenraums (62) zwischen der Rückverbindungsrohrstückschulter (56) und der Hülsenschulter (44) an ihrem Maximumpunkt ausfüllt, wodurch Flüssigkeiten von dem ringförmigen Zwischenraum (62) ausgeschlossen sind, wobei die Anordnung so getroffen ist, daß bei der relativen Bewegung der Schultern (44, 56) des ersten Bauteils und des Betätigungsgliedes aufeinander zu das Material (60) zusammensinkt, um sein Volumen entsprechend der Volumenverringerung des ringförmigen Zwischenraums (62) zu verringern.

2. Bohrlochkonstruktion (10) nach Anspruch 1, mit einer Einrichtung zum Halten der Verriegelungselemente (18) und des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks (14) außen auf der Betätigungshülse (16) unter der unteren geneigten Fläche während des Einführens in das Bohrlochgehäuse (12).

3. Bohrlochkonstruktion (10) nach Anspruch 1



oder 2, mit einer Einrichtung (38) zum Abdichten zwischen der oberen Außenfläche (42) der Betätigungshülse (16) und der oberen Innenfläche (46) des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks (14) und eine Einrichtung (52) zum Abdichten zwischen der unteren Außenfläche (48) der Betätigungshülse (16) oberhalb der unteren geneigten Fläche und der unteren Innenfläche des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks (14), wodurch ein oberhalb der Betätigungshülse (16) ausgeübter Druck eine Abwärtskraft auf die Betätigungshülse (16) ausübt, um diese nach unten in das Rückverbindungsrohrstück (14) zu bewegen und die Verriegelungselemente (18) in Verriegelungseingriff mit der Aussparung (30) zu bringen.

4. Bohrlochkonstruktion (10) nach jedem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, mit einem Laufwerkzeug (20) zum Absenken der Betätigungshülse (16), des Rückverbindungsrohrstücks (14) und der Verriegelungselemente (18) in das Bohrlochgehäuse (12), wobei das Laufwerkzeug (20) eine Einrichtung zum Halten der Betätigungshülse (16) auf seiner Außenseite und eine Einrichtung zur Verbindung mit einem Laufzug (22) enthält.

Revendications

1. Structure de puits (10) comprenant

un tubage de puits (12) présentant un creux de verrouillage interne (30) et un épaulement (26) dirigé vers le haut au-dessus de ce creux (30),

un tirant de raccordement (14) conçu pour être descendu sur cet épaulement (26) du tubage et présentant une surface interne supérieure (46), une surface interne inférieure (54) de plus petit diamètre que la surface interne supérieure (46) et un épaulement interne (56) dirigé vers le haut et situé entre lesdites surfaces supérieure et inférieure (46, 54),

un actionneur en forme de manchon (16) possédant une surface externe supérieure (42) s'ajustant avec peu de jeu à l'intérieur de surface interne supérieure (46) du tirant,

des éléments de verrouillage (18) ayant une surface supérieure d'un seul tenant avec eux et orientée obliquement vers le bas et vers l'intérieur, éléments qui sont portés par le tirant (14) et

une surface oblique prévue extérieurement sur la partie inférieure de l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16) et agencée pour correspondre à la surface oblique sur les éléments de verrouillage (18), de manière que le mouvement descendant de l'actionneur en forme de

manchon (16) à l'intérieur du tubage de puits (12) provoque l'enfoncement par effet de coin des éléments de verrouillage (18) dans le creux interne (30) du tubage, en vue de la fixation du tirant de raccordement (14) dans le tubage (12), caractérisée en ce que

l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16) possède une surface externe inférieure (48) dont le diamètre est plus petit que celui de la surface externe supérieure (42) et qui s'ajuste avec peu de jeu à l'intérieur de la surface interne inférieure (54) du tirant, un épaulement (44) étant formé entre ces parties supérieure et inférieure, épaulement qui est dirigé vers l'épaulement (56) du tirant, et

un matériau compressible (60) de compensation de pression remplit à peu près complètement le volume de l'espace annulaire (62) entre l'épaulement (56) du tirant et l'épaulement (44) du manchon à son point maximal, de manière à maintenir les liquides en dehors de cet espace annulaire (62), l'agencement étant tel que lors du rapprochement mutuel des épaulements (44, 56) de ladite première pièce et dudit corps de l'actionneur, ce matériau (60) s'écrase, diminuant ainsi en volume à mesure que se réduit le volume de l'espace annulaire (62).

2. Structure de puits (10) selon la revendication 1, comportant un moyen pour supporter les éléments de verrouillage (18) et le tirant de raccordement (14) sur l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16), à l'extérieur de ce dernier et sous la surface inférieure oblique, au cours de la descente dans le tubage de puits (12).
3. Structure de puits (10) selon la revendication 1 ou 2, comportant un moyen (38) pour assurer l'étanchéité entre la surface externe supérieure (42) du manchon d'actionnement (16) et la surface interne supérieure (46) du tirant (14) et un moyen (52) pour assurer l'étanchéité entre la surface externe inférieure (48) du manchon d'actionnement (16), au-dessus de la surface oblique inférieure, et la surface interne inférieure du tirant (14), de sorte qu'une pression exercée au-dessus de l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16) produit une force dirigée vers le bas sur ce manchon (16) afin de le faire descendre dans le tirant (14) et à faire pénétrer ainsi les éléments de verrouillage (18) en position de verrouillage dans le creux (30).
4. Structure de puits (10) selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, comportant un outil de pose (20) pour faire descendre l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16), le tirant de raccor-



dement (14) et les éléments de verrouillage dans le tubage de puits (12), l'outil de pose (20) comportant un moyen pour supporter l'actionneur en forme de manchon (16) sur son côté extérieur et un moyen pour sa liaison à un train de tiges de pose ou de descente (22).

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