

Description

This invention relates to a multi-mode testing tool.

Well testing and stimulation operations are commonly conducted on oil and gas wells in order to determine the production potential and to enhance it if possible. In flow testing a well, a tester valve is lowered into the well on a string of drill pipe above a packer. After the packer is set, the tester valve is opened and closed periodically to determine formation flow, pressure, and rapidity of pressure recovery.

Also generally included in a testing string are a drill pipe tester valve and a circulation valve above the tester valve, the former to permit testing the pressure integrity of the string prior to conducting the test, and the latter to permit the circulation of formation fluids out of the string after the test is completed.

It is desirable, particularly when conducting tests on offshore wells, to employ a testing string which requires a minimum rotation or reciprocation of the drill pipe to operate the tools therein, so as to keep the well blowout preventers closed during the majority of the operation. So called annulus pressure responsive downhole tools have been developed, which tools operate in response to pressure changes in the annulus between the testing string and the well bore casing. A number of these annulus pressure responsive tools are disclosed in patents. For example, testing valves are disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 3,858,649 and 3,856,085, 3,976,136, 3,964,544, 4,144,937, 4,422,506, and 4,429,748. Circulation valves are disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 3,850,250, 3,970,147, 4,113,012, 4,324,293 and 4,355,685. It is also known to operate a tool to take a sample of formation fluid with annulus pressure, as disclosed in U.S. Patents No. RE 29,562 and 4,063,593. Moreover, tools which combine multiple functions have also been developed, as disclosed in the aforesaid RE 29,562 (testing and sampling) and U.S. Patents No. 4,064,937, 4,270,610 and 4,311,197 (circulating and sampling). While many of the aforesaid tools provide a biasing source comprising an inert gas under pressure to oppose annulus pressure, it is also known to employ a compressible fluid, such as silicone oil, as disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 4,109,724, 4,109,725 and European patent specification no. 88550. Moreover, the use of a compressed gas in combination with a fluid, such as oil, is disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 4,422,506 and 4,429,748.

There exist other testing, circulating and sampling tools and the like which operate in response to annulus pressure, as disclosed in U.S. Patents No. RE 29,638, 3,796,261, 3,823,773, 3,901,314, 3,986,554, 4,403,659, 4,105,075, 4,125,165, 4,341,266, 3,891,033 and 4,399,870.

Drill pipe tester valves which operate responsive to pipe string manipulation are disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 4,295,361, 4,319,633, 4,319,634 and

4,421,172.

While the tools of the prior art are diverse in design, they suffer from a number of deficiencies in actual operation. First, while several functions have been combined into one tool in some instances, the operation thereof depends upon use of multiple pressures, shearing of pins, or pressure variation both inside and outside the pipe string. Inability to maintain precise pressure levels hampers the use of some of these tools, while the use of shear pins prevents further operation of other tools after the pins have sheared. Many prior art tools employing therein a fluid such as oil utilize fluid metering means such as flow restrictors of a jet type exemplified by the Lee Visco Jet, described in U.S. Patent No. 3,323,550, in conjunction with check valves. Such metering means and check valves are susceptible to clogging and often fail to operate properly if the fluid becomes contaminated or is of a low quality to begin with, a common occurrence in many remote areas of the world where these tools are operated. In addition, the use of fluid metering means requires an inordinate amount of time to cycle the prior art tools, thus prolonging time on the job-site and cost to the well operator. Furthermore, temperature increases or decreases in the well bore from ambient surface temperatures change viscosity in the oils employed in these tools, thus affecting the performance of fluid metering means and altering tool cycling time. A further disadvantage resides with those tools utilizing oil, water or other liquids as an expendable fluid, as they are limited in the number of times they can be cycled downhole.

Finally, even though some attempts have been made to combine multiple functions in a single tool, there has heretofore been no successful combination of more than two functions in a single tool.

The present invention comprises an operating assembly for a downhole tool. The operating assembly changes the tool between different modes of operation as, for example, a drill pipe tester valve, a circulation valve and a formation tester valve, and provides the operator with the ability to displace fluids in the pipe string above the tool with nitrogen or another gas prior to testing or retesting. This latter function is a valuable advantage in testing of gas formations or other weak or low pressure formations which may not flow when subjected to a large hydrostatic head or which may even be damaged by the weight of fluid in the string when the formation tester valve is opened.

The parent European patent application No. 85301991.7 (published as EP-A-0158465) is directed towards a tool for use in a testing string disposed in a well bore, comprising: tubular housing means defining a longitudinal tool bore; valve means disposed in the housing means including a tool bore closure valve, the valve means being operable in at least a circulation valve mode and a second valve mode; and operating means adapted to change the valve means

between valve modes responsive to changes in pressure proximate the tool in the well bore, characterized in that the valve means further includes a sleeve valve, and the second valve mode is a displacement valve mode.

The tool is preferably arranged to be operated by a ball and slot type ratchet mechanism which provides the desired opening and closing responsive to a series of annulus pressure increases and decreases of a drill pipe tester/formation tester valve, a circulation valve and a nitrogen displacement valve, as well as changing between the modes of tool operation in which each of these valves function. The opening and closing as well as changing between tool modes is preferably effected without requiring the accurate monitoring of pressure levels such as is necessary with tools that employ multiple pressure levels above a reference level or both pipe string and annulus pressures. The various tool modes are preferably mutually exclusive, such that only one mode is operative at a time to ensure, for example, that the circulation valve and tester valve cannot operate at the same time. In addition, the tool is preferably not limited to a given number of cycles in any of its modes, unlike tools which employ shear pins or expendable fluids.

One aspect of the present invention provides an operating assembly for a downhole tool, comprising: a chamber filled with fluid; fluid biasing means at a first end of the chamber; pressure transfer means acting on the fluid at a second end of the chamber; piston sleeve means having first and second shoulder means defining a piston support surface therebetween disposed in the chamber between the ends thereof; first and second fluid pressure responsive pistons associated with the piston sleeve between the shoulder means; piston biasing means disposed between the first and second pistons; longitudinally spaced first and second piston stop means adapted to impede the respective movement of the first and second pistons; and transfer means adapted to transfer longitudinal piston sleeve movement to a tool element.

Another aspect of the present invention provides an indexing assembly for a downhole tool, comprising: a fluid filled chamber; pressure responsive double acting piston means including a piston sleeve disposed in the fluid filled chamber, first and second shoulders on the piston sleeve, first and second pistons associated with said piston sleeve and adapted to seat on the first and second shoulders respectively, and biasing means adapted to bias the first and second pistons toward the respective first and second shoulders; first and second longitudinally spaced piston stop means in the fluid filled chamber respectively associated with the first and second pistons and adapted to prevent the seating when in contact with their associated pistons; and ball and slot ratchet means associated with the piston means.

The present invention provides a novel and unobvious operating mechanism for fluid displacement in the tool which avoids the use of the flow restrictors and check valves of the prior art, such mechanism having utility in a wide variety of downhole tools, which employ pressure changes as a power source, and therefore not being so limited to the tool disclosed herein. Elimination of a fluid metering system greatly reduces tool cycling time and avoids the effects of viscosity changes in the metered fluid, as well as providing enhanced reliability. Another portion of the operating mechanism of the present invention includes a non-rotating ratchet sleeve and a rotating ball follower which enhances the reciprocation of the operating mandrel of the tool as disclosed, but which is also not so limited to that particular tool, having utility in other downhole tools as well.

It should be noted that the tool described is not limited to the four-mode (drill pipe tester, formation tester, circulation valve, nitrogen displacement valve) operation format. It may be employed in conjunction with another, independently actuated formation tester valve therebelow, and substitute an alternative ratchet slot program to operate in a three-mode (drill pipe tester, circulation valve, nitrogen displacement valve) format, or in a two-mode (circulation valve, nitrogen displacement valve) format.

The present invention will be more fully understood by a review of the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment thereof, in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIGURE 1 provides a schematic vertically sectioned view of a representative offshore platform from which testing may be conducted and illustrates a formation testing string or tool assembly in a submerged well bore at the lower end of a string of drill pipe which extends upward to the platform.

FIGURES 2A-2H comprise a vertical half-section of a tool in a formation testing mode.

FIGURES 3A-3H comprise a vertical half-section of the tool in a drill pipe testing mode.

FIGURES 4A-4H comprise a vertical half-section of the tool in a nitrogen displacement mode.

FIGURES 5A-5H comprise a vertical half-section of the tool in a circulating mode.

FIGURE 6 comprises a development of the slot design employed in the preferred embodiment of the tool.

FIGURES 7A and 7B comprise an enlarged section of an alternative embodiment of a nitrogen displacement valve for use with the present invention.

FIGURES 8, 9 and 10 comprise alternative slot designs which may be employed to alter the mode-changing sequence in the tool.

Referring to Figure 1, a downhole tool is shown schematically incorporated in a testing string deployed in an offshore oil or gas well. Platform 2 is shown positioned over a submerged oil or gas well

bore 4 located in the sea floor 6, well bore 4 penetrating potential producing formation 8. Well bore 4 is shown to be lined with steel casing 10, which is cemented into place. A subsea conduit 12 extends from the deck 14 of platform 2 into a subsea wellhead 16, which includes blowout preventer 18 therein. Platform 2 carries a derrick 20 thereon, as well as a hoisting apparatus 22, and a pump 24 which communicates with the well bore 4 via control conduit 26, which extends below blowout preventer 18.

A testing string 30 is shown disposed in well bore 4, with blowout preventer 18 closed thereabout. Testing string 30 includes upper drill pipe string 32 which extends downward from platform 2 to wellhead 16, whereat is located hydraulically operated "test tree" 34, below which extends intermediate pipe string 36. Slip joint 38 may be included in string 36 to compensate for vertical motion imparted to platform 2 by wave action; slip joint 38 may be similar to that disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 3,354,950 to Hyde. Below slip joint 38, intermediate string 36 extends downwardly to multi-mode testing tool 50. Below combination tool 50 is lower pipe string 40, extending to tubing seal assembly 42, which stabs into packer 44. When set, packer 44 isolates upper well bore annulus 40 from lower well bore annulus 48. Packer 44 may be any suitable packer well known in the art, such as, for example, a Baker Oil Tool Model D packer, an Otis Engineering Corporation Type W packer, or Halliburton Services CHAMP®, RTTS or EZ DRILL® SV packers. Tubing seal assembly 42 permits testing string 30 to communicate with lower well bore 48 through perforated tail pipe 52. In this manner, formation fluids from potential producing formation 8 may enter lower well bore 48 through the perforations 54 in casing 10, and be routed into testing string 30.

After packer 44 is set in well bore 4, a formation test controlling the flow of fluid from potential producing formation 8 through testing string 30 may be conducted using variations in pressure effected in upper annulus 46 by pump 24 and control conduit 26, with associated relief valves (not shown). Prior to the actual test, however, the pressure integrity of testing string 30 may be tested with the valve ball of the multi-mode tool closed in the tool's drill pipe tester mode. Tool 50 may be run into well bore 4 in its drill pipe tester mode, or it may be run in its circulation valve mode to automatically fill with fluid, and be cycled to its drill pipe mode thereafter. Formation pressure, temperature and recovery time may be measured during the flow test through the use of instruments incorporated in testing string 30 as known in the art as the ball valve in tool 50 of the present invention is opened and closed in its formation tester valve mode. Such instruments are well known in the art, and include both Bourdon tube-type mechanical gauges, electronic memory gauges, and sensors run on wireline from platform 2 inside testing string 30 prior to the test. If

the formation to be tested is suspected to be weak and easily damageable by the hydrostatic head of fluid in testing string 30, tool 50 may be cycled to its displacement mode and nitrogen or other inert gas under pressure employed to displace fluids from the string prior to testing or retesting.

It may also be desirable to treat the formation 8 in conjunction with the testing program while testing string 30 is in place. Such a treating program is conducted by pumping various chemicals and other materials down the interior of testing string 30 at a pressure sufficient to force the chemicals and other materials into the formation, and to possibly fracture the formation. Of course, the chemicals, materials and pressures employed will vary depending on the formation characteristics and the desired changes thought to be effective in enhancing formation productivity. In this manner it is possible to conduct a testing program, treat the formation and a second testing program to determine treatment effectiveness without removal of testing string 30. If desired, treating chemicals may be spotted into testing string 30 from the surface by placing tool 50 in its circulation valve mode, and displacing string fluids into the annulus prior to opening the valve ball in tool 50.

At the end of the testing and treating programs, the circulation valve mode of tool 50 is employed, the circulation valve opened and formation fluids, chemicals and other injected materials in testing string 30 are circulated from the interior of testing string 30 into upper annulus 46 using a clean fluid, packer 44 is released (or tubing seal 42 withdrawn if packer 44 is to remain in place) and testing string 30 withdrawn from well bore 4.

Referring to FIGS. 2A-2H, tool 50 is shown in section, commencing at the top of the tool with upper adapter 100 having threads 102 therein at its upper end, whereby tool 50 is secured to drill pipe in the testing string. Upper adapter 130 is secured to nitrogen valve housing 104 at threaded connection 106, housing 104 containing a valve assembly (not shown), such as is well known in the art, in lateral bore 108 in the wall thereof, from which extends downwardly longitudinal nitrogen charging channel 110.

Valve housing 104 is secured by threaded connection 112 at its outer lower end to tubular pressure case 114, and by threaded connection 116 at its inner lower end to gas chamber mandrel 118, case 114 and mandrel 118 defining pressurized gas chamber 120 and upper oil chamber 122, the two being separated by floating annular piston 124.

The upper end of oil channel coupling 126 extends between case 114 and gas chamber mandrel 118, and is secured to the lower end of case 114 at threaded connection 128. A plurality of longitudinal oil channels 130 (one shown) extend from the upper end of coupling 126 to the lower end thereof. Radially drilled oil fill ports 132 extend from the exterior of tool 50,

intersecting channels 130 and are closed with plugs 134. Annular shoulder 136 extends radially inward from inner wall 138 of coupling 126. The lower end of coupling 126, including annular overshoot 127, is secured at threaded connection 140 to the upper end of ratchet case 142, through which oil fill ports 144 extend at annular shoulder 146, being closed by plugs 148. At the lower end of ratchet case 142 are additional oil fill ports 150 closed by plugs 152 and open pressure ports 154.

Ratchet slot mandrel 156 extends upward within the lower end of oil channel coupling 126. Annular ratchet chamber 158 is defined between mandrel 156 and case 142. The upper exterior 160 of mandrel 156 is of substantially uniform diameter, while the lower exterior 162 is of greater diameter so as to provide sufficient wall thickness for ratchet slots 164. There are preferably two such ratchet slots 164 of the configuration shown in FIG. 6 extending about the exterior of ratchet slot mandrel 156.

Ball sleeve assembly 166 surrounds ratchet slot mandrel 156, and comprises upper sleeve 168 including radially outwardly extending annular shoulder 170 having annular piston seat 172 thereon. Below shoulder 170, ratchet piston support surface 173 extends to the lower end of upper sleeve 168, which is overshoot by the upper end of lower sleeve 174 having annular piston seat 176 thereon, and to which it is secured at threaded connection 178. Ball sleeve 180 is disposed at the bottom of lower sleeve 174, and is secured thereto at swivel bearing race 182 by a plurality of bearings 184. Two ratchet balls 186 each extend into a ball seat 188 on diametrically opposite sides of ball sleeve 180 and into a ratchet slot 164 of semicircular cross-section. Due to this structure when balls 186 follow the path of slots 164, ball sleeve 180 rotates with respect to lower sleeve 174, the remainder of ball sleeve assembly 166 does not rotate, and only longitudinal movement is transmitted to ratchet mandrel 156 by balls 186.

Upper annular ratchet piston 190 and lower annular ratchet piston 192 ride on piston support surface 173 on upper sleeve 168, coil spring 194 being disposed therebetween. Upper ratchet piston 190 carries radial sealing surface 196 on its upper end, while lower ratchet piston 192 carries radial sealing surface 198 on its lower end.

The lower end 200 of ratchet slot mandrel 156 is secured at threaded connection 202 to extension mandrel 204 having relief ports 208 extending there-through. Annular lower oil chamber 210 is defined by ratchet case 142 and extension mandrel 204. Annular floating piston 212 slidingly seals the bottom of lower oil chamber 210 and divides it from well fluid chamber 214 into which pressure ports 154 open. The lower end of ratchet case 142 is secured at threaded connection 218, to extension case 216, which surrounds extension mandrel 204.

Circulation-displacement housing 220 is threaded at 222 to extension case 216, and possesses a plurality of circumferentially spaced radially extending circulation ports 224 as well as a plurality of nitrogen displacement ports 226 extending through the wall thereof.

Circulation valve sleeve 228 is threaded to extension mandrel 204 at 230. Valve apertures 232 extend through the wall of sleeve 228, and are isolated from circulation ports 224 by annular seal 234, which is disposed in seal recess 236 formed by the junction of circulation valve sleeve 228 with displacement valve sleeve 238, the two being threaded together at 240. The exterior of displacement valve sleeve 238 carries thereon downwardly facing radially extending annular shoulder 242 thereon, against which bears displacement spring 244. The lower exterior of displacement valve sleeve 238 is defined by displacement piston surface 246 upon which sliding annular displacement piston 248 rides. Annular valve surface 250 of piston 248 seats on elastomeric valve seat 254. Nitrogen displacement apertures 256 extend through the wall of displacement valve sleeve 238. Valve seat 254 is pinched between sleeve 238 and shoulder 257 of sleeve 238 and flange 258 of operating mandrel 260, which is secured to sleeve 238 at threaded connection 262.

Seal carrier 264 surrounds mandrel 260 and the junction of mandrel 260 with sleeve 238 and is secured to mandrel 260 at threaded connection 265. Square cross-section annular seal 266 is carried on the exterior of mandrel 260 adjacent flange 258, and is secured in place by the upper end of seal carrier 264.

Below seal carrier 264, mandrel 260 extends downwardly to exterior annular recess 267, which separates annular shoulder 268 from the main body of mandrel 260.

Collet sleeve 270, having collet fingers 272 extending upward therefrom, engages operating mandrel 260 through the accommodation of radially inwardly extending protuberances 274 by annular recess 267. As is readily noted in FIG. 2G, protuberances 274 and the upper portions of fingers 272 are confined between the exterior of mandrel 260 and the interior of circulation-displacement housing 220.

At the lower end of collet sleeve 270, coupling 276 comprising flanges 278 and 280, with exterior annular recess 282 therebetween, grips coupling 284, comprising inwardly extending flanges 286 and 288 with interior recess 290 therebetween, on each of two ball operating arms 292. Couplings 276 and 284 are maintained in engagement by their location in annular recess 296 between ball case 294, which is threaded at 295 to circulation-displacement housing 220, and ball housing 298. Ball housing 298 is of substantially tubular configuration, having an upper smaller diameter portion 300 and a lower, larger diameter portion

302 which has two windows 304 cut through the wall thereof to accommodate the inward protrusion of lugs 306 from each of the two ball operating arms 292. Windows 304 extend from shoulder 311 downward to shoulder 314 adjacent threaded connection 316 with ball support 340. On the exterior of the ball housing 298, two longitudinal channels (location shown by arrow 308) of arcuate cross-section and circumferentially aligned with windows 304, extend from shoulder 310 downward to shoulder 311. Ball operating arms 292, which are of substantially the same arcuate cross-section as channels 308 and lower portion 302 of ball housing 298, lie in channels 308 and across windows 304, and are maintained in place by the interior wall 318 of ball case 294 and the exterior of ball support 340.

The interior of ball housing 298 possesses upper annular seat recess 320, within which annular ball seat 322 is disposed, being biased downwardly against ball 330 by ring spring 324. Surface 326 of upper seat 322 comprises a metal sealing surface, which provides a sliding seal with the exterior 332 of valve ball 330.

Valve ball 330 includes a diametrical bore 334 therethrough, of substantially the same diameter as bore 328 of ball housing 298. Two lug recesses 336 extend from the exterior 332 of valve ball 330 to bore 334.

The upper end 342 of ball support 340 extends into ball housing 298, and carries lower ball seat recess 344 in which annular lower ball seat 346 is disposed. Lower ball seat 346 possesses arcuate metal sealing surface 348 which slidably seals against the exterior 332 of valve ball 330. When ball housing 298 is made up with ball support 340, upper and lower ball seats 322 and 346 are biased into sealing engagement with valve ball 330 by spring 324.

Exterior annular shoulder 350 on ball support 340 is contacted by the upper ends 352 of splines 354 on the exterior of ball case 294, whereby the assembly of ball housing 294, ball operating arms 292, valve ball 330, ball seats 322 and 346 and spring 324 are maintained in position inside of ball case 294. Splines 354 engage splines 356 on the exterior of ball support 340, and thus rotation of the ball support 340 and ball housing 298 within ball case 294 is prevented.

Lower adapter 360 protrudes at its upper end 362 between ball case 294 and ball support 340, sealing therebetween, when made up with ball support 340 at threaded connection 364. The lower end of lower adapter 360 carries on its exterior threads 366 for making up with portions of a test string below tool 50.

When valve ball 330 is in its open position, as shown in FIG. 2G, a "full open" bore 370 extends throughout tool 50, providing an unimpeded path for formation fluids and/or for perforating guns, wireline instrumentation, etc.

OPERATION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIGS. 1 through 6, operation of the combination tool 50 is described hereafter.

As tool 50 is run into the well in testing string 30, it is normally in its drill pipe tester mode shown in FIGS. 3A-H, with ball 330 in its closed position, with ball bore 334 perpendicular to tool bore 370. In this position, circulation ports 224 are misaligned with circulation apertures 232, seal 234 preventing communication therebetween. In a similar fashion, nitrogen displacement ports 226 are offset from displacement apertures 256 and isolated therefrom by seal 266. With respect to FIG. 6, balls 186 will be in positions "a" in slots 164 as tool 50 is run into the well bore.

As tool 50 travels down to the level of the formation 8 to be tested, at which position packer 44 is set, floating piston 212 moves upward under hydrostatic pressure, pushing ball sleeve assembly 166 upward, and causing balls 186 to move to positions "b", which does not change tool modes or open any valves. A pressure integrity check of the testing string 30 above tool 50 may then be conducted before flow testing the formation.

In order to open valve ball 330 to conduct a flow test of a formation, pressure is increased in annulus 46 by pump 24 via control conduit 26. This increase in pressure is transmitted through pressure ports 154 into well fluid chamber 214, where it acts upon floating piston 212. Piston 212 in turn acts upon a fluid, such as silicone oil, in lower oil chamber 210, which communicates with ratchet chamber 158. In ratchet chamber 158, the pressurized oil pushes against upper ratchet piston 190, the oil being prevented from bypassing piston 190 by the metal to metal seal of sealing surface 196 on piston seat 172. Piston 190 therefore pushes against shoulder 170 on upper sleeve 168, which in turn pulls lower sleeve 174, ball sleeve 180 and balls 186 upward in slots 164. In this manner, balls 186 are moved to positions c, which has no effect on tool operation as balls 186 do not shoulder on the ends of slots 164 in this position. The aforesaid feature is advantageous in that it permits pressuring of the well bore annulus 46 to test the seal of packer 44 across the well bore 4 without opening valve ball 330. By way of elaboration, when piston 190 reaches overshot 127, it is restrained from further upward movement, but fluid continues to act on shoulder 170 of upper sleeve 168, spreading piston seat 172 from sealing surface 196, breaking the seal and dumping fluid past upper sleeve 168 into oil channels 130 and upper oil chamber 122, which equalizes the pressures on both sides of piston 190 and stops the movement of ball sleeve assembly 166 and of balls 186 in slots 164. As the length of the slot is greater than the travel of the ball sleeve assembly, balls 186 stop short of the slot end. As annulus pressure is bled off, the pressurized nitrogen in chamber 120 pushes

against floating piston 124, which pressure is transmitted through upper oil chamber 122, channels 130 and ratchet chamber 158 against lower ratchet piston 192. As ratchet piston 192 is biased against piston seat 176, a metal to metal seal is effected between radial sealing surface 198 and seat 176. Ball sleeve assembly 166 is therefore biased downwardly, ratchet balls 186 following the paths of slots 164 to position d_1 , where they shoulder on the ends of the slots. Tool 50 is now in its formation tester valve mode as shown in FIGS. 2A-2H, but with valve ball 330 closed. When lower ratchet piston 192 reaches annular shoulder 146 in its downward travel, fluid continues to act on ball sleeve assembly 166, spreading sealing surface 198 from seat 176. Fluid is thus dumped below ball sleeve assembly 166 and is thereby equalized, stopping the travel of ball sleeve assembly 166, balls 186 and ratchet mandrel 156.

When the well bore annulus is again pressurized, ball sleeve assembly 166 moves upward and balls 186 shoulder in slots 164 at position e_1 , moving ratchet mandrel 156 upward, which pulls extension mandrel 204, circulation valve sleeve 228, displacement valve sleeve 238 and operating mandrel 260 upward. Operating mandrel 260 pulls collet sleeve 270 upward, which pulls arms 292 and rotates valve ball 330, aligning ball bore 334 with tool bore 370, permitting the formation to flow into the testing string 30 above tool 50. Tool 50 is now in the tester valve mode shown in FIGS. 2A-2H with valve ball 330 open. When annulus pressure is released, balls 186 shoulder at position d_2 , and close valve ball 330, but tool 50 is still in the tester mode of FIGS. 2A-2H. The process of pressuring and releasing pressure may be continued to open and close ball 330 to flow test the formation until balls 186 reach positions d_6 .

A subsequent increase in annulus pressure will shoulder balls 186 momentarily on inclined edges 164a before moving further along slots 164 past positions f but valve ball 330 will not open. When pressure is released again, balls 186 move downward and shoulder in positions f , moving ratchet mandrel 156 downward and tool 50 out of its formation tester mode and into the nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-H. As can readily be seen in FIG. 4G protuberances 274 on collet sleeve fingers 272 are disengaged from operating mandrel 260 in this mode, preventing rotation and re-opening of ball 330.

A subsequent increase and decrease of annulus pressure causes balls 186 to climb further in slots 164 past positions g , and then to push ratchet mandrel 156 downward, moving tool 50 to its circulation valve mode shown in FIGS. 5A-H. Fluid may be circulated into the testing string 30 from annulus 46 through circulation ports 224, which are aligned with circulation apertures 232, ball valve 330 in its closed position and nitrogen displacement ports 226 offset from apertures 256. Fluid may also be circulated into annulus

46 from the testing string 30, as when it is desired to spot formation treatment chemicals into the string prior to an acidizing or fracturing operation. As may be easily observed in FIG. 5G, operating mandrel 156 has continued to travel downward within collet sleeve 270 but out of engagement with protuberances 274.

Subsequent pressure increases and decreases in the annulus will move balls 186 sequentially to positions h_1, i_1, h_2, i_2 , and h_3 without changing tool 50 from its circulation mode, as balls 186 do not shoulder in slots 164. This provides a margin of safety against changing of tool modes due to inadvertent pressure cycling in the annulus during circulation.

As annulus pressure is decreased after balls 186 reach positions h_3 , they will move downward past positions j , whereupon a subsequent annulus pressure increase will shoulder balls 186 in positions j , moving ratchet mandrel 156 upward and tool 50 back into its nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-H. If treatment chemicals have not been spotted in the string, and if it is desired to displace fluid out of the testing string 30 prior to a further test, as where the formation has not flowed initially due to hydrostatic head of fluid in the string, nitrogen may be introduced into the testing string 30 under pressure. In this mode, valve ball 330 is closed and circulation ports 224 offset from apertures 232, but nitrogen displacement ports 226 are aligned with apertures 256. The pressurized nitrogen will act upon displacement piston 248, moving it away from seat 254, and permit fluid in the string to exit into the well bore annulus. When pressure is reduced in the string, annulus pressure outside tool 50 will act upon the upper end of displacement piston 248 through circulation ports 224, and firmly press valve surface 250 against seat 254, preventing re-entry of fluid into the string.

As in the circulation mode, several subsequent increases and decreases in annulus pressure will move balls 186 in slots 164, but will not change the mode of tool 50. As pressure is decreased and increased sequentially when balls are in positions j , they move to positions k_1, l_1, k_2 and l_2 . When pressure is again decreased with balls 186 in position l_2 , they will move downward in slots 164 past position m , where a subsequent increase will shoulder balls 186 out on slots 164 in positions m , changing tool mode to the drill pipe tester mode of FIGS. 3A-H, offsetting nitrogen displacement ports and apertures, leaving circulation ports and apertures offset, and leaving valve ball 330 closed. A further decrease in pressure will return balls 186 to positions a , and the operator may begin another cycle of tool 50, such as to treat the formation and retest it after the treatment, or test it with the string unloaded of fluid.

By way of further explanation of the mode changing and operating sequence of tool 50, the reader should note that the tool only changes mode when balls 186 shoulder at specific foreshortened positions

on slot 164 during cycling of the tool. For example, tool 50 changes mode at positions d₁, d₆, f, g, j and m. Four mode changes are effected by annulus pressure decrease, and two by an increase. The pressure increases, which shoulder balls 186 in positions e₁ through e₆ do not produce a mode change because balls 186 travel within a restricted longitudinal range limited by the dumping of the operating fluid in the tool by pistons 190 and 192, and the configuration of the slots 164 from positions e₁ through e₆ does not permit balls 186 to climb in slots 164 to change tool modes.

As has previously been noted, tool 50 may be changed to operate in a three-mode sequence as a drill pipe tester, circulation valve and nitrogen displacement valve in conjunction with a separate tester valve therebelow in the string by merely removing ratchet mandrel 156 and inserting another mandrel 156' having a different slot program 164' therein. Such a mandrel slot program 164' is shown in Figure 8. In all respects other than substitution of mandrel 156' for mandrel 156, tool 50 remains structurally the same even though its modes of operation have been altered.

With slot 164', tool 50 is run into the well bore in its drill pipe tester mode with balls 186 in positions a as shown in Figure 8 and tool 50 in the mode shown in FIGS. 3A-H. As tool 50 travels down the well bore, hydrostatic annulus pressure will move balls 186 to position b. As valve ball 330 remains closed, an integrity test of the drill pipe may be conducted. The first increase in annulus pressure subsequent to the drill pipe test will move balls 186 to positions c, which will not change tool mode, and a subsequent decrease and increase will shoulder balls on slot 164' at position d, which will rotate valve ball 330 to an open position, aligning bore 334 with tool bore 370 as shown in FIGS. 2A-2H. This same pressure increase will have opened the ball of the tester valve therebelow, which may be a valve such as are disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 3,964,544, 3,976,136, 4,422,506, 4,429,748, as well as others known in the art. The formation then flows through the tester valve and tool 50 during the test. When annulus pressure is decreased to close the tester valve, the decrease will move balls 186 to positions e₁, which will not close valve ball 330 because balls 186 do not shoulder on slots 164'. Subsequent pressure increases and decreases to flow test the well via the tester valve will move balls 186 sequentially to positions f₁, e₂, f₂, e₃, f₃ and e₄, during which valve ball 330 of tool 50 will remain open. During the next subsequent annulus pressure increase when in position e₄, balls 186 will climb in slot 164' past positions g, valve ball 330 remaining open. When annulus pressure is relieved, however, balls 186 will shoulder in positions g and move ratchet mandrel 156' downward, closing valve ball 330 and returning tool 50 to its drill pipe tester mode shown in FIGS.

3A-H.

Another increase and decrease in annulus pressure will move balls 186 to shoulder in positions h, changing tool to the nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-H. A second increase/decrease pressure cycle will move balls 186 to positions i and tool 50 to the circulation mode of FIGS. 5A-5H.

Subsequent increases and decreases in annulus pressure will move ratchet balls 186 through positions j₁, i₂, j₂, i₃, j₃, and down past k₁ without changing tool mode, after which an increase will shoulder balls 186 in positions k₁, changing tool 50 to the nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-4H.

Further annulus pressure cycling in decrease/increase sequence will move balls 186 to positions l₁, k₂, l₂, k₃ and down past positions m without changing tool mode.

A subsequent pressure increase will shoulder balls 186 in positions m and change tool 50 to its drill pipe tester mode of FIGS. 3A-H. Further pressure cycling of the annulus will begin another tool cycle.

As noted with respect to slot 164, tool 50 only changes mode when balls 186 shoulder in foreshortened paths in the slot. In slot 164' for example, tool mode changes only in ball positions d, g, h, i₁, k₁, and m. In all other instances, balls 186 merely travel slots 164' with no effect on tool operation.

It is also possible to re-program the tool 50 to effect modes of operation other than those disclosed with respect to the first and second preferred embodiments.

For example, referring to Figure 9, the program of slot 164" is shown. Using mandrel 156" with slot 164", tool 50 is run into the well bore in its drill pipe tester mode of Figures 3A-3H, with balls 186 in positions a in Slots 164. Going downhole, balls 186 will be forced upwards to positions b by hydrostatic pressure in the annulus. A drill pipe integrity test may be conducted when tool 50 reaches the test level in the well bore.

After the packer is set, the formation may be flow tested by raising annulus pressure, lowering it and raising it again, which moves balls up through positions c, down past positions d₁, and up to d₁ whereat balls 186 shoulder and open valve ball 330, tool 50 being in the tester valve mode of FIGS. 2A-H. A subsequent decrease in annulus pressure will move balls 186 to position e₁, which will retain valve ball 330 in an open position. Another increase/decrease cycle will close valve ball 330 due to shouldering of balls 186 in positions f₁ and downward movement of ratchet mandrel 156. Another increase/decrease cycle will result in ball movement to positions g₁, and down past d₂, with valve ball 330 remaining closed. The next increase/decrease opens valve ball 330 when balls 186 shoulder in positions d₂, and leave valve ball 330 open when balls 186 travel to positions e₂. The following increase/decrease shoulders balls 186 in positions f₂ as

annulus pressure is relieved, closing valve ball 330. A further increase/decrease moves balls 186 to position g_2 and back down below d_3 , after which the next subsequent increase/decrease shoulders balls 186 in positions d_3 , opening valve ball 330 and leaving it open as balls 186 land at position e_3 .

To continue the tool cycle, an annulus pressure increase/decrease moves balls 186 to f_3 , closing valve ball 330. Balls 186 climb slots 164" with the next increase/decrease to position h , whereat tool 50 is shifted to its nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-H, and then to its circulation mode of FIGS. 5A-H when annulus pressure is again cycled and balls 186 shoulder in positions i_1 .

The next three increase/decrease cycles in annulus pressure will move balls 186 through positions j_1 , i_2 , j_2 , i_3 , j_3 and back down past position k_1 . During this travel, balls 186 do not shoulder, and the tool 50 does not change mode. However, the next subsequent increase in pressure will shoulder balls 186 in positions k_1 , change tool mode to the nitrogen displacement mode of FIGS. 4A-H.

The next two decrease/increase pressure cycles move balls 186 through positions l_1 , k_2 , l_2 and k_3 without change in tool mode. During the following decrease/increase cycle, however the tool is moved back to its drill pipe test mode of FIGS. 3A-H when balls 186 move downward below positions m on the decrease and then shoulder as pressure is increased. When annulus pressure is next decreased, balls 186 move back to positions a for commencement of a new tool cycle.

As was noted with respect to the previous operating mandrels 156 and 156' mandrel 156" does not move longitudinally to operate valve ball 330 and to change tool modes unless balls 186 shoulder in fore-shortened legs of slots 164". In slots 164", only positions d_1 , f_3 , h , i_1 , k_1 , and m produce a change of mode. Positions d_1 , f_1 , d_2 , f_2 , d_3 and f_3 , however, all serve to open and close, respectively valve ball 330.

With the slot program employed in slot 164", the test operator must positively pressure the annulus and then relieve pressure for valve ball 330 to move from a closed to an open position and vice-versa, which feature prevents a shutoff in the middle of a flow test if annulus pressure is reduced inadvertently. Furthermore, valve ball 330 may be left open after the formation test and circulation, to let testing string 30 drain of fluid as it is removed from well bore 4.

A further embodiment may be effected utilizing yet another slot program, illustrated in FIG. 10 as slot 164'" on mandrel 156"". With slots 164'", tool 50 is restricted to a two-mode operation, circulation valve, which would be preferred in some areas of the world which do not conduct drill pipe tests prior to flow testing the well, and which use a separate tester below tool 50.

With slots 164'", ratchet balls 186 commence in

positions a , and move to b as tool 50 travels down the well bore. Valve ball 330 is open. A first annulus pressure increase after packer 44 is set will result in ball movement to positions c_1 , and subsequent decrease/increase cycling will move balls 186 through positions d_1 , c_2 , d_2 and c_3 to d_3 . The next three increase/decrease pressure cycles will result in balls 186 climbing slots 164'" to positions e , which closes valve ball 330; positions f , which places tool 50 in its displacement valve mode; and position g_1 , which places tool 50 in its circulation valve mode. The next three increase/decrease pressure cycles will result in free ball movement through positions h_1 , g_2 , h_2 , g_3 and h_3 past i_1 , without moving tool 50 from its circulation valve mode. However, a subsequent increase will change tool mode to displacement valve, as balls 186 shoulder in positions i_1 . This mode is maintained through the next two decrease/increase cycles with free ball travel. The next decrease/increase cycle then moves balls 186 to shoulder in positions k , which offsets both displacement ports 226 from displacement apertures 256 and circulation ports 224 from circulation apertures 232 while leaving valve ball 330 closed. The next subsequent decrease/increase cycle will again open valve ball 330 with balls 186 in positions l , and an annulus pressure decrease will place balls back in positions a for another tool cycle. In slots 164'", balls 186 shoulder in positions e , f , g_1 , i_1 , k and l .

ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENT OF THE DISPLACEMENT VALVE FOR USE WITH THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

FIGS. 7A and 7B illustrate an alternative construction for a nitrogen displacement valve assembly which may be employed in tool 50. Valve assembly 400 includes an outer circulation-displacement housing 220' with slightly longer spacing between circulation ports 224 and displacement apertures 226 than in standard housing 220. At its upper end, housing 220' is secured at threaded connection 222 to extension case 216, while at its lower end (not shown) it is secured to ball case 294. Within tool 50, extension mandrel 204 is secured at threaded connection 230 to circulation valve sleeve 228, through which circulation apertures 232 extend. Sleeve 228 is threaded to displacement valve sleeve 238', seal 226 being maintained in an annular recess 236 therebetween to isolate circulation apertures 232 from circulation ports 224.

On the exterior of displacement valve sleeve 238' lie annular marker grooves 420 (three grooves), 422 (two grooves) and 424 (one groove), the purpose of which will be explained hereafter. Below the marker grooves displacement apertures 256 extend through the wall of sleeve 238' adjacent obliquely inclined annular wall 416, which is a part of displace-

ment assembly 400.

Flapper mandrel 406 slides on the exterior of sleeve 238' below wall 416, and is restricted in its longitudinal travel by the abutment of elastomeric seal 414 against wall 416 at its upper extent, and by the abutment of shoulder 408 against stop 404 extending upward from shoulder 402 on operating mandrel 260'. Stops 404 prevent pressure locking of shoulder 408 to shoulder 402. Seal 266 is maintained in a recess between annular shoulder 258' on mandrel 260' and seal carrier 264, which surrounds threaded connection 262 between sleeve 238' and operating mandrel 260', and is itself secured to operating mandrel 260' at threaded connection 265.

Flapper mandrel 406 carries thereon a plurality of frustoconical valve flappers 412, which are bonded to mandrel 406 adjacent annular shoulders 410.

Displacement assembly 400 is placed in its operative mode in the same fashion as the displacement mode of tool 50 in FIGS. 2-5, that is by longitudinally moving the internal assembly connected to ratchet mandrel 156 through the interaction of balls 186 in slots 164. However, unlike displacement piston 248 which is spring-biased toward a closed position against seat 254 (FIGS. 2E-F, 3E-F) and is moved therefrom by nitrogen flowing under pressure through apertures 256 (FIGS. 4E-F), mandrel 406 operates when placed adjacent displacement ports 226 (FIGS. 7A-B) through downward movement against stops 404 followed by collapse of flappers 412 against mandrel 406 to permit exit through ports 226 of the fluid in the string and the pressurized nitrogen impelling it into the well bore annulus.

If pressure is removed from the bore 370 of tool 50, the hydrostatic head (and pressure) in the annulus will expand flappers 412 against circulation-displacement housing 220' and move mandrel 406 upward against wall 416, whereon elastomeric seal 414 will seat, preventing re-entry of annulus fluids into bore 370.

An added feature of assembly 400 is the ease of identification of tool mode through the use of marker grooves 420, 422 and 424. For example, when tool 50 is in its circulation mode, circulation ports 224 will be aligned with circulation apertures 232 and no grooves will be visible. When tool 50 is in its displacement mode (FIGS. 7A-B), grooves 420 will be visible. When valve ball 330 is closed, grooves 422 will be visible, and when valve ball 330 is open, groove 420 will be visible. With knowledge of which ratchet mandrel is employed in tool 50 and the initial portion desired, the tool will then be easily able to ensure placement of tool 50 in its proper mode for running into the well bore.

It is thus apparent that a multi-mode testing tool has been developed, which includes a novel and unobvious operating mechanism and valves therein. It will be readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the

art that numerous additions, deletions and modifications may be made to the invention as disclosed in its preferred and alternative embodiments as disclosed herein. For example, tool 50 might employ an all-oil operating biasing mechanism such as is disclosed in U.S. Patents No. 4,109,724, 4,109,725 and U.S. Applications Serial No. 354,529 and 417,947; the nitrogen displacement valve might be placed above the circulation valve in the tool; alternative pressure responsive check valve designs might be employed as displacement valves; Belleville or other springs might be substituted for the coil springs shown in tool 50; the operating mechanism of the tool, including nitrogen and/or oil chambers, the ratchet mandrel and the ball sleeve assembly could be placed at the bottom of the tool or between the ends thereof; the ratchet balls could be seated in recesses on a mandrel and a rotating ratchet sleeve with slots cut on the interior thereof might be employed therearound and joined by swivel means to a sleeve assembly carrying annular pistons 190 and 192 thereon; a ratchet sleeve might be rotatably mounted about a separate mandrel and ratchet balls mounted in a non-rotating sleeve assembly thereabout; a sleeve-type valve such as is disclosed in U.S. Patent RE 29,562 might be utilized to close bore 370 through tool 50 in lieu of a ball valve; an annular sample chamber might be added to tool 50 such as is also disclosed in the aforesaid U.S. Patent RE 29,562; a second valve ball might be included longitudinally spaced from valve ball 330 and secured to operating mandrel 260 to form a ball-type sampler having a mechanism similar to those disclosed in U.S. patents No. 4,064,937, 4,270,610 and 4,311,197; the valve ball 330 could be placed at the top of the tool and employed for drill pipe test purposes only with another tester valve run below the tool, as has been heretofore suggested; an annular piston having a longitudinal channel therein with a resiliently biased check valve closure member and valve seats at each end thereof may be substituted for the piston sleeve and pistons of the preferred embodiment, using for stop means a pin or rod adapted to push the check valve closure member back from its seat at each limit of piston travel to dump fluid therepast.

Claims

1. An operating assembly for a downhole tool, comprising: a chamber (210) filled with fluid; fluid biasing means (124) at a first end of said chamber; pressure transfer means (212) acting on said fluid at a second end of said chamber; piston sleeve means (168) having first and second shoulder means (170,174) defining a piston support surface (173) therebetween disposed in said chamber between said ends thereof; first and second fluid pressure responsive pistons



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Claims

1. An operating assembly for a downhole tool, comprising: a chamber (210) filled with fluid; fluid biasing means (124) at a first end of said chamber; pressure transfer means (212) acting on said fluid at a second end of said chamber; piston sleeve means (168) having first and second shoulder means (170,174) defining a piston support surface (173) therebetween disposed in said chamber between said ends thereof; first and second fluid pressure responsive pistons



- (190,192) associated with said piston sleeve between said shoulder means; piston biasing means (194) disposed between said first and second pistons; longitudinally spaced first and second piston stop means (127,146) adapted to impede the respective movement of said first and second pistons; and transfer means (186) adapted to transfer longitudinal piston sleeve movement to a tool element (156).
2. An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said piston sleeve means further includes first and second piston seats (172,176) on said first and second shoulder means, said first piston (190) includes a first sealing surface (196) sealingly engageable with said first piston seat and said second piston (192) includes a second sealing surface (198) sealingly engageable with said second piston seat.
 3. An assembly according to claim 2, wherein said chamber (210) is of annular configuration; said pressure transfer means (212) communicates pressure from the exterior of said tool; the top of said chamber comprises the inner wall of the housing (142) of said downhole tool, and the bottom of said chamber comprises the outer wall of a substantially cylindrical element (156) within said tool.
 4. An assembly according to claim 3, wherein said piston sleeve means comprises a tubular sleeve slidably sealingly disposed about said cylindrical tool element (156); said shoulder means (170,174) comprise radially outward extending annular shoulders; said piston seats (172,176) comprise a radially oriented surface on each of said annular shoulders at each end of said piston support surface (173); said pistons (190,192) comprise annular pistons disposed about said piston sleeve (168) in slidably sealing engagement with said inner wall of said tool housing (142); said sealing surfaces (196,198) comprise radially oriented surfaces on the outer ends of said pistons; said piston stop means (127,146) comprise inward protuberances from said inner wall of said tool housing; and said piston biasing means (194) comprises a spring.
 5. An assembly according to claim 4, wherein each of said piston stop means (127,146) is adapted to limit longitudinal movement of said piston sleeve (168) in one direction by contacting its associated piston and spreading said piston from its associated shoulder on said piston sleeve, thereby permitting equalization of chamber fluid pressure on both sides of said piston.
 6. An assembly according to claim 4, wherein one of said pistons is adapted to sealingly engage its associated shoulder responsive to a positive pressure differential across said piston sleeve in one longitudinal direction, and the other of said pistons is adapted to sealingly engage its associated shoulder responsive to a positive pressure differential across said piston sleeve in the opposite longitudinal direction.
 7. An indexing assembly for a downhole tool, comprising: a fluid filled chamber (210); pressure responsive double-acting piston means including a piston sleeve (168) disposed in said fluid filled chamber, first and second shoulders (170,174) on said piston sleeve, first and second pistons (190,192) associated with said piston sleeve and adapted to seat on said first and second shoulders respectively, and biasing means (194) adapted to bias said first and second pistons toward said respective first and second shoulders; first and second longitudinally spaced piston stop means (127,146) in said fluid filled chamber respectively associated with said first and second pistons and adapted to prevent said seating when in contact with their associated pistons; and ball and slot ratchet means (164,186) associated with said piston means.
 8. An assembly according to claim 7, wherein said ball and slot ratchet means includes a ball (186) received in a ball seat means (188) and extending into a slot (164) associated with mandrel means (156), and swivel means (182) permitting substantially unimpeded relative rotational movement between said ball seat means and said mandrel means.
 9. An assembly according to claim 8, wherein said swivel means (182) is disposed between said double-acting piston means and said ball seat means (188), and said slot (164) is a continuous slot disposed on the exterior of said mandrel means (156).
 10. An assembly according to claim 9, wherein said slot (164) includes a plurality of longitudinally disposed legs connected by oblique laterally disposed transfer channels.
 11. An assembly according to claim 10, wherein said legs include extended ends and foreshortened ends, and said piston means moves said mandrel means through shouldering of said ball in said foreshortened ends.
 12. An assembly according to claim 11, further including at least two laterally adjacent oppositely



longitudinally oriented legs having extended ends, whereby said ball is permitted to move sequentially at least twice in opposite longitudinal directions without movement of said mandrel means.

13. An assembly according to claim 11, wherein said slot includes longitudinally offset legs including foreshortened ends connected by transfer channels, whereby said ball is enabled to travel longitudinally in said slot and move said mandrel means a distance greater than that of a single leg.

Patentansprüche

1. Betätigungsanordnung für ein Bohrlochwerkzeug, gekennzeichnet durch eine mit Fluid gefüllte Kammer (210); Fluidvorspannmittel (124) an einem ersten Ende der Kammer; auf das Fluid einwirkende Druckübertragungsmittel (212) an einem zweiten Ende der Kammer; Kolbenhülsenmittel (168) mit ersten und zweiten Schultermitteln (170, 174), die zwischen sich eine Kolbenlagerfläche (173) bestimmen, welche Kolbenhülsenmittel in der Kammer zwischen ihren Enden angeordnet sind; erste und zweite, auf Fluiddruck ansprechende Kolben (190, 192), die der Kolbenhülse zwischen den Schultermitteln zugeordnet sind; zwischen den ersten und zweiten Kolben angeordnete Kolbenvorspannmittel (194); erste und zweite Kolbenanschlagmittel (127, 146), die im Längsabstand angeordnet und so eingerichtet sind, daß sie die Bewegung des ersten bzw. zweiten Kolbens verhindern; und Übertragungsmittel (186) zur Übertragung von Längsbewegung der Kolbenhülse auf ein Werkzeugelement (156).
2. Anordnung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Kolbenhülsenmittel ferner an den ersten und zweiten Schultermitteln erste und zweite Kolbensitze (172, 176) enthalten und daß der erste Kolben (190) eine erste Dichtfläche (196), die abdichtend an den ersten Kolbensitz anlegbar ist, und der zweite Kolben (192) eine zweite Dichtfläche (198) enthält, die an den zweiten Kolbensitz abdichtend anlegbar ist.
3. Anordnung nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Kammer (210) ringförmige Gestalt hat; daß die Druckübertragungsmittel (212) Druck von außerhalb des Werkzeugs übertragen; und daß das Oberteil der Kammer die Innenwand des Gehäuses (142) des Bohrlochwerkzeugs und das Unterteil der Kammer die Außenwand eines im wesentlichen zylindrischen Elementes (156) innerhalb des Werkzeugs aufweist.

4. Anordnung nach Anspruch 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Kolbenhülsenmittel eine rohrförmige Hülse aufweisen, die gleitbeweglich abdichtend um das zylindrische Werkzeugelement (156) herum angeordnet ist; daß die Schultermittel (170, 174) radial nach außen verlaufende Ringschultern aufweisen; daß die Kolbensitze (172, 176) eine radial gerichtete Fläche an jeder Ringschulter an jedem Ende der Kolbenlagerfläche (173) aufweisen; daß die Kolben (190, 192) Ringkolben aufweisen, die um die Kolbenhülse (168) herum in gleitbeweglich abdichtender Anlage an der Innenwand des Werkzeuggehäuses (142) angeordnet sind; daß die Dichtflächen (196, 198) radial gerichtete Flächen an den Außenenden der Kolben aufweisen; daß die Kolbenanschlagmittel (127, 146) von der Innenwand des Werkzeuggehäuses nach innen gerichtete Vorsprünge aufweisen; und daß die Kolbenvorspannmittel (194) eine Feder aufweisen.

5. Anordnung nach Anspruch 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jedes der Kolbenanschlagmittel (127, 146) derart eingerichtet ist, daß es die Längsbewegung der Kolbenhülse (168) in einer Richtung dadurch begrenzt, daß es seinen zugehörigen Kolben berührt und diesen von seiner zugehörigen Schulter an der Kolbenhülse entfernt und dadurch einen Druckausgleich des Fluids in der Kammer auf beiden Seiten des Kolbens ermöglicht.

6. Anordnung nach Anspruch 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß einer der Kolben zur abdichtenden Anlage an seiner zugehörigen Schulter unter Ansprechen auf eine in einer Längsrichtung positive Druckdifferenz an der Kolbenhülse und der andere Kolben zur abdichtenden Anlage an seiner zugehörigen Schulter unter Ansprechen auf eine in der entgegengesetzten Längsrichtung positive Druckdifferenz an der Kolbenhülse eingerichtet ist.

7. Schaltanordnung für ein Bohrlochwerkzeug, gekennzeichnet durch eine fluidgefüllte Kammer (210); auf Druck ansprechende, doppelt wirkende Kolbenmittel mit einer Kolbenhülse (168), die in der fluidgefüllten Kammer angeordnet ist, erste und zweite Schultern (170, 174) an der Kolbenhülse, erste und zweite Kolben (190, 192), die der Kolbenhülse zugeordnet und zum Sitz an der ersten bzw. zweiten Schulter eingerichtet sind, und Vorspannmittel (194) zum Vorspannen der ersten und zweiten Kolben gegen die erste bzw. zweite Schulter; erste und zweite Kolbenanschlagmittel (127, 146) im Längsabstand in der fluidgefüllten Kammer, die dem ersten bzw. zweiten Kolben zugeordnet sind und in Kontakt mit den zugehörigen



Kolben zur Verhinderung des Aufsitzens eingerichtet sind; und den Kolbenmitteln zugeordnete Kugel- und -Schlitz-Ratschenmittel (164, 186).

8. Anordnung nach Anspruch 7, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Kugel- und -Schlitz-Ratschenmittel eine in Kugelsitzmitteln (188) aufgenommene Kugel (186), die sich in einen Dornmitteln (156) zugehörigen Schlitz (164) erstreckt, und Schwenkmittel (182) enthalten, die eine im wesentlichen ungehinderte relative Verdrehung zwischen den Kugelsitzmitteln und den Dornmitteln gestatten. 5 10
9. Anordnung nach Anspruch 8, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Schwenkmittel (182) zwischen den doppelt wirkenden Kolbenmitteln und den Kugelsitzmitteln (188) angeordnet sind und der Schlitz (164) ein durchgehender Schlitz ist, der außen an den Dornmitteln (156) angeordnet ist. 15 20
10. Anordnung nach Anspruch 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Schlitz (164) eine Vielzahl längs angeordneter Schenkel enthält, die durch seitlich angeordnete, schräg verlaufende Übertragungskanäle verbunden sind. 25
11. Anordnung nach Anspruch 10, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Schenkel verlängerte Enden und verkürzte Enden enthalten und die Kolbenmittel die Dornmittel durch Absetzen der Kugel in den verkürzten Enden verstellen. 30
12. Anordnung nach Anspruch 11, ferner gekennzeichnet durch wenigstens zwei seitlich benachbarte, in Längsrichtung entgegengesetzt gerichtete Schenkel mit verlängerten Enden, wodurch die Kugel wenigstens zweimal nacheinander ohne Bewegung der Dornmittel in entgegengesetzten Längsrichtungen bewegbar ist. 35 40
13. Anordnung nach Anspruch 11, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Schlitz in Längsrichtung versetzte Schenkel mit verkürzten Enden enthält, die durch Übertragungskanäle verbunden sind, wodurch sich die Kugel in dem Schlitz in Längsrichtung bewegen und die Dornmittel um eine größere Strecke als die eines einzigen Schenkels verstellen kann. 45 50

Revendications

1. Ensemble d'actionnement pour outil de fond de puits, comportant : une chambre (210) remplie d'un fluide ; des moyens (124) de mise en contrainte du fluide situés au niveau d'une première extrémité de ladite chambre ; des moyens 55

(212) de transfert de pression agissant sur ledit fluide au niveau d'une seconde extrémité de ladite chambre ; des moyens (168) formant manchon de piston ayant des premier et second moyens formant épaulements (170, 174) définissant entre eux une surface (173) de support de piston disposée dans ladite chambre entre lesdites extrémités de celle-ci ; un premier et un second pistons (190, 192) sensibles à la pression du fluide, associés audit manchon de piston entre lesdits moyens formant épaulements ; des moyens (194) de rappel des pistons agencés entre lesdits premier et second pistons ; des premier et second moyens (127, 146) formant arrêt de piston, écartés longitudinalement, adaptés pour empêcher le déplacement respectif desdits premier et second pistons ; et des moyens de transfert (186) adaptés pour transférer un mouvement longitudinal du manchon de piston vers un élément (156) formant outil.

2. Ensemble selon la revendication 1, dans lequel lesdits moyens formant manchon de piston comportent en outre un premier et un second sièges pour pistons (172, 176) situés sur lesdits premier et second moyens formant épaulements, ledit premier piston (190) comporte une première surface d'étanchéité (196) pouvant venir en contact de manière étanche avec ledit premier siège pour piston, et ledit premier piston (192) comporte une seconde surface d'étanchéité (198) pouvant venir en contact de manière étanche avec ledit second siège pour piston.
3. Ensemble selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ladite chambre (210) a une configuration annulaire ; lesdits moyens (212) de transfert de pression communiquent une pression provenant de l'extérieur dudit outil ; la partie supérieure de ladite chambre comporte la paroi intérieure du boîtier (142) dudit outil de fond de puits, et la partie inférieure de ladite chambre comporte la paroi extérieure d'un élément (156) à peu près cylindrique situé dans ledit outil.
4. Ensemble selon la revendication 3, dans lequel lesdits moyens formant manchon de piston comportent un manchon tubulaire agencé de manière coulissante et étanche autour dudit élément (156) formant outil cylindrique ; lesdits moyens (170, 174) formant épaulements comprennent des épaulements annulaires s'étendant radialement vers l'extérieur ; lesdits sièges (172, 176) pour pistons comprennent une surface orientée radialement située sur chacun desdits épaulements annulaires au niveau de chaque extrémité de ladite surface (173) de support de piston ; lesdits pistons (190, 192) comprennent des pistons



- annulaires agencés autour dudit manchon (168) de piston en contact étanche de manière coulissante avec ladite paroi intérieure dudit boîtier (142) d'outil ; lesdites surfaces d'étanchéité (196, 198) comportent des surfaces orientées radialement situées sur les extrémités extérieures desdits pistons ; lesdits moyens (127, 146) formant arrêt de piston comportent des protubérances vers l'intérieur à partir de ladite paroi intérieure dudit boîtier d'outil ; et lesdits moyens (194) de rappel de piston comportent un ressort.
5. Ensemble selon la revendication 4, dans lequel chacun desdits moyens (127, 146) formant arrêt de piston est adapté pour limiter le déplacement longitudinal dudit manchon (168) de piston dans une première direction en venant en contact avec son piston associé et en écartant ledit piston de son épaulement associé situé sur ledit manchon de piston, permettant ainsi une égalisation de la pression de fluide de chambre sur les deux côtés dudit piston. 5 10
 6. Ensemble selon la revendication 4, dans lequel un desdits pistons est adapté pour venir en contact de manière étanche avec son épaulement associé en réponse à un différentiel de pression positif à travers ledit manchon de piston dans une première direction longitudinale, et l'autre desdits pistons est adapté pour venir en contact de manière étanche avec son épaulement associé en réponse à un différentiel de pression positif à travers ledit manchon de piston dans la direction longitudinale opposée. 15 20 25 30 35
 7. Ensemble d'indexation pour outil de fond de puits, comportant : une chambre (210) remplie de fluide ; des moyens formant pistons à double action sensibles à la pression, comportant un manchon (168) de piston agencé dans ladite chambre remplie de fluide, un premier et un second épaulements (170, 174) situés sur ledit manchon de piston, un premier et un second pistons (190, 192) associés audit manchon de piston et adaptés pour venir en appui sur lesdits premier et second épaulements respectivement, et des moyens de contrainte (194) adaptés pour contraindre lesdits premier et second pistons vers lesdits premier et second épaulements respectifs ; des premier et second moyens formant arrêts de pistons (127, 146), écartés longitudinalement dans ladite chambre remplie de fluide, associés respectivement auxdits premier et second pistons et adaptés pour empêcher ledit appui lorsqu'ils sont en contact avec leurs pistons associés ; et des moyens (164, 186) formant cliquet à bille et fente associés auxdits moyens formant pistons. 40 45 50 55
 8. Ensemble selon la revendication 7, dans lequel lesdits moyens formant cliquet à bille et fente comportent une bille (186) reçue dans des moyens (188) formant siège pour bille et s'étendant dans une fente (164) associée à des moyens (156) formant mandrin, et des moyens (182) formant pivot permettant un mouvement en rotation relative à peu près libre entre lesdits moyens formant siège pour bille et lesdits moyens formant mandrin.
 9. Ensemble selon la revendication 8, dans lequel lesdits moyens (182) formant pivot sont agencés entre lesdits moyens formant pistons à double action et lesdits moyens (188) formant siège pour bille, et ladite fente (164) est une fente continue agencée sur la partie extérieure desdits moyens (156) formant mandrin.
 10. Ensemble selon la revendication 9, dans lequel ladite fente (164) comporte plusieurs branches agencées longitudinalement reliées par des canaux de transfert disposés latéralement en oblique.
 11. Ensemble selon la revendication 10, dans lequel lesdites branches comportent des extrémités étendues et des extrémités raccourcies, et lesdits moyens formant pistons déplacent lesdits moyens formant mandrin en repoussant ladite bille dans lesdites extrémités raccourcies.
 12. Ensemble selon la revendication 11, comportant en outre au moins deux branches orientées longitudinalement de manière opposée, adjacentes latéralement, ayant des extrémités étendues, de telle sorte que ladite bille peut se déplacer en séquence au moins deux fois dans des directions longitudinales opposées sans déplacement desdits moyens formant mandrin.
 13. Ensemble selon la revendication 11, dans lequel ladite fente comporte des branches décalées longitudinalement comportant des extrémités raccourcies connectées par des canaux de transfert, de telle sorte que ladite bille peut se déplacer longitudinalement dans ladite fente et déplacer lesdits moyens formant mandrin sur une distance plus grande que celle d'une branche unique.