LARGE BORE VERTICAL TREE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/041,803, filed Apr. 2, 2008, the full disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

1. Field of Invention

This invention relates in general to production of oil and gas wells, and in particular to a wellhead having a large bore tree that includes a hanger adapter in the bore, the plug having a passage therethrough to receive a control line.

2. Description of Related Art

Wellheads used in the production of hydrocarbons extracted from subterranean formations typically comprise a wellhead assembly. Wellhead assemblies are attached at the upper ends of wellbores that intersect hydrocarbon producing formations. Wellhead assemblies also provide support for tubing and casing inserted into the wellbore. The casing lines the wellbore, thereby isolating the wellbore from the surrounding formation. The tubing typically lies concentric within the casing and provides a conduit for producing the hydrocarbons entrained within the formation.

Wellhead assemblies also typically include a production tree connecting to the upper end of the wellhead housing. The production tree controls and distributes the fluids produced from the wellbore. Valves assemblies are typically provided within wellhead production trees for controlling the flow of oil or gas from a wellhead and/or for controlling circulating fluid flow in and out of a wellhead. Gate valves and other sliding stem-type valves have a valve member or disc and operate by selectively moving the stem to insert/remove the valve member into/from the flow of fluid to stop/allow the flow when desired.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

A subsea wellhead assembly that includes a wellhead housing, a production tree, a tubing hanger adapted to land in the wellhead assembly inside the wellhead housing, and a bore formed through the production tree having an inner diameter greater than the tubing hanger outer diameter. A hanger adapter may be included having an annular body disposed on the tubing hanger upper surface and a flange member projecting radially outward from the annular body.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a schematical partial sectional view of an embodiment of a large bore wellhead production tree having a hanger adapter in the tree bore.

FIG. **2** is a schematic illustration of drilling through a large bore wellhead.

FIG. **3** is a schematic illustration of inserting tubing and a tubing hanger within the wellhead of FIG. **2**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings in which embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and

should not be construed as limited to the illustrated embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout. For the convenience in referring to the accompanying figures, directional terms are used for reference and illustration only. For example, the directional terms such as "upper", "lower", "above", "below", and the like are being used to illustrate a relational location.

It is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the exact details of construction, operation, exact materials, or embodiments shown and described, as modifications and equivalents will be apparent to one skilled in the art. In the drawings and specification, there have been disclosed illustrative embodiments of the invention and, although specific terms are employed, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for the purpose of limitation. Accordingly, the invention is therefore to be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

FIG. **1** is a side sectional schematic of an embodiment of a wellhead assembly having a full bore, or large bore, tree as part of the assembly. The wellhead assembly **10** illustrated in FIG. **1** comprises an outer wellhead housing **12** anchored in the seabed on conductor pipe **14**. The conductor pipe **14** extends a predetermined distance into a wellbore **5** over which the wellhead assembly **10** is disposed. Coaxially landed within the outer wellhead housing **12** is a high pressure/inner wellbore housing **16**. The high pressure wellbore housing **16** includes therein a casing hanger **24** landed on its inner circumference. A packoff **40** seals between the casing hanger **24** and the high pressure housing **16**. Casing **28** is attached to the lower portion of the casing hanger **24** and is cemented into and lines the wellbore **5**. A tubing hanger **18** is coaxially attached to the high pressure wellbore housing **16** by a tubing hanger latch **20** above the casing hanger **24** attachment point. A seal **22** may be provided between the tubing hanger **18** and the high pressure housing **16**. Tubing **26** is suspended from the tubing hanger **18** and coaxially projects within the casing **28** to define a tubing annulus **27** therebetween. A lower actuator passage **38** is axially formed through the tubing hanger **18** and shown registering with the tubing annulus **27**.

A production tree **42** also included with the wellhead assembly **10** of FIG. **1** is shown affixed on the high pressure housing **16** upper end **17**. An annular channel **45** formed into the production tree **42** lower terminal surface **47** is configured to receive the high pressure housing **16** upper end. A connector **44** on the production tree **42** outer periphery couples the high pressure housing **16** to the production tree **42**. Fluids produced from within the wellbore **5** that flow through the tubing **26** can be delivered to a production line (not shown) through a production outlet **50** and wing valve **52**. The tubing **26**, tubing hanger **18**, the space in the bore **56** above the tubing hanger **18**, and production outlet **50** form a production flow path. The wing valve **52** selectively controls produced fluids flow to the production line. The tree **42** of FIG. **1** includes a large annulus bore **56** axially extending through the tree **42** body. A swab valve **58** is provided in the bore **56**; selectively operating the swab valve **58** can control flow and pressure through the bore **56**. The bore **56** and valve **58** are optionally sized to accommodate insertion and retrieval therethrough of tubing and casing. The swab valve **58** is shown as a ball valve. Optionally, the swab valve **58** can be a gate valve.

An annular hanger adapter **60** is shown disposed on the tubing hanger **18** upper end. The hanger adapter **60** includes an annular body **63** having radial dimensions substantially

matching the tubing hanger **18**. The hanger adapter **60** includes a flange **65** shown atop the body **63** that radially extends outward into contact with the bore **56** inner diameter. Seals **67** are shown provided in the interface between the flange **65** and bore **56** inner diameter. A lockdown mechanism (not shown) can be used for securing the hanger adapter **60** within the tree bore **56**. An upper actuator passage **62** shown passing through the flange **65** and body **63** registers with the lower actuator passage **38**. Above the hanger latch **20**, the tubing hanger **18** outer surface transitions radially inward away from the high pressure housing **16** creating a shoulder **19** on the tubing hanger **18**. A tubing hanger annulus **36** is shown in the annular space circumscribing the tubing hanger **18** and plug body **63** between the shoulder **19** and flange **65**. The tubing hanger annulus **36** outer radius is bounded by the high pressure housing **16** and tree **42**.

A circulation port **46** shown passing between the plug annulus **61** and the tree **42** outer diameter includes a circulation valve **48** for annulus pressure and fluid control through the port **46**. A tubing annulus passage **34** is shown bored through the tubing hanger **18** and the high pressure housing **16**; the tubing annulus passage **34** provides pressure and fluid communication between the tubing hanger annulus **36** and the tubing annulus **27**. The combination of the tubing annulus passage **34**, tubing hanger annulus **36**, and plug annulus **61** creates a flow path to the circulation of fluid into the tubing annulus **27**, such as during workover operations.

A selectively openable and closeable safety valve **30** is shown in the tubing **26** that provides pressure isolation between the wellhead assembly **10** and within the wellbore **5**. The safety valve **30** is operable with the actuator **32** shown on the tubing, and can be electrically or hydraulically powered. A line **33** attached to the actuator **32** is shown that can provide electrical or hydraulic power. Extending upward from the actuator **32**, the line **33** follows the path through the tubing annulus **27**, the lower actuator passage **38**, and into the upper actuator passage **62**. The upper actuator passage **62** registers with a tree control line passage **64** shown formed through the tree **42**. There, the line **33** connects to a lead **66** that extends from a subsea control module **68**. The control line **33** may be disposed within the lead **66** or connected thereto for transferring either hydraulic fluid or electrical current through the line. In one embodiment, a pair of control lines is provided to and from the actuator **32** to complete the electrical or hydraulic circuit. As is known, the subsea control module **68** can provide control for operating the actuator **32** as well as any actuatable elements, such as valves and sliding sleeves, associated with the wellhead assembly **10**. The passages **64**, **62**, **38** and annulus **27** form an actuation passage. Aligning the passages within the wellhead assembly **10** may require an orientation device when landing the hanger adapter **60** within the wellhead assembly **10**. It is well within the capabilities of those skilled in the art to create and implement such an orientation.

One of the advantages of the device illustrated herein is the flexibility of installing particular components of the wellhead assembly **10** and in what order. For example, the wellhead housings **12**, **16** and tree **42** can be installed prior to drilling the wellbore **5**. As noted above, the tree bore **56** diameter can accommodate a drill bit therethrough. Referring now to FIG. **2**, a rig **4** for drilling the wellbore **5** is shown above the sea surface **7**. An annular riser **8** is connected between the tree **42** and a platform **6** on the rig **4**. A drill string **9** inserted through the riser **8** and tree bore **42** extends into the wellbore **5**. A drill bit (not shown) on the drill string **9** lower end excavates the wellbore **5**. The rig **4** includes legs **11** shown extending to the sea floor, however the present embodiment is not limited to

this configuration and can include semi-submersible, jack-up, submersible, and a floating vessel. Optionally, a blowout preventer (BOP) **13** can be installed prior to drilling and the drilling can occur through the BOP **13** as well as the production tree **42**.

Referring back to FIG. **1**, after the wellbore **5** has been drilled to depth a tree cap **54** can be installed on the bore **56** upper end to prevent sea water ingress into the drilled wellbore **5**. The tree cap **54** can be added before or after one of casing installation, tubing installation, or completing the wellbore **5**. A remotely operated vehicle (not shown) may be employed to install/remove the tree cap **54**. FIG. **3** schematically depicts a partial side sectional view of the tubing hanger **18** coupled on a drill string **9**. Tubing **26** extends from the tubing hanger **18** through the production tree **42** and into the wellbore **5**. In one example, FIG. **3** illustrates a step of completing a wellbore **5** by deploying and landing the tubing hanger **18** and attached tubing **26** into the wellhead housing **16**. In another example, FIG. **3** depicts retrieving the tubing hanger **18** and tubing **26** that may occur during a workover procedure. The tree bore's **56** dimensions allow deployment and retrieval of the tubing hanger **18** and tubing **26** through the production tree **42**.

The present invention described herein, therefore, is well adapted to carry out the objects and attain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as others inherent therein. While a presently preferred embodiment of the invention has been given for purposes of disclosure, numerous changes exist in the details of procedures for accomplishing the desired results. These and other similar modifications will readily suggest themselves to those skilled in the art, and are intended to be encompassed within the spirit of the present invention disclosed herein and the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A subsea wellhead assembly comprising:

a wellhead housing;

a production tree secured to the wellhead housing upper end,

the production tree having a production port and an annulus port;

a tubing hanger releasably landed in the wellhead housing, the tubing hanger having an attached tubing string and a production passage formed therein;

a bore formed through the production tree having an inner diameter greater than the tubing hanger outer diameter, so that the tubing hanger can pass through the bore; and

a hanger adapter disposed on the tubing hanger in the tree bore, the hanger adapter having an upper end below the tree production port and an axial bore registering with the tubing hanger production passage and in fluid communication with the tree production port.

2. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **1**, wherein the hanger adapter has an annular body with a flange member projecting radially outward from the annular body into sealing engagement with the tree bore defining an annulus chamber below the flange that is in communication with the annulus port.

3. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **2**, further comprising an actuation passage formed through the production tree, the hanger adapter, and tubing hanger leading exterior to the tree for controlling actuation of a downhole element.

4. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **3**, further comprising tubing attached to the tubing hanger and an actuator affixed on the tubing.

5. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **4**, further comprising a control line disposed through the actuation passage.

6. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **1**, further comprising a latch coupled between the tubing hanger and the wellhead housing.

7. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **6**, further comprising:

a tubing hanger annulus circumscribing a portion of the tubing hanger above the latch;

a tubing annulus passage through the wellhead housing to the tubing hanger annulus, the tubing hanger annulus being in communication with the annulus port of the tree.

8. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **1**, further comprising a valve in the tree bore above the hanger adapter, the valve selectively openable to form a passage adapted to receive the tubing hanger therethrough.

9. A subsea wellhead assembly comprising:

a wellhead housing;

a production tree secured to the wellhead housing upper end,

the production tree having a production port and an annulus port;

a casing hanger having attached casing that projects into a wellbore;

a tubing hanger releasably landed in the wellhead housing defining an annular space between the tubing hanger upper portion and the tree bore, the tubing hanger having

an attached tubing string disposed within the casing to form a tubing annulus therebetween, and a production passage formed axially through the tubing hanger;

an annulus passage through the wellhead housing and tubing hanger, so that a flow path is created between the tubing annulus and annulus port; a bore formed through the production tree having an inner diameter greater than the tubing hanger outer diameter, so that the tubing hanger can pass through the bore; and

a hanger adapter disposed on the tubing hanger in the tree bore, the hanger adapter having an upper end below the tree production port and an axial bore registering with the tubing hanger production passage and in fluid communication with the tree production port.

10. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **9**, wherein the hanger adapter has an annular body with a flange member projecting radially outward from the annular body into sealing engagement with the tree bore.

11. The subsea wellhead assembly of claim **10**, further comprising a passage laterally formed through the tree, extending radially through the flange and axially through the body, and axially through the tubing hanger to define an actuation passage between the tubing annulus and external to the tree.