

How to modify Accucraft's Hydrostatic Lubricators

*From an article by John Shortreid, GVGR Member #827
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Background

Recently members have been purchasing new Accucraft live steam engines that come with their new 'Adjustable Hydrostatic Lubricators'. This new design is intended to replace the older non-adjustable 'Displacement Lubricators'. Apparently some Accucraft clients had complained about the amount of steam oil their engines were using and the resulting oil getting onto the surface of their engines. I would say it's a live steam engine, so get over it. That said however, the new design is now problematic and a concern for many of us

I purchased a 2 Cylinder Shay with this lubricator installed. In running the engine I became concerned about the apparent lack of oil getting to the cylinders, no matter how I adjusted the the needed valve on this new lubricator. I was also hearing the same concern being expressed by other members. This lack of steam oil would of course eventually damage the cylinders.

Getting started

Now, I'm no expert, but the older design with the steam line running right through the lubricator made perfect sense.

The new design has the steam oil entering the steam line from a 'T' extension line. I'm not sure how this works, but as I say I'm no expert. I'm told that the hole to release the oil in the new lubricator was placed to close to the needle valve and that drilling a hole further away from the valve would resolve the problem



Not only was I nervous about drilling such a hole, but I was not convinced in any event that this would do the trick. I approached Accucraft about replacing the current lubricator with the older version, but was told that they did not have these in stock and it could take quite some time to get replacements from China.

The Club does have several live steam experienced modelers and I consulted with some of them on this issue. They told me that they believed that there was not enough room in the lubricator for the steam to condense and pick up the oil. Several had drilled out the lubricator cap to allow for more room for the steam to condense. They claimed that this helped.



Adjustable Hydrostatic
Lubricator cap after being
drilled out.

So I had this done for me by an experienced Club member, and since the needle valve was blocking the existing hole in the steam line, I also decided to cut off the end of the needle valve just past the threads and use it simply as a plug to end of the steam line. While this lubricator is no longer adjustable, it now appears

to function better. However, it does not seem as effective as the older lubricator design and I will continue to press Accucraft for a replacement.



Final (non) adjustable Hydrostatic Lubricator reassembled.



GVGRC Members may find the complete article featured in the October 2012 issue of the Burnt Journal, located in the Archives section of the GVGRC website, in the Member area.

John Shortreid
GVGRC Burnt Journal Editor
President of the Fraser Valley & Pacific Railway