

UNUSUAL PRODUCTS

KEY GRAPHITE PASTE

It's Only 90 years old....

I spend a lot of time chasing down manufacturers of products I feel would be of interest to you in your restorations. Sometimes, the chase gets a little weird. Well, I think that I just found the king of weird!

One of our readers told me about a graphite paste that can be used as a gasket sealer. It is gasoline proof, alcohol proof, oil, turpentine, tar, all kinds of stuff proof - except for water. It is called Key Graphite Paste, not to be confused with Key Pipe Joint Compound. This fellow told me that he has been using Key Graphite Paste for years, and that it was recommended in the service manuals back in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Now here's the weird part. I went on-line, found the product and contacted the owners of the website. I was told that they are merely distributors, and they passed along the name of the manufacturer in Houston TX. I telephoned, and the receptionist insisted that I had a wrong number or the wrong company. They didn't make that product, she told me. But I persisted, and she put me through to another person in marketing. A lovely lady, but she knew nothing about the products, except that, yes, it was theirs.

She kindly passed my name along to the national sales manager, and he and I spoke by phone. He knew nothing about the product, except he believed that they did, in fact, have it manufactured for them, and they shipped it in 55 gallon drums to a place in California where it was repackaged it under their name. All fine, except that the product package lists the name of the parent company in Houston. I'm still waiting for a callback from the company in California.

The good news though, is that it is available from McMaster-Carr. *"Key Graphite Paste - Nonhardening for use with petroleum products, acids, and high-pressure steam joints. Not for water*

This column is designed to showcase a product which can make your restoration job a little better, a little faster, or just a little easier. Products shown here are not necessarily new, but they might fall into the less-than-common usage category. We are not necessarily endorsing the product or the manufacturer, but just passing the information along to you.

service. Temperature range is -30° to +750° F. Color is black.

Size Each

Key Graphite Paste

5/8-lb. Can 4586K8* \$15.24

1-lb. Can 4586K5 \$15.78

*Brush-top can.

The manufacturer's website blurb offers the very same information that McMaster-Carr has in their listing, but goes on to say,

"This viscous compound is the industry's finest for leakproof sealing of threaded, flanged and gasket joints in flow lines for gasoline and other fluids, solvents, including chlorinated (Trichloroethylene) and aromatic and vegetable oils, ethers, esters, ketones, alcohols, glycerin, glycols, compressed air; high pressure steam and strong acids. Key Graphite Paste acts as a lubricant and protects pipe threads from rust and seizing. When hot, it expands to provide an even tighter seal. Gaskets sealed with it can be reused. It stays soft and pliable in the can and never needs stirring. Key Graphite Paste is black and consists of food grade carbohydrate binder, graphite, and a preservative. Underwriters Laboratories Inc. has classified this material at 0 to 10, less hazardous than paraffin oil in respect to fire hazard."

An ad which we located from January 1925 gives even more information. See the ad on the next page.

The 1925 advertisement indicates that the paste, once it reaches "the boiling temperature of water..." carbonizes and doubles in volume. Thus it fills every crack and crevice and seals the joint against leaking...."

One of the most appealing features of the product is, though, the fact that it is water soluble.

Gaskets are easily removed (a little warm water helps dissolve the graphite paste) and the gasket can be re-used. Graphite is a natural mineral, and in the paste it is held into a thick solution with a water-soluble binder. Thin it with just a little water, if necessary, and paint it on both faces of the gasket. Snug it up, and you are good to go!

I have tried the Key Graphite Paste on a set of exhaust manifold gaskets, a cross-over exhaust pipe, a carburetor mounting gasket and a head gasket. So far, it seems to perform well, with no leaks or problems.

I did have to remove the exhaust manifold after using the paste, and it washed right off.

As an aside, the fellow who introduced me to Key Graphite paste told me that years back the binder used for the graphite was molasses. Today, with advances in science (some good, others, well...) more efficacious binders are used. But, I was told, after an engine rebuild, when the car was started, it smelled like Mom was baking molasses cookies. Now that's not such a bad thing.

Although manufactured by Keytite (a division of Cameron Valve) Houston TX, don't get involved with the parent company. Save yourself some grief, and just go directly to McMaster-Carr:

McMaster-Carr
<http://www.mcmaster.com/>
 with warehouses in
 Atlanta (404) 346-7000
 Chicago (630) 833-0300
 Cleveland (330) 995-5500
 Los Angeles (562) 692-5911
 New Jersey (609) 689-3000



KEY® Graphite Paste is available in both a brush top can (left) and a traditional can. The regular can is more economical. Use a soldering acid brush or a putty knife to apply the compound.

January 6, 1925

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**It stops leaks
and keeps 'em stopped!**



**KEY GRAPHITE PASTE
makes joints tight where
other means fail. Even
makes gaskets unnecessary.**

Key Graphite Paste contains a larger proportion of pure graphite than any other joint filler. It carbonizes and expands to double its volume when heated to the boiling temperature of water. Thus it fills every crack and crevice, and seals the joint against leaking whether the line carries steam, oil gas, tar, ammonia acid, turpentine or practically any other fluid. It holds tight under all pressures and temperatures, yet, when required, the joint can be very easily taken apart and the surfaces washed perfectly clean. It has been used on or in place of gaskets, on cylinder heads, valve stems, piston packing, threaded or flanged pipe joints, hand hole covers, Key Safety hand hole Caps, and many other similar places. It always gives perfect satisfaction.

**Do You Know About
KEY SAFETY
Hand Hole Caps?**

They are the simplest, most efficient type of closure for water tube boilers. Installed or removed with greatest ease - no special tools or wrenches required and no gaskets. Time involved in cleaning tubes pays for caps within a year. Key Caps are guaranteed to withstand a pressure of 3000 pounds.

**KEY
Boiler Equipment Co.**
East St. Louis, Ill.

Let us send you a sample of Key Graphite Paste. Fill out, clip and mail the coupon at the right. Try the paste on the most severe location. We know it will work.

KEY BOILER EQUIPMENT CO.
2715 & McCandless Ave. East St. Louis, Ill.
Name _____
Phone _____
Firm _____
Address _____