



Otter Wonderful Suit!



Jack in his new Otter suit (photo courtesy of Gordon McSkimming)

ONCE UPON a time long, long ago, well not that long ago, when I first decided to change from a wet suit to a dry I started to look around at what everyone else was wearing. The most popular suit seemed to be the Otter Ultimate, and I was determined to get one. However fate stepped in and I was offered another manufacturer's suit at very reasonable terms. For the next five years I used it happily, not knowing whether it was any good or not as I had never used a dry suit before I had nothing to judge it against.

Since then I have watched enviously as Otter suits got better and better, then earlier this year my chum David Ainsley invited me to dive with him from his new boat. When I saw his new Otter suit and how easy he got it on and how good it looked I thought that's for me. So I sent of my order and in July this year I finally became the proud owner of an Otter drysuit.

It's a Britannic Super Skin with a front entry zip in royal blue with black knee pads. The skin material is a membrane that is unique to Otter; it is light, tough and slightly stretchy for what they claim is a more comfortable fit.

To the touch it has a smooth feel, like suede or velvet, but is obviously very tough and hard wearing. Inside it is quite smooth which makes it easy to don. Seams are double sewn, double taped and hand glued. Knee pads, cuff and neck seals are all heavy duty and there is a

grade 8 zip either front or back entry.

There are reflective patches for safety and options for one or two cargo pockets or one cargo and one zipped, as well as internal braces and very heavy duty neoprene lined boots. It also has a neoprene collar that keeps your hood in place and very efficiently keeps your neck warm.

At first I thought this was just a sales gimmick but in use I find it terrific - it really works and keeps my hood from folding up and exposing the back of my neck.

Otter has been making dry suits since 1987 when they were formed, and are members of the guild of master craftsmen. Over the years they have developed the design of their suits and as divers they are able to test and improve them. This suit is the culmination of all those years of modification and is probably the best suit on the market today.

I was about to leave for a midweek trip to St. Abbs when I received a call saying my suit had arrived so a slight detour to pick it up and a rather excited editor became impatient to get diving.

We stopped at Scoutscroft for air and the ever helpful Amanda pointed out I might need to cut the neck seal, good idea to try it on first. She was right of course and there followed a bizarre few minutes while I hacked away at the neck seal with a pair of nail scissors until Amanda stepped in and feeling sorry for a hapless man did it properly.

There were pretty clear instructions on how to don a front entry suit and I have to say it is pretty easy. Keeping the zip well lubricated with beeswax is important, the first few inches are the hardest part but once you get it running its fine.

Another feature I didn't notice till I had it on is the elasticated panel at the back which gives the suit a more fitted appearance. Once on it felt very comfortable with the swivel inlet valve in exactly the right place and a neat little cover to protect it when not in use.

The heavy duty boots were perfect for the long walk round the harbour and did not slip when going over the weed covered rocks at the entry point.

In the water I opened the exhaust valve and dumped all the air from the suit very quickly. A lot of the dives I do with Mr Ainsley are drifts where it is important to get down as quickly as possible so this is a welcome feature for me.

Anyone who wants to retain some buoyancy should just open the valve a little, it really is quite easy to regulate. I suppose for most people that last statement is obvious, but when wearing my last suit I had to squeeze my arm to dump air. I had the valve checked and there was nothing wrong with it and I never found out why it was so hard to dump air. Anyway that's history - I don't have any problems with this suit and getting my buoyancy perfect is easy. I have taken a couple of kilos off my weight belt. I have had the suit for two months now and done about twelve dives and I've even been snorkelling in it, not easy in a drysuit but it is in this one.

So far I have found no niggly little annoying things about it. Everything works and works well; it looks good, it feels good and by heavens it is good. Two of my friends who wear rather expensive suits made in California are so impressed they are changing to a Britannic Skin; it is half the price and is much better made.

Otter is based in Yorkshire where God comes from in case you didn't know. They have been making suits for years and know exactly what they are doing. They don't employ Italian designers because they don't need to, their suits look good and are made to last. To see the full range of Otter suits visit www.drysuits.co.uk

Get Filming With Greenaway

WANNABE UNDERWATER film makers will be interested to hear of an excellent package from Greenaway Marine that will get you up and running - taking your first vital steps en route to Cannes. OK, Cannes may be a few years down the line but with the latest Panasonic NV-GS17 video camera complete in Seapro underwater housing you are definitely ready to go.

Gerald Greenaway told **SCOTTISH DIVER**: "We can house virtually any video camera on the market but there are certain models which really are ideal for underwater use. If you don't already have a video camera and are wondering what to choose, we would particularly recommend the latest Panasonic NV-GS17 video camera. This is



a top quality digital camera and ideal for general use. And a big plus is that it's ideal for fitting into one of our housings. Other pros are - a very wide angle lens, 1 lux minimum illumination and colour viewfinder. Oh! and a very special price - £1250. This includes the latest Panasonic NV-GS17 video camera plus Housing with Optolite Port and 3 controls, and monitor screen open at approx 60° for accurate framing of all your video shots. Spec includes 800k pixel CCD, 24 x optical digital zoom, 2.5" LCD monitor, super image stabiliser; 1 Lux illumination and DV Out.

"You can upgrade to Panasonic NV-GS21 video camera with Single Shot Control on to Memory card plus housing as above for £1350 or for those on a budget we can supply the Panasonic GS17 complete with our SP1 housing, flat front port and the basic controls, on/off plus video run for a highly competitive £995."

For more info call Gerald Greenaway on 01793 814992 or visit www.greenawaymarine.com



FOR THOSE OF you worried about losing your precious scuba gear, take note. Dive-logs have announced that they are introducing a free and anonymous contact service for customers who purchase their ScubaTags.

ScubaTags are small, discrete, long lasting tags for Scuba equipment. At the time of purchase they are indelibly engraved with contact information that helps to identify equipment and also provides a form of personal identification in the water.

The engraved text can be whatever the diver wants and usually includes phone, email or address contact information; however, including an address on ScubaTags could be a way of inadvertently advertising an empty house whilst away on holiday.

The new contact service fixes this security problem by allowing customers to use a special anonymous contact system

Get Tagged

through Dive-Logs. If a piece of kit is found by someone, they contact dive-logs using a unique code found on the ScubaTag, who will then pass on the information to the customer. This contact service from Dive-Logs is free and easily used at time of purchase of the ScubaTags.

In addition, many dive centres have been requesting a set of ScubaTags for their equipment with sequential numbers for easier gear identification. Dive-Logs have now introduced a further pricing discount for dive centres or clubs who purchase large sets which includes a free sequential numbering system.

Prices start at £3 each for quantities of more than 20. Prices continue to decrease as larger quantities are purchased down to £2.50 per ScubaTag.

For more information on the ScubaTag contact service or Dive Centre pricing, please go to the website: www.dive-logs.com.

Grab A Prize

IN THE last issue of **SCOTTISH DIVER** we told you about fundraising wing-walker Martin Quinn - doing his bit for the Anthony Nolan Trust.

Illustrated are examples of some of the goods up for grabs in the raffle, which include merchandise from

Scubapro, Suunto, Apeks, Aqua Sphere, Ap Valves, Beaver, Bowstone, Hunter, Sea & Sea, Typhoon, Seac Sub, Custom Divers, Seven Tenths, Fourth Element and Hydro Tech. The raffle can be entered through Martin's shop - Aquatron.



BIG BLUE Planet (www.bigblueplanet.com) is a new and free web resource available to all scuba divers. It brings together a range of information on all the world's dive locations into one place.

So far the Big Blue Planet people has collected data on

more than 400 different locations from around the planet and there are more being added every day! From white ice diving in northern Russia, to live-aboards on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, every conceivable diving experience is covered! This is a tremendous resource for divers and is accessible from any location via the web.

The advanced search functionality has now been extended with a special global water temperature search page. It is now possible to interactively

search a thermal map of the planet's oceans shown at different months of the year and at different depths.

Zooming in shows all of the dive locations in different temperature zones for easy identification of the perfect holiday spot.

For more information on the global water temperature search feature, please go to the website:

www.bigblueplanet.com

Big Blue Planet Gets Thermal