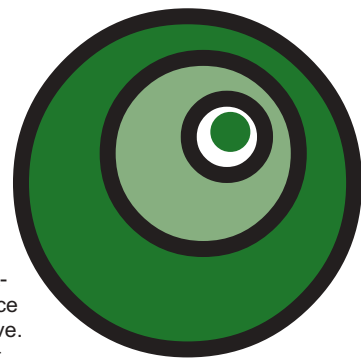


New Swedish Wings



DIVESHOP



AGIR-BROKK IS a Swedish company that specialise in high quality diving equipment and accessories. Their products are designed to endure the extreme conditions of the Swedish winter; should be alright in Scotland then!

The Scandinavians are looking to break into the Scottish market and so sent **SCOTTISH DIVER** a Blackbird 36 wing to test. The Blackbird is designed for a single cylinder but they have another, the Habrok for twins.

The wing has a double bladder, the inner made of 420 denier 'puncturesafe' cordura lifejacket fabric. The Swedes see zips as a

weak point so have kept the opening to a minimum with a layer of rubber under the zip to protect the inner bag from impact damage. The outer bag is made from heavy duty cordura and has a standard corrugated inflation hose.

Another simple yet effective touch is the rubber rings, made from what look like the inner tube of a bicycle tyre, used to hold the inflation hose in place. The bag is sandwiched between a stainless steel tank mount and a 3mm stainless steel backplate with DIR style harness.

I must say I was impressed with the build quality, it looked like it was made in the Volvo factory - solid

and indestructible. I have always scoffed and made fun of the DIR approach to diving but I did like the simplicity of design. The harness is a single length of 5cm webbing threaded through the backplate, it took a bit of adjusting but once this is done it will not slip. It has five stainless D-rings with two on the crotch strap one of which is below the bum, I have no idea what it is there for and neither did the two techie divers I asked, but I'm sure there is some obvious use for it.

The first time I used it I was diving with Phil Smith from the Marine Biology Station at Millport. Phil has a Halcyon wing that looks not dissimilar to the Agir although the Agir looked a bit more robust, although that might just be because his is three years old.

Wings are new to me and at first I kept trying to pull the D-rings to tighten the shoulder straps until I realised they were fixed. I wondered if the whole thing would slip and roll about

but it didn't. In fact it was remarkably comfortable and I didn't notice any movement throughout the dive.

On the surface I tried inflating it fully and found the 35lb lift more than adequate to keep my head clear of the water. I've heard people say wings float you face down but I didn't find this.

There are plenty of holes in the backpack setup to allow you to position your cylinder low enough to keep you floating in a head up position. I was also a bit concerned that the wing nuts would press into my back, but again I need not have worried as the groove they are in keeps them well away from contact.

Divers who use wings will probably be having a laugh at my novice like concerns but I have only owned one BC, which is fifteen years old and is probably due for renewal. My experience of the Agir-Brokk has made me think twice about this, I very much like the comfort and ease of use of this particular wing.

The crotch strap reminds me of the first harnesses we had back in the 60s although you have to remember basic things like putting your weight belt on last, and the uncluttered chest area is another advantage.

Another interesting extra the manufacturers added is a line cutter, which so far I have had no need of. Perhaps I should dive the caves in Loch Long as there is usually plenty of fishing line there.

On the downside the only disadvantage I can think of is the weight of the wing if you are travelling abroad. So all in all, good value at £395.

At present there is no distributor in Scotland but there is one in England and you can always order one direct from Agir-Brokk in Sweden. They have a wide range of equipment on their website: www.agir-brokk.com which all looks as good as the Blackbird wing.



Agir-Brokk's Blackbird 36, according to our reviewer, is robust and comfortable and comes with some interesting extras

NEW SCAPA ACCOUNT

SCAPA FLOW devotees will be delighted to find out that Wordsmith Publications are reissuing Admiral Ludwig von Reuter's original account of the remarkable scuttling of the interned Imperial German Fleet in 1919.

"There has been a long expressed wish for an account of the last few months of the existence of the German High Seas Fleet. In the following work I try to fulfil this wish and endeavour to give full details to justify the scuttling" -

so begins the original account of the greatest scuttling in naval history by the commander of the German Fleet, Vice Admiral Ludwig von Reuter. This fresh translation and additional chapters by wreck historian Simon Mills is a golden opportunity for British divers to read first-hand what really happened in Orkney 86 years ago.

Of particular significance is the von Reuter family's agreement to allow Mills access to their private papers, with the result that images never seen outside of the family are included for the first time in this limited edition.

A review of the re-issued volume 'From Graveyard to Resurrection' will appear in **SCOTTISH DIVER** later this year.

For details of how you can buy a copy of the book - email: data@wordsmith-uk.com or call Elizabeth Tildesley on 01494 782 376 01856.





'Hunting' For A New Dive Suit? - Read On

IF YOU are currently in the market for a new dry suit and yet you are finding it hard to justify parting with your hard earned cash on just one item then take a few moments of your time to read this article – it may well provide you with a few good reasons as to why a new dry suit is a good idea and worth your money.

Hunter, the wellington boot supremos, have just launched three new dry suits in their sports diving range; the Pro-CBX and Pro-VSN, both medium weight suits and the Pro-SBX which is light weight.

The latest addition to the Hunter sports diving range is the Pro-SBX which although light weight is extremely hard wearing. It is made from a light trilaminate material and

features Hunter's unique Vulca-seam technology (the same method used in their iconic welly boots). The suit has been designed with total comfort and flexibility in mind; it also boasts neoprene lined boots to keep your feet warm and dry, a carry bag, changing mat and manual and service material such as talc and zip lube.

Design as well as functionality and comfort is a key plus point of the suit. You can relax in the knowledge that it will do its job whilst enjoying the fact that you are wearing an item that looks good too. With water and bubble effect patterns to choose from for shoulder and knee panels – you will always stand out from the crowd!

If however wreck diving is your passion and you are looking for a suit that is a little hardier, why not try the Pro-CBX?

The Pro-CBX is another trilaminate suit manufactured from a brand new Cordura/Butyl/Polyester material, which replaces the previously favoured nylon fabrics. The new Cordura material has an extremely hardwearing textured outer surface, and yet feels softer and more comfortable than the old nylon trilaminates. This dive suit is ideal for those who are regular wreck divers or dive in a harsh environment having proved itself in independent taber abrasion tests.

The remaining medium weight suit – the Pro-VSN – is a hybrid stretch trilaminate suit, manufactured from material that is made up of an inner and outer layer of 'Armatex' jersey nylon.

The overall material gauge of this suit is roughly 1mm and is non-compressible which means that when wearing one you will experience no loss of buoyancy or insulation. Again, like its fellow suits it is comfortable and tough wearing and features the Vulcra-seam jointing technique, which should give you complete peace of mind. There are also a variety of accessories to take advantage of including pockets, relief zip, warm neck collar and attached hood.

It is clear that no matter what the conditions outside, inside a Hunter Pro-Series Dry Suit the climate couldn't be more favourable. By buying a suit from such a longstanding and reputable company as Hunter you can be sure you are buying a quality item and the support of a company that has spent over 100 years in the rubber industry.

So if you are looking for a dry suit that you can well and truly look at and believe is worth all those pennies, look no further than the Hunter Pro-Series Dry Suit series.

For more information on any of the above visit www.hunter-diving.com



Get Your Thermals On!

SOMETIMES EVEN even the best dry suits can't keep out the chill of Scotland's waters, so why not see if Fourth Element's new Xerotherm Plus might provide the solution. You might discover that they have taken thermal protection to a whole new level.

Combining the Xerotherm top, leggings and socks with a sleeveless vest, greatly improves the performance of the Xerotherm Plus, making it suitable as a base layer in more demanding situations or longer dives. It also makes

the perfect lightweight undersuit for underneath neoprene drysuits, causing minimum additional buoyancy, but providing comfort and thermal protection.

Manufactured using the fastest wicking fabric currently available, the Xerotherm Plus achieves its surprising level of thermal performance by maintaining a layer of air next to the skin. Around the body core, this effect is magnified by the use of a double layer of Xerotherm fabric.

The top leggings and socks

can be used on their own as a lighter base layer, and the vest itself can be used if just a small amount of additional layering under an undersuit is required.

The Xerotherm Plus is the perfect accompaniment to the Xerotherm Arctic for use in cold waters with membrane or trilaminate drysuits. Together, these products form the most versatile thermal protection system for drysuit diving.

For more details call 01326 241404 or visit www.fourthelement.com to find a stockist.