



DIVESHOP



I'VE ONLY BEEN in the shop 10 minutes and already my hats off to owner Peter Carrick, no sooner had I introduced myself than an irascible teacher called Gary came in and started giving Peter a hard time. He wanted this, he wanted that, and he wanted a discount.

I could see he was a regular customer and Peter was used to his eccentric way of bargaining and haggling. I know from working with people how hard it is to keep the head and not be taken for a ride by people like Gary. Peter handled this with consummate ease and Gary went away happy with his purchases and I've no doubt he'll be back.

I'm here to check out C&C Marine and see what they have to offer the visiting diver to Largs. Like many dive shops it was started on a shoestring with two masks, a snorkel and a couple of pairs of fins.

That was 19 years ago and I would hazard a guess that C&C is probably the best stocked dive shop in Scotland, both for quantity and variety. Whilst most dive shops carry one or two major brands, C&C has most of the big names - Scubapro, Poseidon, Cressi, Typhoon, Fourth Element to namecheck a few.

That's just dive gear. Being in a marina they are constantly being

asked for anything to do with boats as well. And there's a fair chance they'll have what you're looking for as this is the only shop I've been in where the stock ranges from a toothbrush to an anchor; I say that because the toothbrushes are in a cup just above the stainless steel anchor lying on the floor.

This is the type of dive shop where you can't see the walls for stock, the sort of place a gear junkie could spend a day in just drooling over the range of equipment on offer.

However it quickly became clear to me that C&C had a special feel about it, a feeling of confidence; of reliability. A feeling that they won't sell you equipment they don't believe in and if you get any servicing done it will be right.

Why is that? Well the answer is simple, Peter Carrick. Peter first got into diving over 30 years ago; he was a founder member of Allander Branch of ScotSAC. He was running his own haulage business at the time when he, excuse the pun, came to a crossroads.

He had just won a contract with House of Fraser which he quickly realised would take over his life. He sat down, thought about it and decided on a completely different route - he'd open a dive shop.

He chose Largs because there was a new marina and it was by the sea, ideal for a dive shop. Like most dive shops it opened with a couple of masks, fins and snorkels. Gradually he built the business up adding a compressor, testing and servicing facilities.

Being in a marina means customers ask for boat related gear, hence the anchor and the toothbrushes. It's fair to say C&C can supply almost everything to do with boats, canoes and diving. The ability to adapt and diversify is crucial to any successful business and Peter has always managed to read the signs and keep ahead of the game.

At this point in our visit Peter decided we had seen enough of his Aladdin's cave of a shop and ran us along to his training and service centre. A couple of examples of Peter's innovative ideas - C&C were the first dive shop on the West coast to supply nitrox; and coming right up to date C&C is the only dive shop in the West of Scotland certified under the new laws to test cylinders.

In case you're not aware of it, from July there are new rules covering test facilities. Anyone setting up to test cylinders has to be accredited either by ASSET or IDEST. They have to have certain equipment for

## Finding Aladdin's Cave In Largs



ScotSAC chair Jack Morrison headed to Largs to catch up with recent developments at the town's popular dive centre - C&C Marine. There proprietor Peter Carrick gave Jack the full Royal tour before speeding him out to the best diving in the area ...

the inspection and measuring of different types of cylinders. The technicians have also to be assessed.

The equipment is expensive and many dive shops are opting not to seek accreditation and will simply contract out testing. For you and I this means it will take longer and will cost more.

At present there are four accredited test stations in Scotland and C&C are the only one in the West of Scotland. Peter reckons they will be able to turn round cylinders in a week, about what you would expect now. Costs are £39 for a visual and £48.50 for a hydrostatic and £25 if your tank fails, which means he loses money and you lose a tank.

Servicing is important to Peter, he is a diver who has come up through the club system and like us all appreciates regulators that are reliable and safe. He still personally services them and takes great pride in making sure the job is done properly.

C&C can service any kind of engine, outboard, inboard, diesel, four-stroke or two-stroke. 10 years ago they became a PADI school and run courses throughout the year. The fact that they are situated beside the sea makes it easy for them to offer their trainees regular diving once they are trained.

Most Wednesday evenings in summer, weather permitting, they go diving from what I can only describe as the best RHIB I have ever seen. Made to order by Dutch firm TP Marine, the RHIB is just fabulous. The choice of many navies and special forces it is impossible to flip and this has



been proved many times by prospective customers who have taken one out in the roughest of seas. They've tried purposely to flip them, however no one has succeeded.

Peter expects 10 years at least out of this boat which he'll need if he is to recoup the cost of £80,000, yes £80,000. I can't see the lottery giving my branch that kind of grant but if they did Peter is the sole agent in Britain.

C&C Marine is very much the brainchild and creation of Peter Carrick. When he decided all those years ago to move to Largs and set up C&C he made a lifestyle choice before it was fashionable to do so.

Years of experience and commitment and the fact that he still has endless patience for his customers, even the awkward squad like Gary the irascible teacher, means the discerning diver can rest assured that C&C Marine will provide the highest standard and quality of service.

*Photos (from left to right - pages 34/35): Aladdin's cave aka C&C Marine; Peter Carrick in his workshop; and Jack Morrison gets close to danger with Peter's super RIB in background.*

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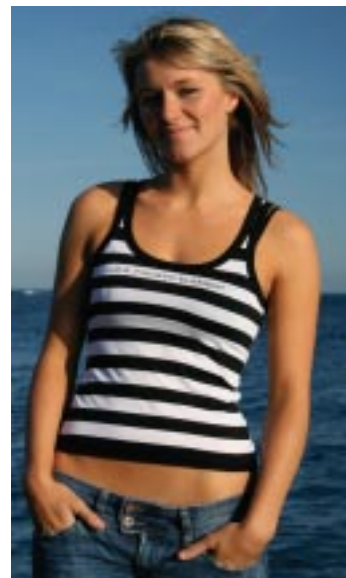


## You Lookin' At Me?

WITH ALL this good weather we have been having, news of Fourth Element's new additions to their range of t-shirts was met with much interest. Men's designs now include a new colour of the popular Soviet tee, the manta design featuring three mantas in close formation and the new patch long sleeved top.

Ladies can choose from the HMS Fourth Element vest and the manta half sleeve top with open neck. This being Scotland though, it is probably worth noting their new Icelandic women's fleece - the perfect post dive warm up garment. It is a water repellent Polartec® Thermal Pro fleece combined with Xerotherm hand warmers which all add up to make this fitted jacket not only practical but good-looking too.

For more details visit [www.fourthelement.com](http://www.fourthelement.com) or visit your local dive centre. To find your local stockist, call 01326 241404.



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