

DRYSUIT HANGER

£10.95

Contact: Scubapro 01256 812636 Website: www.scubapro.co.uk

A FEW years ago I went to Iceland to do some cold, clear-water diving in the glacier melt-water-filled lakes. At the end of the day, with land temperatures dipping well below freezing, we hung up our drysuits to dry in the heated dive centre. The system the centre staff had adopted was tremendously efficient at drying the suits. It consisted of a huge blower fan blasting warm air over a long rail. The rail was fitted with unique hangers that allowed the drysuits to be hung upside down by their boots – a simple, yet effective, way of drying several suits in a small amount of space. I asked the staff where the centre had obtained the hangers from and it transpired it was at a German dive show a few years previously but they couldn't

recall the manufacturer's name. There wasn't a maker's name on them so I left it at that. So it was with some joy that Scubapro sent us its new drysuit hanger, which is exactly the same as the ones I had used in Iceland a few years ago. These hangers are a cost-effective and neat way to dry and store your drysuit and at just over a tenner they're great value. **CH**



VERDICT

Excellent method for drying suits

Value: 10/10

Performance: 10/10

HEATED KIDNEY BELT

£39 PLUS P&P

Contact: Hotsuits 00 61 352 214717 Website: www.hotsuits.com.au

AS MOST of my UK diving at this time of year is carried out from a RIB, there's little chance of keeping dry, and while a flask of hot chocolate helps to take the chill out of the winter air, the warmth gained is relatively short lived. So when the Australian company Hotsuits sent us a heated kidney belt, I greeted it with great enthusiasm. It works in the same way as climbers' hand-warmers do – a fluid-filled pouch that contains a tiny catalyst chemical capsule. To use the hand-warmer you simply crack open the capsule and the fluid reacts with the catalyst, changes to a solid and in doing so gives off heat. The reaction lasts around one hour and to 'recharge' the pouch you simply heat it in a pan of boiling water for around 15 minutes. Hotsuits has taken this concept one stage further by doubling the size and encapsulating it in a neoprene belt.

For the first test I used it underneath my undersuit when drysuit diving. This was a very short test. It didn't matter how hard I tried but due to the bulk of the undersuit and the position of my BC's backpack, I couldn't locate the catalyst. Eventually, at the surface and using the assistance of my buddy, we managed to get it to work and I had a very warm trip back on the RIB! Over the next few dives I set off the

catalyst before kitting up – with practice it becomes easier to accomplish. It does make a difference to your dive and certainly retains its heat long enough for a good 40-minute-long dive. The belt can also be used underneath a wetsuit, as the pouch is totally waterproof, and being fluid-filled is not affected by any change in pressure. It's certainly one piece of kit I'll be using for the rest of this winter. At the time of writing the heated kidney belt is only available by mail order direct from Australia, but Hotsuits is actively seeking a UK distributor. **CH**



VERDICT

Great solution during the cold winter

Value: 7/10

Performance: 8/10