

# Siebe-Heinke “Frogman” Suits

## Historical Diving Suits

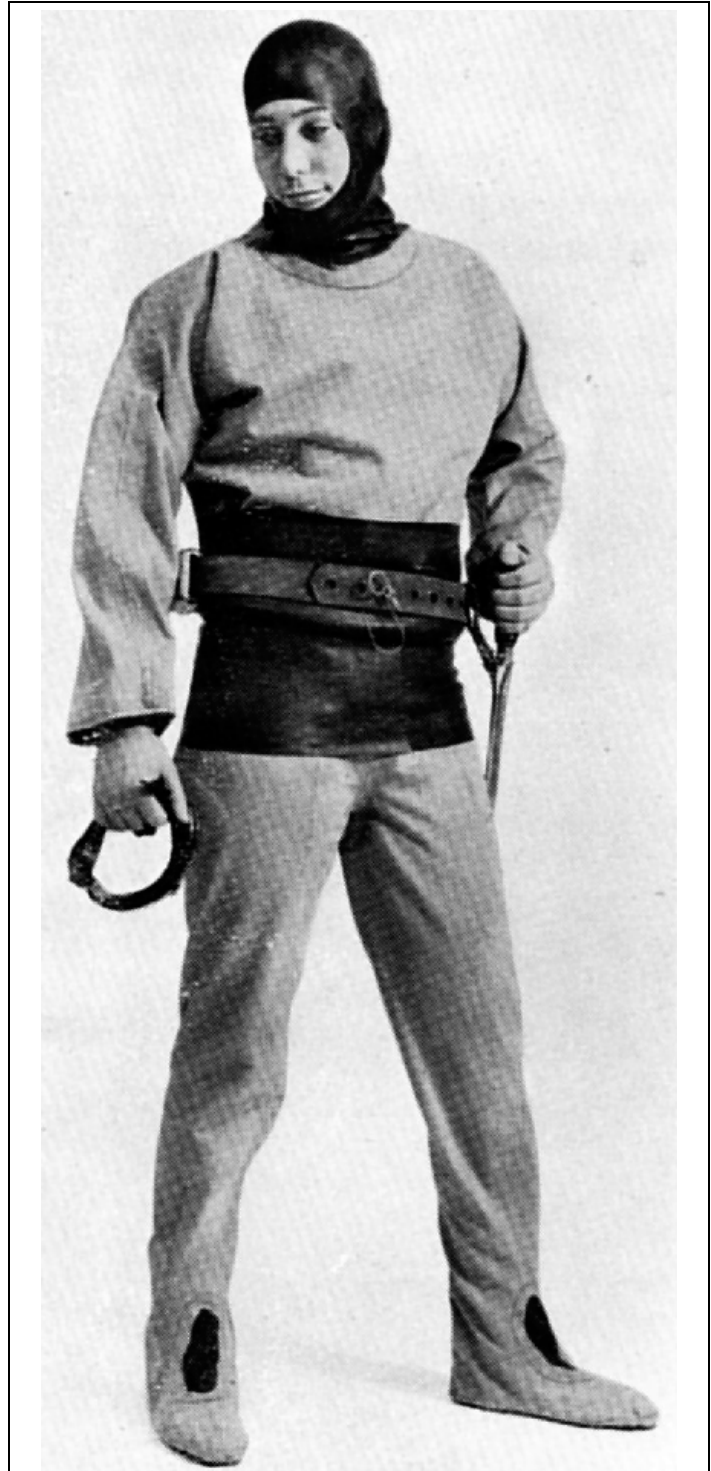
# 16

In 1961, Siebe-Gorman and Company took over C. E. Heinke & Co. Ltd.. “For a short while, equipment was given ‘Siebe-Heinke’ tags but eventually the name completely disappeared” (Diving Heritage, 2000). In 1962, the “large range of Siebe-Gorman and Heinke suits” was “condensed to provide dry suits only” (Siebe-Heinke, 1963).

Siebe-Gorman moved in 1975 from Chessington in Surrey to Cwmbran in Gwent, later specialising in breathing equipment for firefighters. Siebe-Gorman and Heinke manufactured standard diving dress until the mid-1950s, when they diversified into stockinet-lined rubber suits for commercial and recreational underwater swimmers.



“Frogman” suit with braces, hood and neck seal



“Frogman” heavy-duty swimsuit with braces, hood and neck seal

## References

1. Collins & Chambers Ltd (June 1966) *The Siebe Heinke range of underwater swimming equipment*, London: Collins & Chambers.
2. Diving Heritage (2000) <http://www.divingheritage.com/>
3. Lillywhites Ltd (1962-1964) *Underwater Catalogue 1962, & Underwater Catalogue 1964*, London: Lillywhites.
4. Siebe-Heinke (1963) *The Blue Book of underwater swimming*, London: Siebe-Heinke.

# The 'Frogman' Suit

The 'Frogman' suit is designed to give the underwater swimmer complete protection when diving in cold or polluted waters.

It is manufactured in two alternative materials—stockinette proofed with black rubber, or heavy duty proofed fawn twill. The suit is tough, flexible, resistant to abrasion and impervious to oil, sunlight and ozone. The soles of the feet are toughened to provide a hard surface if walking is necessary.

The suit consists of a separate jacket and trousers, made watertight at the waist by a roll seal held in place by a rubber cummerbund.

The jacket can be fitted with a hood and/or neck seal. Ankle seals can be provided for the trousers instead of built-in boots.

The 'Frogman' suit can be worn next to the skin or, in cold waters, over a suit of woollens.

**20501.** (right) 'Frogman' dry suit with braces, hood and neck seal.



- Reproduced above is page 20 of the *Siebe-Heinke Blue Book of underwater swimming* (Siebe-Heinke, 1963).
- It provides a basic description of Frogman Suits made from black rubber proofed stockinette.
- According to page 20 of the *Blue Book*, Frogman Suits were introduced in 1963.
- The suit material was designed to be tough enough to resist wear and tear and environmental pollution.
- The suit consisted of a jacket and trousers. A waist-seal cummerbund came as standard.
- The jacket featured a hood and/or a neck seal
- The trousers could be fitted with in-built boots or ankle seals.
- The suit could be worn next to the skin or over woollen underclothing.



**20502.** 'Frogman' dry suit with braces and neck-seal only.

**20503.** 'Frogman' heavy duty two-piece swimsuit with braces, hood and neck-seal. Manufactured in fawn 'Salvus' twill.

**20504.** (left) 'Frogman' heavy duty two-piece swimsuit with braces and neck-seal only.

- Reproduced above is page 21 of the *Siebe-Heinke Blue Book of underwater swimming* (Siebe-Heinke, 1963).
- The page shows the "Frogman" two-piece swimsuit manufactured in fawn twill.
- A table further down the same page, recreated below, relates the two Frogman Suits' four sizes to height, chest and inside-leg measurements.

	Small	Medium	Large Short	Large
Height	5' 3"-5' 9"	5' 7"-6' 1"	5' 7"-6' 1"	5' 9"-6' 3"
Chest	32"-36"	36"-42"	42"-46"	42"-46"
Inside Leg	29"-31"	32"-34"	32"-34"	35"-37"