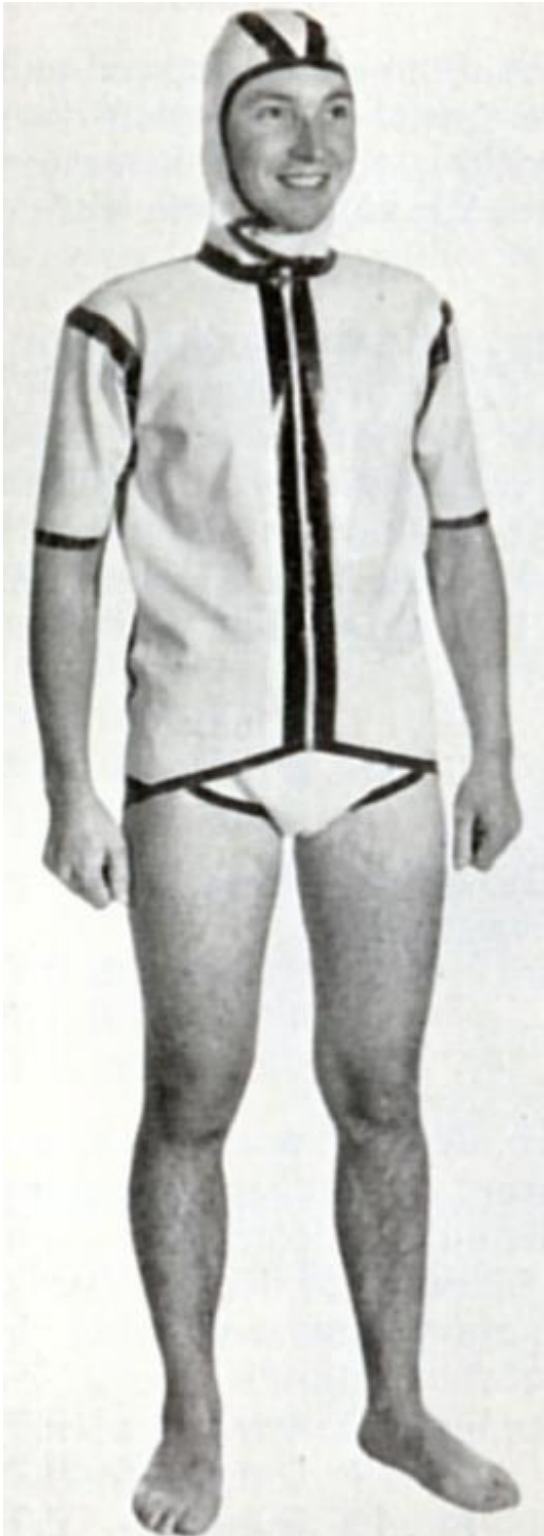


Heinke Falla Suit

C. E. Heinke & Co. Ltd of London was an old-established manufacturer of standard diving apparatus. In 1961, Siebe Gorman took the company over and “for a short while, equipment was given ‘Siebe-Heinke’ tags but eventually the name completely disappeared” (Diving Heritage, 2000).

By the mid-1950s, Heinke had diversified into recreational underwater swimming equipment, including Hans Hass masks and fins. In the product range were two “underwater suits”, both made from rubber on a stockinet base: the Delta dry suit and the Dolphin wet suit.

Billed as “a wet or free flooding suit performing the same functions as the Dolphin” (Lillywhites, 1958, p. 5), the Heinke “Falla” suit (below) was a relatively short-lived latecomer to the company’s range of diving suits.



Falla Suit Facts

In 1958, London’s premier sporting goods store Lillywhites commenced sales of the Falla suit with the same price (£6 6s) as the Heinke Dolphin it had stocked since 1956 (Lillywhites, 1958, p. 4-5). Neither suit reappeared in the London store’s underwater catalogues. They were replaced by foam rubber and neoprene wet suits.

Here is Heinke’s own description of the suit (Heinke, n.d.):

The “Falla” suit is also a wet or free-flooding suit and although of a different style from the “Dolphin”, performs the same functions with regard to insulation. The suit is provided with a hood which also gives added protection to the head and the nape of the neck against cold and also abrasion when swimming amongst rocks. The suit is fitted with an open-ended rustproof zip fastener providing front entry. The extended back portion is brought up between the legs and fastened to the inside of the front panels. This type of fastening the legs to have the maximum amount of freedom from the hips. Made in white rubber for men only to the same specification as the “Dolphin”, with seams taped in black.

The Falla and the green version of the Dolphin were for men only and equipped with zip fasteners providing front entry. The Falla and the female version of the Dolphin were both made from white rubber.

Like the Dolphin (right), the Falla suit imprisoned a layer of water that soon reached body temperature and served as an insulator against further cold.

The Falla’s hood was intended to be an improvement on the Dolphin’s neckband, which would often let water trickle in during use. The beavertail-like crotch fastening of the Falla also appeared a better option than the Dolphin’s tight briefs when it came to a swimmer’s leg mobility.



Sizing

The Heinke Falla suit was available in three sizes, Small, Medium and Large, each corresponding to a range of height, chest, waist and hip measurements, as shown in the image and table below.



WHITE RUBBER

<i>Personal Details</i>	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Height	5'3" – 5'9"	5'7" – 6'1"	5'9" – 6'3"
Chest	32 – 36	36 – 40	40 – 46
Waist	27 – 31	30 – 35	36 – 42
Hips	38 – 40	40 – 42	42 – 44

References

1. Diving Heritage (2000) <http://www.divingheritage.com/>.
2. C. E. Heinke & Co. (n.d.) *Heinke Underwater Swimming Products*.
3. Lillywhites (1958) *Underwater Catalogue 1958*, London: Lillywhites.