

The Hogarthian Way

By WIN REMLEY

Imagine for a moment that you own no dive gear whatsoever. Nor do you have any preconceived concept of how



scuba gear should be arranged, connected or configured. Also imagine that you have access to any type of gear you wish, and that you must configure it in the absolute most efficient means possible, while simultaneously maximizing your safety. After thinking about this for a minute, if you are able to see how you might do things differently, then you have started down the path towards the Hogarthian Way.

applying the “safer and more efficient” philosophy to every component of dive gear. He reduced the amount of gear taken underwater, he removed unnecessary D-rings and clips, and he rearranged his gear to promote efficiency and safety to the extreme. He examined every assumption and convention for soundness, and if they were found lacking he changed it. He developed his philosophy to be dynamic. The proper configuration for a warm water cave dive, for example, is different than that used for a cold water wreck dive in the ocean.

Hogarthian gear configuration began, not surprisingly, with Sheck Exley whose style of breathing from the long hose was adopted by Bill Hogarth Main, who dived with Exley. Breathing from the long hose, according to Main, is safer and more efficient in an emergency, since an out-of-air diver will invariably rip the regulator out of your mouth rather than spend a lot of time searching for your octopus.

Bill Main's friendship with Bill Gavin led to the development of the second component of the Hogarthian Way—the holistic component. It was Bill Gavin's philosophy that the most important piece of dive gear owned by a diver, is his own body. A healthy, well functioning body, Gavin argued, is both more efficient and safer while diving. Gavin even included the diver's attitude and state of mind as a component of the Hogarthian Way. A rigorous program of exercise, eating healthy foods, and abstaining from alcohol, tobacco and drugs are part of this philosophy.

George Irvine, director of the Woodville Karst Plain Project (WKPP), took this emergent philosophy and ran with it. He added the third and final component of the Hogarthian Way by arguing that the best dive equipment available should be used while diving. George started from scratch and purchased state-of-the-art equipment for every component of technical dive gear he required. He bought the best regulators, the best cylinders, the best dry suit, etc. that he



To make a long story short, Bill Main is a perfectionist. He began

could find. And if a suitable component could not be located, he and Bill Gavin, who happens to be an engineer, designed it from scratch. The scooters used by the WKPP are one example of this. These scooters, custom built by Gavin and Irvine, are routinely used at depths of 300-400 ft. with a run time of more than two hours.

Describing all of the specific methods and techniques adopted by Bill Main, Bill Gavin, and George Irvine are beyond the scope of a magazine article. However, below are listed some of the specifics. Refer to the illustration for these descriptions.

Harness—A simple webbed harness should be custom fitted and adjusted so that the diver can easily reach all manifold knobs while wearing the harness in the water.

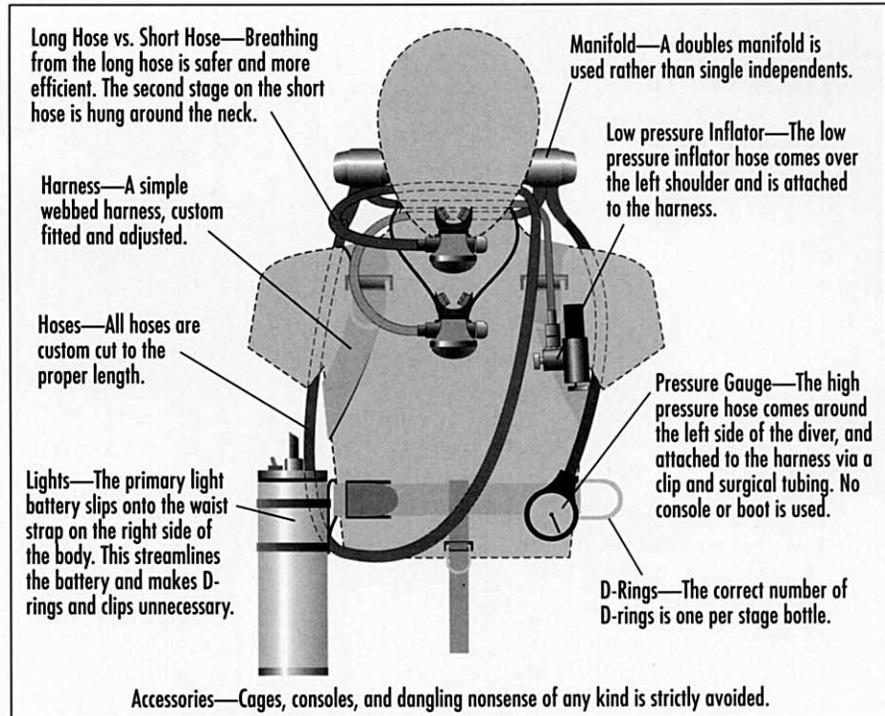
Hoses—All hoses, high pressure and low pressure, are custom cut to the proper length. The “one length fits all” philosophy of the manufacturers is rejected.

Long Hose vs. Short Hose—Breathing from the long hose is safer and more efficient as described earlier. The second stage on the short hose is hung around the neck with surgical tubing so the diver can simply dip his chin and bite the mouthpiece.

D-Rings—The correct number of D-rings is one per stage bottle. Stages are clipped at one end only so the other end can float behind the diver as he swims or scooters, thereby minimizing drag. The D-rings are bent slightly to prevent them from laying flat against the harness, which makes them easier to grab.

Manifold—A doubles manifold is used rather than single independents due to the complexity of air sharing rules with independents. Single independents are seen as prevention for a non-problem, a manifold failure, and only serve to complicate things.

Accessories—Everything should be firmly attached to the body or placed in pockets. Cages, consoles, and dangling nonsense of any kind is strictly avoided.



Curt Bowen

Lights—The primary light battery slips onto the waist strap on the right side of the body. This streamlines the battery and makes D-rings and clips unnecessary. Backup Lights should be streamlined by attaching to the harness with surgical tubing and a clip.

Low pressure Inflator—The low pressure inflator hose comes over the left shoulder and is attached to the harness. Dangling wing inflators or inflators hooked around the left arm are not acceptable since they increase drag and are potential entanglement hazards.

Pressure Gauge—The high pressure hose should come straight from the first stage, over the top of the wings, around the left side of the diver, under the arm, and attached to the harness via a clip and surgical tubing. Note that this is a pressure gauge only, gauge consoles and rubber boots are unnecessary and increase drag.

Personal Preference—Strict Hogarthians believe that there is only one best way. “Personal preference” is a euphemism for “I don’t want to do it right.”

Hogarthian philosophy attempts to prevent emergencies that can really happen rather than prepare for every

possible emergency. This comes from the belief that most accidents don’t happen as a result of equipment failure, but rather from the diver failing to adequately prepare. This can happen by divers not properly cleaning and servicing their equipment, or by overweighting themselves with too much equipment, or by configuring their equipment in a manner that is confusing, etc.

To use analogy: Volvo advertisements claim that if you are going to have an accident you are better off having one in a Volvo because they are heavier, stronger and built to survive an accident. BMW, on the other hand, claims that the best way to survive an accident is to not have one. They instead place emphasis on performance features like braking, cornering, and acceleration. BMW, albeit unknowingly, embraces the Hogarthian Way.

Following the path towards the Hogarthian Way may seem like a tall order to most divers. In truth, there are few purists. However, adopting principles like removing unnecessary dive gear, or saying no to that piece of cheesecake, or getting daily exercise are simple and cost free ways to begin the journey. 🙌

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