

## Sealing seams on waterproof clothing.

(Keeping a dry bum offshore)

Sharon and I are entered in the 2010 Round Britain and Ireland Yacht Race on behalf of the 'Richard House Children's Hospice. Hopefully you will enjoy this article, maybe you will follow us on the live tracker when the race starts on the 6th June; but above all learn some more about the Children's Hospice and give them your support – see end of article for links. Richard House is a centre of excellence for the whole of the UK providing training and sharing learning for the whole of the UK on what works for kids.



### Article.

I have two sets of waterproofs one 12 yrs old and one set 18 months. Both are from leading manufacturers of sailing clothes and yet both leaked through the seams. The leaks are not obvious or serious; but led to damp under-clothing and after several hours far more discomfort than is necessary.

Both sets are made with Goretex and the fabric didn't leak in either case. They both have taped seams and this is where the leaks occur. What seems to happen is capillary action through the seam which the tapes don't stop. The jacket in both cases it isn't a problem as the water runs off fast enough to not trouble the taped seams. The salopettes however are generally worn more often and water doesn't run off the seat area as quick, allowing time for capillary action to work.

No scientific work has been done by me but down the Club House bar it seems I am not the only one unlucky enough to get a wet bum in all my Foulies; many sailors report a damp backside whilst wearing supposedly water proof items.

I used to use a product called Aquasure to seal leaky diving drysuits and remember it working very well whilst providing a long lasting on repair. Aquasure is a polyurethane sealant; however there are other versions out there.

Please turn over to see how I use Aquasure to seal the waterproofs.

Application:

- Wash and dry Foulies (don't use normal detergent it ruins waterproofing, use soap based cleaners).
- Warm Aquasure in a pan of hot water so it runs more easily (this step may or may not be necessary, but is how I have always done it).
- Lay foulies on a flat surface, only apply to one side at a time.
- Squeeze a small bead of Aquasure along seam.
- Use a small paint brush to cover seam area plus 2mm overlap (Aquasure comes with a small applicator brush).
- Aquasure will run if over applied or item is not properly flat.
- Leave for 12 hours (don't touch earlier - it won't be set); turn over and complete other side.

I reckon it takes 2 to 3 tubes of Aquasure to seal a large set of foulie bottoms. I think Aquasure comes in 70cl tubes, in the Dive Shop I use they also sell a competitors version for the same price but it only contains 50cl. Truth is I don't think the shop thought about the differing amount when pricing but when doing this job every 'cl' is valuable as this stuff cost between £6 and £9 per tube.

I have used the older foulies with this repair for 5 years without a damp patch since. It was only when I got a damp backside almost immediately with my new set that I realised the Polyurathane sealant operation is an essential upgrade for even the best waterproofs.

So there you have it, seal your seams with polyurethane to maintain a dry and warm backside. And if all else fails I suggest you keep a tub of Sudacreme close to hand...

This process could save you money and give a much loved set of Foulies many years of extra life.

If you have enjoyed this article pls take time to read about our entry in the Round Britain and Ireland Yacht race that begins on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010 on our Just Giving Webpage – even if you are unable to contribute just yet we really appreciate your support and interest in this event for the Children's Hospice.

[www.justgiving.com/roundbritain-velocitygirl](http://www.justgiving.com/roundbritain-velocitygirl)

You can follow the race live from the 6<sup>th</sup> June on [www.rwyc.org](http://www.rwyc.org)

Fun and safe sailing

Richard Lett.