

# Tech Dive NZ

## Newsletter April 2011

www.techdivenz.com, info@techdivenz.com

### WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March has been a little quieter than normal for TDNZ, mainly as a result of house moving and lots of visits from family members. But that doesn't mean we have nothing to report on, in fact we have rather a lot this month.

Firstly a follow on from last month's newsletter when we highlighted Riwaka Resurgence as a great NZ dive site. We have been informed that the local Iwi are trying to stop divers accessing Riwaka Resurgence, claiming it as a site of cultural importance.

We would like to counter this argument by highlighting the important role cave divers around the world play in helping to protect such sensitive and delicate environments. Whilst most people are unaware of what happens beneath their feet, cave divers are intimately familiar with their caves and notice any degradation far sooner than the general public. The divers at Wakulla



Cave divers should be seen as the good guys!

Springs for example have been at the forefront of publicising the pollution in their caves, caused by towns many miles away. Cave divers in Mexico are also the main source of information about the damage unrestricted building development is having on the underground world. Far from being unwanted trespassers cave divers should be seen as guardians of the caves

This month has also seen a couple of medical issues of interest to divers in general. One of our regular divers has been diagnosed with a PFO, or hole in the heart in laymans terms. This is a condition which affects 1 in 4 of the population, but for divers it can have complications if the PFO is of medium to larger size. It can lead to a shunt of blood from the venous side of the heart to the arterial - which can in turn lead to a bend. The diver in question has promised an article all about the situation - so look out for that one.

Secondly we had Tony F's nasty encounter with some hydroids up at the Waikato last Sunday. Although very little skin was in contact with the water some hydroids obviously hit Tony on the cheek and upper lip and he had a very bad reaction to them - requiring a visit to A&E. Thankfully he is all better now, but it is a timely reminder to us all never to take the ocean for granted.

Safe diving everyone.

### LOCATION HIGHLIGHTING A GREAT NZ DIVE SITE



White Island maybe well known amongst the diving community, but only a few kilometres to the west of the steaming volcano lies one of NZ's best dive sites - Volkner Rocks.

An ex-RNZAF bombing range, these sheer pinnacles rise to 113m above sea-level and lie at the centre of one of NZ's most recent marine reserves, created in 2006. If you look carefully whilst diving you will find old shells and other reminders of the more violent past of this area. If you look up at one of the rock stacks you'll even see the remains of a missile sticking out.

We've done 4 separate trips out to this reserve and on every occasion the visibility had been very good - sometimes superb. To give an example, imagine looking up from the reef

at 35m and watching divers jumping off the boat above - and you can identify who is who.

The fish life is amazing, with huge schools of pink and blue Maomao surrounded by marauding Kingies the norm. On one dive in February last year we counted well over 40 stingrays on just one patch of reef.

The dive sites which stand out are Diadema Pinnacle, Red Snapper Rock and Lazens Reef. Diadema is our favourite - a sheer brilliant white granite pinnacle rising from over 50m to just below the surface.

As this marine reserve is located quite a long way off-shore our recommendation is to do a 3 day live-aboard trip. We usually use John Baker, who runs a boat called Ma Cherie out of Whakatane. John has been diving out in this area since the late 1960's and was instrumental in getting the marine reserve set up. Alternatively Dive HQ Tauranga organise regular trips to the Volkners - contact Nicki or Tony for more details.

Finally if you really wonder how good this area is for diving - well Jamie took a BBC cameraman usually based in the Galapagos Islands out to the reserve in 2008. The footage he took made it into the BBC South Pacific documentary series and the cameraman said he would definitely rate this site in his top 10 anywhere in the world!

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### DIVING

TRIP OF THE MONTH

#### HMNZS WAIKATO Mapping Project

April 3rd

By Christian Stimson

The omens were good as Mike and I sat eating pizza in Mission Bay going over the Waikato plans. The list of unresolved areas or 'big picture' things to validate on Decks 1, 2 and 3 was now getting very short. Deck 4, the bow and the Engine/Boiler Room were a separate task and on the radar for this winter.

And the weather was lining up nicely – SwellMap giving around 50cm on Sunday morning, with 5kn offshore breezes and both slowly building in the afternoon, with clear skies and temperatures in the low 20's. So a quick ring around got Tony and Astrid signed up without much trouble! Chris B was fence sitting – or sofa sitting as it turned out, with a hang over. No sense of commitment, these nippers! Mike booked us on the boat with D!T and we were good to go! A last minute check that the clocks actually went back on the Sunday morning meant the 05:00 shake out wasn't too painful. Living north of the Bridge has its upsides sometimes as Mike bemoaned his 1hour earlier start! So Saturday was spent fettling, charging lights and generally prep'ing all the gear.

The drive up treated me to the most spectacular sunrise – they don't tell you about this on the PADI Open Water course when discussing the benefits of diving! I just had to take this pic on the Waipu flats. The other three were driving up in Tony's car and, having overtaken me at Warkworth, I knew were out of earshot as I sang along to the radio!

We all got to Tuts by 08:00, and setting up our kit on the Henrick J, we chatted over the laminated plans Mike had prepared. He wanted to get into the Sonar and Operations Control rooms to document the more complicated cabinets and consoles that had so far defeated all attempts to map out! Astrid buddy'd with him to record the event with her new HD video camera and housing – jeez, you gotta love Trade Me!

Tony would give me a guided tour of the Engine Room and Boiler Rooms – spaces I'd not yet ventured into and that were a big



empty void in the 3D model we were putting together. So my aim was to get an overview of the machinery and pipes in there, and come back on a subsequent dive to start sketching it out.

Once on the buoy, we splashed and planned to descend as a team with Astrid filming from above. We settled in on the hangar deck, confirmed all were 'OK' and off we went. Tony and I dropped down the torpedo loading hatch into Deck 2 then in to the Engine Room on Deck 3. Mike and Astrid headed of forwards. Mike reports with a grin that he had an 'excellent dive' yet made little progress in clarifying some key points – mmmm, methinks Trimix is the answer! Astrid's footage is very sharp, but she tells us the task loading is significant, especially when trying to keep up with and film Mike ferreting around.

In the machinery spaces Tony did an excellent job of leading the way, yet staying out of my way and showing me the key chunks of hardware. He reports some of the overhead ducting has settled to the floor following recent storms. We cut through into the Boiler Room through the emergency hatch low on the port side and had a good look around. Tony signalled he was coming up on 5minutes of no deco left, so we exited through the cutout high and forward on the starboard side.



From there we ducked into Deck 3 forward of the Boiler Room and cruised through some spaces I'd not been in previously, noting some hatches down into Deck 4 for next time. Exiting under the Bridge we swam up and aft, back the hangar, meeting Astrid and Mike on the way – perfect! Tony and I managed to pull off a rather smooth ascent, even if we do say so ourselves. Back on board we saw that Tony had encountered some form of marine life that had taken a fancy to him – a significant histamine reaction around his lips that later resulted in a trip to hospital to be checked out. He's all OK now, but I wish he'd let us post a picture of him.....

To read the rest of Christian's report check out the website.

And if you want to find out more about the computer generated model of the Waikato shown above read the project section.

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### DIVING

WHAT'S COMING UP

#### Orewa Fun Run

April 17th

STOP PRESS - we completed this only a few hours ago and amazingly the legs still feel ok. For more information check out the blog section of the website. The only question we have is was it Mel or Cas who finished last - might depend on who you ask.....

#### GUE Fundamentals [Only 1 space left]

April 22-25th [Easter]

Learn how to back-kick, how to hover and why many of the world's dive ninjas all wear the same equipment configuration. This class is the gateway to all GUE training and an excellent starting point for would-be techies. The course is a very intense 4 days, but you will have a great time and you will learn loads. In fact Jamie is so confident you will learn a lot he offers a money back guarantee: a full refund if you don't think the course was worthwhile. How good is that?

The course is strictly limited to a maximum of 4 people; can be done in either a single or double tank configuration and is suitable for everyone from a 10 dive novice to a 500+ dive expert. If you want more info drop Jamie an email or give him a call.

#### Cave & Cavern diving: Poor Knights

April 29th - May 1st [FULL]



Join us for a 3 day live-aboard to explore the hidden interior of these iconic islands. Enjoy the challenge and beauty of Taravana, Crystal and many other caves. During this trip you can also do the TDI Cavern course, TDI Introductory Cave Diver course, or both as a combo.

#### Poor Knights Winter Live-aboards

May 28-29th

June 11-12th

July 9-10th

August 6-7th [NB: Date changed]

September 24-25th

During these weekends we will be specifically targeting the dive sites for the 10\*10\*10 challenge, although the weekends are open to all. See below for more details.

#### Lake Taupo & Waikato River Drift

June 18-19th

One weekend, three very different dive experiences. The plan for this weekend is firstly to do a couple of dives in Lake Taupo, enjoying the deep shore diving in very clear water; secondly to do a drift dive down the Waikato River during the day; thirdly to do a re-run of one of last years more challenging dives - a night drift dive down the river. Join us for all or just one of the dives and add something very unusual to your log-book.



#### GUE Fundamentals

We know people always struggle with time off, so we've arranged two more GUE holiday weekend courses - Queen's Birthday weekend and Labour Day weekend. The course will run Thursday and Friday evening, plus all day Saturday, Sunday and Monday - so no need to take time off.

2-6th June

20-24th October

#### Mexico

September 5-9th

Explore some of the world's best and most beautiful caves and then relax afterwards in the warmth of the Caribbean sunshine.

#### Mikhail Lermontov

October 14-17th

This is NZ's biggest and most totally awesome wreck dive! It has 12 decks, lots of artifacts and areas to explore and it's all located in a max. depth of only 37m - perfect. Having done 4 trips in the last year we've now learned how to access some of the wrecks best kept secrets - but they will remain a secret unless you come on this trip.



Events still to be scheduled:

Halcyon Treasure Hunt

Cage diving with Mako sharks

**SAFE DIVING EVERYONE**

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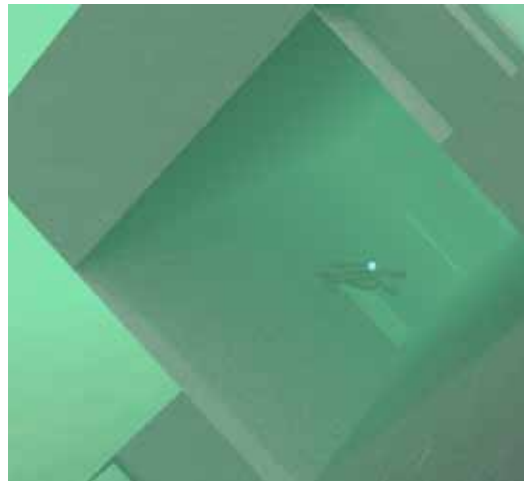
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### PROJECTS

HMNZS WAIKATO MAPPING

Nerdfest 2011 continues seemingly unstopably - or perhaps we're being unfair. Perhaps what we should be saying is that Christian and Mike have continued all their hard work on our HMNZS Waikato mapping project.

Firstly to Christian who has been putting all the deck plans into his 3D imaging software and creating 'virtual swim-throughs' of different parts of the ship. The pictures below are screen shots from one of these animations. It's actually looking quite awesome - if a little geeky - and we do of course need to have a few words about making sure all the divers are in trim. One question Christian - does Sian know how much time you're devoting?



Secondly onto Mike who has been doing some mathematical calculations regarding the list to port on the stern section of the ship. He has calculated that since we started this project the list has become more pronounced; increasing from 32 degrees to 42 degrees. The question is will she fall over entirely like the bow section?

Of course were we in Australia then the anti-ships-sunk-to-make-reefs-brigade would be claiming the Waikato is now becoming dangerous and unsafe for divers. (Check out DiveNZ for that story.) Rubbish! We believe having a list makes the dive more interesting and provides far better training and preparation for bigger wrecks such as the Lermie. And besides if it does fall over it will actually be easier to swim down the corridors as there will be more space for frog-kicks.

### DIVE CLUB

LATEST NEWS AND FUTURE EVENTS



Our April club evening didn't quite go as Jamie had planned. He had envisaged sitting in the sun at Mission Bay, enjoying the end of summer - but had neglected to check when the clocks went back, Oops! So on Mel's suggestion instead of Mission Bay we headed out to De Post in Mt Eden, still planning on enjoying some Belgium Beer.

Of course Mel's idea didn't exactly go entirely to plan either. She'd hoped she could persuade a few people to join in the pub quiz the bar was having that night - only to find it was fully booked out by the time she arrived at 6pm. Hmm - plan the dive, dive the plan.... But the 14 of us who were there still enjoyed ourselves - once everybody found us out on the balcony upstairs. (Sorry John, you should have texted.)

Our next club evening will be held on Wednesday 4th May, at Mel and Jamie's new house in Onehunga. (Text us for directions if you are not sure where it is.) The evening will be part house warming and part presentation. Jamie will talk a little bit about the Blue Creek expedition in February, plus show how we set up the underwater habitat and the zip line. He'll also show some previously unseen photos as well.

Finally last month we gave our first advance warning for June/July - we're thinking about a night dive. We also asked if anyone had any preference for location or date - and of course we got no reply. So does anyone care? Is Mel going to have to dive by herself? You know she'll be emailing people individually and twisting your arms - so avoid all the pain and simply reply.

Happy diving everyone!



A picture of the habitat in the cave.

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### 10 x 10 x 10

WINTER DIVING CHALLENGE

**We are looking for 10 adventurous divers to take up our winter diving challenge.**

Between May and September we have arranged 10 days where we will be specifically targeting 10 of the most exciting and challenging dives at the Poor Knights Islands. Pit your skills against the whims of the weather gods and the best sub-tropical diving in the world.

The first diver to complete all 10 diving challenges\* wins a free weekend of diving with OceanBlue. And EVERY diver who completes 6 challenges gets a half-price weekend with OceanBlue.

\*or the most completed challenges at the end of the period

#### **What have you got to lose?**

Join us for all or just a couple of the diving weekends aboard Mazurka, knowing you will be sailing out specifically to dive the best spots.\*\* On each weekend you have the opportunity to do up to 7 dives, you will get great food and have great company. And after only 6 successful challenges you get even more diving for free. In fact the only thing you can lose is this opportunity, if you sign up too late and all the places have gone!

\*\*Weather dependant

#### **The Challenges**

1. Twelve-Fathom Reef
2. Phil's Pins
3. The Mermaid of Taravana
4. Fresh-water zone in Crystal Cave
5. The Chimney at Fraggle Rock
6. The Window on Landing Bay Pinnacle
7. Drift-dive: Wild Beast Pt:Northern Arch
8. Circumnavigate: Sugarloaf or Scary Deep
9. The air chamber at Red Baron Cracks
10. East or West

We have tried to pick dive sites which show off all the best bits of the Poor Knights, plus highlight a few of the lesser known gems, such as Phil's Pins and 12 Fathom Reef. These are the main sites which helped to rank the Poor Knights as Top 10 in the World.

#### **The Dates**

##### **Weekend 1:**

Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th May

##### **Weekend 2:**

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th June

##### **Weekend 3:**

Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th July

##### **Weekend 4:**

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th August

##### **Weekend 5:**

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September  
(This weekend is also special as we will be celebrating Jamie's 40th Birthday!)

#### **\*\*\*\*\*Is there a catch?\*\*\*\*\***

Someone has contacted us saying it all sounds great, 'but what's the catch?' Amazingly there isn't one. There is no entry fee or other hidden charges except for the boat as usual. And the cost for the boat is exactly the same as a normal winter diving charter - \$180 per day. All the same facilities, all the same services - just a guarantee that we will hitting the listed dive sites, as long as the weather permits. You really have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

#### **\*\*\*\*No catch - just great diving\*\*\*\***



#### **Details**

Our belief is that anyone who enjoys their diving will want to do at least 4-6 days diving in a five month period, especially with such a great selection of dive sites on offer. And unless disaster strikes this should be comfortably enough time to earn a half-priced weekend, maybe even a free weekend if you work hard.

We also think by giving you plenty of time to prepare and train for this challenge that all of the dive sites are possible. Of course we're not making it easy - but then anything good takes a bit of effort.

As the challenge progresses we will give regular updates in the TDNZ newsletter so everyone will know how our 10 divers are doing. And the divers will know who is out in front in the race to do all 10 sites first and claim the free weekend.

All the diving will be done from Mazurka (OceanBlue) and Kev and the crew will be giving plenty of help and advice to ensure you successfully dive each site.

#### **HOW TO ENTER**

**If you want to join in this challenge please send us an email. [info@techdivenz.com](mailto:info@techdivenz.com) Remember only the first 10 people to contact us get the chance to win a free weekend!**

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### PROFILE

CLUB MEMBER OF THE MONTH

In this section we profile one of our dive club regulars, find out a little more about them and see if they have any recommendations for us. This month we profile:

#### CHRISTIAN STIMSON



**Profession/job?** Yacht designer/Naval Architect - I do the technical bit, not the colouring in bit.

**When did you start diving?** May 2005, in the Florida Keys for my 40th birthday. I did a DSD in the Caribbean in the 1990's which I regret not following up on.

**How many dives have you done?**  
250 (ish)

**What qualifications do you have?** PADI Master Scuba Diver, TDI Trimix, TDI Cavern, GUE Fundamentals

**Favourite NZ dive site?** HMNZS Waikato, because she's broken up and listing enough to be a 'proper' wreck, cleaned up and cut open enough to be safe in the majority of spaces, but still with some dark corners that have to be taken seriously - it's never the same twice, and all this is do'able on EAN32 and a 2hr drive.

**Which course would you most recommend?**  
GUEF without a doubt. Until then I'd been conducting myself entirely to my own satisfaction!

**What do you love most about diving?**  
It's the closest I can get to being an Astronaut in zero-G, and if it's with Jamie it's the closest I can get to diving with Michael Macintyre.

**What do you do when you are not diving?**  
Annoy my pregnant partner Sian with tales of how good the last dive trip was! Oh, and fettling with my dive kit in anticipation of the next one!

**What is the next course you plan to take?**  
I'm not allowed another course until Sian has caught up a couple!

**Where is your next planned dive trip?**

I'd like to jump in on some of the Cave/Cavern surveys, putting my Cavern cert to good use while consolidating those skills.

**Any other information we should know about you?**

I have the carbon footprint of a yeti with all the flying I do (for which I am sorry), I'm on the cusp of Gemini/Cancer and hopefully I will beat Tony in the Orewa fun run on the 17th April. (Not that I'm competitive...)

### DIVE FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?

From April 2007 Great White Sharks have been fully protected within New Zealand territorial waters - that is 200 nautical miles (370km) of the coastline. The same protection regulations also apply to all NZ flagged fishing vessels, regardless of where they are fishing. Penalties can include fines of up to \$250,000 and a 6 month prison term.

Great White Sharks live in almost all coastal and offshore waters with temperatures between 12 and 24 degrees celcius. The Chatham Islands to the east of mainland NZ is recognised as a particularly well visited spot by these sharks.

Great Whites, like all sharks, have an additional sense which humans do not. The Ampullae of Lorenzini enables them to



detect the electromagnetic field generated by the movement of other living creatures. Great Whites are sensitive enough to detect even the beat of a fish heart, if they are close enough.

They also have another adaptation which helps when hunting fast prey such as sealions. They are able to regulate their body temperature and maintain it at a warmer level than the surrounding water.

Although considered an apex predator in the ocean, human beings are far more dangerous to Great Whites than they are to us. These sharks are not mindless eating machines, but beautiful creatures needing our protection.

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