

Welcome

Welcome to the last Tech Dive NZ newsletter of the year, which we've brought forward by a week so it gets to you all well before you start heading away for your Christmas holidays. With only a few weeks since the last newsletter, as much as report on what's been happening we're going to spend some time reviewing the whole year and looking ahead to 2010!

Photo of the Month

Different photographers always have a different eye, and can see a dive site in completely different ways. This month's photo of the month comes from Alison Perkins, and was taken on during a dive on HMNZS Canterbury – we love it, because it shows a completely different side of the wreck than Andy's photo from last month!



Please keep the photos coming in – send them by email to andy@techdivenz.com. They don't have to be underwater shots; anything that's diving related is fine!

We never intend to fill your in-box with emails you don't want. So if you'd rather not receive this, hit the reply button and ask us to remove you from our email list.

Club Night

Our December club evening had a European feel and taste this month – Belgium Beer on the Balcony – held at De Poste in Mt Eden. For those of you that don't know, De Poste is a bar that specialises in Flemish beers and food allowing most of us (except the completely unadventurous) to enjoy a few of the weird and wonderful Belgium Beers and the odd speciality snacks such as Bitterballen. The balcony setting coupled with a lovely summer evening meant that the whole evening had a real summer feel, which means only one thing: time to plan your diving. As usual Mel was on fine form talking everyone into signing up on trips and courses, even cajoling Steve who was at his first club evening to join us for diving on Saturday. Take warning – don't sit near Mel if you thought you had other plans for the weekend!

In January, we'll be sticking with the 7th as our club night despite the fact that a few people may still be away. We'll be keeping it simple, and will be returning to the “old faithful” haunt of the Abbey in Greenlane. Come along for a few drinks from 7pm and tell us all about your Christmas holidays!

What's Been Happening?

With only one course and one trip since the last newsletter, we're going to take the time to review the whole year – and what a year it has been! It was about this time last year that the Tech Dive NZ concept was spawned and after a few months of behind the scenes development we finally went live in April with our first trip to Matai Bay. If you haven't looked for a while, take a look at our trip reports page (<http://www.techdivenz.com/reports.html>) and check out where we've been! Matai Bay, the Rainbow Warrior, Volkner Rocks, HMNZS Waikato, Riwaka Resurgence, the Solomon Islands, the Mikhail Lermontov Lake Taupo and HMNZS Canterbury to name just a few! Every trip we've run has been in great demand, and whilst some of our more exploratory trips (like Horahora Power Station) haven't been great successes, they have all been great adventures. We'd also like to say a great big thank you, not just to those of you who have made this trips so much fun – but particularly those of you who have written trip or course reports for us: Rob Wilson, Chris Bardon, Tony Frith, Aaron Glass, Astrid Lorange, Sean Comber and Dean Danford. Having your words rather than ours is great feedback for us to help us run trips better – so thanks for all your efforts, and hopefully we'll see a lot more trip reports from other people in 2010!

Tutukaka Diving

The first weekend in December saw us back up north with one day's diving at Poor Knights and one day on the wrecks. We were joined by an American GUE diver over in Auckland for the first time and he was keen to see what NZ had to offer in the way of diving. Despite terrible weather on the drive up Friday, the weather for the entire weekend turned out to be beautiful and we managed two great dives on Northern Arch and Scary Cave. Sunday was a little windy but certainly not enough to stop us getting to the wrecks. We couldn't have cancelled anyway, Cas had come up especially to put her life in Mel's hands for her first ever dive on the Waikato. How could we disappoint her? Read the full trip report on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/trip061209.pdf>

As well as our trips, we've run some very successful courses this year! Given that we are the only people in New Zealand that can offer the courses, it's not surprising that our two unique PADI courses (Self Reliant Diver & Advanced Wreck Diver) have proven to be just as popular as the GUE Fundamentals course! There are too many individuals to mention, but hopefully those of you that have trained with us this year have learnt something new, been challenged to improve your diving skills – but most importantly of all, had fun along the way.

Self Reliant Diver Course - Wellington

Whilst Jamie and Mel were enjoying the Poor Knights, Andy was down in Wellington teaching a Self Reliant Diver course for Sean and Chelsea. With the first couple of dives of the course happening in less than perfect conditions, it was challenging all round to transfer the skills that had been learnt in the pool to the ocean! Thankfully, the visibility improved throughout the weekend and it allowed Sean and Chelsea to shine on the Sunday! You can read Sean's account of the course on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/articles/srd061209.pdf>.

TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures – Wellington

The weekend following Andy's trip to Wellington saw Jamie also visiting the capital, running the very first TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression procedures course for Splash Gordon in Wellington. Amazingly despite it's windy reputation the first couple of days provided excellent diving conditions, which were made even more spectacular when an orca came up to check out the trainees during one of the dives – not something that happens on all of our courses! To read the full report check out the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/articles/tdiandp111209.pdf>.

What's Coming Up?

Looking into 2010, there is a lot to look forward to! Over the next week or so, you should see plenty of trips and courses appearing on the calendar (<http://www.techdivenz.com/calendar.html>). Whilst we're expecting January through until March to be busy with training, we're hoping to get a few good trips in as well! These will hopefully include some evening shore dives, skive dives aplenty and we also have a few secret squirrel trips to check out some new dive sites on both the North and South Islands. But there's one special dive trip for this year...

Christmas Dive – 20th December

There's only a couple of events in the calendar for the remainder of this year, first of which is the Christmas Dive on Sunday 20th December. Andy and Mel will be taking a barbeque up to Jones' Bay, whilst Jamie swans off to the Poor Knights "working" as deck hand for Ocean Blue. With high tide being late morning, that's time for a decent dive before we start up the barbeque for lunch. If it's your thing, there's a chance to get some scallops – provided you stick to the size and bag limits!

Mikhail Lermontov Trip – 10-13th January

Our biggest trip in January is the Lermontov trip, for which there are a couple of spaces still remaining. The trip costs \$820, which includes everything for four diving days on one of the largest diveable shipwrecks in the world! Contact Jamie on Jamie@techdivenz.com for further details.

TDI Nitrox and Decompression Procedures - January 15th, 16th, 17th, 23rd & 24th

We'll also be running a number of TDI courses in January, one in Wellington and one in Auckland. Whilst the Wellington course is full, there are some spaces on the Auckland course. The combination of Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures will qualify you to undertake staged decompression dives to a maximum depth of 45m, using rich nitrox mixes for accelerated decompression. Technical diving is growing in New Zealand, and whilst you can dive deeper you can also dive longer at shallower depths. If you've been frustrated by your dives being cut short by your computer no stop limits then this is definitely the course for you!

Special Cavern Liveboard – 23-25th January

We are pleased to announce that in partnership with [Oceanblue](#), we will be running several cave and cavern specific trips. These will be 3 day live-aboard weekends based at the Poor Knights Islands. During these trips we will be offering PADI cavern diver training, followed by a series of fully supervised and guided experience dives in the many caverns and caves located at the islands. This is your chance to explore some of NZ's more challenging dive sites, such as Taravana cave, Scary cave plus many others. For more details check the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/Cavern-Liveboard.pdf>

Special Tech Weekend at the Cowshed – 18-21st February

February is a big month for technical diving, as it's currently looking like there will be three GUE instructors in one place – and that place is the Cowshed between the 18th and 21st. Liam Allen will be in the country teaching the first Tech 1 that has ever taken place in New Zealand. Liam is not only a GUE Tech 1 instructor, but also an instructor trainer and has been awarded GUE instructor of the year for 2009. Whilst it's not yet confirmed, it looks like we will also be joined by Steve Trewavas. A Kiwi by birth, Steve is based in Australia and is in the final stages of becoming a GUE Cave instructor. With Liam, Steve and Jamie in one place this is a great opportunity to come along and pick the brains of some of the top instructors.

Tips and Techniques

On a number of trips now, people have commented on how quickly we seem to get our gear ready for diving. There's no real secret here, it's about having a routine. When everything always goes in the same place, and is done in the same order, then it not only speeds up the process of getting ready but also reduces the chances of you making a simple mistake like not connecting your drysuit hose or forgetting a vital piece of gear like your wrist computer. Always having the same gear in the same place makes it easy to do a head to toe check where you're only looking for things that are missing as opposed to having to look for what is there!

Test Your Knowledge

We've decided to start including short quizzes in each newsletter for you to test your knowledge about different aspects of diving. As we're running a big trip to the Lermontov next month, we thought we'd

theme our first quiz on different wrecks around the world and wreck diving techniques. Have a go at the quiz, when you're ready to find out how well you did you can check the answers on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/quizzes.html>.

1. Where is the wreck of the SS Thistlegorm located?
2. In what year did the Mikhail Lermontov sink?
3. Which ship was scuttled as an artificial reef of the Australian coast this year, and was finally opened as a dive site on December 5th?
4. What are the names of the two sister ships of the Titanic?
5. In the event of a silt-out whilst penetrating a wreck, should you attempt to recover your line whilst exiting?
6. If HMNZS Wellington was F69, what was HMNZS Waikato?
7. What was the name of HMNZS Tui before she was brought into service in the New Zealand Navy?
8. What is the minimum number of dive lights needed to penetrate a wreck beyond the light zone?
9. The Rainbow Warrior was on its way to what atoll in French Polynesia to protest against nuclear testing when it was sunk by French intelligence services?
10. What wreck at Chuuk Lagoon has the nickname "Betty"?

Dive Trips

You can keep track of our planned dive trips on the website, but each month we'll provide you with a reminded of what we've got planned. Here's what we've got planned over the next couple of months, so get in touch if you'd like to come along on one of these:

<i>Trip</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Mikhail Lermontov	10-13th Jan	Only 2 spaces available	Jamie
Riwaka Resurgence	14th Jan		Jamie
Poor Knights Liveaboard	23-25 th Jan		Mel
Tutukaka Wrecks	23-24 th Jan		Andy
Auckland Anniversary Trip	30 th Jan - 1 st Feb	Tell us where you want to go!	Mel
Volkner Rocks	5-7th Feb	Full! Contact us if you would like to be placed on the reserve list.	Jamie
Poor Knights	13-14th Feb		Mel
Northland Diving	18-21 st Feb		Mel

If there's anywhere you particularly want to go diving, either let Andy (andy@techdivenz.com), Jamie (jamie@techdivenz.com) or Mel (mel@techdivenz.com) know and we will help arrange the trip.

Dive Courses

There are lots of courses to look forward to, for which the dates are:

<i>Course</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures	11 th , 12 th 13 th Dec & 16 th & 17 th Jan	Wellington	Jamie
TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures	15 th , 16 th , 17 th , 23 rd & 24 th Jan	Auckland/Tutukaka	Andy
PADI Cavern	23 rd , 24 th & 25 th Jan	Poor Knights (Ocean Blue Liveaboard)	Jamie
GUE Fundamentals	28 th & 29 th (evenings), 30 th , 31 st Jan & 1 st Feb	Auckland	Jamie
PADI Self Reliant Diver	1 st & 3 rd (evenings), 6 th & 7 th Feb	Auckland	Andy

If you are interested in any of these courses then get in touch with the instructor for the course.

And Now for Something Completely Different...

Christmas has come early this year for sharks at an aquarium in the UK as "Santa Jaws" takes the plunge every weekend before Christmas to give them their daily bread (and meat!). Santa will be delivering presents to the team of divers who work in the tanks at Blue Planet Aquarium in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire alongside three-metre-long sand tiger sharks, lemon sharks, giant stingrays and other tropical fish.



The underwater Saint Nick will also be dishing treats to the tank's fishy residents so that no-one misses out this Christmas... maybe if you ask nicely, Mel will bring her Santa outfit for the Christmas Dive??