

Welcome

Welcome to the February Tech Dive NZ newsletter. It has been an awesome start to the new decade – a trip to the Mikhail Lermontov, trips to two different South Island cave systems – Blue Creek Resurgence and Riwaka Resurgence, a cavern course, an advanced wreck course, an advanced nitrox and decompression procedures course and finally to round it all off an amazing trip to White Island and Volkner Rocks. With so much to report on this is going to be a cracker of a newsletter.

Photo of the Month

To celebrate the completion of our first TDNZ cavern course we thought we'd dig out a photo from our archives, to show you all why we love cave diving so much. This photo was taken by Danny Riordan in Nohoch Nah Chich cave. After completing our GUE cave classes in Mexico in April 2007 we took a "day off" to get some photos – but trust me, being a photography model was far more stressful than the course.



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 February club evening was held at lake Pupuke, where we had a BBQ, a few beers and took the chance to do some training/skills refreshment. Before anyone comments, the beer was drunk after the diving! Almost everyone (except Mel and Cas...) took the plunge and did at least one dive, with some doing two dives and Andy and Mike even staying to do a night dive. Several new faces came along to join us – Sue, Chas, Christian, Mike, Kathryn and Cam (apologies if I've forgotten anyone) - and I think most people were surprised at how many twin sets appeared, by my count there were at least 8.

Don't worry if you missed out, with GUE Tech 1 fast approaching for Andy and James plus Astrid having recently signed up for GUE Cave 1, we'll be having plenty more training opportunities – keep an eye out for future dates.

In March the club evening will be held on Thursday 4th and the theme will be similar to our December club evening: Belgium Beer at the Beach. From 6pm onwards we will be soaking up the evening sunshine on the Balcony of the Belgium Beer Café at Mission Bay: De Fontein. Prior to the beers a few of us will also be going to an 'ocean swim' – maybe 1 or 2kms if anyone is interested...?? Let Jamie know!

What's Been Happening?

January has been incredibly busy with both trips and courses. The full write ups for each of these can be found on our website, but here is just a taste of the fun we've been having:

Blue Creek Resurgence – 7th & 8th January

Water temperature of 6 degrees, a restriction at 35m and an unknown strength of water flow - none of these factors are top of my wish list in a cave system, let alone putting all three together. Yet when actually down there, with the crystal clear visibility, the adrenalin and the knowledge that you're one of only a very select group of people who have ever seen the sights you're seeing, it makes it all manageable, even enjoyable!

Read Mel's full trip report at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/bc070110.pdf>.

Mikhail Lermontov – 10th – 13th January

Ever since the Mikhail Lermontov sank in 1986 I have yearned to visit her, at the time I had no idea how this was to be accomplished. Now however after much training and planning I have finally fulfilled this dream or at least a part of it. Read Tony's account of his first Lermontov trip at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/lermie130110.pdf>.

Riwaka Resurgence – 14th January

Why is it that madness always draws a crowd? At least, that's how I felt as we wandered up the track to check out the entry to the cave system. Jamie, as usual, simply said "I'll explain when we get inside." Read Chris's report at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/riwaka140110.pdf>.

TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures course – Wellington – 16th & 17th January

Could there be a better way to get fired up for a course? Cave diving at Blue Creek, followed by 4 days diving the Lermontov and then more cave diving at Riwaka – I was arriving in Welly straight from an awesome trip to the South Island and was ready to inspire my students. Unfortunately the weather wasn't playing its part. Read more at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/articles/tdipt2080110.pdf>.

Advanced Wreck course and Wreck Mapping weekend – 23rd & 24th January

Astrid and Mike took advantage of the great weather to start a new mapping project of the Waikato, whilst Tim was doing his Advanced Wreck course and Christian and Sian were just diving for fun! Read more at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/waikato230110.pdf>.

Cavern course – Poor Knights – 23rd – 25th January

Tech Dive NZ's first extended Cavern trip aboard Oceanblue and what a successful weekend! John, Rob and Pete were the students and whilst at times they may have doubted their ability to successfully complete an Open Water course, as anyone who has done one of our courses knows, our philosophy is to safely push people past their level of comfort and show them what they are really capable of. Three very happy, but tired, divers successfully completed the weekend. Our next course is on the 6-8th of March, see below for more details.

Volkner Rocks & White Island – 5th – 7th February

Awesome! Completely, totally and utterly awesome! The Poor Knights may be better known, have more operators, more dive sites and more divers, but when it comes to outright gob-smacking awesomeness Volkner Rocks marine reserve offers some serious competition.

Read how this weekend's trip rates as Jamie's top diving in New Zealand at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/volkner050210.pdf>.

What's Coming Up?

Having sorted out much of our calendar through to October we think that we have some pretty exciting diving opportunities planned. We have enough wreck and cave trips to keep even the most die-hard overhead enthusiasts happy, plus a couple of fun weekends where you can meet the instructors and the many other divers who share a burning passion for diving, just like you. Of course there will be plenty of other day trips, skive dives and secret squirrel trips that make their way onto the calendar – so keep checking in regularly. And post Tech 1 (assuming Andy and James pass) some deeper dives/trimix trips as well.

That said we don't believe that we're perfect (well nearly) so if there is a location that you'd love to dive please contact us. The chances are that we're already thinking about it!

Special Tech Weekend at the Cowshed – 19th – 22nd February

February is a huge month for technical diving in NZ, with the very first GUE Tech 1 class to be held here, starting on the 17th – and with Andy as one of the first students! This is a very challenging course which introduces trimix as the gas of choice for deeper dives and as this is a first for NZ we only want

the best – so we've invited Liam Allen (GUE instructor of the year 2009 and Australasia's only GUE Instructor Trainer) over from Australia to teach this very first course.

As well as Liam, Jamie will also be present throughout the course, which makes it a perfect time for everyone that wants to know more about GUE to pick their brains. After two days of work in Auckland everyone will be moving up to the Cowshed/Northland Dive from Thursday evening through to Monday afternoon. Diving is available everyday and with nothing much in the vicinity Jamie and Liam will be available each evening for all those difficult questions and training advice. Spaces are strictly limited, so please contact Mel for further details: mel@techdivenz.com

Cavern Diving at Poor Knights – 6th – 8th March

Following the success of our inaugural Cavern Course Live-aboard on OceanBlue, we are running another trip in March. Whilst 4 dives is sufficient to complete the PADI Cavern course, as you know that isn't our attitude at Tech Dive so this 3 day live-aboard gives you the opportunity to take your training to a higher level and gain further supervised experience in the overhead environment. If you're not sure whether cavern/cave diving is the way forward for you, there are a couple of spaces on the boat for non-course divers so come along and sample the caverns safely with Mel guiding you. For more details, have a look at the flyer on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/Cavern-Liveboard.pdf>.

PADI Assistant Instructor Course – 19th – 21st March

Introducing others to the underwater world and teaching people to dive can often be as exciting and challenging as wreck or cave diving. In March Andy will be running an AI course based at Global Dive in Auckland. For those of you that are interested in teaching this is the perfect opportunity to start on the instructor path, without having to take a whole week off work to do the full Open Water Instructor Course. You'll still learn the same stuff as a full instructor: how to give lectures, run pool sessions and teach effectively in open water, but this way you can get a taste to ensure you enjoy teaching. And if you pass the course and decide that later you want to be a full instructor you only need to do 4 extra days. Don't miss this opportunity - contact Andy for further details: andy@techdivenz.com

Tech Dive NZ Big Weekend Out – 27th & 28th March

We know it's always hard finding good buddies to go diving with, especially once you start tackling harder and more exciting dives, so as a way of helping you to meet like-minded adventurous divers we are holding the very first TDNZ Big Weekend Out. The plan is to enjoy two days of diving down at Lake Taupo – where the water clarity is always good and we have a great variety of depths to challenge everyone [3-70m]. Andy and Jamie will also be running a couple of workshops: overhead protocols and introduction to twin tanks – so if you've been thinking about doing a class with us this is the perfect opportunity to get an introduction to the unique TDNZ 'intense' style of teaching. Everyone is welcome, however spaces on the workshops are limited, so to ensure that you are not disappointed please contact Andy to reserve a space: andy@techdivenz.com

Mikhail Lermontov – 3 more trips in 2010!

Come and dive with us as we explore one of the largest dive-able shipwrecks in the world! Following the success of our January expedition we have organised three more 4-day trips to this colossal wreck. Our Easter trip is already full, but spaces still remain for September and October, although they are

going fast. Visit the cinema or library, check out the bridge and officers quarters, be amazed by the enormous engine room, slide into one of the bars or even swim past the swimming pool. This wreck has it all! Contact Mel for further details: mel@techdivenz.com or have a look at the flyer on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/Lermontov.pdf>.

Tips and Techniques

Many divers that are new to double tanks often feel a little top heavy. To counteract this tail weights can be used – but how do you know how much weight you need? Before you go to considerable effort or expense and get a custom tail weight made, which may or may not be right for you, we suggest that you do a few dives using a temporary tail weight – as shown below.



Take one or more weights, depending on how much weight you want to try, and tape them together using gaffer tape. Next create a tab of tape, several layers thick. Once complete put a hole through the tab and slide over your bolts – as easy as that. Do a few dives, increase and decrease the weight and you can work out exactly what you need. Simple. Once you know what weight is right, you can then get a proper weight made up.

Test Your Knowledge

Following the cave theme of the rest of the newsletter this weeks quiz is unsurprisingly all about caves and cave diving. Have a go and 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. What is the deepest water filled cave in NZ currently being explored by cave divers?
2. What is the name of the famous Somerset cave where UK cave diving was born?
3. Which Spring in Florida are GUE divers most associated with?
4. What is a snoopy loop?
5. Who wrote 'Blueprint for Survival' and also proposed the 'rule of thirds'?
6. What is the minimum number of lights that should be carried by all cave divers?
7. Which Caribbean country is famous for the large number of blue holes located there?
8. Who is the director of the WKPP?
9. What is the name of longest cave in Australia?
10. What do cave divers use 'cookies' for?

Be our Fan on Facebook

Be the first to find out what we're doing! As well as email, we use Facebook to keep you updated with upcoming dives, details of our recent trips plus last minute reminders of availability. In order to do this, you need to be our Fan. Do a search for Tech Dive NZ on Facebook and join us.

Dive Trips

You can use the website to keep track of our dive trips, but just in case you forget in each newsletter we'll also provide you with a reminder of what we've got planned. Here's what's on offer over the next couple of months – please get in touch if you'd like to come along on one of these trips:

<i>Trip</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Contact</i>
GUE weekend (Cowshed – Northland Dive)	February 19 th - 22 nd	Mel
Poor Knights Cavern diving (Ocean Blue Liveboard)	March 6 th , 7 th & 8 th	Mel
Waikato wreck diving	March 13 th & 14 th	Mel
TDNZ Big Day Out (Taupo)	March 27 th & 28 th	Andy
Mikhail Lermontov	April 2 nd - 5 th	Mel
Riwaka Resurgence	April 6 th	Mel
Blue Creek Resurgence	April 7 th -12 th	Jamie
Poor Knights	April 17 th	Andy
Lake Taupo	April 18 th	Jamie
Waikato wreck diving	April 24 th , 25 th & 26 th	Mel
Poor Knights Liveboard (with Ocean Blue)	May 1 st & 2 nd	Jamie
Riwaka Resurgence	September 24 th	Mel
Mikhail Lermontov	September 25 th - 28 th	Mel
Mikhail Lermontov	September 30 th – October 3 rd	Mel
Riwaka Resurgence	October 4 th	Mel

If there's anywhere you particularly want to go diving, either let Andy, Jamie or Mel know and we will help arrange the trip.

Dive Courses

In the last week the team here at Tech Dive NZ have been busy organising the calendar and we now have courses organised all the way through to October. Here is a list of the main courses coming up in the next few months, but for a full list please check out the calendar on our website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/calendar.html>

<i>Course</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Location</i>
GUE Fundamentals	February 27 th & 28 th ; March 20 th & 21 st	Auckland
PADI Cavern	March 6 th , 7 th & 8 th	Poor Knights Liveaboard
PADI Self Reliant Diver	February 23 rd & 25 th (evenings), 27 th & 28 th	Auckland
PADI Advanced Wreck	March 9 th & 11 th (evenings), 13 th & 14 th	Auckland/Tutukaka
PADI Assistant Instructor	March 19 th , 20 th & 21 st	Auckland (Global Dive)
TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures	April 10 th , 11 th , 17 th & 18 th	Auckland/Taupo
PADI Advanced Wreck	April 20 th & 22 nd (evenings), 24 th & 25 th	Auckland/Tutukaka
GUE Fundamentals	May 5 th & 6 th (evenings), 7 th , 8 th & 9 th	Auckland

If you are interested in any of these courses then get in touch with mel@techdivenz.com.

And Now for Something Completely Different...

A group of Florida-based GUE divers has been hired by the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) to try to solve an ancient mystery. They will be investigating an area near the island of Bimini, 50 miles off the South Florida coast, hoping to uncover evidence of the Lost Continent of Atlantis.

The divers will conduct as many as four deep-diving missions, using rebreathers, high-definition video and digital mapping equipment to investigate the area around the “Bimini Road”, a mysterious U-shaped stone formation, which A.R.E. members believe is the key to rediscovering Atlantis.



Robert Carmichael, one of the leaders of the GUE expedition, doesn't exactly buy into the Atlantis theory, although he admits he and his colleagues have observed some “unnatural features” - long, curving sandy trails winding through the sides of steep, underwater cliffs 200 to 300 feet deep that “look like mountain switchback trails or ski runs. It’s hard to think that would be naturally-occurring.” Maybe they’ll find some prehistoric skis down there...