

Tech Dive NZ

Newsletter June 2011

www.techdivenz.com, info@techdivenz.com

WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the June edition of our monthly TDNZ newsletter. Since our last newsletter there has been a heap of diving going on. We've done two of our 10x10x10 winter diving challenge trips, run an Advanced Wreck, a Cavern Diver and an Introductory Cave Diver class.

We've also been planning lots of stuff as well - our first GUE Fundamentals class in Wellington, some cave diving in Australia and a major cave expedition in NZ. And quite possibly by the time you receive this we may also have done our Lake Taupo and Waikato River weekend. And this is supposed to be the winter when it's quiet?

We have also been taking the opportunity to update the website, adding more details about the classes we offer and starting to work on cleaning up and adding to the photo library. (If anyone has any photots they'd like to share please send them in.)

But it's not just us who have been busy. Congratulations need to go out to Rob and Akiko on the birth of their first son Liam - we hope you are getting soime sleep guys. And quite probably before the next issue of this newsletter gets published Christian and Sian will be welcoming a new arrival as well. The next generation of divers we hope!

Finally a quick mention about some exciting news - NZ is going to have a dive conference this year - OCEANZ, happening in Tauranga on 12/13th November - we'll provide more details next month.

LOCATION HIGHLIGHTING A GREAT NZ DIVE SITE



Goat Island, New Zealand's first marine reserve, gazetted in 1975 and officially opened in 1977. This has been a popular spot for Aucklanders for over 60 years, combining clear water and an exposed but very accessible coastline. Only an hours drive from Auckland and offering lots of potential for amazing interactions with the wildlife it is easy to see why this is such a popular spot. If you want to know how incredible the wildlife can be, simply ask a few of the open water students on one of Matt's recent courses there - they got to watch orcas feeding on stingrays from only a few metres away!

For the more adventurous of you (either very fit or with access to a DPV) we would suggest trying a tour

of the whole island, or at least exploring further than normal. The further round the back you get the more wildlife you tend to see. James, Susan and Jamie did a complete circuit a couple of years ago and got to see a big bait ball being hammered by dozens of Kingies, met the two seals who lived round the back and explored the small cave at 20m.

However, a couple of points to note if you do want to circumnavigate the whole island - firstly it's about a 5km trip. Secondly be aware of the glass bottomed boat operator, divers and propellers should not mix, so task a buoy. Thirdly be aware of occassional strong currents - you can access the beach pretty much anywhere along the coast here, but it can make for a long walk back to the car if you get your timing wrong. Finally make sure your DPV batteries are charged properly - not that we might have made that mistake at all.....

If you are planning a day trip here then mid-week is best, or mid-winter. Unless you like sharing your space with 100's of other people try to avoid weekends in the middle of summer when the beach can get very crowded. Also please do not feed the fish. Clearly lots of people are ignoring the signs and feeding them, because as soon as you get in the water they start to appear, looking expectantly for you to produce something.

For photographers this is a must do dive.



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DIVING

TRIP OF THE MONTH

Overhead Adventures - May and June

Something a little different this month from our usual trip report. Instead here are a few highlights from two of the overhead environment courses Jamie taught recently - Advanced Wreck Diver and Introductory Cave Diver.

The aim of the Advanced Wreck class is to prepare students for full penetration inside ship wrecks, including line laying protocol, emergency procedures and dive planning. Students complete four penetration dives,

with the final dive being an extended wreck penetration based on a plan agreed before the dive.

The aim of the Introductory Cave Diver class is to take students beyond the cavern zone and into the darkness of the cave proper, using full cave equipment - double tanks, back-plate and wing etc. Once into the darkness dive planning, line protocol and emergency skills are again tested - over and over.

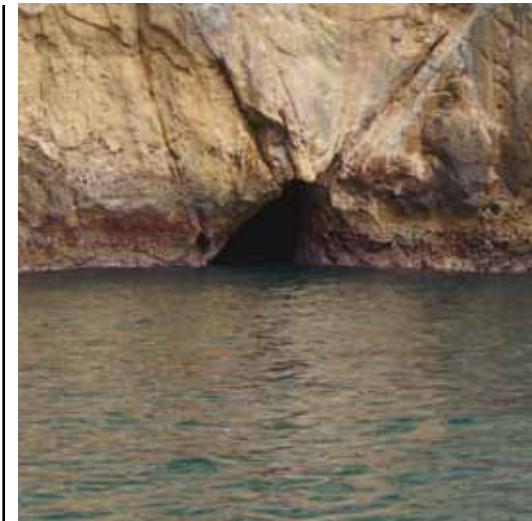
If you read Peter Carruthers brief bio at the end of the newsletter you'll see he rates this cave class as the most fun class he's ever done, even though it is definitely a challenge.

Jamie also rates these classes as some of the most fun to teach, especially as entering the overhead environment is something of an obsession with him. To give you an idea of how these courses work out here are just a few of the gems from the recent dive debriefs:

"Everything was going ok until you went into the cupboard." Yes it sounds like something from C. S. Lewis' Narnia books, but there was a serious point being made. Using the helicopter hanger on the Waikato to do a lost line drill might seem to be making life easy for the students, but it is a surprisingly complicated space, especially if you enter the cupboard by mistake and get disorientated.

"I couldn't have laid the line to cause more trouble if I'd tried." Here the importance of team member two looking at where team member one has laid the line cannot be stressed enough. Trying to do a blind exit through a vertical hatchway when you've run the line diagonally across the hatch makes for very entertaining viewing.

"I'm the one who causes the entanglements usually." Here Jamie was referring to the fact that during the dives 3 students had managed to get themselves entangled in the line, without any 'help' from Jamie - and one of them in only the first 2m of the penetration. No wonder some students think they can hear laughing during the dive.



Through this tiny hole an entirely different world awaits.....

These are both very challenging classes, which will take you into the darkness and beyond recreational limits. You need a cool head and good diving skills, a sense of adventure and a passion for diving - but most importantly you need to be ready to have fun. The classes obviously have a serious side, as penetrating the overhead environment must always be done carefully, but if you maintain your sense of humour you will definitely learn more.

For more details on these classes, including future scheduled dates, costings and equipment requirements please check out our website.



Introductory Cave Diver Class - June 2011: Chris B, Pete H, Claire M & Tony F

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DIVING

WHAT'S COMING UP



Lake Taupo & Waikato River Drift June 18-19th

One weekend, 3 very cool dive experiences. The plan is to meet up in the carpark by Cherry Island (river end of Waikato Street, Taupo) at about 12.30pm to do the drift dive down the river - takes about 30mins.

Saturday evening spent in Taupo, with a night drift dive down the river a possibility.

Sunday morning a dive in Lake Taupo, where you can get 75m+ just off the shore, if anyone really wants to go deep.

Drop us an email if you are keen. Note: We can't get tank fills in Taupo after about 11am Saturday so you'll need to bring enough tanks to get you through (one single will do both river dives, unless you really suck it up.)

Goat Island - 'longest' night dive June 21st

Celebrate mid-winter with a night dive. We'll meet up in the carpark at Goat Island at 7pm, kit up and enjoy a fish-tastic dive and then head off to the comfort and warmth of the Sawmill Bar and Restaurant, to enjoy the roaring fire, a few beers and some great food.

TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures course 2nd/3rd July

This course has two objectives, to train you in the correct use, hazards and procedures for utilising up to 100% oxygen for diving and to introduce you to the virtual overhead - how to plan and execute decompression dives. By the end of the course you will know how to do accelerated decompression dives and safely use side slung decompression tanks to tackle more challenging dives. Contact us directly for more details.



10x10x10 Winter Diving Challenge 9th-10th July

This will be our third trip and as usual it will be excellent. See page 5 for more details.



Rotorua Tough Guy Challenge August 6th

Something a little different! Get down and dirty with us in the mud. Challenge yourself to a unique off-road event involving mud, a spiders-web net climb, mud, various man-made obstacles, mud, a barbed wire crawl, mud, a swamp crossing and yet more mud. Everyone will be impressed - really!?.

GUE Fundamentals - last courses in 2011

The end of the year is starting to fill up with some very exciting dive projects (more details to follow soon), so if you are keen to do Fundies this year then book now. Jamie will be teaching one course in Auckland and one in Wellington:

Wellington: 17/18th September

Auckland: 22/23rd October

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.



Other scheduled events:

Aug 6-7th - Poor Knights Live-aboard

Sept 24-25th - Poor Knights Live-aboard

October 30th - Auckland Marathon

Events still to be scheduled:

Halcyon Treasure Hunt

Cage diving with Mako sharks

Riwaka Resurgence

Blue Creek Resurgence

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TWO YEARS

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



This month is our 2nd birthday, and to celebrate we're giving out the presents. (Yep, we stole that idea from a well known Supermarket chain.) We have a quick and very easy quiz, with prizes - all you have to do is email us your answers by the 5th July (in time for the next newsletter).

1st Prize: A Halcyon u/w notebook

2nd Prize: A Halcyon hooded top

3rd Prize: A Halcyon titanium knife

4th Prize: A TDNZ Beanie.

Just send us the answers to these 10 questions. (HINT: All of the answers can be found in our back issues of this newsletter.)

1. Which lake is Horahora Power Station at the bottom of?
2. Which of our featured dive locations used to be a RNZAF bombing range?
3. In what year was an oxygen rebreather first used at Wookie Hole?
4. What was the name of the Hollywood cave diving film several of us went to see earlier this year?
5. On what day did we first dive the Minato Maru?
6. What were the good, the bad and the ugly?
7. In which month did we feature a statue which required a bikini top to cover her 'ample breasts'?
8. What is Nipper's real name?
9. When was the 10th anniversary of the sinking of the HMNZS Waikato?
10. Where was Tom when he had to use swimming goggles instead of a dive mask?

The answers to all of these Qs can be found in our newsletters. Remember - you don't have to get them all right, just more than anyone else! Happy hunting guys.

DIVE CLUB

LATEST NEWS AND FUTURE EVENTS



This month's club evening was held at the Abbey Bar on Great South Road, one of our old favourite's. It was quite a quiet affair, although as usually happens in such cases various cunning plans were hatched for diving excursions to strange and bizarre places. Keep an eye out on our facebook page and also our blog to find out what we've been up to. James C and Tom seem to be at the forefront of crazy ideas - think Tapawera Falls - so we're looking forward to hearing about their mid-winter South Island trip to investigate holes in the ground.

However, we also have a 'normal' get-together this month to celebrate mid-winter. We are going diving at Goat Island to do a 'longest-night' dive on the 21st June. We'll meet up at 7pm (ish) at the carpark at Goat island and after the diving we'll go for beers/food at the Sawmill. Drop us an email if you are interested.

For our July club evening [July 6th - put it in your diaries now] we'll be getting far more energetic and possibly a bit hot and bothered too. As we've done for the last two years we're going to play shoot-em-up laser games at Megazone at Mt. Wellington. It's not difficult, you don't have to be a great shot and it's a lot of fun. However, we warn you the staff team is now unbeaten two years on the trot - maybe this is the year for revenge. Can you beat Mel with her 'run around randomly firing non-stop at everything strategy'? So far no one has, so is there anyone new up to the challenge? Oh and beware Mike Smith - the silent assassin!

Happy diving everyone!

PS: Let us know if you have any more ideas for future club evenings.



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10 x 10 x 10

WINTER DIVING CHALLENGE

To dive or not to dive, that is the question.

Our great winter diving challenge has begun! Since the last newsletter we've run two of the five scheduled 10x10x10 trips - and what a start we've had. Over the two trips we have visited six and a half of the ten dive sites. OK, so now you're wondering how we've managed to visit half a dive site - well the East or West challenge entails visiting 3 separate caves, and we've only done one of them - so I guess we've really only done 6.33 dive sites.



And the diving has been awesome - with Twelve-Fathom Reef standing out as one of the best dives we've ever done at the Poor Knights - fabulously fish-tastic. Even Kev took a dip into the depths to take a few pictures, it was that good.

In terms of our competition we currently have 3 divers tied for first place, all having dived 5 sites each:

HAMISH McKAY
CHRISTIAN STIMSON
JOHN LEE

Remember everyone who dives 6 of the 10 sites gets a free days diving, so these guys are only one dive away - AND the first person to complete all ten sites gets a FREE weekend.

So who else wants some free diving?

We still have 3 weekends remaining, but spaces are very limited. If you want to come on a trip where you know only the best sites are being targeted then here is your chance.

There is no cost to enter the competition; there is no minimum number of trips you have to do; there is only great diving to be done - or to be missed if you just sit at home.

What are you waiting for?

The Costs

The cost for two days of diving is \$360, which is discounted from the usual \$220/day. This cost includes your accommodation onboard on Saturday evening; lunch both days, Saturday evening meal and Sunday Breakfast - plus lots of snacks. All your air fills whilst onboard are included and there is the possibility of doing 7 dives during the weekend - which includes a night dive, something you cannot do off the normal day boats.

In terms of value for money this is an awesome deal. Maybe it is because it is such a good deal that everybody is a bit confused. We'll say it again - there are no catches, no hidden costs - just great diving to be done!



The Dives

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

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: Completed successfully
Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th May

Weekend 2: Completed successfully
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!)

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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:

PETER CARRUTHERS



Profession/job? Jack of all trades (master of none?). Currently own a food importing and marketing business but have been an hotelier, a marketer, a stock broker, and a banker. Also thinking about what to do next. Any ideas anyone?

How many dives have you done? 288

When did you start diving? Open water in 1989 in time for honeymoon to Thailand. Actually it was the only way I could persuade the new Mrs Carruthers to wear rubber. After that just a bit of resort diving until I came to New Zealand.

What qualifications do you have? Padi Open Water and AOW and some specialties; TDI intro to Cave; GUE Fundies and Rec 3; Nippon Adv. Origami

Favourite NZ dive site? NZ is the most outstanding country for diving I have visited and it's impossible to pick one site - you never know what is going to come through. Reefs, pinnacles, wrecks, caves, rivers, lakes you name it NZ has it, and all wrapped up in one neat accessible package.

Which course would you most recommend? No question the most eye-opening was GUE Fundamentals, I would recommend it to any diver and especially those with a decent number of dives under their belt. I wish I had done it 200 dives ago. The most fun was TDI Intro to Cave, I especially enjoyed it when an instructor (not Jamie) gave me a 70m reel for a 120m penetration, that was interesting.

What do you love most about diving? Initially it was the serenity and the simple pleasure of being able to breath underwater. In what other sport can one interact so intimately with such diverse flora and fauna? Now my diving is a bit more goal-oriented

such as searching for Christabel the seal last seen tearfully departing the Calypso.

What do you do when you are not diving? I translate racial slurs for Cuban refugees, I cook Thirty-Minute brownies in twenty minutes (beat that James) and on weekends I take part in full-contact origami (apologies to the greatest college application). I also play tennis (averagely) spent a lot of time reading, especially about how we humans make sense of the world - or not.

What is the next course you plan to take? Cave 1, or Tech 1...when is the question? Spent waaayyy too much money diving last year.

Where is your next planned dive trip? No immediate plans, keen to get surveying the PKI caves having recently had a trip cancelled. [Ed. PC went on the June 10*10*10 trip to do some cave surveying with Mel.]

Any other information we should know about you? I don't wear anything under my kilt, oh...and I like giving long answers to short questions.

TECH DIVE
New Zealand

DIVE FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?



The sinking of the Mikhail Lermontov on Feb 16th 1986 is clouded in controversy. Here are just a few of the strange facts and stories surrounding the sinking:

1. In 1972 a London Paper printed a report alledging the ship was a Russian Spy Ship.
2. No public inquiry was ever held and no one was prosecuted in NZ. The police cited cost as the main factor, although a year earlier they had spent many hundreds of thousands on the Rainbow Warrior case.
3. The pilot Capt Jamison was not interviewed under oath, however the chief navigator was.
4. The preliminary enquiry (the only enquiry) was headed by Capt Ponsford - best man at Capt Jamison's wedding.
5. All reports on this tragedy are locked away in the National Archives, marked never to be released.