

Welcome

Welcome to the March Tech Dive NZ newsletter. We're feeling quite proud of ourselves this month as we've achieved a first – the first GUE Tech 1 class in NZ. This is an open circuit trimix course and has taken a lot of effort and careful planning to make happen. It involved all of us here at TDNZ and culminated with Andy and James gaining the coveted T1 rating – big congratulations to both of them. Unfortunately this does mean that you should expect to read about a lot more trimix diving in the near future. We've also got some news about additional technical qualifications for Andy and Jamie, our next cave exploration trip, another successful Advanced Wreck course and a new UK aquatic superstar. So sorry if you are stuck at work – but who's fault is that? Take a day off and come diving before the summer is over!

Photo of the Month

For this month's photo we've chosen something a little different from normal, but incredibly mysterious and inspiring in equal measures. This diving self portrait was taken by Simon Franicevic and unlike last month's photo shows what you can do without other divers as models. Awesome shot Simon!



Please keep the photos coming in – send them by email to info@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 March club evening was held at De Fontein at Mission Bay. For those of you that had (conveniently) forgotten the plan was to do an ocean swim beforehand and as usual it was the imports to NZ that showed their adventurous spirit – Canadian, Dutch, German and English to be precise – not a Kiwi in sight. As it was low tide we swam out towards Rangitoto, turning around at the reef that is about 1.5km off shore – at which point a couple of us wondered whether we should really have been there given the wind and chop. But we all swam comfortably back in and were settled in the Belgium bar with everyone else shortly after 7.30pm. Oddly enough plenty of Kiwis turned up at the bar.

In April the club evening won't be quite so energetic and will be held on Thursday 1st (no it's not an April Fools joke) back at our old favourite, the Abbey on Great South Road. See you there from 6pm onwards.

What's Been Happening?

January may have been a huge month for us but that doesn't mean we took it easy in February. As usual the full write ups for each event can be found on our website, but here is just a taste of the fun we've been having:

Mel's birthday – 15th February

Clearly the most important event this month was Mel's birthday – 21 all over again, but for the 17th time we think. Jamie spent most of the afternoon building the new BBQ, purchased early that morning when Mel realised that although she had invited people round for a BBQ she didn't actually own one – not a true Kiwi yet Mel. And although we all know that a BBQ is a man's thing, the men all seemed very reticent to pick up the tongs. It wasn't until Ben arrived that any cooking even started – it's always wise to invite a chef along! Thanks Ben. Also, for anyone wondering whether Mel drank in moderation as usual – well she actually did. Probably something to do with the swim test early the next morning in preparation for GUE Tech 1.

GUE Tech 1 class – 16th & 21st February

“Like many other Tech 1 students by the end of the first day we were almost ready to throw in the towel. Skills that we knew we could do, valve drills and s-drills were ropey at best. The second dive of the day was a scenario based dive where as a team of three we needed to resolve failures in line with the protocols we'd learnt the day before. After the dive it was clear that it's so easy to create more problems than you fix.....” To read the rest of Andy's report just follow this link: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/articles/tech1210210.pdf>

Trimix diving HMNZS Canterbury – 22nd February

Who's been to deck 4 of HMNZS Canterbury (since she sunk) and swam around the engine room and boiler room? Have you noticed how much silt has accumulated and how dark, tight and slightly stressful the dive feels? And what about all the kelp currently clogging several of the holes? That's how most of us have felt at 36m on air/nitrox at the bottom of the ship – but for the Tech Dive team, their last couple of dives to the engine room were very different. We did two back-to-back dives using 30/30 trimix, both 30min long with only short deco times and the whole boat felt light, open and spacious. It was still a serious penetration dive, but the edge had gone. You've got to love trimix!

DSAT Instructor exams – 25th February

Here at TDNZ we hate to stand still. Technical diving is clearly growing in NZ (of course we'd like to take some of the credit for that) and recognising this growth PADI have decided to push their technical diving arm DSAT more actively in NZ. Obviously we want to be able to offer the courses that are in demand, so Andy and Jamie are both completing their crossover exams. The theory part of this is now complete with both of them passing their exams with flying colours – although they did argue a couple of questions with the examiner. Would you expect anything else? (STOP PRESS – PADI have just changed one of their answers following our 'debate'.)

Jamie becomes an uncle again – 8th March

Jamie became an uncle again this month when his sister Emma gave birth to a gorgeous little girl called Elizabeth. Unfortunately being the irresponsible uncle, he's planning on confusing the poor girl once she gets old enough, because although she was born on the 8th in America it was the 9th in New Zealand – well that's his excuse if he's ever late with birthday presents.

Advanced Wreck Course – 13th & 14th March

Four intrepid explorers took up the challenge in March and tackled the Advanced Wreck course, which is unique to TDNZ. For three of them, Aidan, Dean and Peter it was a chance to get fully up to speed before the Lermontov trip at Easter. Unfortunately after hearing lots about the Lermontov trip during the course Aaron now wishes he was also coming. As usual the course provided plenty of enlightening moments, one of the highlights being when Aidan started glaring at Jamie, assuming that he was causing problems – only to discover that his spare regulator had come loose and got trapped around a door latch, dragging Aidan into the floor every time he tried to move forward. There was quite a lot of chuckling from Jamie when realisation finally dawned.

Read the full report at <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/articles/advwreck130310.pdf>

Introducing: GUE PRIMER

Do you want to start your GUE training, but think that you are not ready for the GUE Fundamentals course? Are you interested in GUE and want to know more, but have limited time? This one weekend course is a perfect introduction to GUE, the equipment configuration and some of the skills taught in the full GUEF course. It's also a great chance to evaluate your own diving capacity.

All TDNZ classes are 'intense' but GUE classes are particularly demanding. Precise buoyancy control, a heavy emphasis on teamwork and a focus on perfecting the most important basic skills are what GUE has always been about. If you really want to excel underwater then this is the best place to start.

And best of all this is a non-certification class, meaning no material or agency fees. Plus if you do this course you will get credit towards your future GUE Fundies training. For more information, please see <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/courses/primer.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 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. Also, now that there are more of us with trimix qualifications we'll be doing 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!

PADI Assistant Instructor Course – 18th – 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 Day 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 Day 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

Blue Creek Expedition – 7th – 12th April

Following our successful reconnaissance trip in January we will be returning to the Blue Creek cave system for an extended series of dives immediately after the Lermontov trip at Easter. The main dive team is now complete, but if you are interested in learning more about this type of exploration or helping out with logistics please contact Jamie for details.

Trimix Tuesdays

We now have a big enough group of qualified divers to justify chartering a boat mid-week specifically for deeper dives. Also now that Andy our hard working(?) university lecturer has his calendar for the next semester we can start to plan these trips. If you are interested in joining us for these deeper dives (and you have the appropriate qualifications..), please contact us for details.

Tips and Techniques – Setting up your can light

If you enjoy exploring wrecks or caves then eventually you will own a can light. Just ask Tony and Chris how much better their Lermontov trip was with their new lights! But to get the best from your can light here are a few tips.

Firstly make sure that you have a cover for the bulb. Stubby holders work very well, or if you have an old unused wetsuit a bit of cutting and sewing can also create a good padded cover. Secondly make sure that you have a bolt snap permanent attached, so that whenever the light is not in your hand you can clip it off. Never leave your light unattached, especially if walking away from your kit - you never know if someone will move it and drop the light by mistake. Finally put a loop at the back of the light. You can use loop this with a double-ender clip to temporarily stow your light when it is still on. Now when you maintain a good horizontal trim facing your buddies you won't blind them. Happy diving.



Test Your Knowledge

This month's quiz has a Poor Knight's theme. We know you've all heard about these spectacular islands and most of you have probably dived there (if not sort it out soon!) but how much do you actually know about the islands? 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 name of the smaller of the two main islands at the Poor Knights?
2. Which bird is known to share nests with tuatara at the islands?
3. Which historical figure named the Poor Knights as one of the top ten dive sites in the world?
4. Of the following dive sites, which one offers the most potential for trimix divers - Blue Mao Mao Arch, Brady's Corner or Imagination Point?
5. What is the name of the current that sweeps warm water and tropical species from the Pacific to the Poor Knights?
6. In what year did the Poor Knights islands become the second marine reserve in NZ?
7. What was the name of the last warrior chief on the islands?
8. Which cave at the islands gives people the opportunity to see species normally found in much deeper water?
9. How big is Riko Riko Cave?
10. On what date did James Cook sail past the islands?

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>
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
Lake Taupo	April 18 th	Jamie
Poor Knights	April 18 th	Andy
Waikato wreck diving	April 24 th , 25 th & 26 th	Mel
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

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>
PADI Assistant Instructor	March 18 th , 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
GUE Fundamentals	June 4 th to 7 th	Auckland
PADI Self Reliant Diver	June 5 th to 7 th	Auckland
TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures	June 12 th , 13 th , 19 th & 20 th	Auckland/Taupo

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

And Now for Something Completely Different...

The UK's latest aquatic superstar: The UK seems to have a knack for discovering talent in unusual places – just think of Susan Boyle. However, it remains to be seen whether the latest attempt at Global Pop-Culture domination will be just as successful - Mr. Memory the Goldfish. He is the star of the Drench TV adverts (a type of bottled water) and is wowing UK audiences by swimming through an obstacle course, negotiating a toilet cistern and avoiding the waiting claws of a cat. Intrigued? Check out this link to enjoy the full advert.



<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/2864063/New-advert-features-talented-goldfishGoldfish-advert.html>