

Welcome

Welcome to the Tech Dive NZ November newsletter – by all accounts, it's not just a month for growing a dodgy moustache but also the biggest wreck and cave diving month we've had for a while! Whilst the algal blooms have caused unpredictable variations in visibility at some ocean dive sites, we've consistently found great conditions inside the various wrecks we've been diving!

Photo of the Month

One of our wreck diving trips this month was to HMNZS Canterbury, where fully equipped with his tripod, Andy took a number of long exposure shots of the wreck. This shot was definitely cream of the crop, showing just what you can do with even compact digital cameras!



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.

What's Been Happening?

How can we start talking about what's been happening in the last month without starting off with last month's club night? This was the first (of many!) fun nights, where we headed down to Mt Wellington to play three rounds of laser tag... purely by chance, Jamie, Andy and Mel ended up on the same team. We had thought that the safest plan was for all three of us to be on separate teams so at least one of us was on the winning team! But as it happened, Team Yellow seized the day thanks to Mike Smith whose silent but deadly approach picked off player after player from the other teams. Between rounds we retired to the Megazone "Party Room", which much to our surprise actually didn't have a ball pit and slides... but there was always the bumper cars to look forward, where once again Mike showed his deadly precision in taking out other people! It was certainly a great evening for Roz to turn up and meet us all for the first time!



And of course, we should always acknowledge when we are in the presence of greatness. Jamie has recently been appointed to the list of famous scuba divers of modern times... it would of course be more meaningful if it wasn't some dodgy Ukrainian blog that then the next started talking about Paris Hilton's scuba diving antics. If you want to check out Jamie's fame entry, here's the link: <http://scuba-instructors.blogspot.com/2009/11/famous-scuba-divers-of-modern-times.html>.

Trips wise, our "skive dive" this month involved two dives on HMNZS Waikato, thanks again to Dive! Tutukaka for a great day. It was a difficult decision for Chris and Mike, whether to go and explore the wreck or whether to hang around in the hanger and watch Andy and Mel be simulated students as Jamie put them through the skills on the new Advanced Wreck Diver course! In the end, they choose to explore the wreck with one dive on the bow section, then a second dive that involved penetration from the stern right through to the break. Meanwhile, Andy and Mel didn't really see much at all – a shame as the visibility was excellent. To see why they didn't see anything, check out the trip report that Chris wrote for the day: www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/trip111109.pdf.

Following on immediately from the "skive dive", Jamie and Mel dived the Waikato again the next day with Kevin Delonge from Ocean Blue. They were definitely on a mission, but we've left it up to you to try and work out what it was! The "stealth dive" trip report contains a few photos intended to give you a few clues – if you manage to work it out, send us an email so we can announce it next month!



The following weekend, Jamie, Mel and Andy were joined by James Croker from DiveHQ Tauranga, who had wangled the Monday off work for a trip to Matai Bay. The plan for this weekend was to run through our Cavern Diver course and also spend some time looking for new caves in the area. When you think that New Zealand actually has a longer coastline than the mainland US, it's not surprising that we managed to find one! After throwing James in

to the water every time we came across a likely looking crack, when we found a decent sized cave it only seemed fair to name it in his honour, though we didn't feel like Croker's Crack was the most suitable name... so Canary Cave is now on the map! You can read more about the details of our weekend in the trip report on the website: <http://www.techdivenz.com/pdfs/trips/trip161109.pdf>.

The final trip to report on this month is the weekend up at the Cowshed (aka Northland Dive), which had a mix of training and pleasure diving on HMNZS Canterbury. Jamie was putting Astrid through her paces on the Advanced Wreck Diver course, whilst Mel was doing the same for Aaron, Aidan and Dean on their basic wreck course. That left Craig, Lee and Andy doing some pleasure dives that included a trip down to the stern at 37m as well as several other dives. Julia from Northland Dive provided us with great skippering and fantastic evening meals, if you haven't been up to the Cowshed yet then you should definitely check it out this summer. In particular, if you are in to your technical diving then we have a few days booked in February where trimix fills will be available! This will be a good time for anyone with an interest in finding out more about GUE to come along and find out more – as well as Jamie, we'll also be joined by Liam Allan from Australia. Liam is a GUE Instructor Trainer and it will be a great opportunity to find out more, even if it's just seeing what is going on whilst he's teaching a Tech 1 course. More details will follow in the December newsletter.



What's Coming Up?

For December, we're having another themed club evening to celebrate the warmer weather with some suitably crisp beverages! So please join us for "Belgian Beer on the Balcony" from 7pm onwards on Thurs 3rd December at De Post in Mt Eden. We're hoping that everyone will find their perfect beer match from the extensive range of Belgian beers on offer!

December is always an interesting month, with Christmas generally getting in the way of some good diving! It's doubly interesting for us this year, as December is all about Wellington! Andy is heading down on the 5/6th to run a Self Reliant Diver course and then the next weekend he is back again with Jamie to teach a TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures course in conjunction with Splash Gordon. They're both looking forward to that famous Wellingtonian hospitality!

Further north, we have some trips out to the Poor Knights Islands on the weekend of the 5/6th. There's plenty of spaces available and if you've not yet been diving this summer, then this is going to be a great trip to dust off the dive gear and get out there! Contact Mel for more details.

Later in the month, we'll be organising our Christmas Dive, on the 20th December. We'll decide the actual dive site nearer the time, but it will be a local shore diving spot with the option to do as many dives as you like along with a beach barbeque.

Looking ahead to January, we have dates for a trip down to the Mikhail Lermontov in the Marlborough Sounds between the 10th and 13th January, with a side trip out to dive the Riwaka Resurgence on the 14th. The Lermontov offers some of the best wreck diving you can imagine, being one of the largest diveable shipwrecks in the world! This will be a great trip, so let us know if you are interested as spots will go quickly! If you miss out in January, don't worry as we'll be arranging another trip over Easter. Both trips will be "live-ashore" with the chance of doing around 12 dives on the wreck, more than enough to satisfy even the most avid of rust seekers!

There's plenty planned beyond that, so if you want to look further ahead then check out the calendar on the website: www.techdivenz.com/calendar.html.

Dive Trips

You can keep track of our planned dive trips on the website, but each month we'll provide you with a reminder 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:

- Poor Knights, 5-6th December 2009
- Mikhail Lermontov, 10-13th January 2010
- Riwaka Resurgence, 14th January 2010
- Tutukaka Wrecks, 23-24th January 2010
- Volkner Rocks, 5-7th February 2010
- Poor Knights, 13-14th February 2010

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

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

- Self Reliant Diver: December 4th, 5th & 6th (Wellington)
- Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures; December 11th, 12th 13th & January 16th & 17th (Wellington – contact Splash Gordon for details)
- GUE Fundamentals: January 28th & 29th (evenings), 30th, 31st and February 1st.
- PADI Cavern (on Ocean Blue Liveboard): January 23rd, 24th & 25th

The January GUE Fundamentals course has been arranged to coincide with Auckland Anniversary weekend, so there's no need to take any time off work to complete the four day course. Also, the Cavern course lines up with Wellington Anniversary weekend – perfect for the Wellingtonians to plan a road trip up to the Poor Knights!

If you are interested in either of these courses then get in touch with Andy, Jamie or Mel.

Tips and Techniques

Have you ever noticed that most instructors dive in drysuits? There are definite advantages in terms of warmth and comfort but there is an extra level of care needed with drysuits to keep them in tip top shape. The main parts of a suit that need that extra care are the zip and the seals. It's always worth checking what the manufacturer recommends, but some general principles that always apply. Keep zips well lubricated to help them open and close freely. It's generally a good idea to keep the zip open when being stored, but zipped up when your packing the suit into the car. This will help prevent the zip from being damaged. To prolong the life of your latex seals, always talc the seals after washing the suit. Perfumed talc can potential damage the latex, so medical grade talc or French chalk are preferred.

And Now for Something Completely Different...

We were thinking of recounting a story about someone eating a rotten pumpkin, but at the last minute decided that we wouldn't want to embarrass them too much.... instead, have you heard the one about a giant jellyfish that sank a fishing trawler? No joke, this really happened! The trawler, the Diasan Shinsho-maru, capsized off Chiba`as its three-man crew was trying to haul in a net containing dozens of huge Nomura's jellyfish. Each of the jellyfish can weigh up to 200 kg and waters around Japan have been inundated with the creatures this year. Experts believe weather and water conditions in the breeding grounds, off the coast of China, have been ideal for the jellyfish in recent months. The crew of the fishing boat was thrown into the sea when the vessel capsized, but the three men were rescued by another trawler... it certainly makes you think, doesn't it??!

