

Tech Dive NZ

Newsletter November 2011

www.techdivenz.com, info@techdivenz.com

WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the November edition of our monthly TDNZ newsletter. If you're wondering about the picture below, it's all to do with going diving - or rather not going diving. Just when we thought we'd heard it all, this month we had the most amazing excuse ever for not going diving texted through to us: "Sorry I can't come along tonight as I've damaged my oesophagus drinking too much beer during the world cup final."



Even more amazingly it was true! Who knows what would have happened to this poor unfortunate soul had the All Blacks lost to France.....

However, everyone here at TDNZ has not been making excuses and we've had an incredibly busy month. We've had a trip to Horahora Power Station (it's underwater in case you've missed our previous trip reports), we've run a GUE Fundamentals class and Jamie has done a 1-on-1 open water class for Andrew, who wanted to do it all in a dry-suit, backplate, wing and long hose from the very beginning.

Some of you will probably have noticed we've also updated our photo gallery which now has 2009, 2010 and 2011 sections - with many new pictures previously never displayed. And that's not all - this month we also had Oceanz, where we met many of you (see report below) and Jamie did the Auckland Quarter Marathon - finishing in 55mins.

And before you start worrying you might have missed things we've also planned a whole bunch of trips for next year - a cave and caverns live-aboard, a deep reefs and pinnacles weekend, trimix training, Mel's birthday bash at Northland Dive and a whole winter calendar of 10x10x10 trips.

And this coming month looks awesome as well, with trips to Blue Creek, the Mikhail Lermontov and talks by Casey McKinlay. Maybe it was something to do with a lucky date this month 11.11.11. but whatever the

LOCATION HIGHLIGHTING A GREAT NZ DIVE SITE

This dive site needs very little introduction. By surface area it is the largest lake in New Zealand, drained by the longest river in NZ, the Waikato - it is of course Lake Taupo.

Situated in a caldera, created when a super-volcano erupted nearly 27,000 years ago, the depth of the lake is reported as at least 160m, maybe as much as 186m, depending on which source you believe. To get to these depths you would need a boat, but there are a couple of easily accessible spots where you can quickly drop to 70m+ very close to the shore line.

Motutere, by the holiday park, is where we usually dive, with two spots standing out as our favourite. The first is off the southern side of the little spit of land which sticks out 100m south of the campsite entrance. If you swim out from the shore you remain very shallow for about 200m, and then the wall drops almost vertically to 70m+. The second site is straight out towards the isolated danger mark (red and black buoy) which is at the other end of the campsite. You park by the fence and again swim out for 100m or so. Here the wall drops to 30m, then there is a shelf, followed by another drop.

There are two great things about diving lake



Taupo. Firstly the visibility is usually excellent and secondly you don't have to deal with tides, current or surge, which makes it an excellent training site, especially for deep dives.

Of course everything can't always be perfect and there is one slight inconvenience diving here - air fills. The local dive shop closes at 12 noon on Saturday and doesn't open on Sundays, so you have to bring all your own tanks with you. But it is worth the effort.

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DIVING

TRIP OF THE MONTH

Horahora Hydro-Electric Power Station 17th October

Time seems to be moving quicker, which worries me, as it's exactly what my grandparents used to say. If I was feeling pessimistic I'd think it was because I was getting older, but as sunshine always makes me feel optimistic I'll console myself with the thought that I'm really just very busy. Whatever the reason our last trip to Horahora in May this year seems doesn't feel like a 5 months ago. Indeed Mike from Karapiro Cruises had been asking us to come back for another visit for a while, but with many other commitments and a few cancelled trips due to the weather it hadn't been possible. Thankfully when we awoke early Monday morning the weather was perfect – it was time to dive again.

We had three aims for this trip. Firstly Mike had discovered a local landowner who had a large scale architect's model of the old power station which we were going to have a look at. Secondly we wanted to get some decent photographs of the site, both for us to use and for Mike to be able to show to his customers. And finally I personally wanted to get further into some of the rooms,



Architect's model of Horahora

particularly the main generator room, to see how much was still visible and not buried under 64 years of silt.

We arrived just as Mike was mooring up – great timing – and once we had loaded the boat we headed straight off to have a look at the model. I wasn't sure what to expect, but it certainly wasn't a 4m x 4m model showing the entire valley, power station, slip ways, nearby buildings and other features exactly as it was prior to the whole area being flooded in 1947. As an aid to understanding what exactly we were diving on this was invaluable and I was able to finally make more sense of what I had seen last time. Tom who was going to be diving with me had not been on the last trip so I explained to him where we would be diving and what features to look out for. Since our last trip I had also discovered through more research

that the locals had removed all the roofing materials whilst the station was slowly flooding – hence why we hadn't been able to use the sloping roof as a landmark last time. Together with the sonar images we had and my previous dives I was at last getting a good picture of the whole layout underwater. It was time to get wet.

As we had done last time our plan was to use the first dive to lay lines, explore and locate suitable areas for photos, which would be the focus of the second dive. Again we were using a surface marker buoy and reel to give us a guideline back to the surface and once we were both ready we descended about where we thought the centre of the main building would be. Dropping through the very silty water actually felt quite comfortable for me, as I knew what to expect, but I could still remember my first dive here so wondered how Tom felt. Unfortunately the visibility wasn't as good as last time and with a slight current we drifted away from the building and found ourselves reaching a sloping bottom at 20m, not quite the start I'd hoped for. However by following the slope uphill we found the main building and after a couple of minutes I started recognising some of the features and knew where we were.

For the next 45mins Tom and I explored the outside of the building, tying off on interesting features, mentally making notes

of what depths to find certain windows and exploring a little way inside. The visibility was terrible, only 1-1.5m and although I'm pretty certain I found the way into the main part of the building we abandoned our inside excursions when Tom got his manifold tangled in old copper wires. This could have been a very nasty situation, but Tom followed his cave training, stayed calm and very gently extricated himself by reversing his movements. It was a great example of why we do lots of training. After another 10mins of exploring it was time to head back to the boat.

This report continues on our website:

www.techdivenz.com/reports.html



Jamie shining his light through one of the old window panes.

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DIVING

WHAT'S COMING UP



Blue Creek Resurgence December 1-8th

Following our very successful exploration in February this year we are going back for another trip. Casey McKinlay is joining us from Florida, plus Steve, Trent and Andrew from Oz. This time we're aiming to push the end of the line, get some great video footage and do some more surveying. This trip is going to be one of the highlights of our year!

Casey McKinlay presentations December 3rd [Wellington] December 13th [Auckland]

Casey McKinlay is visiting NZ for the very first time (to join us diving at Blue Creek) and we have persuaded him to do a couple of talks for us. Casey is the Director of the W.K.P.P. which is probably the most successful cave exploration team of the last two decades. Opportunities like this come along very very rarely so don't miss out. The Wellington talk will be held at the NIWA offices and the Auckland talk is at Auckland Uni. Times and rooms will be finalised soon - keep checking the website: www.techdivenz.com



Poor Knights Deep Pinnacles Weekend January 28-29th 2012

Join us as we explore some of the rarely dived deeper reefs and pinnacles at the beautiful Poor Knights. This trip will run as two separate days, so you have the choice of coming along for all or just part of the weekend. If you want to dive trimix we'll be filling on the Saturday evening as well.

Mel's 21st Birthday Bash February 18-19th 2012

Come up to Northland and have a fun filled weekend at the Cowshed as Mel celebrates turning 21 again. (For the 20th time....) This will be the social event of the year - probably with hangovers and photos to match.

Advance Warning - lots of trips ahead

Caverns and Caves March 2-4th 2012

This is a 3-day live-aboard trip. Do the TDI Cavern or Intro-to-Cave classes, maybe even both. Or simply enjoy diving the caves.

GUE Fundamentals February 20-24th 2012 [Auckland] March 29th - April 2nd 2012 [Wellington]

The dive ninja course which sets the benchmark for everyone else. Places are limited as usual.

Trimix Training 17-18th & 24-25th March

This is the GUE Rec 3 Trimix class, pre-req. being a 'tec' pass at GUEF. Places are limited.

10x10x10 May-September 2012

Same format as last year, with 5 new sites and 5 old favourites. Dates as follows:

19/20th May
16/17th June
14/15th July
18/19th August
15/16th September

Auckland Marathon October 28th 2012

This should be enough warning for anyone!

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OCEANZ DIVING CONFERENCE



NAVY recompression chamber

OCEANZ November 12-13th [Tauranga]

After an absence of more than 20 years an OCEANZ diving conference and exhibition has been held again. Initially conceived by Dave Moran in 1974 this conference used to be one of the highlights of the NZ diving calendar. If you're wondering how big it was in its heyday - on two separate occasions it was officially opened by the Prime Minister!

The last full conference was in 1990 and the last photo competition was about 10 years ago, so it is great to see it return, amazingly with several of the past attendees.

As always a team of people were involved in running this event, but it is really two people who made it happen and took on the bulk of the work - Shane Wasik and his partner Nicki. They did an amazing job, involving a huge amount of stress and hassle and somehow seemed to remain calm throughout. It is an astonishing achievement.

The event comprised a main exhibitors hall, where a range of exhibitors - retailers, training organisations, universities, environmental groups, equipment wholesalers, travel companies and even the Royal NZ Navy had displays and information for visitors. Outside of this hall there was also a photography exhibition and competition, a shipwreck artefacts display, a swimming pool for try-dives and of course the two auditoriums for the presentations throughout the weekend.



Halcyon and GUE stands



Dive New Zealand magazine

The range of topics presented was also very varied, with everything from Pete Bethune talking about protecting the whales, to the Police Dive Squad explaining their work and a debate on NZ Marine Reserves, involving several MPs. Keith Gordon presented on the RMS Niagara, Pete Mesley on Truk and Bikini and of course Jamie on Overhead Environment diving in NZ.

As well as us being excited this event is back on the NZ diving calendar it was also great to see so many of you making the effort to come along and give your support. On the Saturday evening there was a Gala Dinner and we had an entire TDNZ table which was fun. Of course some of us had more fun than others - with Mel staying up all evening to party, arriving back at the show on Sunday morning still in her party dress, which left

Jamie to do most of the work manning the Halcyon and GUE stands. Thank you to those of you who helped us out by answering questions and covering the stand whilst Jamie did his talk.

Finally it looks likely that the next OCEANZ event will be in 2013, two years time. We sincerely hope this will be an even bigger and better show, so if any of you have any ideas we'd love to hear them. Obviously Shane and Nicki are enjoying a well earned break right now, but if we get some good ideas from anyone we'll forward them on. We'll definitely have lots more exciting projects, photos and video to present at the next show, hopefully featuring many of you. So get your thinking caps on, get diving and let's see if we can have two or more tables at OCEANZ '13.



Photography competition

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PROFILE

CLUB MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Here we profile one of our dive club regulars, find out a little more about them and see if they have any recommendations for us.

MEL JEAVONS



Profession/job? Accountant

How many dives have you done? 1500+

What qualifications do you have? PADI Staff Instructor, Disabled Association Scuba Instructor, BSAC Advanced Instructor, GUE Tech 2 and Cave 1.

When did you start diving? In 1991, whilst backpacking around Australia.

Favourite NZ dive site? For chilling out Matai Bay is awesome; Riwaka Resurgence is also great. But then I also love the PK's and the Lermly is an amazing dive - it's a tough choice.

Which course would you most recommend? GUE Fundies, as this is the one course which has most influenced my diving.

What do you love most about diving? Blue water and relaxed dive buddies are the key ingredients. After that I don't mind whether I get lots of fish, unexplored caves or challenging wrecks.

What do you do when you are not diving? I work too much and then try to prevent Jamie from spending all of our money on dive trips or new diving toys. When I get the occasional day off I like to snuggle under the duvet and watch films.

What is the next course you plan to take? GUE Cave 2 or RB80 (depending if I give into Jamie's nagging or not).

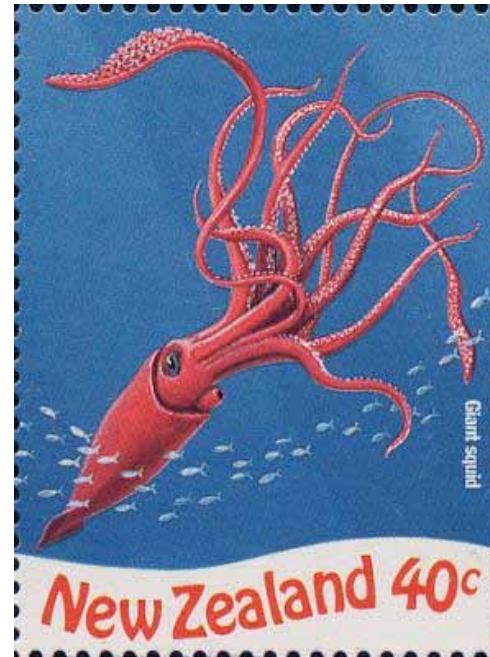
Where is your next planned dive trip? Blue Creek Resurgence in two weeks time - it's going to be very exciting being on a project with Casey McKinlay.

Any other information we should know about you? Once I start dancing I never go home early - make sure you have a lot of Red Bull if you want to keep up.

DIVE FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?

The Giant Squid, or *Architeuthis dux* as it is known to scientists, is a fearsome looking but very elusive creature. Although its existence has been known about for centuries it wasn't until 2005 that images of a live giant squid were released. These were captured by two Japanese scientists, using a camera, strobes and a baited line, at a depth of 900m, near the Ogasawara Islands (North Pacific Ocean).



This genuine NZ stamp was released in 1998, part of a set of 8 celebrating the underwater world.

Tales abound of attacks by giant squid. In October 1966 two lighthouse keepers at Danger Point, South Africa watched a giant squid drown a baby southern right whale. In 1965 a Soviet whaler witnessed a fight between a 40 ton sperm whale and a giant squid. Neither animal survived this encounter. In the 1930s the Norwegian tanker Brunswick was attacked several times by a giant squid. And the list goes on.

And of course there are also plenty of myths and legends about the Kraken, which were probably inspired by either giant squid or giant octopii, *Haliphron atlanticus*. The Kraken is a legendary sea creature which would attack a ship by grabbing it with its many arms and capsizing it. The crew would drown or be devoured by the monster. The arms of the Kraken were said to be able to reach as high as the top of a sailing ship's mast. The Pirates of the Caribbean series of films are probably the most recent to revive the Kraken monster, but it has appeared on the silver screen for decades, attacking Captain Nemo's submarine and appearing as a servant of the Gods in Clash of the Titans.

The first literary references to the Kraken go back to an 1830 irregular sonnet by Alfred Tennyson, followed most notably in 1870 by Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. Whatever the reality, let's hope we never meet one whilst diving!