

# Tech Dive NZ

## Newsletter October 2011

www.techdivenz.com, info@techdivenz.com

### WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the October edition of our monthly TDNZ newsletter. Some months when it comes time for us to write the editorial we have to search around for inspiration, but not this month. In fact there is almost too much to comment on.

Firstly of course we have the Liberia-flagged Rena container ship which is currently stuck on the Astrolabe Reef near Tauranga. Whilst we are hoping for the environmental damage to be negligible, the potential for a new enormous ship wreck is very exciting - although probably unlikely. But if the swells do get bigger and the ship breaks up I imagine the local dive charter boats will have a field day.



Secondly we have completed our 10x10x10 diving extravaganza - congratulations to Christian who won the free weekend, courtesy of Kev and Jan at OceanBlue. For a full report on our final trip see below.

Thirdly this month saw the very first GUE Fundamentals class running in Wellington, at Splash Gordon's - congratulations to Serena, Brendon and Geoff who all passed. Hopefully we'll have another one running in Windy Welly early next year.

And finally this month was a double celebration for Jamie who not only chalked up a major birthday milestone (40 years old) but also completed his TDI Full Cave Diver Instructor training - becoming the very first Full Cave Instructor in NZ. Not a bad way to celebrate leaving his 30s behind!

### LOCATION HIGHLIGHTING A GREAT NZ DIVE SITE

Unlike the locations we've highlighted in the previous two newsletters this month's location cannot really be described as pretty, iconic is perhaps a better epithet. Locals may recognise the picture, but for the rest of you here is a clue - we are down in the far south this month. Still not sure - how about if we said it was originally called Cargill's Pier. OK, let's put an end to the wondering, this month's highlighted dive site is 'The Mole'.

If you are still confused 'The Mole' is a huge man-made rock wall at the far eastern end of Otago harbour, Aramoana. It was built to protect the harbour entrance from silting and keep the channel clear. If this was all there was to it we probably wouldn't be including this site in our list, but between 1921 and 1945 things got interesting. During this period a series of no longer required rusty old hulks were sunk along the length of the Mole in order to help prevent erosion. Which makes this a very unique NZ dive site - where else can you say you've done a shore dive and visited multiple wrecks?

Jamie first dived this site in 2007 and the notes from his log book are still relevant. "Access to the water is pretty easy anywhere along the Mole, by climbing over large granite boulders - be careful if wearing a



trilam suit. Locals suggest avoiding the far end of the pier except at slack water. Vis 3-4m, lots of sponges and nudibranchs. Explored several different bits of wreckage. Max depth 10m, but could have gone deeper if dived closer to end of pier. Gate at end of pier locked, so had to walk our gear all the way down."

According to the locals you can get depths approaching 30m at the end of the pier and on a good day the vis can be up to 10m.

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### DIVING

TRIP OF THE MONTH

#### 10 x 10 x 10 Diving Extravaganza May to September

When you have conceived, nurtured, developed and finally seen an idea all the way to completion it is time to sit back and contemplate. Was it a good idea? Was it a success? Ten by Ten by Ten was a reasonably simple plan. Organise 10 days of diving, highlighting 10 specific sites and offering 10 people the chance to win a free weekend of diving. Whoever completed all 10 sites first, or had completed the most by the end of the 10 days would be the winner. But there was more. There was no entry fee or additional costs, just the standard boat fees, plus everyone who dived six of the sites would win a free days diving. In theory all 10 entrants to the competition would be able to walk away with a prize if they wanted to. We thought the idea was a winner.

What we didn't anticipate was the level of suspicion from the average Kiwi diver. During the months I lost track of how many times I was asked 'What's the catch?' The answer was simple - there was no catch. The 10 days scheduled for the dives were published in advance. The 10 sites were published, all excellent sites, specifically chosen to offer divers places they hadn't



seen before. There was no minimum number of trips you had to go on, no minimum qualification, no gear requirement, no secret handshake, no membership of the masons, no contracts written in blood or strong-arm money-with-menaces tactics at the end. What the hell was wrong with everybody? Had people's experiences of life left them so jaded they couldn't see a good deal when it was offered. Maybe if we'd adopted the 70% off, SALE SALE SALE approach of Harvey Norman and Briscos it would have been more in line with expectations. Ok, stop

ranting. Breath. It was a good idea and everyone who came along and enjoyed the dives agreed. Let me tell you why.

Early on in my first 10x10x10 trip report I used the words "Yah-boo-sucks" and I still stick by them. I use them when I hear the phrase "But I've done the Poor Knights". It's an attitude which rankles with me, that somehow by doing just a couple of dives at the islands you can now tick them off as 'completed' and move on to the next thing. The Poor Knights have incredible diversity, both fixed at each dive site (topography) and varying every dive (fish life). There are multiple different walls, many different arches, numerous caves and cracks, isolated pinnacles and more. The water is clear, the existence of the marine reserve guarantees great fish life and you have very good chances of seeing sharks, dolphins (from the surface) and other larger life. If you have lost interest in the Poor Knights then you have lost interest in diving! Oops, sorry, ranting again.

The 10 sites we chose included 4 dives I had never done and 6 other dives which I knew I loved. We could easily have chosen 20 or even 30 great sites but we wanted to make the competition manageable. Our final selection was a compromise, balancing sites we knew weren't regularly dived, with a mixture of different topographies and spread right

right around the islands so we could always guarantee hitting at least a few no matter what the weather. We knew the chances were the majority of divers would have done very few of these sites before, so this was a way to showcase Poor Knights Diving at its best.

We started in May with a superb trip, hitting 5 different sites out of the 10, thereby almost guaranteeing those involved in this first trip would win at least a free day. We even managed 3 of the 4 sites I had never seen before - Phil's Pins, Scary Deep and best of all 12-Fathom Reef. Our first dive on this last site will stay with me for a long time as the most fish-tastic of all the dives I've done so far at the Poor Knights. I will also remember this trip for two other reasons, firstly because I got to play with my new scooter for the first time and for a comment made by Christian.



*First rays of dawn shining through Blue Maomao Arch.*

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He noted the novelty of sleeping aboard a boat moored inside a cave, something I had started to take for granted.

Our second trip in June mutated somewhat from the original idea, although it was still a lot of fun. Claire from Dive HQ Wellington came up to join us, along with Pete H, planning to do the TDI Cavern and Intro-to-Cave classes. Also on this trip were Tony and Chris, who were initially focussing on the 10x10x10 sites, but the lure of caves became too much and they both joined the class. If you read the trip report by Chris it's clear he's still wondering quite how he got talked into yet more training with me. (Go on, admit it Chris – it was fun.)

In July our trip had to be cancelled due to the weather, but in August we were back at it again, this time with Mel leading the trip whilst I competed in the Rotorua Tough Guy Challenge. This was the trip where our first people won their free days diving – John and Christian getting to 7 completed sites – although Christian did try to claim 8 sites by doing the same one twice. Maybe it was just innocent confusion due to the fact he hadn't had much sleep with the arrival of his son Samuel only a few short weeks earlier. Again however the weather caused problems, with the weekend cut short due to strong winds forecast to arrive on the Sunday afternoon.

Which brings us to our most recent trip in September, which was the final chance for people to get to the magic 6 sites required for a free days diving. Amazingly Chris who was on 4.5 sites and Hamish who was on 5 sites didn't make the trip and John couldn't contest for the top prize due to 'home improvement' commitments, which left Christian home and clear to bag 2 more sites and claim the most with a total of 9. Congratulations Christian – you win a free weekend of diving courtesy of Kev and Jan at OceanBlue.

But how good was this last weekend of diving?



Well we started with perfect NZ spring conditions – clear blue skies, calm seas and some warmth in the sun. As we headed out to the Knights we were joined by a group of Bottlenose Dolphins who stayed with us for about 15 minutes, giving Ali, Christian and Kent the chance to take some wonderful photos. On reaching the islands our first dive was the final one which I had never done – going from Wild Beast Point right around to Northern Arch, a distance of about 1km. OK so the current didn't exactly help us to make it a 'drift dive' but Christian and I both reached the arch just as 60mins ticked over on my computer. Unfortunately Ali and Tim didn't make it all the way to the arch – but having been joined by dolphins on their dive we didn't feel at all sympathetic. Just like our May trip had been the perfect start to 10x10x10 it appeared this trip would be the perfect end.

Our second dive was at 12-Fathom Reef, which although already ticked off Christian's list couldn't be missed out with such perfect conditions. Again we had some great fish encounters, although not quite as impressive as in May, but we did get to see two huge Bastard Cod which was great. We also hijacked this dive slightly, with Tim and Ali doing valve and s-drills at the end as part of their GUE Fundamentals 'tech' upgrade process.



Our third dive was the last untouched site of the complete 10x10x10 list, Red Baron Caves, and after doing more GUE drills at the start of the dive I lead the guys through all three cracks, getting to just below the air chamber at the very back before turning the dive due to swell. This was a tough dive for Ali as not only had I made her and Tim sweat the entire dive wondering if I was going to pass them, but she also didn't have her camera with her and surfaced almost certain she had seen a species of nudibranch that was new to her.

This report continues on our website:

[www.techdivenz.com/reports.html](http://www.techdivenz.com/reports.html)

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### DIVING

WHAT'S COMING UP

#### GUE Fundamentals

**October 20-24th [Auckland - Labour Day]**

Learn how to back-kick, how to hover and why many of the world's dive ninjas all wear the same equipment configuration. This class is the gateway to all GUE training and an excellent starting point for would-be techies.



The course is a very intense 4 days, but you will have a great time and you will learn loads. In fact Jamie is so confident you will learn a lot he offers a money back guarantee: a full refund if you don't think the course was worthwhile. How good is that?

Please note, course numbers are strictly limited - this class has one space left.

#### Auckland Marathon October 30th

Come and cheer for all the TDNZ club members who are running.



#### Oceanz Dive Conference - Tauranga November 12-13th

This is NZ's only dedicated diving conference and exhibition and will be held at the Baycourt Complex in downtown Tauranga. See the next page for full details.

#### Blue Creek Resurgence December 1-8th

Following our very successful exploration in February this year we are going back for another trip. We have divers visiting from all around the world for this trip so it's a great opportunity to pick their brains for advice and expertise. And don't worry if you're not a cave diver, we also need willing helpers for carrying stuff to and from the cave - it's only 1.7km each way so not too bad.....

### 2012

#### WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

OK, so the title is a little garish, but we've got to attract your attention somehow - maybe we'll even get a few emails in response to our question.....!

So what do YOU want to do in 2012?

Over the last two years we've visited several new places and run innovative and different trips not previously offered in NZ.

We've done night dives on wrecks and down the Waikato river. We've been to caves at Matai Bay, Poor Knights and the South Island. We've done day trips, skive dives, weekend live-aboards, extended weekends and full weeks away. We've been to France, Micronesia, Australia and the Solomon Islands.

We've visited a flooded power station, scootered around Goat Island, done deep trimix dives and searched for the 'lost' anchor of the HMNZS Waikato - which is finally on display at Tutukaka.

And now we are asking for your input. Are you happy to revisit many of the great places we've been to in the last two years - and if so where - or are there some other destinations you've always wanted to visit with a like minded group of divers - please tell us.



Just to remind you, here is a list of some of the spots we've been to:

Mikhail Lermontov (Wreck)  
Riwaka Resurgence (Cave, South Island)  
Poor Knights  
Volkner Rocks  
Blue Creek Resurgence (Cave, South Island)  
Minato Maru (Wreck)  
Matai Bay  
Mayor Island  
Rainbow Warrior  
HMNZS Waikato  
Goat Island  
Lake Taupo  
Waikato River (drift dive)  
HMNZS Canterbury  
Cow Shed/Bay of Islands  
Mokahinau Islands  
Alderman Islands  
Horahora Power Station  
HMNZS Tui

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### OCEANZ DIVING CONFERENCE



After a long absence NZ will soon be getting its only dedicated diving conference and exhibition back again. Initially conceived by Dave Moran in 1974 this conference used to be one of the highlights of the NZ diving calendar, so it's great to see it returning. And if you go to see Dave's talk you'll get to hear about the history of this event.

Based at the Baycourt Complex in downtown Tauranga over the weekend of 12/13th Nov, this conference promises something for everyone, or all divers at least! There will be equipment manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers exhibiting, training organisations, conservation groups and dive clubs all represented. There will be a photography competition, diving events and a gala dinner. There is also an entire program of speakers, who will present on a wide variety of topics, including technical diving, conservation and environmental activism, free-diving and spear-fishing, commercial diving and more.

This should be a regular event in NZ, but in order to make it successful we need your support. Check out the website, get your tickets and tell your friends. We're going to be there - we hope you will be too.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

The prize pool is now worth over \$11,000 and there are several different categories of entry: Wide-angle, Close-up, Portfolio, Wreck; there is even a separate category for compact cameras to give those without really expensive camera a chance.

The judging panel has a long list of accolades and pedigree attached to them: Andy Belcher, Colin Gans and Kim Westerskov.

#### MARINE RESERVES DEBATE

NZ Marine Reserves - is 10% the beginning or the end? The government pledged to have 10% of New Zealand's marine environment protected by reserves by 2010. With public pressure the sub-Antarctic islands were included earlier this year, however the argument is whether the 10% figure and other outcomes have been achieved. Many believe that this level of protection is just the start; that current reserves do not protect enough area to retain biodiversity and a healthy marine environment.

With some of NZ's 'hot spots' of biodiversity only protected to the territorial limits, do we need to push for large scale marine parks to ensure consistent protection and cover the many zones in the sea rather than just the coastal one? We have arranged a debate with 3 MP's and given its two week prior to the election— CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE????

#### SHIPWRECK EXHIBITION

There will be a dedicated area for shipwreck artefacts displays. The RMS Niagara may lie 120m down but that doesn't stop you seeing some of the artefacts. NZ has many thousands of shipwrecks and instead of it lying in your house, why not display it for all too see at Oceanz? Included are artefacts from 6 big name wrecks so far.

Speakers list (we will keep adding to this list as more speakers are confirmed.)

DARREN SHIELDS  
Six times NZ Spear fishing Champion

DR ROGER GRACE  
Marine biologist and photographer

PETE BETHUNE  
Founder of Earthrace Conservation

PETE MESLEY  
Photographer and Rebreather Instructor

STEVE TREWAVAS  
National Director of the C.D.A.A

JAMIE OBERN  
NZ's only GUE and Cave Instructor

RICHARD TAYLOR  
Sales and training rep. for TDI Australia

DAVE MORAN  
Editor of DiveNZ and founder of Oceanz.

SHANE WASIK  
Technical diver and Oceanz'11 organiser

LT CDR LESLIE  
Commanding officer RNZN Op. Dive Team

KEITH GORDON  
Kiwi diving legend, RMS Niagara expert

SNR SGT ADAMS  
Senior Officer Police National Dive Squad

[www.oceanzdiveconference.com](http://www.oceanzdiveconference.com)

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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.

#### TIM OLDFIELD

**Profession/job?** Employment Lawyer

**How many dives have you done?** 230

**What qualifications do you have?** GUE Fundies, TDI Adv Nitrox/Deco Proc, PADI Assistant Instructor

**When did you start diving?** At the University of Otago in 2002.

**Favourite NZ dive site?** Hauturu (Little Barrier), one of the last remaining slices of primeval Aotearoa, the birdsong during surface intervals is something else.

**Which course would you most recommend?** GUE Fundies

**What do you love most about diving?**

The sensation of weightlessness, the raw beauty of underwater scenery and the chance to encounter some rare or strange sea creature.

**What do you do when you are not diving?**

I like living the good life, eating and drinking, particularly slow cooking, marinating and bbqs. I am partial to cured meats and cheeses. I like whisky, pinot noir and pilsners. I also like fishing, sailing and boating. Sometimes I do a bit of plotting and scheming.

**What is the next course you plan to take?**

GUE Tech 1 or Rec 3 (after a couple hundred more dives)

**Where is your next planned dive trip?**

In NZ I'd like to dive the Karikari Peninsula, internationally I'd like to go to Ambon or Pulau Weh in Indonesia.

**Any other information we should know about you?** I believe that siestas should be a mandatory part of the working week.

### DIVE FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?



#### KELLY TARLTON

1938 - 1985

Kelly Tarlton is most widely known around NZ and the world for the Aquarium (Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World) he built, but here are a few more facts about this diving legend you may not be aware of.

The 1956 revolution in Peru was a major factor in Kelly becoming a diver. He was due to go mountaineering there, but cancelled because of the dangerous situation. He spent the money he saved on his 1st 'aqualung'.

Kelly taught himself to dive.

After 25 years of diving Kelly was forced to do a dive course when he tried to go diving for a commercial contact at a Club Med in Tahiti. Apparently 'the french questioning his ability to dive' was one of the rare times he got really angry.

Kelly discovered the Elingamite (Three Kings) by accident during a spearfishing trip.

Kelly spent a number of years and conducted several trips looking unsuccessfully for the General Grant (Auckland Islands).

Kelly was once in a film directed by David Lean, called Lost and Found - The Story of Cook's Anchor.

Kelly found the first anchor from the ship St Jean Baptiste, one of the earliest European ships to visit NZ; visited Doubtless Bay for the first time only a couple of days after Captain Cook..

As well as his Underwater World he also set up a shipwreck museum in Waitangi, which still operates today.

Amazingly no one has bothered to do a write up of Kelly for Wikipedia, with the only reference to his name being for the Aquarium which was his brainchild.

