

Trip Report: Riwaka Resurgence – 14th January 2010

Chris Bardon

Why is it that madness always draws a crowd? At least, that's how I felt as we wandered up the track to check out the entry to the cave system. Jamie, as usual, simply said "I'll explain when we get inside."

Realising that we weren't the only ones silly enough to jump in a perfectly cold creek (there *was* one other brave soul climbing out, with 2 assistants to carry gear), we ambled back down the track to the cars and unloaded gear bag after gear bag and proceeded to ready ourselves, much to the puzzled looks of the other trampers. All this after having done 4 days on the Mikhail Lermontov shipwreck.



You could have been mistaken this was to be a Halcyon publicity event, with five of the six sets of gear being Halcyon backplates, and one being.... Not.

The weather conditions were just horrid – sunshine, sunshine, and more sunshine. In fact it got soo hot that Mel nearly burnt her arm turning her drysuit in the right way! Who would have thought 10min in the open sun, on a black car bonnet would be enough to boil the remaining moisture!!!

Hauling our gear to the top of the hill, then down a flight of stairs to the waters edge, then over the rocks, then remembering to stop and finish getting into the wetsuit, was enough to generate a good sweat. How was it in those drysuits??

To a large crowd gathering on the track, we proceeded to tie off the entry line, then James, Mel, Astrid, Tony, myself and Jamie slipped under and into the first sump.

A few short moments later, taking the swim at a very leisurely pace, looking all round the cave, we emerged into the open cavity of the first sump. Rolling over, and looking at the ceiling, it was simply mindblowing! Put simply, this adventure dive had us going WOW!! so often as the torchlight from our Halcyon canisters lit up different parts of the cave – stalactites, mineral deposits, formations. And all this with crystal clear water!! That's when Jamie surfaces with a grin from ear to ear, asking "Whats the attraction? This is!!!" while laughing at our musings.



TECH DIVE New Zealand

Out we then scramble, and while James tied off, we lurch over the rocks and into the opening of sump 2.

More of the same follows as we drop down, and slip along another line previously tied and left for others to use. Pulling up at the next spot, we haul ourselves out of the water, desperate for a bit of warmth. Did I mention the water was only 11 degrees.

So off come the fins and gear, and on go the back up torches, and out of the water we scramble. A quick catching of breath, and James, Tony and I scramble up the craggy rocks like billygoats on a mission to find the next sump. And sure enough find it we did.



However there was no entertaining the requests for Jamie to bring the tanks and gear up, so after floating our way across we looked further up the rockpile to see how far it went. By this time I guess nearly an hour had passed so we crawled, slipped and swam back to the main group, to find that Mel and Astrid had headed out earlier in search of the sun outside. Jamie, very nicely waited for us to return, before assisting us reassemble our gear and back and out.

At the mouth, Mel dropped in to surprise me, however I hadn't noticed as I looked back to check the others were still in sight. I'm not sure who was more surprised when I crashed into her!

Some more scrambling over the rocks, back up the stairs, down the track we were back in the carpark for a well deserved break to warm up, before heading back to Motueka for lunch.

So to sum it all up... As an adventure dive it was pretty impressive, yet just another day at the office for Jamie, James and Mel. Seriously guys, if you keep it up you're goin to end up with several cave addicts here in NZ. Starting with the 3 of us

