

Stoked



BELLY BOARDING

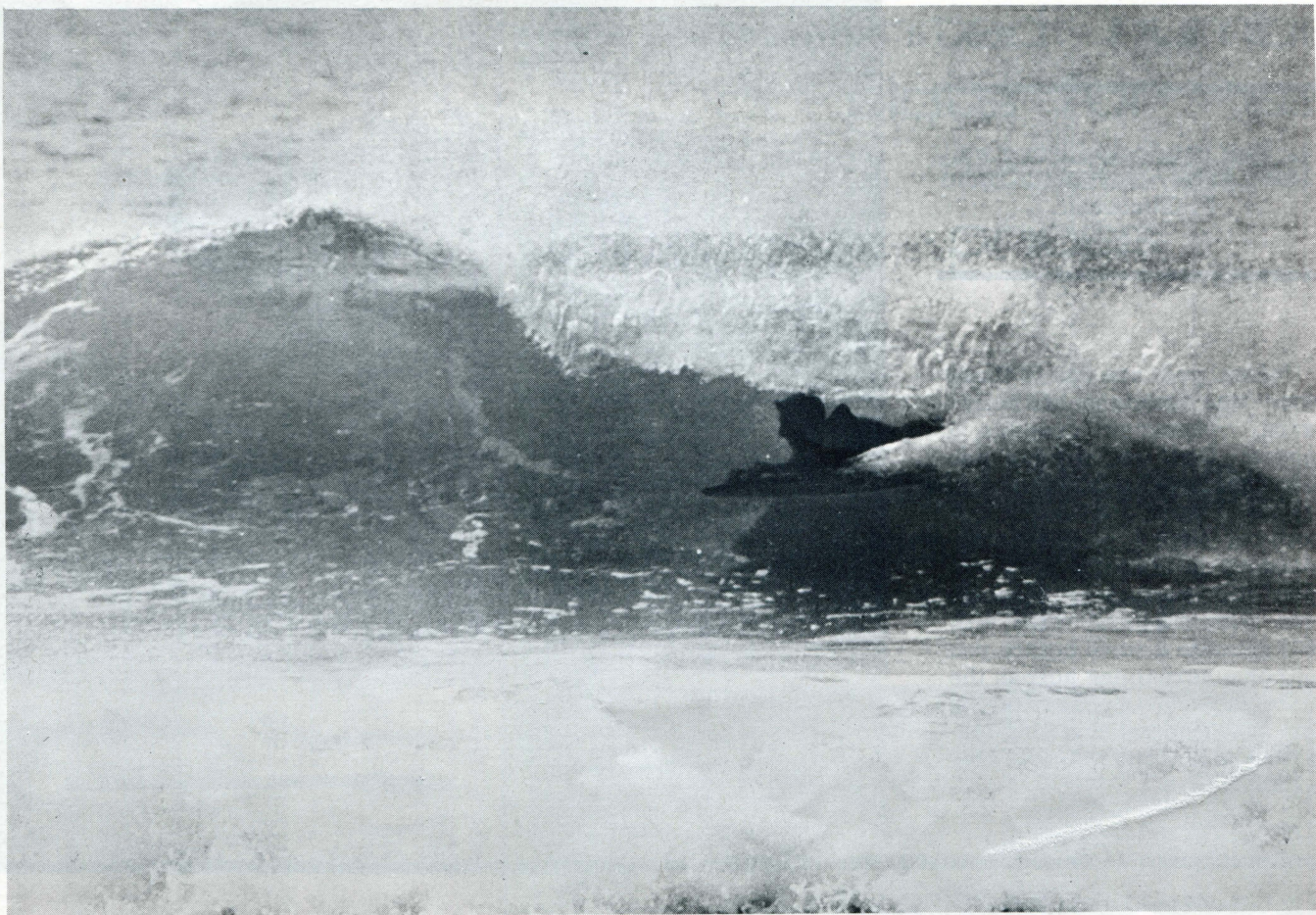
By Rob Gouldie

Bellyboarding — one of the coolest, cleanest, cheapest and most exhilarating of water sports, provides the thrills and spills of surfboard riding with only a fraction of the skill and sense of balance, which is required in the latter sport. In fact, because of the operational simplicity, its exponents are very often referred to derogatorily by the surfing fraternity as "instant surfers". The cost of a bellyboard is approximately one third of a surfboard and this factor accounts largely for its popularity with the very young surfer who has to rely upon his parents' financial generosity. Bellyboards range in price from R24 to R60 depending on whether a "pop out", or a custom built one is required. As in surf board riding, the size of a bellyboard is governed by the physical characteristics of the rider. Bodyweight and height are the deciding factors. Most novices

begin with a 4'6" "popout" which has a fairly pronounced rocker and a single skeg. I have found that the presence of a rocker slows the board up considerably, but helps tremendously in preventing pearling when levelling out at the base of a wave, which closes out suddenly. The single skeg turns more easily than twin skegs but does not afford the same stability on a steep wall, and on very large waves I have noticed that the board has a tendency to spin out. The board which I have found to be most satisfactory, is a teardrop shape custom built craft, 4' 6" long, which tapers in side elevation from approximately 1" in thickness at the transom to 2" at its widest point. The board has no rocker whatsoever but possesses a turn-up which starts 6" from the nose. The skegs and a handle complete the board. The difference in performance between a bellyboard with a rocker and one with a flat bottom is

tremendous. The former appears to drag and hold back on a wave, whereas the latter slips over the water with less resistance, resulting in a much faster ride. A bellyboard with very thin rails has a two fold advantage. Apart from being faster, it is also far easier to cutback out of a wave. Whether to have a handle or not is a matter of personal taste. While a handle detracts from the appearance of the board, the advantages it offers are, in my opinion, well worth the loss in looks. Instead of adopting the usual method of rolling with the board just before a handle in the centre, forces the nose under and with one's free hand, maintains a side-stroke, as well as kicking with one's swimfins, gaining yards over the chap who is using the board without the handle and who is unable to move until the wave has passed over him.

Cont. page 37

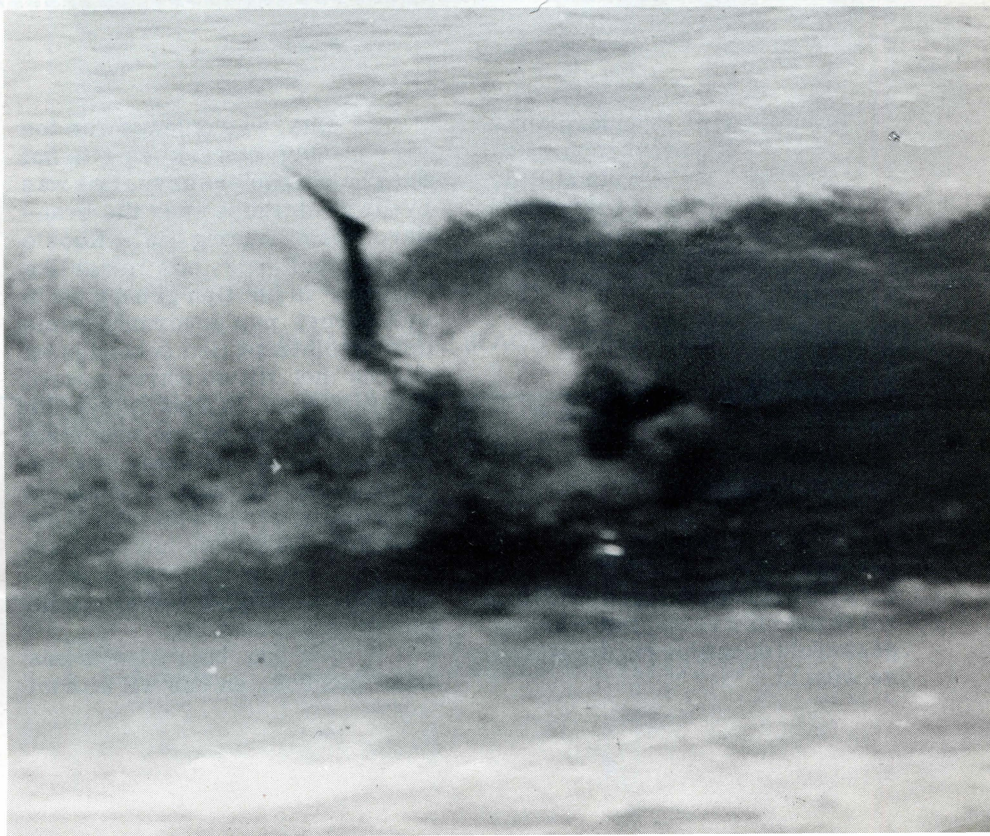


The photographer was Frank Giraudeau, and he caught Allan Cooper sneaking through the Fence. Well that is where the photo was taken anyway.

Yes you get them on belly boards also. Photo Frank Giraudeau.

An interesting point of debate is, which is faster on a wave, a bellyboard or a surfboard. A surfboard tends to give the impression that it is faster, but I feel that this is primarily due to the fact that the take-off point of the surfboard is further out and the board rider has therefore reached peak revs, as it were, by the time the bellyboard rider has got onto the wave. However, probably because of its greater ratio in length in relation to its width, the surfboard has a slight edge in speed on the bellyboard. This position is reversed, however, in the case of running vertically down the face of a steep wave. Here, the bellyboard has a more acute angle of drop and will tend to outrun the surfboard whose rider is compelled by means of his weight displacement to bring the board down at a gentler angle, to prevent pearling.

Cont. page 38

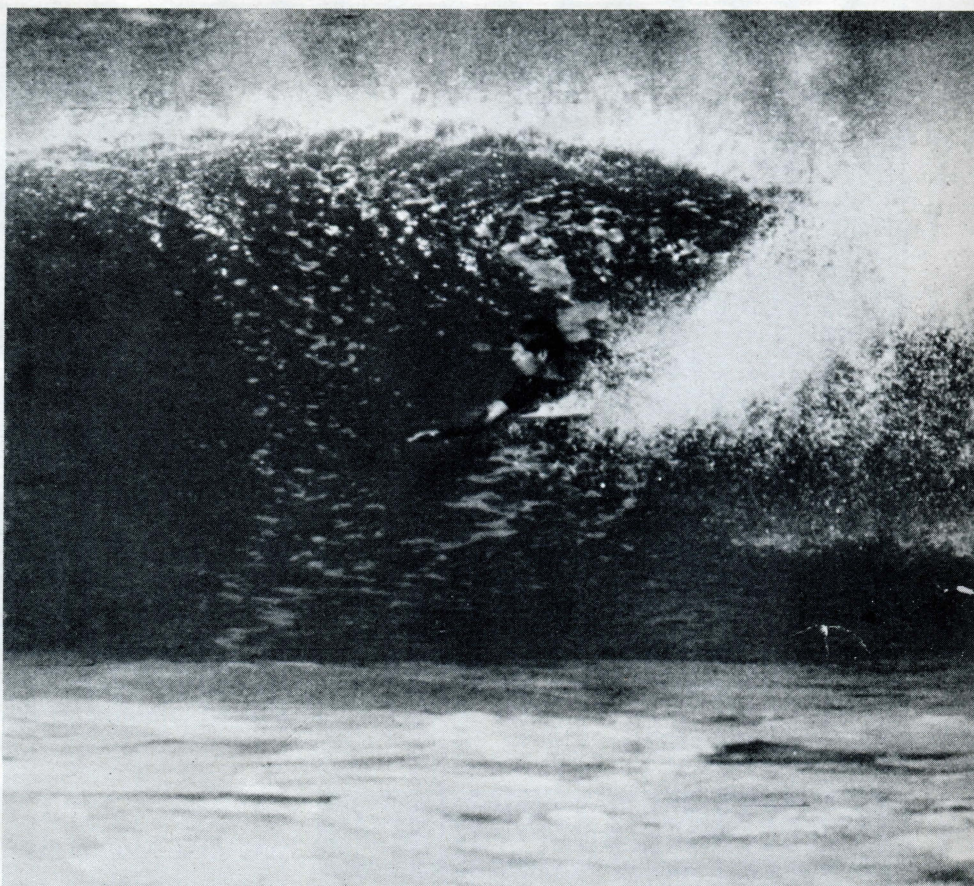


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N. Dyer gets locked into a well shaped Jeffreys Bay tube. Photo F. Giraudeau.

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Unless you are one of those types who stands on his belly-board, whenever possible I suggest that you always use swimfins as they enable you to get onto a wave a lot sooner. A word of advice to all belly-boarders is to keep a wary eye open for surfboards because even with flippers, they will still get onto a wave before you and come screaming across the face of the wave as you are taking off. Just remember a ding in a surfboard is not as bad as a ding in the head.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Beaufort Wes Branderplank-
kryersvereniging,
Donkinstraat,
BEAUFORT WES.

September 16de 1966.

Die Redakteur,
South African Surfer,
Posbus 74,
Snell Parade,
DURBAN.

Waarde Redakteur,

As president van die pasgevormde Beaufort Wes Branderplankkryersvereniging wil ek net vir u vertel van 'n klomp gestookde ouens hier in die Karoo se wêreld.

Ons was onlangs see toe vir 'n lang naweek en ons het daar baie branders gery. Ons was bv die Wilderness waar die branders baie haarig is. Koosie Poggenpoel wie ons plaaslike "kahuna" is het tien gehang op 'n vyftienvoet pyp gevormde brandervir omtrent tien sekondes en daarna het dit so warm geword dat hy moes 'n spoor gryp om deur te kom. Ek self is vreeslike uitgevee terwyl ek besig was om 'n terugsnij te doen. In omtrent elke brander was ons fantasies ingesluit. Ou Koosie het ons baie verbaas met 'sy wonderlike wegvlieënde uitskoppe toe hy op die stertblok gestaan het.

Nee ou bul, hier is ons baie gestook, en ons wil uitnooi

na ons Modderbrandplankrykampioenskappe by die Beaufort Wes dam op die 29de Februarie volgende jaar.

Die Uwe,

Johannes Jacobus Maan.
BEAUFORT WES.

Dear Sir,

Your mag is "gas". How about featuring little East London. It has the best reef break in S. A. and you can't beat the Nahoon Corner for hollow waves. The beach has too good waves. So how about it.

Yours Sincerely,
E. L. Gremmie.