



SURFING

Matthew Dale



Sean 'Frank' Harris becomes world bellyboard champion

Crazy capers make for a barrel of belly laughs

NOBODY, least of all himself, ever thought that they would see Sean Harris as a world surfing champion. But last Sunday that is exactly what happened. Sean "Frank" Harris from Newquay became the world bellyboard champion at Chapel Porth on the north coast of Cornwall. This essentially fun event has really taken off and is starting to attract a good number of entrants, all of whom enter into the spirit of the contest.

Blazers, caps and knitted swimsuits are the order of the day as competitors relive the era of the plywood bellyboard that used to be so prevalent on our beaches in previous decades. With Skinners Brewery in support the atmosphere was very relaxed. Bonus points were awarded for the effort put into dressing the part, manoeuvres and the number of surfers on a wave – which could be as many as 10 with big heats the norm.

John Isaac was one of the key people behind the event and he persuaded Sean to take part after a few drinks the night before. It was the combination of a superman manoeuvre coupled with switch reverses and a barrel roll – this last never seen in bellyboarding before – that gave the champion triple the points of most other surfers. Although the bellyboards are a British thing, they have evolved from the Hawaiian boards from centuries ago – the Alaia that people such as Dave "Rasta" Rastovich are riding and bringing back into the public eye.

Sally Parkin is another advocate for the boards.

She said: "I went to the bellyboard championships last year and was so taken with what I saw that I have started my own company selling them. Charles Pearce from North Devon makes them for me with my own designs.

"They are such fun in smaller waves. I also do boards with a pink ribbon in support of the breast cancer campaign, having lost my sister to the disease."

Sean was riding one of her boards with the cross of St Piran on the deck. Visit www.originalsurfboards.co.uk for details.

In fact it is not only smaller waves that are good for the bellyboards. John Isaac is another fan of the molded plywood boards.

"I have pictures of a friend surfing heavy waves at Porthleven with a bellyboard," he said.

"But they are so good when the surf

Coasts set to host longboard contest and Jesus Classic

is onshore and small. You can have a half-hour session and come out smiling – do the same on a regular surfboard in small slop and it spoils your day."

There are two events taking place this weekend – the Christian Surfers UK Jesus Surf Classic at Croyde and the British Longboard Union Sunset Surf Classic at Gwithian.

The first has steadily grown in size and status over the years. Although not part of a pro-tour or a national championship it is highly-regarded by our top surfers and well-attended.

The second is smaller but no less important. It is the fourth in the series of the British Longboard Union championships. Sunset Surf at Gwithian is the main sponsor and the location, close to Hayle, not only boasts great waves but the two miles or so of sandy beach make it a spectacular venue too.

The Billabong British Junior Surf Championships are running next weekend at Fistral and the British Bodyboard Nationals supported by Auto Sleepers motorhomes are the following week at Porttowan.

Also on September 27-28 is the Oakley XPY Pro Junior presented by Globe. This contest is part of the UK Pro Surf Tour and in addition to the pro-junior element there will be categories for U16 boys and U16 girls and for the U12 groms. Monster energy drinks and Carveboard skateboards are supporting this contest which run by Jack Clinton.

If you have any energy left after all the contests, catch the art exhibition in St Merryyn Village Hall near Padstow tomorrow. There Is No Surf In England is a display of paintings and prints plus video and film. Nick Halstead provides the music for the event which starts at 6pm.

WEEKEND WAVES

Sunday will have plenty of swell but also plenty of wind. Saturday will be quieter in terms of wind and waves but both days will have rideable surf.



A



The Class 1 fleet he

THERE was an occurrence last Saturday from the Met Office more than 50 skippers Events Pontoon in Brix pre-race briefing, made weather prediction for the He was following or Michelmores who had issued instructions before Michelmores Cup, and he said sounded like a sailors, the forecast mate was the making of a terrific at the end of a summer – best part, has failed to de

The Michelmores Cup 18th year, is an invitation where Westcountry firms on the water instead of the They turn out in their dress become something of a recent years that Will Mich heads the Exeter-based I organises the event, sail board a less than conven

This year was no exception invited his guests to Bennett's Class 40 Fujif

He very kindly asked me on board what is after special boat.

I have formed quite a this boat over the past year her being built in a barn witnessed the launch the hours above her and behind pictures, have tramped times, and followed Ale: the Transat, but never sa

So, arriving in Brix Saturday, I was full of the – well, autumn, to be mo: it was in fact one of the we have had all summer,

Awes

IN an awesome championships, sailed in France, the Westcountry and his crewmate Andre become the new SL16 champions.

They had to fight ha current ISAF Youth