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Skinner's Surf Event Turns Clock Back! - 11 September 2006 at 09:10

The surfing scene of yesteryear was re-created at Chapel Porth Beach near St Agnes, Cornwall, when the clock was turned back in style for the Skinner's Brewery World Bellyboard Championships.

After a summer of high profile surfing contests in the county, it was the turn of competitors with an average age of around 65 – and with traditional wooden boards in many cases scarcely any younger - to take centre stage in an altogether more sedate event.

With the Truro-based brewery making its debut as lead sponsor, 70 people took to the sea with the sort of plyboards that went out of fashion in the 1950s and 60s.

The event, now in its fourth year and believed to be the only one of its kind in the world, was the grandest yet, being turned into an all-day affair and renamed after its lead sponsor.

A small number of overseas competitors included Hannabeth Luke, from Australia, who became women's world bellyboard champion. Her male counterpart was John Davy, who hailed from a little closer to home, the Cornish capital city of Truro. Both were winners of the "junior" section – the under-60s!.

The championships were run in ten-minute heats for ten contestants at a time, rather than a free-for-all as previously, and with the winners progressing to the finals later in the afternoon. No wetsuits were allowed.

Chris Ryan, event co-organiser with Martyn Ward, commented: "The championships actually celebrated the roots of surfing in Cornwall in the 1920s.

"It was a wonderful occasion, although at the start of the day the conditions were so bad that it looked as if it might not go ahead at all. Everyone did extremely well given that the conditions remained very challenging throughout."



THEY'RE OFF! Competitors take to the sea in the Skinners Brewery World Bellyboard Championships at Chapel Porth Beach, St Agnes, Cornwall.



WOOD you believe it! Some of the competitors, young and not so young, pictured with their traditional plyboards used in the Skinners Brewery World Bellyboard Championships at Chapel Porth Beach, St Agnes, Cornwall.

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