



(a) Leigh Tingle at Boomer Beach. Surfabout 1963.



(b) John Dunn 1964. Skimmer.

Source: Photos John Arnold and Dennis Markson.

## 1 Bronte

Bill Wallace (2009) recalled a couple of wooden boards from the late 1940s-early 1950s. These were described as being modelled on "something surfers at Bondi were using". They were said to be a flat piece of 1/2" ply, with two metal handles on top and a fibreglass fin. It was unclear where the design originated but they were reported to have been ridden around Bronte. A 1960s Bronte beach scene in *Vesper* (2007, pages 128-129) contains several short boards, including one board that is clearly a bellyboard. Seddon (2008) has reported that Clyde 'Trux' Park rode bellyboards around Coogee around the 1950s and had formed some form of bellyboard club. Weepy Sims surfed with Park. Walding's *Surf-O-Rama* (Walding 2008) includes a picture of a 4'6 Wallace balsa board, dated 1959. This style of board is similar to those made by Bill Clymer, in the Manly area.



Bill Wallace balsa bellyboard logo. Photo courtesy Mike Brown.



(a) Bill Wallace balsa bellyboard - deck view.



(b) Bill Wallace balsa bellyboard.

Source: Photos courtesy Mike Brown collection.



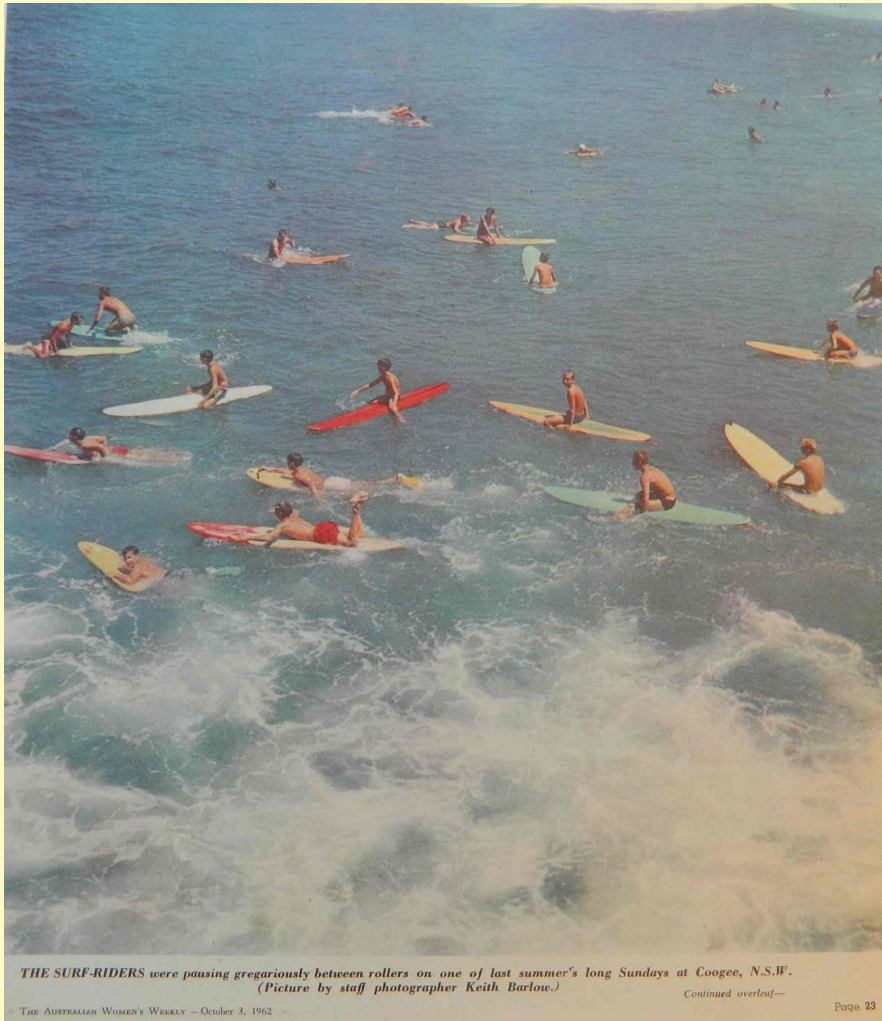
(a) Wallace bellyboard.



(b) Wallace bellyboard.

Source: Unknown.

This photo includes two dominant 1960s bellyboard designs: the tombstone handled Froiseth shape (likely twin finned) and the finless delta wing Paipo Nui style board. Both board designs originated from Hawaii.



*THE SURF-RIDERS were pausing gregariously between rollers on one of last summer's long Sundays at Coogee, N.S.W.  
(Picture by staff photographer Keith Barlow.)*

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — October 3, 1962

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"The surf-riders were pausing gregariously between rollers on one of the last summer's long Sundays at Coogee, N.S.W." Photo by Barlow, Keith. A Dream of Summer. The Australian Women's Weekly (1962, October 3), 30(18), 23.

Bill Wallace (Wallace 2009) recalled making a small number of fiberglass bellyboards in the 1960's. He stated Peter Crawford was a "wizard" at riding them, which suggests these were kneeboards.



(a) Wallace bellyboard.



(b) Wallace bellyboard.

Source: Unknown.

In 1958 Gordon Woods built a wooden bellyboard for Leigh Tingle, after Tingle and friends watched a 1957 Bud Browne surf movie at the Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club. Tingle's board was 4' long x 20" wide, with a handgrip on the deck and two fins. This board is of especial interest because Tingle has ridden this board continuously to the present day, including Hawaii in 1964 (Tingle 2009).

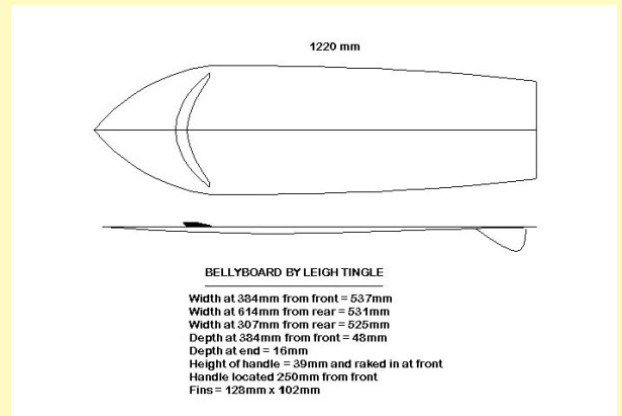


Bluey Mayes with two paipo boards, late 1950s. Photo courtesy John Sullivan and Dan Webber. Source: <http://bondistories.com/2011/>

Leigh Tingle who had travelled to Hawaii in 1964, gave up work in 1967 to make bellyboards. With the assistance of the Opera House seat manufacturer who used a microwave press, he produced 30 plywood 'Barracuda' bellyboards. These boards were based on the board Gordon Woods had made for Tingle. Advertisements were placed in surfing magazines (Tingle 1967a, Tingle 1967b) and the boards sold but there were construction difficulties and there wasn't a second run (Tingle 2009). Tingle's surfing has been featured in two articles, which included a photo at Boomer Beach (Waldeck 1963) and another at Haleiwa (Unknown 1962). He also featured in Nat Young's 'Let's Go Surfing' in 1967, a 13 part instructional television series that is no longer available.



(a) Leigh Tingle with boards.



(b) Leigh Tingle board specifications.

Source: Photos courtesy Leigh Tingle.



(a) Barracuda bellyboard, 3'11 x 21.5"



(b) Barracuda bellyboard.

Source: Photos courtesy Clark Valler.

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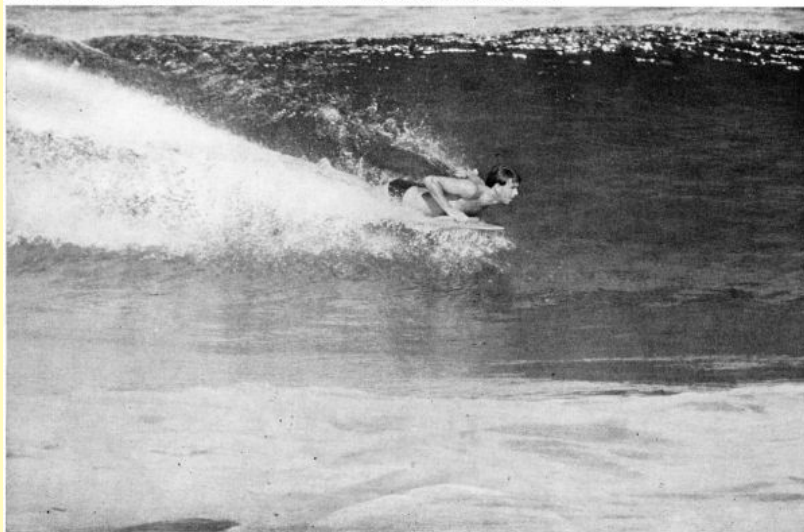
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18 SURF

(a) Barracuda bellyboard ad.

Bottom: South Australian Lee Tingle is shown in action on his belly board. Lee has been riding a belly board for many years and is recognised as the best exponent of this art in Australia. This pic was taken at Haleiwa Beach. Lee had himself a ball on this, his first overseas trip. The shot shows him riding his first wave in Hawaii. The belly board used in Hawaii has no fin and is much thinner than the boards used here. They are used on the big waves and are very successful. Note John's left hand as he grabs the side of the wave.



(b) Leigh Tingle at Haleiwa. Spotlight on Hawaii.

Source: Photo courtesy John Witzig, Surf international, Vol.1(7) 1968 and Surfabout 2(6), 13-19.

Robert McDermott who introduced ply bellyboards to the Gold Coast around 1965 came from nearby Maroubra, where both finned bellyboards and paipo style boards were being ridden (Peden 2010). Peden described experimenting with different designs. Three ply was preferred over 5 ply. Five ply "didn't have the flex, couldn't get flex in the turn". Peden also described lifesavers riding 12-18" handplanes which they could get their chest onto. Alternatively, these handboards were ridden with two hands held out in front. These Maroubra surfers also travelled to Avalon with Dick Evans, a bodysurfer who was brother of Bob Evans, the editor of Surfing World.



Robert McDermott. Photos courtesy Robert McDermott.



John Holden -1965. Skimmer. Photos courtesy Dennis Markson.



(a) Dennis Markson. 1969 with skim-mer.



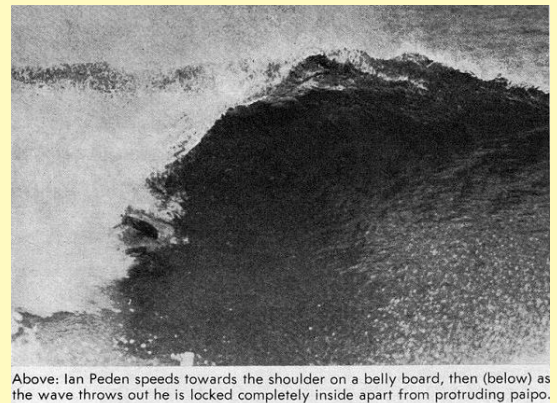
(b) John Holden -1965. Skimmer.

Source: Photos courtesy Dennis Markson.

Pennings (1965) described a surf trip to a south of Sydney spot Willinga Reef. This area was popular with belly-boarder riders then and since. Rick Howell, Paul Koller and Ian Peden were identified as bellyboarders on this trip, as were John Williams, Ian Barrett and Bob Commys. Many of these Maroubra surfers also surfed Little Avalon. Dennis Markson and John Holden were other Maroubra surfers who rode plywood 'skimners'. (Markson 2010). More



(a) Dennis Markson. 1969 with skimmer.



Above: Ian Peden speeds towards the shoulder on a belly board, then (below) as the wave throws out he is locked completely inside apart from protruding paipo.

(b) John Holden -1965. Skimmer.

Source: Photos courtesy Dennis Markson.

well known as an innovative kneeboard shaper and glasser, the late Pete Berry started out on ply bellyboards surfing around Maroubra and Lurline Bay. He recalled surfing with Phil Shapiro, and his mates Dick Bush and Ronnie Ralph. Ronnie was described as "about the best paipo rider on the beach". A plywood shop opposite Maroubra Fire Station, in Maroubra Road would cut up sheets into 3 x 3 ft pieces. Pete said they would have liked longer boards but nothing over 3 ft. was allowed on the bus.





(a) Dick Bush (?) on a 10' day.



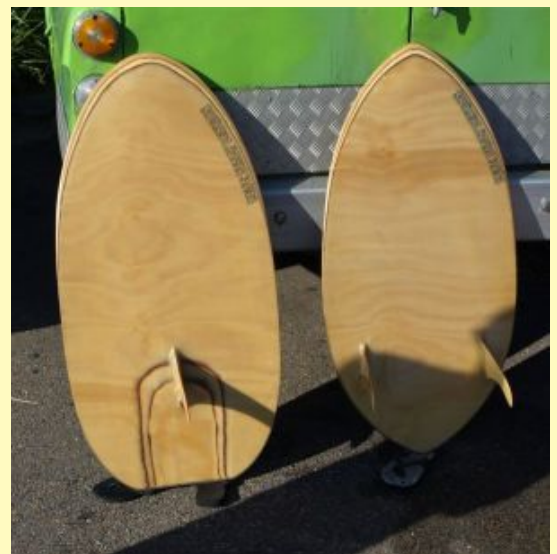
(b) Through the wave face, with body surfer.

Source: Photos courtesy Pete Berry.

In 2002 he shaped a couple of longer boards, 46-7/8 by 23-3/8 inches, which he called a Lurline design because it was an expanded version of what was used to ride at Lurline Bay."I made two up, that and a twin fin, which is a pin-nose pintail sort of thing. A rounded thing which was what we made more of, than the other. Both were done using vacuum bagging. The originals were fiberglass because it was cheaper and quicker than varnish. You could do it in a day compared to using 20 coats of varnish over a two period. They were made out of two layers of ply. They have a spoon shape in them, with lift in the nose and on the deck they have balsa wood on there. I shave the rails to very thin. A year ago a local guy said he wanted one. I still have the mold to bag them onto, in my workshop and I tried to get hold of some rib cedar ply to go with the balsa but it was going to cost me more to get the ply than they wanted to pay for the board. It was \$400 a sheet for the ply. I needed three slices out of a 4-mil sheet. That was three quarters of a sheet."



(a) Pete Berry with Lurline board.



(b) Single and twin fin bellyboards.

Source: Photos courtesy Pete Berry.

Around the corner from Maroubra, Regan (2010) recalled Russell Hogg of Bondi as a bellyboarder. Charles 'Bill' Moseley shot footage of a bellyboarder in the shallows at Bondi (Crockett 2010) while George Quigley a local lifeguard rode a variety of surfcraft, including prone on half a surfboard which was transformed into a bellyboard. Another Bondi bellyboard connection concerns Kevin Brennan. The photograph below features, 'Wheels' Williams, Brennan and John Knobel. The board Brennan is holding belonged to Gary Johnson of Bondi. Gary loaned Brennan the board at times for assisting him with a paper run. Brennan was recalled riding this board prone and standing up (Johnson 2011, Conneely 2011) Gary rode the board for 4-5 years around 1965 at places like Harbord. He called it 'pregnant' as it was fat underneath (Johnson 2011).



1960s Bondi bellyboard. Photo Charles Moseley, courtesy Marilyn Moseley.



(a) John Knobel, Kevin Brennan and Wheels Williams.



(b) 1960s Bronte bellyboard.

Source: Photos courtesy John Knobel and Seddon (2008).



(a) Waverley registered bellyboard.



(b) 1Waverley registered bellyboard.

Source: Photos courtesy Damien Macey



(a) Ron bellyboards.



(b) Ron bellyboard.

Source: Photos courtesy Wayne Priestly