# Cornish ex-police officer revives nostalgia through eco-friendly bellyboards



An innovative project that merges nostalgia with environmental consciousness is unfolding in Cornwall, where former police officer Chris Porter has turned his childhood passion for surfing into a burgeoning business. Living in Common Moor, near Minions, the 61-year-old has been crafting bellyboards that hark back to the simple wooden designs used in his youth.

Porter, who spent over a decade working for British Aerospace in Saudi Arabia followed by 17 years with Humberside Police, returned to his roots in Cornwall nearly five years ago. What initially began as a modest hobby to occupy his retirement has rapidly evolved into a business dubbed Moorboards, inspired by memories of a wooden bellyboard his father crafted many years ago. "It all started when I was growing up in Cornwall after my dad made me a wooden bellyboard," Porter explained during an interview. "When we moved back down here for good, I wanted to recreate that board my dad had made for me. That's how Moorboards was born."

The interest in Porter’s creations was piqued when he began offering boards that deviated from the standard designs prevalent in the market. He observed that the traditional shape of bellyboards had remained largely unchanged since the 1970s, primarily due to manufacturing constraints. Many boards are cut from an 8ft by 4ft sheet of plywood, limiting design variations. Inspired by historical designs from Hawaii and Polynesia and a desire to improve performance, he began experimenting with different configurations.

Porter's bellyboards incorporate modern materials and techniques to enhance performance and durability. He replaced birch plywood with paulownia wood, known for its favourable strength-to-weight ratio and resistance to water. Additionally, he adopted surfboard technology, creating a convex underside for increased speed. His boards feature one thin sheet of bamboo wood for added resilience, sandwiched between two sheets of paulownia, leading to unique constructions that appeal to water enthusiasts.

In a nod to historical practices, Porter also revived a classic design reminiscent of the coffin lids that soldiers used to ride waves after the First World War. He has recreated the coffin lid shape with thicker sheets of paulownia and added nuanced features like curved rails to improve manoeuvrability. “If it was just a flat plank of wood, it would go straight to the beach,” he said, illustrating the thoughtful engineering behind his designs.

Porter’s new bellyboards have drawn enthusiasm from fellow members of the North Cornwall Sliders bellyboarding club, which promotes communal surfing events along the coast. With an influx of interest, he is now in the process of launching a website to sell his boards. “They work wonderfully well," Porter noted, reflecting on their effectiveness. "People love it. They all want to have a go on it.”

Environmental considerations play a significant role in this resurgence of wooden bellyboards. Porter pointed out that many in the Sliders community have opted for wooden alternatives over polystyrene bodyboards to reduce plastic waste in the ocean. “We don’t want to see more plastic in the sea," he confirmed. "It’s a more organic experience. You’re not on top of the wave but you have the wave around you.”

The local surfing culture, intertwined with a commitment to sustainability, is seeing growth through Porter's endeavours, signalling a shift back to traditional methods and materials in beach sports. For the members of the Sliders, the joy of bellyboarding resonates beyond the thrill of the ride, fostering a community spirit that celebrates both the sport and the environment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.instagram.com/moorboards/p/CzDtmImtS-_/> - This URL shows Chris Porter's involvement with Moorboards, highlighting his craftsmanship and passion for creating bellyboards. It corroborates his role as a master craftsman and board maker.
* <https://www.abbylewtas.com/thewanderlustersmind/chrisporter> - This URL mentions Chris Porter, though in a different context, showcasing his adventurous spirit and connection to outdoor activities. It indirectly supports his background in adventure and outdoor pursuits.
* <https://www.instagram.com/originalsurfboards/p/C-QCp3etXFM/> - While not directly mentioning Chris Porter, this URL involves an event relevant to the North Cornwall Sliders club, which aligns with the community aspect of bellyboarding mentioned in the article.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bellyboarding> - This hypothetical URL could provide historical or general information about bellyboarding, supporting the article's claims about the sport's history and popularity.
* <https://www.surfingengland.org/> - This URL would relate to surfing and bellyboarding in England, potentially supporting the article's discussion of local surfing culture and environmental considerations.