



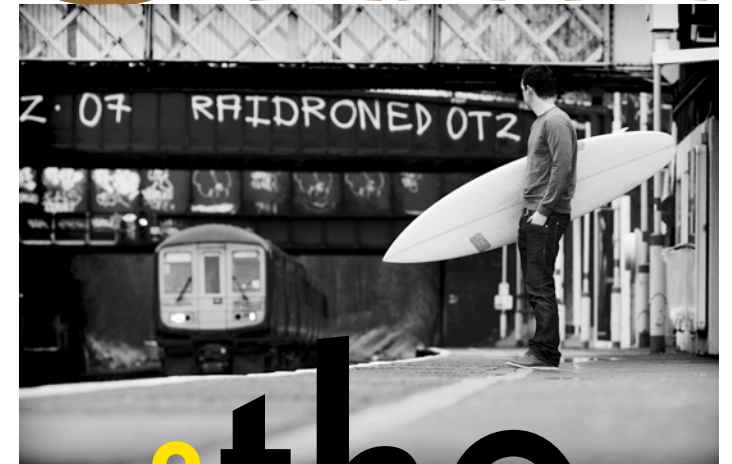
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There are some geezers who reckon that if your Mickey Mouse isn't close to the sea, you can't be a proper surfer, and if you live in the Big Smoke, you must be a kook and you're probably Sandy Bay. But we've always thought this is a bit Jodie Marsh. We couldn't Adam and Eve that surfers from London were less James Dean than surfers by the coast, and perhaps living right by a break makes some of those Elephants and Castles more Patrick Swayze than the cockneys that they have the beef with. So we got on the dog and bone and set up some Ronan Keatings with six dedicated surfers who live in the Smog, either because they grew up there or moved to find Captain Kirk. It turns out that even though they might get some Barry White from locals now and then, so long as they're surfing, they don't give a Crispy Duck. (and disappointingly, none of them could understand any of our David Hockney.)

PHOTOS BY GREG MARTIN (UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

SIX



&the  
CITY



SIX AND THE CITY

“WEEKENDS AND EVENINGS WERE TAKEN UP BY HEADING OFF TO THE COAST OR UP AT THE FAMILY FARM SHAPING BOARDS FOR OURSELVES AND OUR MATES”

**PETE LINDSELL:** Age 29  
Surf Shop Owner / Shaper

After moving to Cornwall from Essex at the age of 5, surfing seemed like the natural thing to get into. My love of photography took me to Plymouth College so getting a surf in was never a problem. Between term time and through the Summer months my cousin Mark and I would load the camper up and travel around the coastlines of Europe. It was on one of these trips we had a chance meeting with Gonzalo Martinz of GMS Surf Boards in AÍfe, Portugal spent time with him learning to shape surfboards, with the idea of making our own back in the UK.

Both Mark and I then moved to London to get “proper” jobs, mine in photography and Mark’s in sound engineering. Weekends and evenings were taken up by heading off to the coast or up at the family farm shaping boards for ourselves and our mates. In time, we found ourselves shaping more and more, for friends, then friends of friends and soon decided to turn it into a business. Lindsell Custom Boards (LCB) was born, allowing us to dedicate a lot more time to shaping, supplying shops around the UK and working on new surfboard constructions.



We had often talked of opening our own store. During my first years in London I happened to live a few doors up from Low Pressure in West London, which felt like an oasis of surf culture in the city. We started working with the Low Pressure guys, doing their board repair service, as well as a few custom boards. I guess it was when those guys shut we really started considering the idea of a surf shop in London. With spending time in Low Pressure, and the database of London surfers we had met just from board repairs; the potential was clear to us. LCB Surf Store in Brick Lane, East

London, opened in the hot summer of 2006.

The select brand mix of core labels, a range of surf, skate and snow hardware, the custom boards and repair service, mixed with an organic coffee shop, immediately drew in surfers from all over the City. Whether they were travelling through or here to work in their chosen professions as we had done, we found surfers enjoyed hanging out in the shop, having a yarn over a latte about where they are heading off to next or where they have just come back from, as well as checking out the latest surf movies. I guess in a way we had become the new oasis of surf culture.

We have now opened a second store in Camden with the same concept and have a really good team working for us, each with their own love of one or all of the board disciplines, allowing us to continue to shape, surf and push the company forward.

Being in London does come with the baggage of having to endure several hours of motorway driving to get our fix, but it gives us the opportunity to pool together the art, photography, music and board-sports scenes to create an ever evolving community around the stores; allowing us to put on street art exhibitions, movie premiers, unplugged music nights as well as skate and surf trips.



**BEN FARWAGI:** Age: 36  
Web Consultant – 6ftOffshore.com / Hurricaneforce12.com

Like most Londoner’s my surfing story is unconventional. I learnt down in St. Ives, France and Indonesia, before returning to the Smog aged 16. I have since surfed all over the UK, lived in France for a year, Ireland for another year and South America for 3 years, working and studying along the way.

Why London? Well either you love it or hate it, and I love it! The advantage of the Smog, apart from always having something to do, is the wonga. If you are prepared to sell your soul for cash then the world is your oyster. At this moment I am trying to regain my soul a bit and do more surf related stuff, but a proper job is always just around the corner!

In the last month I have spent over 10 days in the water in Cornwall, Dorset and Brighton chasing swells and surfing reefs. If you know how to read weather charts you definitely have a wider choice of breaks to head for from London. Then it’s just a case of jumping in the car late at night, racing down the roads with speed camera detectors glowing back at us and heading to wherever is good for the period. My record to Newquay from the Smog still stands at 3 hours 45 mins! I don’t even blink at a 100 mile drive and over that I just pack more stuff. Thurso is only 10 hours and four red bulls away, Yorkshire has over 20 reefs in one 80 mile stretch and Wales has some great reefs too. Clearly I realized that I was never going to be a pro surfer or amazingly brilliant, but as I put more and more effort in I met more and more cool people and still do. I can walk onto a beach from Kernow to Scarborough, or be rolling about in some dodgy night club like the Marisco Disco (Woolacombe), Boyln’s (Scarborough) or Skinandi’s (Thurso) and know people. My adventures never stop, from car fires on the M1 coming back from Newcastle with Micah and others after the Nationals, to playing kiss-chase with 18 wheelers in Southern Eire – there’s nothing like near death experiences to make you appreciate things more. Will I stay in London till I die? – I doubt it, I’m too poor to buy in Kernow due to the high house prices at the moment, but there is a plan! I have found waves I like, in a great little country where I have good friends, far, far away, where you can ski in the morning and surf in the afternoon. So that’s plan A, but as I’m working on plan B and C to generate the money to finance the fantasy, it may take a little longer to achieve! But in the meantime I’ll continue hunting and foraging at a break near you.

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**ALEX RUSTON:** Age: 34  
Owner of a Lighting Company

I really started surfing 5 years ago, aged 29 and living in London... so not ideal! I’d always been into skating and snowboarding, and I’d even surfed the odd day here and there when I was younger, but I never took it seriously, definitely something I regret now. A friend of mine went down to the Surf Experience in Portugal, she thought I’d like it, so I went over there for an awesome week of surfing and drinking. Best of all, I met my now great friends John and Kieran, who were also just starting and wanted to go more. Kieran invited us to Ireland that

December where I experienced one of the coldest and best days of surfing in my life - that was the day that surfing took over. Friends and family soon realised that this obsession was here to stay, turning a blind eye to a growing list of missed birthdays, parties and even weddings. It’s become a bit of a joke to them now, how I’ll just disappear off to the coast. It was often hard work with endless disappointing trips to the south coast, 5am starts, mind numbing traffic jams, tons of solo missions, and hundreds of miles racked up for a single surf. I never minded - I still believe that no matter how many wipeouts, hold downs, and ice cream headaches I get, just one good wave can make a session worthwhile, and if I get loads, so much the better.

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18 months ago I discovered the London Surf Club, and joined up straight away. Since then, I’ve been surfing more than ever, and made many friends. Filling the car with boards and people on a Friday is a great feeling, everyone’s frothing for a surf.

Running your own business has its perks, and I often end up taking a Monday or Friday off when the charts look good. I find it very frustrating sitting in the office when I can see it’s pumping, but it makes me get on and plan more trips. There are three good things about being a surfer in London - Heathrow, Gatwick, and Stansted. It’s easy to get flights to anywhere in the world. I’ve been over to Ireland loads of times, down to France, Portugal, Morocco, Fuerte and Lanzarote, and over to Indo last year.

Having never lived by the sea, I guess I don’t know what I’m missing, but I wish I could wake up every day and hear the waves, grab a board and just go for a surf. I would love to go travelling round the world for a year with a board and a backpack, but I just can’t do that with work. So for now, I’ll just carry on buying lottery tickets and keeping my fingers crossed.



SIX AND THE CITY

CHARLIE PHILLIPS: Age 35  
City Banker

I grew up in Newquay, but moved to London after University. That might sound like doing things the wrong way round, but when I was younger I wanted to escape Cornwall to see the bright lights. I have always loved the buzz of cities even though I miss being by the sea. My big plan was to move to the city, earn enough to get out while I was still young and then do something more chilled out L At 35 I'm still up in London - so much for plan A!

I lost touch with surfing when I went to uni, but it wasn't too long before I realized how much I missed being in the waves and wanted to get back into it. Luckily I met some like-minded people who live in the city, but still surf on a regular basis. At first, I was amazed at their dedication to the cause of finding a good wave, but now, a 6 hour journey each way in the hope of at least one decent session seems fairly normal to me. Some people have a negative idea of London surfers, but you have to be really committed to get waves and to improve as a surfer when your nearest consistent break is 3-4 hours away. I know what it's like to be a local with people invading your spot, but anyone who is respectful and puts that much effort into getting a wave deserves it as much as the next man. I didn't try surfing properly until I was 15. I remember the excitement before my first session, then I remember the waves looked really big and I was bricking it a bit as I started to paddle out! Somehow I got out back with my mates helps I went for the first wave that came, got absolutely pounded, my board smacked me on the head and I foundered to shore semi-conscious, but I was so stoked and headed straight back out for more punishment.

Not living near a beach these days, I realize how much I appreciate the time I get in the sea. The buzz you get from riding a wave is great, but, just as much, I love being out back and bobbing around with the waves waiting for a set, totally chilled. I always feel top of the world after a good surf. I've been lucky enough to surf in many different parts of the world. Warm climes like Bali, South Africa and Brazil were some of my favourites, just wearing boardies and getting some incredible waves. I love Australia as well. One of my best memories is surfing in WA near Margaret River, when my mate and I froze after spotting a fin heading our way. Relieved and amazed at the same time, we watched as a pod of 5 dolphins jumped out from a big set breaking just in front of us. But my favourite surf sessions are always at sunset after a day of surfing - this is what it's all about to me, just feeling in tune with everything and riding the waves as the rays sink into the horizon. I plan to move back to the coast in the next few years. My son is 3 years old now and I want him to grow up near the sea. He's already been on my board in the waves with me and loves it! Look out Slater!

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LLOYD RUSSELL: Age 36  
Music Production Teacher

My Mum says that when I first saw the sea at three years old, when my hair was blond, I simply ran into it with all of my clothes on.

We grew up on the coast; the sea was at the end of our road. In the 1980's wind surfing was the thing that all of the cool kids did. I really wanted a wind surfer. The kid in the house opposite had one; I didn't. It wasn't fair! So my Mum eventually bought me a little surf board. I was the only kid in town that had a surf board. Other kids thought that I was a bit geeky or uncool when I used to cycle to the beach with it tucked under my arm.

Music was my other love. I learnt piano from an early age. At 18, I moved to London to pursue a career in music. I stopped surfing and visiting the beach. My hair turned brown. I spent all of my life hanging around dingy, smoky gig venues or media-wanker parties. This debauched lifestyle was so much fun and intellectually stimulating that I forgot all about the sea, nature and surfing.

Ten years later, I went on holiday to South West France with a girlfriend for a couple of months. I dusted down my old surf board from the attic and packed it in the car. This trip changed my life and priorities. Since then I took a lot of time out of whatever band I was in and missioned it to the coast. Managers and band mates always got really annoyed when I didn't turn up to a rehearsal or recording session because the waves were fab. I had good intentions, I always tried to get back in time, but when I was surfing, time just slipped away without me realising; then there was the long drive back to the city.

Then, just over a year ago, I quit the London music scene to free up more time for surfing. It's such a relief. No more gigs, no more crazy parties, no more late nights. I just get up at first light



RICH FOLLEY: Age 31  
Post Production Manager

I've always been a Londoner, I was born and brought up south of the river and still live in the area today. I can see the appeal of living down in Cornwall or maybe somewhere hot with surf, but I think I'd miss the city a lot, it's in my blood. What I do for a living also restricts where I can work L there's not much of a TV industry in Lagos. Having said all that, if someone put an offer on the table in Biarritz, Sydney or California then my view on the city might be swayed. the warmer the waters..

I've had a bit of stick from people about being a Londoner, some people think you're less of a surfer or you don't deserve it as much if you don't live by the sea for some reason, but I reckon getting up at 5am and making a 600 mile round trip on my day off is pretty bloody dedicated, as well as expensive! And then there's staying paddle fit without getting water time - running miles on treadmills and swimming hundreds of lengths in tiny pools in London so you know you can handle it when it's pumping. It's probably one of the biggest challenges for me. I got into surfing when I was 20 and travelling in Oz and Indo. Obviously it's an easy thing to do in bath warm water and constant sunshine, but when I got home I found I needed a fix more and more and decided that I wanted to keep surfing even though I didn't live anywhere near the sea. I tend to disappear suddenly a lot these days. My girlfriend is pretty understanding, even when I have to pull out of our weekend plans because the charts look good. My work don't really get it though so it's difficult to explain to them that I really need to take a particular day off at the last minute. They say things like "but it's not even windy" or my favourite "but it's raining!"

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