

## New Year 2001

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*The end of 2000 could only be described as yet another total wash out!! In December there was no river to be seen over much of its course, and the closest the Toes came to surfing the bore, was a fifty mile diversion to avoid over bridge on the largest day of the month.....*

*Excitement and expectations were high for the start of the New Year with some excellent forecasts predicted for the spring months. But it was accepted, rather grudgingly, that January was going to have nothing to offer, with the effects of the Xmas wash out still lingerin. Toes, Wizard and Drop Down watched the tide from opposite banks at the crossing in the hope that Sabrina might produce something magical, but the fact was, the elements were against her, and she dribbled through with a microscopic face!....*

*So roll on February, and please can someone pull the plug!!...*

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### *Friday 9th to Sunday 11th February*

As the tides ticked closer it seemed the effects of the Silver Surfer's sacrificial ceremonies were starting to prove favourable, as the level of the river dropped dramatically, setting up for potentially a great weekend of bores. And the, as though some evil spirit of the troposphere was determined to stop Sabrina's party, the heaven's opened and the rain poured constantly for several days. It certainly seemed the Silver's worship had some success, as he truly dominated the wkend waves with a majestic display of distance surfing into the unknown and *Hands* like soul-ing...

And so as Toes, Wizard, Standfast and Silver cautiously approached a verry wide Boats on an icy friday morning with a bitterly north-easterly breeze biting against there faces. In fact, Toes and Standfast were a bit too cautious!! Casually ambling along the bank to the jetty, they suddenly noticed the wave breaking at the bottom of the new lower Boats, hurled themselves into the freezing water and paddled frantically in the direction of the breaking shoulder. For all their efforts, they did get to see the Wizard and Silver riding a beautiful glassy wave. It was near four feet out on the shoulder and the Wizard put in some sole for Tranny's camera, while Silver let out one long continuous hoot (that must have still been ringing out in the valley sd the sun was laid to rest that



evening). The ride was longer than usual at Boats and they had both caught after the wave had been broken for quite a while.

The wave was backing off as Toes and Standfast finally made it, and as Standfast just flowed over the back, Toes managed a quick nose to stay on for a ten second ride up to the pit.....Ah yes the pit, or washing machine, or wotever u want to call that churning monster of a close out. All three were obliterated in this rather new development to the Bowl. The face jacked up in a split to second to head high and then churned the full force of the tide ahead of it taken the surfers down with it! (probably just the effect of a wider channel running over the shallow banks - hopefully!)



On up river Toes, Standfast and Tranny stood on the ice-stricken bank at Muds and just watched a ripple of a surge flow past rather drearily. Alternative action was needed for the wkend when the posse from the Big Smoke were heading down....





So, on Saturday morning a new approach path was established, and the crew arranged to meet at Spot O, for hopefully another morning of majestic glass at Boats. For once, the Feet's, Toes and Tranny made it on time, even after a frantic diversion. Wizard was ready and waiting, and they headed on down the banks to New Boats, to be joined by Stanfast just in time. Wiz picked it up first in just the right spot, followed by the others, but poor old Magic Feet popped off the back and had to suffer the long paddle back in some rather disturbing rips! The wave was no larger than the previous day, but it was no less menacing in the mixer. Wizard wisely slipped off the side before they reached it, but the others took the drop and suffered the consequences - a mouth full of dirty, grimey, river mud!





As everyone prepared to leave, we noticed that Silver's car was there and he was nowhere to be seen. He had caught the wave in the lagoon but where had he got too??? It turned out he had just ridden a fairly,

rippy at times, small wave right round to Leicester Square, where he finally came a cropper, battled in a tide race and suffered a several mile walk back to the car. Always one for an adventure!...

Next stop was E-land, a wave that hadn't been ridden much recently, but Wiz had noticed some potential the previous night. As it turned out as we climbed the bank and saw the river, the wave was already rolling up along the far bank. Shit!! Toes, Wizard and Funky plunged in the water quick, while Magic, decide to watch! What to do was the initial thought, and as Wizard went for the long slog to the other side, Toes and Funky just waited to see what the building slab rolling towards them would do. Wiz made it to the other side, but the wave



was just pulling away weakly to the bank. Meanwhile a four foot face peeled off from the bank below the other two, and as Funky got swept up by the soup, Toes just slid off the back of the face. Funky jumped on the chance and had a purrfect face for several hundred yards to put in some soulful turns for the crowds. As it happened Toes picked up the wave behind and likewise had a rather clean shoulder to move up and down on. The guys got out with happy smiles, just as the Silver finally trundled up in his car. That was that and time for a bit of Risk!....

Meanwhile Buff had tracked the wave elsewhere and rumours were it was also uncharacteristically producing some faces at Wipeout and Jaws, though we left these areas to the canoeists!

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Sunday was a more brave affair. Food and beers at the Dog followed by an alright game of Risk, meant there were a few sorry looking faces in the morning! And just to make matters worse, the wind was really howling from the SW as a new front stormed through. But the decision was made, and it was off to Spot O again. This time there was an addition to the surfing posse though, as Tranny put down his camera and finally picked up his brand-new looking Guts mal for a dip in the water.

It was really howling on the Boats straight, and walking down the banks was even pretty difficult. Buffalo was there too, and as the wave approached on the sky line we flagged Drop Down, as he struggled (for a change) to make it in time against the battering winds! For all everyone's efforts, the wave was choppy as hell, with lots of wake, and most of the crew went fairly quickly as the wave backed off. This gave Toes the face, but his smile was quickly lost as he dropped down just as a wake rolled up in front, and his nose was gone!! So, as always, it was the man with the magic carpet who had the wave to himself. And it looked pretty solid from the back as Wizard carved this way and that, casually hopping off just before the mixer.

At E-land, Toes, Wiz, Buff, Silver and Magic went to the far bank, while Tranny and Funky stuck against the nice safe boulders!!!???? Drop Down had gone on up the normal route to check it out. Another guy was sitting mid-stream, sadly one place where, this time, the wave did not break!! The wave, although choppy was several feet, and broke well into the river as it came up around the bend. As Toes was picked up by the wave, his board locked and hurtled straight over the top of Magic Feet's body and head!! Somehow, while Toes plunged to the bottom, Magic cruised on upriver, for his longest ride to date, and a rather sore head to go with it! But it was the guys inside who scored it just right. Wiz, Buff and Silver disappeared up around the bend, much further than is normally expected from this wave. They had one hell of a walk back!!

Meanwhile, Funky had fortunately been thrown out by the churning boulder wave, which didn't have the width of the previous day. Tranny had scored though, and whopped away as he carved up and down a fast peeling head high wave. Of course it was way too late when he noticed he was heading straight for the stone wall and the boulders, and he was dragged along the rocks, colliding many times, tearing his finger, and receiving numerous large bruises!! Funky climbing out was recieved by a whole load of people crying, where is ure mate??? Fortunately, Tranny survived one of the worst sceanario's of recent times, and promptly got to wavin blood everywhere, shouting awesome man, rad man!!!! I think he is mad, and sure all the crowds of spectators thought the same! (But it's ok, 'cos apparrantly, this never happened and he actually fell off a ladder!?)

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As far as we know Monday was left to the Silver Surfer. It was a bit ripply at Boats and the dropping tide, but E-land was perfectly clean, and the Silver honed a few of his classic 'cartoon style' manouveres, and reminisced on a great wkend of surfing and global conquest with little plastic pieces.....



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The biggest tides of the spring are only a week away, and it looks like fronts yet again threaten the falling levels (with the addition of snow melt) - bit of a pattern forming here? But an even worse threat poses major problems for the wkend. The outbreak of foot and mouth has had its impacts on the area. Nearly all farmland around the river is currently out of bounds, and strict fines are being imposed. There are still plenty of access points on the river from roads etc, but if ure thinkin of having a go then be very careful where u tread!