



Picture: BRENTON GEACH, The Argus.

OLD FRIENDS: More than 100 yachting enthusiasts gathered at the Royal Cape Yacht Club last night to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Cape-to-Rio race. With the original 1971 gold and silver Transatlantic Floating Trophy are Ted Kuttel, a former commodore of the club, Molly Warr, the only woman skipper in the race, and solo yachtsman Bertie Reed.

29/11/1992

ARGUS

1971 Rio race sailed again — with party

ANDRÉ MARTIN Staff Reporter

THE yachts that sailed in the first Cape-to-Rio race 21 years ago may have been slower and less sophisticated than today's racing machines, but their crews were as strong and enthusiastic as ever.

Fond memories of the first one in 1971 were exchanged last night when more than 100 skippers, crew, organisers and guests gathered at the Royal Cape Yacht Club to celebrate the race's 21st anniversary.

Only three Cape-to-Rio races were held before the finish was moved to Uruguay because of political pressure by Brazil.

Many first-race entrants are hoping

to compete in the revived Cape-to-Rio race next year.

"At least 12 or 15 of the original yachtsmen who took part in the 1971 event will race again," said the chairman of the organising committee and vice-commodore of the RCYC, Mr John Lewin, who also sailed in the race.

Today's yachts were faster and more powerful than those who made the crossing in 1971. Then, it took 32 days to reach Rio. In 1976, it took about 23 days, and now, with more advanced technology and design, it could be done in 14 or 15 days by the bigger boats, said Mr Lewin.

For skipper and yachting administrator Mr Gordon Webb, the 1971 race will always be a memorable one. His yacht,

Pioneer, sank about 1 500 miles out of Cape Town after hitting a whale.

He and his four crew, all at last night's function, spent 19 hours on a liferaft before being rescued by an American freighter.

"I am so thankful to be here tonight. Once a year, the crew have a dinner to celebrate our survival," said Mr Webb.

Yachtswoman Molly Warr, who skippered an all-woman crew, said her worst memory of the race was of her yacht, *Sprinter*, struggling to cross the finishing line with no wind.

During the race, *Sprinter's* electronic equipment and battery failed and the crew had to use torches to see the compass. They finished 27th out of 69 yachts.