

# Vaal Dam triumph for 'old fart'

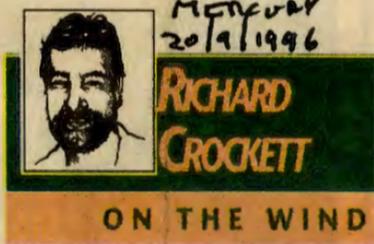
YACHTING administrators are often perceived to be a bunch of old farts who know little about the current realities of the sport and do the job for self glorification.

I was therefore delighted that Durban sailor Gavin Smith, who is President of the South African Yacht Racing Association, went up to the Vaal Dam last weekend and beat the pants off everyone.

He and his crew almost needed a wheelbarrow to cart all the trophies and gongs away after scoring a whitewash in the Sailsure Keelboat week.

Well done Gavin. Your performance disproves popular perception about yachting administrators, and shows that active sailors can administer the sport and participate with success.

Moving from landlocked Vaal Dam we head to the oceans of the world where there is action a-plenty. On Saturday the BT Global Challenge started off Portsmouth. This is no ordinary race around the world, but a race for greenhorns who will circumnavigate against the spin of the globe, or in land-lubber parlance, "the wrong way".



All the crew have paid fairly large sums of money to compete in this event aboard 14 identically built steel yachts.

South African sailor Boris Webber is the skipper of *Courtauld's International*, and on completion will be the first South African to circumnavigate the wrong way.

The yachts stop in Rio, Wellington, Sydney, Cape Town and Boston before finishing back in Portsmouth.

## Youngest

Late last year a young guy by the name of Brian "BJ" Caldwell sailed into Durban while attempting to become the youngest person to circumnavigate the globe.

He was 19 years old when he left

Hawaii in June last year, and the news is that he completed his circumnavigation to a hero's welcome on Saturday, and should make the Guinness Book of Records.

Many people have asked whether Robin Lee Graham of *Dove* fame does not hold this record as he begun his circumnavigation at the age of 16.

Apparently these records are only ratified when the person finishes, and Graham took five to six years to complete his trip, making Caldwell the record holder as he is still only 20.

And yet another epic voyage is taking place on the oceans. This time it is Roger Andersson who is attempting to break the world record for the smallest yacht ever to circumnavigate the globe non-stop.

He left Falmouth on August 1 aboard a 28-foot boat named *Wiffta Office*, and hopes to be home around mid-May next year.

Obviously there are still many challenges and records left in our oceans for those tough enough to attempt them.