

# Graybeard seems to be in front

28.1.71

From NEVILLE PEAT on board S.A.S. Tafelberg

OF THE HALF-DOZEN YACHTS contesting the Rio Race lead over a 600-mile front, guardship Tafelberg has intercepted and greeted three of the most favoured — Graybeard, Ocean Spirit and Fortuna — in the past 24 hours.

Towards midnight last night (South African time), as she was about to heave to for the night and let the main body of yachts catch her up, Tafelberg came abeam of Ocean Spirit.

An amusing exchange of messages went something like:

'This is Ocean Spirit, Rio bound.'

'Good evening. This is Tafelberg, also Rio bound.'

'Please arrange 15 birds for us.'

'Sorry, we haven't even got pin-ups. Bad luck, See you in Rio.'

A few hours earlier, during the position-reporting roll call, Ocean Spirit reported radio failure in the past day or two, which explains her silence at this critical stage of the race.

## UNUSUAL SAIL

It seems the Canadian ketch Graybeard is fractionally ahead, the doubt being due to a lack of reports from French boats Pen Duick III — typically tightlipped — and Striana.

Most impressive of the front-runners is undoubtedly Fortuna, which we found about 4 p.m. yesterday running before a 15-knot easterly under a spinnaker, mainsail, mizzen and unusual two-tone water sail ballooning out over her port bow.

She was then 25 miles north-east of Graybeard and 360 miles south-west of St. Helena.

It was no understatement when Capt. Dick Cousins informed Fortuna by radio: 'You look splendid.'

Not far behind Fortuna is Frenchman Alain Gliksman's sleek ketch Raph, and way down to the south are the South African yachts Mercury and Albatros, apparently in convoy, and the German entry Hamburg VII.

One wonders whether they are not too far south to keep pace with the leaders.

## ARGIE



'If Tabarly gets left behind he can always try for a tow from the France.'

From the archives of  
Richard Crockett

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