

FAIR WINDS AND CALM SEA FOR RACE YACHTS

Leading the field?

By John MacLennan

ADVENTURE, the Royal Navy cutter leading the round-the-world yacht race on handicap, this week had her huge Big Boy spinnaker up in excellent sailing conditions as she ploughed through the Roaring Forties in the wake of **Great Britain II**, now believed to be in front with **Penduck VI**, skippered by Frenchman **Eric Tabarly**.

Great Britain II, the glamour entry skippered by Chay Blyth, has to reach Sydney a week before **Adventure** to win the second leg on handicap.

But **Adventure** is only 300 miles (or 36 hours' sailing time) behind **GB II** and it seems she is managing to keep up.

According to crewman Tony Higham in a radio call yesterday **Adventure** was squarely in the southern ocean drift and travelling about 200 miles a day.

'We're keeping **GB II** squarely in our sights,' he said.

He described the sailing conditions as 'perfect.' The fleet ran into a violent storm off Cape Agulhas, but since reaching the Roaring Forties it has had only fair winds and calm seas.

WEDDING TOAST

Crewmen aboard **Adventure** and **British Soldier**, the British Army entry, toasted **Princess Anne** and **Captain Mark Phillips** after the royal wedding in London this week.

On **British Soldier**, according to skipper Major George Philp, they broke out champagne . . . but they had a meagre celebration dinner to go with it — baked beans.

On **Adventure** the crew sat down to a 'royal' menu which included consomme, grouse, new potatoes and asparagus tips, cherry tart made aboard the yacht and fresh cream, coffee, cheese and biscuits.

The crew also sent a congratulatory message to the royal couple and received one in return from **Captain Phillips** to say thank you.

Adventure came close to having a run-in with a whale almost as big as the yacht. They saw it ahead of their bows and had to change course.

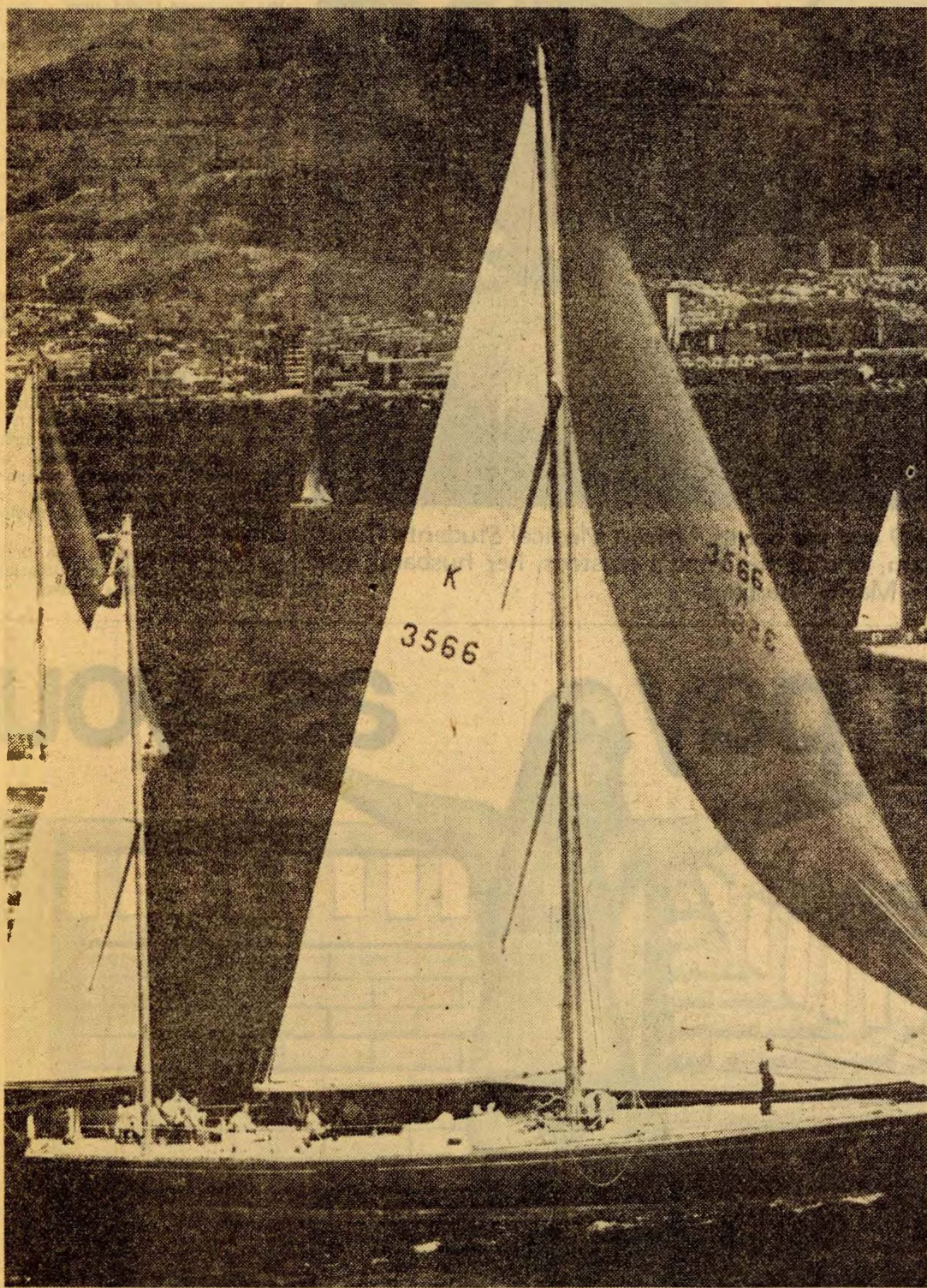
CHAY BLYTH

The whale swam alongside **Adventure** for a while. Tony Higham said: 'It had a good look at us. Then it gave a final snort and took off.'

Aboard **Great Britain II** Chay Blyth reported doing 253 miles yesterday. As far as he knows he is the frontrunner, as nobody knows **Pen Duik's** position. 'I would like to think we're in front anyway.'

The ketch, said to be the most powerful yacht in the race, ran into a storm which shredded her spinnaker and stripped one of the boat's guard rails from the hull.

The crew sent **Princess Anne** a message of congratulations on her wedding, listened to the ceremony on the radio, and toasted the couple with a bottle of champagne.



WITH Cape Town forming a backdrop, **Great Britain II** leaves Table Bay on the start of the second leg of the round-the-world race.

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