

By Mark Sinclair



Coconut's preparations for the 2018 Golden Globe Race

Race update, another test sail and preparations for shipping

THE original Golden Globe Race required competitors to depart from any port in Europe north of 40 degrees latitude. The 50th anniversary race in 2018 was initially planned to start in Falmouth from where Sir Robin Knox-Johnston had departed in his 32 foot yacht *Suhailli*. Unfortunately, due to lack of sponsorship support, this was changed to Plymouth, from where four competitors had departed on the original race: French competitors Bernard Moitessier in *Joshua* and Loic Fougere in *Captain Browne*, Commander Bill King in *Galway Blazer II* and Lieutenant Commander Nigel Tetley in *Victress*. Unfortunately, Plymouth also failed to secure sponsorship for the current race. This lack of corporate support in the UK is thought to be partly due to the uncertain business environment created by Brexit. Fortunately, the French town of Les Sables d'Olonne stepped in, and the race start and end have been moved there. Les Sables d'Olonne has experience in hosting single-handed around-the-world yacht races as it is also the home of the famous Vendee Globe Race, which has a world-wide following.

Falmouth's historic connection with the original Golden Globe Race will still be celebrated in the lead up to the 2018 GGR. As previously reported in the Winter edition of SQ, on the 50th anniversary of Sir Robin's start in that race from Falmouth aboard *Suhailli*, the skippers competing in the 2018 Golden Globe Race will join hundreds of other yachts in Falmouth Harbour for a sail-past salute to Sir Robin. Historic yachts joining the commemoration include Sir Francis Chichester's famous *Gipsy Moth IV*, Sir Alec Rose's *Lively Lady*, a replica of Sir Chay Blyth's original Golden Globe race yacht *Dytiscus III*, and *Joshua*, which Frenchman Bernard Moitessier sailed in the original Sunday Times Race. The Royal Cornwall Yacht Club will host a *Suhailli* gala dinner where Sir Robin will be guest of honour on the evening prior to the sail-past. Following the parade of sail, a charity race will be sailed from Falmouth to Les Sables d'Olonne. This

race, the Sheffield Institute for Translational Neuroscience (SITraN) Challenge, will raise funds for, and improve awareness of, this organisation which is the nominated charity for the GGR. The SITraN Challenge across the channel and past the coast of Brittany is over 300 nm long and will take about three days. A crew of two can be embarked for this race, which will ease the stress of single-handedly crossing the shipping lanes in the approaches to the English Channel. Once the vessels have reached Les Sables



Les Sables d'Olonne

d'Olonne, there will be vessel inspections, additional safety courses, press engagements and final preparations in the two weeks before the start. These activities are expected to generate significant public interest: there were over one million visitors prior to the start of the last Vendee Globe race and 345 million web page views during the event.

Coconut has been out for more sea trials since the previous report. A new light-weather, larger and fuller mainsail has been made and test-sailed. I plan to use this sail in the North and South Atlantic Oceans, and the heavy mainsail in the Southern Ocean. The storm trysail, storm jib and new heavy weather staysail have been tested; they were effective in southern Gulf St Vincent to claw off Rapid Head to Troubridge Shoals against 40 kt westerly winds in late October. I also experimented with securing the clew of the storm trysail to the stern quarter or to the end of the boom; both worked well. Drogues were towed to try to predict how *Coconut* will behave running before large following seas: an orange standard canvas drogue exerted the most retarding force, while car tyres, which were still effective, provided less load and were relatively easier to recover. In both cases, it is recommended a swivel be used to prevent line twist. *Coconut's* new dodger was tested and found to be most effective in providing shelter from weather from abaft the beam.



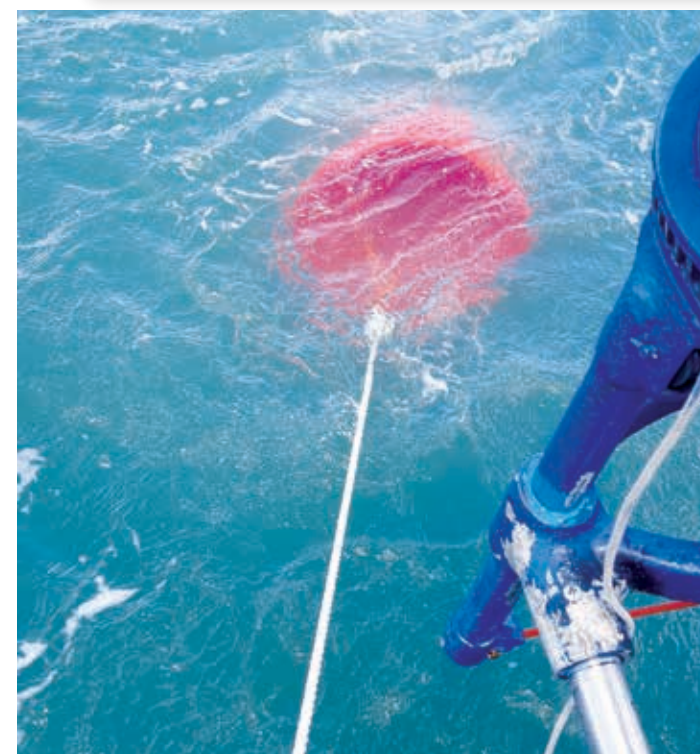
Coconut on the slip at the Squadron

Coconut is now back on the slip at RSAYS for final preparations. The mast is dropped in preparation for shipping, the rudder removed to inspect the shaft and tangs, and the shaft removed to replace the coupling and shaft seal. The life raft has been moved from the foredeck to the cockpit, in order to reduce cockpit volume and so the raft will be close at hand if required. The hull will be prepared and antifouled below the waterline, the toe rail repaired and painted, and non-skid paint applied to the decks. The Aries wind vane has been unshipped and sent to the manufacturer in The Netherlands for refurbishment. Down below still requires painting, lee cloths and canvas covers, and retainers to ensure everything remains secured in all weather. We still need to build a cradle for shipping *Coconut* by sea to London in January and then by road to Plymouth.

I remain very grateful for the continued support provided by RSAYS and members to enable me to prepare *Coconut* at the Club, and all are welcome to drop by and inspect the progress and make suggestions.

Important Dates in Coconut's Calendar:

- 6-8 December 2017 – Mark attends Golden Globe Conference at Les Sables d'Olonne and Paris
- 3 January 2018 – Coconut shipped to UK
- Mid-March 2018 – Coconut arrives in UK
- 1 May 2018 – Mark to UK for race preparations
- 1 July 2018 – Coconut sails to Falmouth and the fun begins!
- 30 April 2019 (300 days from the start, plus or minus 50 days) – Mark expects to cross the finishing line!



Testing a drogue



New sails get a run