

COCONUT'S GOLDEN GLOBE RACE

By Mark Sinclair



Luke Burrow (Bravo Sails) with Mark Sinclair

COCONUT has departed! She was loaded on MSC (Mediterranean Shipping Company) *Luisa* at the Flinders Ports container terminal on Saturday 27 January. When she was secured up near the bow between two stacks of containers onboard *MSC Luisa*, her stern was clearly visible from RSAYS – one of the benefits of being located within the port! *MSC Luisa* sailed later that evening and after a trip across the Bight berthed in Fremantle the following week. In Fremantle, the other Australian entered vessel was then also embarked: Kevin Farebrother's Trade Wind 35 *Sagarmatha*. *Sagarmatha* means 'Everest' in Nepalese, which Kevin has submitted on three occasions. As it turns out the entire Australian contingent for the 2018 Golden Globe Race is now heading to Europe in company. At the time of writing *MSC Luisa* was berthed in Singapore.

The plan is for *Coconut* to be disembarked in London on 8 March where she will then proceed by road freight to Plymouth; *Sagarmatha* will be disembarked in Le Havre and will travel by road freight to Les Sables-d'Olonne for her final preparations. Later, both boats will rendezvous with the rest of the fleet in Falmouth for the *Suhaili* parade of sail on 14 June 2018, the date of the 50th anniversary of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's departure on the original Golden Globe Race. The parade will be followed by the SiTRAN charity race to Les Sables-d'Olonne. This warm up race will take the entrants across the English Channel and past Brittany and into the Bay of Biscay, covering a distance of 320 nm, and passing through some interesting waters. The 2018 Golden Globe Race will start from Les Sables-d'Olonne on 1 July. Since the last update published in SQ, final preparations for shipping have been made at a hectic pace on the slip at RSAYS. These

include work on the keel, rudder, tiller, life-raft and toe rail. Down below was also substantially finished and *Coconut* was painted inside and out. Sails were taken ashore, checked and bricked for tight stowage in the bow. Importantly, the shipping cradle was made and *Coconut's* mast was prepared and secured for transport. While on the cradle, the starboard side of *Coconut's* keel was cut open for inspection to determine the cause of constant dripping of water from the back of the keel. The inside of the aft part of the keel was cleaned out, made good and resealed. *Coconut* was then repositioned over the pit to enable the rudder to be dropped to inspect the rudder shaft and tangs. Unfortunately, the rudder shaft had corroded at the top where it exits the rudder and the rudder itself had also deteriorated; the foam packing inside had disintegrated and the fibreglass casing was delaminating. The decision was made to

replace the rudder stock and rebuild the rudder, including cutting a hole in the top of the rudder to attach lines for emergency steering. *Coconut's* hull was also prepared and anti-fouled below the waterline.

Above the waterline, the tiller bearing at the aft bulkhead in the cockpit was replaced, and resin was poured into the transom gudgeons which support the emergency rudder, to remove slop in the pintle which was detected during shakedown trials in the Gulf. The life-raft was moved aft from the foredeck to the cockpit to reduce cockpit volume in the event of seas boarding from astern, and so that the raft will be close at hand if required. A new timber bracket was made to raise the life-raft off the deck and facilitate cockpit drainage. The toe rail was also resecured to the bulwarks by tapping and bolting and is now securely fastened. The deck was painted in non-skid orange for visibility from the air; there is a race requirement for a minimum of 2 m² of orange on the deck, but we just kept going. Minor shipping delays also enabled the hull to be repainted, also bright fresh orange. Once this was done the *Coconut's* race numbers, lucky '88', were attached to the hull.

Down below the main bulkhead was painted and *Coconut* was cleaned from stem to stern. New bunk cushions were made of high density foam with new hard-wearing synthetic covers fitted. High adjustable lee cloths were also made up for the port and starboard berths. Covers with mesh were made for all shelves, bookcases and voids to keep things secured for sea down below in heavy weather. These are secured by Velcro and toggles.

One of the most important activities was to modify the shipping cradle base to support *Coconut* on her journey by sea and road. The base was inverted and longitudinal steel beams were welded in position to stiffen the floor. Steel uprights were then welded onto the corners of the base and were braced by diagonal steel beams in both the fore and aft and athwartships planes. Props were reattached to the uprights to brace *Coconut's* hull and heavy duty lifting lugs were also attached to the base of the cradle. The keel was chocked in the centre



Coconut being loaded onto her shipping cradle

of the cradle, and timber supports were attached to the stanchions to provide a mast crutch above the deck down the port side of the hull, but lower than the top of the doghouse. This was necessary to keep the overall height below 5 m when *Coconut* is loaded on her cradle on a semi-trailer in London to be transported to Plymouth.

I had never experienced the process of sending a boat overseas by sea freight and so we learned the steps to ship *Coconut* out of Flinders Ports. Firstly *Coconut* was lifted by crane onto the steel cradle base and the cradle was then built around her. The mast was then craned onto the deck where it was secured on the timber crutches. A larger crane was then used to lift *Coconut* on her cradle onto a low loader to move her to the port, where both were loaded onto a flat rack container. Then the flat rack container containing *Coconut* and her cradle which weighed a total of 12.5 tonnes were then moved around the port and finally loaded onto *MSC Luisa* by 70 tonne crane.

She is now on her way. I remain very grateful for the expert workmanship of all the people who have helped me prepare *Coconut* over the last 18 months. I am also highly appreciative of the continued support provided by RSAYS and members to enable me to prepare *Coconut* at the Club. Although she is no longer in Adelaide, all are

welcome to drop by and inspect *Coconut* during final preparations in Plymouth, Falmouth and Les Sables-d'Olonne.

Important dates in Mark Sinclair and Coconut's calendar:

- 8 March 2018 - *Coconut* arrives London - then road freight to Plymouth
- 28-29 April - Mark travels to the UK to begin final race preparations
- 7 May - Mark and Ken Banwell re-rig *Coconut* at Plymouth Yacht Haven
- 11 June - *Coconut* sails to Falmouth and the fun begins!
- 14 June - Suhaili parade of sail and start of SiTRAN charity race (crewed)
- 1 July - Golden Globe Race day - singlehanded for 300 days to cover 30,000 nm
- late Nov 2018 - Mark passes through the Storm Bay gate - come to Hobart and wave as *Coconut* sails on!
- 30 April 2019 (300 days from the start, plus or minus 50 days) - Mark expects to cross the finishing line in Les Sables-d'Olonne - and a well-earned drink.



Repairs to the leaking keel



Repairs to the rudder



Deck painted to enhance visibility from the air



Athur Vandenbroek working on bunk cushions and lee cloths

