

MY BOAT

By Mark Sinclair



My Boat *Coconut* and the 2018 Golden Globe Race

Adelaide's solo contender in the 2018 Golden Globe Race titled his talk at a recent Cruising event 'Cocoloco'. Mark Sinclair says this quirky term (coined by one Cody Allan Dill in 2010 via a Facebook status), refers to 'disbelief in the absurdity or craziness of a situation'. 'Coco' is a euphemism for any object ever made by mankind, (such as Mark's newly-acquired bright orange Lello 34 yacht Coconut). 'Loco' comes from the Spanish word for crazy. Sounds the perfect description of the daunting adventure that Mark is preparing to undertake in two years' time. Over 30,000 sea miles without any post 1968 technology - why's he doing it? Read on!

ON Friday 10 June I was reading the RSAYS e-Bulletin and came across a sailing video, The World Sailing Show – February 2016. This 30-minute video clip included a report on the 2016 Vendée Globe non-stop single-handed round the world yacht race. The genesis for this race was the 1968 Golden Globe race, where Robin Knox-Johnston was the only competitor to finish, and as a result, became the first to sail solo, non-stop around the world, in his 32 foot yacht, *Suhaili*, in a time of 312 days. The report ended with news of a 2018 rerun of the famous Golden Globe Race, conceived and directed by former RSAYS member, Don McIntyre.

The 2018 re-run limits competitors to conditions of the 1968 race, including yacht design and on-board equipment. Entrants 'must sail without the aid of modern technology including satellite-based navigational aids'. I found this to be an enthralling prospect as I have always regarded the original sailors with awe. However, I quickly formed the view that it was logistically impractical for me to mount a campaign from Adelaide while working full time. By a stroke of luck, the following day I found a Lello 34 yacht, *Coconut*, for sale at the Garden Island Sailing Club. Was this a sign? Is Neptune providing the

opportunity to enter his world? Moving deliberately over the next few days, I inspected *Coconut*, drafted an application to enter the race, placed an offer on *Coconut* subject to a satisfactory survey report and a test sail, was offered a position on the 2018 Golden Globe Race waitlist and paid the deposit. Following a successful test sail on Sunday 18 June, I purchased *Coconut* and placed *Starwave* for sale.

The Lello 34 was designed in South Africa by Brian Lello; it is thought this occurred in approximately 1966 in preparation for the first Cape to Rio Race in 1971. It is a strong, seaworthy design, with a narrow beam of 2.9m, a traditional long keel and a draft of 1.9m. Originally named *Windy Lou*, *Coconut* was built in Durban South Africa in 1981. Documentation that came with *Coconut* indicates she circumnavigated the globe in the late 1980s, including cruising in the Mediterranean, crossing the North Atlantic and transiting the Panama Canal, cruising the Pacific Islands including French Polynesia and Fiji, and returning to South Africa. More recently, she sailed south towards Kerguelen Island and visited Madagascar. There is also a video on YouTube which shows *Coconut* sailing in the Roaring 40s from Amsterdam Island to Albany in 2011. I was impressed!

Although *Coconut* is of sound design, a significant refit is required to prepare her for the 2018 Golden Globe Race. Structural work includes inserting hanging knees in the saloon to strengthen the hull to deck join, strengthening the bulkhead at the forward end of the main saloon, improving watertight integrity with a watertight door, removing the anchor and chain and inserting flotation in the chain locker forward of the collision bulkhead. New windows with storm boards will be inserted in the main cabin and the windows in the doghouse will also be replaced. Safety upgrades to standing rigging include fitting new chainplates, replacement of the single spreader with double spreaders, fitting a permanent inner forestay and a new boom. The running rigging will also be replaced with running backstays added to brace the inner forestay and a new suite of sails made. Upgrades to pulpit, pushpit, lifelines, tiller and emergency rudder and tiller are also planned. The engine, an original Farymann 22 hp diesel, will be retained. The race rules limit the amount of fuel that can be carried to 150 litres, so the engine is there for emergency only. The original engine manuals look like ancient manuscripts and have only just stood the test of time; they would probably fit in well with the Paul McGuire Collection of the State Library of South Australia!

All existing electronics will be removed and new HF and VHF communications fitted, as well as new batteries, solar panels wind/water generator and new wiring. Having redundant charging systems will be important to deal with conditions both in the tropics and for approximately five months at high latitudes in the Southern Ocean. Radio direction finding equipment and a Walker trailing log will be fitted. There is a long list of safety equipment to be obtained. Satellite tracking and communications equipment will be installed but this will only be used to communicate with race headquarters for safety and publicity.

I am receiving fantastic advice from the local sailing fraternity. I have tentatively planned to conduct the bulk of the refit this year, so it can all be tested and optimised in 2017. I currently plan for *Coconut* to be delivered to the UK as deck cargo on a container vessel departing late next year – unfortunately I do not have the time to sail her over! There are also many ancillary jobs; some of the more esoteric requirements are due to the retro aspect of the race. For example, resilvering the mirrors of my sextant, obtaining a non-electric chronometer, resurrecting my 35mm camera and film, finding a Super8 camera for video and learning how to use it, and resurrecting a cassette player. I finally have a use for those original Beatles cassettes in the shed, even if the sound quality may have deteriorated over the years!

The following is an excerpt from the Golden Globe Race website:

'Like the original Sunday Times event, the 2018 Golden Globe Race is very simple. Depart Falmouth, England on June 14th 2018 and sail solo, non-stop around the world, via the five Great Capes and return to Falmouth. Entrants are limited to use the same type of yachts and equipment that were available to Robin in that first race. That means sailing without modern technology or benefit of satellite based navigation aids. To create a level playing field, competitors must sail in GRP production boats between 32ft and 36ft overall (9.75 – 10.97m) designed prior to 1988 and having a



Test sail



Moored at Garden Island Sailing Club

full-length keel with rudder attached to their trailing edge, similar in concept to Robin's 32ft vessel Suhaili.'

Readers may be interested in the approved list of designs: Westsail 32, Tradewind 35, Saga 34, Saltram 36, Vancouver 32 & 34, OE 32, Eric (sistership to *Suhaili*), Aries 32, Baba 35, Biscay 36, Bowman 36, Cape Dory 36, Nicholson 32 MKX-XI, Rustler 36, Endurance 35, Gaia 36, Hans Christian 33T, Tashiba 36, Cabo Rico 34, Hinckley Pilot 35, Lello 34 and Gale Force 34.

The following equipment is not allowed: GPS, radar, AIS, chart plotters and electronic charts, electronic wind instruments, electric auto pilots, electronic log, mobile phone, iPhone, iPod, Kindle or any computer based device, CD players, electronic watches/clocks, video cameras and electronic digital cameras, satellite equipment of any kind, digital binoculars, pocket scientific calculators, water maker, carbon fibre, spectra, Kevlar, vectron, any high-tech materials, rod rigging etc.

There is a strong connection between the 2018 Golden Globe race and RSAYS. The race was conceived and is directed by Don McIntyre. RSAYS was Don's first yacht club, and he was a member for about 25 years.

He recalls, "I was a member there before I was old enough to operate my own boat! Sunday night dinners at the club became an institution, me a young kid hanging out with Morris Bellemans, Owen Trewather and other old salts like Josco Grubic with *Anaconda II* who kept my imagination alive. I launched *Skye*, my *Duncanson 29*, there in about 1977. Keith Flint had the same boat then and was a great help as were many Club members and I sailed away from there out into the Pacific shortly after. When I organised the GWF Bicentennial Around Australia Yacht Race (Goodman Fielder *Wattie*) in 1988, the RSAYS was the host club and when I completed the 1990/91 BOC Challenge (British Oxygen Company) solo around the world race I was awarded the Youth Trophy from the club".

In 1972 Don sailed in the schooner *Sari* with Morry Bellemans. Don recalls, "We would head across the gulf for weekends setting out on Friday nights. Then Port Lincoln and more. They were my first keel boat experiences. We sailed together for years and with his great war stories he set my imagination going big time. So many memories for the kid and the old man of the sea ... Yes, he and this boat were instrumental in all my sailing since. This boat stirred my imagination even more about the GGR back then. He was proud when I did the BOC and he died not long after... Life hey!" Sadly *Sari* sank at RSAYS earlier this year.

So please don't hesitate to drop by *Coconut* if you want to find out more. *Coconut* is out of the water and has commenced her refit but will be back at RSAYS in a few months. She is quite recognisable, with an orange hull similar to the pilot vessel – *Coconut* is the smaller one! I understand *Coconut* was affectionately known by a previous owner as, 'Coconut, the orange greyhound.' Whether that is true, well we will just have to wait and see ...

