

By Mark Sinclair

In 2018 Mark Sinclair (aka Captain Coconut) was a competitor in the Golden Globe Race, a solo around-the-world race. He did not finish that time, but this is his account of preparations for the next race starting in 2022, and also other related around-the-world races to be held in subsequent years.



Coconut off Les Sable d'Olonne prior to the start of the 2018 GGR

THE 2022 Golden Globe Race (GGR) will depart from Les Sable d'Olonne in France on 4 September 2022. The race is planned every four years following the 2018 GGR, which was a re-creation held on the 50th anniversary of the original Sunday Times Golden Globe Race. The original race was won by the only finisher, Sir Robin Knox-Johnson in the yacht Suhaili. The spirit of the GGR is to re-create the same conditions as the original race, that is of small boats sailing single-handed, non-stop and unassisted around the world while using only traditional techniques. It was a golden age of sailing without the requirement for high levels of commercial sponsorship that have effectively removed around-the-world yacht racing from the reach of the average sailor.

The traditional aspects of the original race have been maintained; in general, if equipment was not on *Suhaili* in 1968 it is not allowed. For example, navigation is by sextant and dead reckoning using magnetic compass and trailing log; time is obtained from a winding chronometer or deck watch with corrections from time signals received over HF radio; astro-positions are calculated laboriously using tables and plotted manually on paper charts; and the boats are steered mechanically by a wind vane, by balancing the boat or by steering manually. Entertainment and media are also from that era: music is from cassette tape, photography by 35mm film and video recorded by Super8. It really is sailing like it was back in 1968! There are some modern equipment concessions for safety and for environmental sustainability, such as EPIRBs and solar panels.



Chelsea Clock



Deck watch



Waterproof box for HF & VHF

I participated in the 2018 GGR in *Coconut* and pulled into Adelaide on 5 December after 157 days at sea, due to lack of fresh water and barnacle infestation. Having made a stop I was moved to the Chichester Class, in recognition of Sir Frances's single-stop circumnavigation in *Gypsy Moth IV* in 1966-67. On 5 December this year, the third anniversary of coming into Outer Harbor, I intend to cast off and continue my around-the-world voyage back to France. The plan is to head out through Backstairs Passage, through Bass Strait and Banks Strait or round the bottom of Tasmania depending on conditions, then across the Tasman Sea and on through Foveaux Strait at the bottom of South Island New Zealand or south of Stewart Island, then across the Pacific, around Cape Horn, up the South Atlantic sailing past Punta del Este in Uruguay, then across the equator and around the Azores and back into the Bay of Biscay. Once I finish the circumnavigation, I will plan to sail back across the English Channel to Falmouth and onto Plymouth to commence preparations for the 2022 GGR.

It is often said the challenge for many a major event is getting to the starting line and for *Coconut* and me that will be ever so true. To arrive at the starting line will mean completing the single-handed circumnavigation commenced in 2018, by way of the three great capes, with hopefully just one prolonged stop in Adelaide of three years. Wish me luck! As for the 2022 GGR, that will bring its own challenges. However, having been around the track once there should be fewer surprises. Interestingly, of the five competitors who finished the 2018 GGR, all had previously sailed around the world. *Quod erat demonstrandum* ...

What will I do differently this time around? Well, firstly re the barnacle debacle – I intend to coppercoat *Coconut* at RSAYS this September. Regarding fresh water – I have fitted a 200-litre bladder tank into *Coconut's* keel and so will carry more. It has been suggested that I sail too conservatively – I can probably push a bit harder this time but to my way of thinking there is a fine balance between risk and reward. Five boats were dismantled in the 2018 race of which four were abandoned, and even the eventual winner had a badly damaged rig from a violent knock down. There is something to be said for sailing at a moderate pace and preserving the integrity of the boat and the skipper. To each his own.

There have been other minor changes and some maintenance to *Coconut* while in Adelaide. I have made two jockey poles to boom out twin staysails, as well as carrying the two standard spinnaker poles. A WWII US Navy Chelsea engine room clock has been mounted



Coconut down below

on *Coconut's* main bulkhead. Seacocks have been fitted on all bilge pump outlets to stop water coming back inboard; it is amazing how often the outboard side of the cockpit coaming is under water. A new starter motor has been fitted to the Farymann diesel and the water pump has been rebuilt. A storm board has been made for the companionway and a barrier has been built below decks between the galley and saloon, to stop any water that has made its way down below from sloshing between the two compartments.

A few changes have also been made to the rules for the GGR 2022. Firstly, the start date from Les Sable d'Olonne has been delayed from 1 July to 4 September 2022. This will delay competitors arriving in the Southern Ocean in late winter/early spring, when during the 2018 race a number of vessels were dismantled off South Africa and in the Indian Ocean. This will also delay competitors rounding Cape Horn, and any vessel arriving at the Hobart gate after 31 January 2023 will be moved to the Voyager Class and will not be able to continue towards Cape Horn until 1 December 2023.

As in 2018 the race has no time limit and the course is around the world east about, but a number of course changes have been made for GGR 2022. Trindade Island, located in the South Atlantic Ocean about 600 nm east of the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo, must be left to port. This avoids beating down the east side of the South Atlantic Ocean, and forces competitors further west and along a more traditional route towards the coast of Brazil and then anticlockwise around the South Atlantic high. An inshore mark off Cape Town must be left to starboard, which will stop competitors entering the Southern Ocean too early, and an inshore mark off Punta del Este in Uruguay will keep competitors over towards



Coconut working up in Plymouth



Coconut berthed at the Squadron

South America on the return trip up the South Atlantic. The other waypoints will remain the same as the 2018 GGR course.

Other changes to the rules include requiring a non-GPS enabled AIS transponder as an additional safety initiative. HAM radio will not be allowed this time to avoid tailored weather forecasts being provided, as routing is forbidden. To ensure outside assistance is not provided, the only weather forecasts permitted are standard WMO high seas and coastal text weather forecasts from any national or weather bureau, and a weather fax is now also allowed as optional equipment.

There are currently 28 competitors registered for the race, including seven from the UK, five from Australia, three from France, two each from Canada, South Africa and USA and single entrants from Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Spain, New Zealand and one undeclared entrant. Seven places are still available! Interestingly, there are three entrants from Adelaide: Michael Davey, Matthew Wright and me (3Ms), the latter two from RSAYS. Of course, the race organiser is well-known adventurer Don McIntyre, also originating from RSAYS. I bet you were not aware that Adelaide was such a hotbed of single-handed adventurers!

Don is managing other sailing adventures as well. The Ocean Globe Race (OGR) which is a re-creation of the Whitbread around-the-world race, will be held in 2023. There are four classes of boat: Adventure Class, Sayula Class, Flyer Class and Classic Challenge. We have an entrant *Spirit of Adelaide* in the Adventure Class, led by RSAYS sailor Campbell Mackie. Don has also created the Globe 5.80 Transat for 19-foot vessels aimed at home builders and adventurous racing sailors. It starts on 31 October 2021 from Portugal and heads to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands then onto Martinique/Antigua. Don is entrant number 1 onboard *Trekka II* in the Seniors Class. This race is a perfect qualifier for the 2024 Mini Globe Race, a multi-stage solo around-the-world race, heading across the North Atlantic Ocean, through the Panama Canal, across the Pacific Ocean, Coral Sea, Arafura Sea and Timor Sea, then across the Indian Ocean, around Cape of Good Hope and then finishing in Europe. The race is expected to take more than a year to complete ... and you thought the GGR was out there!

To find out more, check out the following websites:

- Golden Globe Race - Golden Globe Race
- <https://oceanglobelrace.com/>
- <https://globe580transat.com/>
- www.spirit-of-adelaide.com
- Coconut - 2018 Golden Globe Race | Facebook