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LONDON LAUNCHES CLIPPER ROUND THE WORLD YACHT RACE



Sir Robin Knox-Johnston and Dame Ellen MacArthur

London was a blaze of colour and billowing sails as it waved off the crews of the world's longest ocean race as they started their 40,000-mile adventure from Tower Bridge.

Crowds estimated in excess of 120,000 lined the banks of the Thames to cheer on the colourful pageant to mark the start of the

Clipper 2013-14 Round the World Yacht Race.

The fleet of twelve 70ft ocean racing yachts and a flotilla of support vessels, spectator boats and well-wishers participated in a spectacular parade with Tower Bridge lifting to salute the crews who will face the ultimate endurance test.

Legendary British yachtsman, Clipper Race Founder and Chairman, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston said: "It is wonderful to see these gutsy people set off on one of the greatest adventures left on the planet.

"Departing from the iconic Tower Bridge, in London, is something really special for the crews and skippers who have been building up to this moment for months. To see them return to London as accomplished circumnavigators in 11 months' time will be a special moment."

The armada was joined by a paddleship steamer, pilot boats, police boats, RIBs, spectator boats and other pleasure craft as Britain waved off the 270 crew sailing from London to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on the first leg of the race.

It is the first time London has hosted the Clipper Race and it is 40 years since the Thames last featured a round the world sailing event.

The fleet will not be returning until July 2014 after a total of 670 crew race 40,000 miles and visit 16 ports on six continents.

Designed to provide everyone - regardless of sailing experience - the chance to race across oceans and taste the exhilaration of completing a



circumnavigation, the Clipper Race has turned over 3,500 novices into ocean racers since its inception in 1995.

Everyone from teachers to sports stars, professionals, lorry drivers, nurses, film directors and more team together to take on the world's toughest sailing conditions. Skipped by a professional yachtsman, each team will battle to complete eight different legs over 11 months, all vying for the overall top prize.

Race prep week saw the Clipper Race's Global Medical Emergency Support Partner,

PRAXES Medical Group, undertake medical training with the skippers and crew members of the world's longest yacht race ahead of its ninth edition.

PRAXES CEO Susan Helliwell and Medical Director Dr John Ross travelled from the group's Canada base to the UK for the specialist training which will aid the crews in the event of a medical emergency.

"We went through with the skippers and crew how the PRAXES service works and how they can utilise it during the race," said Dr Ross.

"We went through a head to toe survey of what kind of injuries might be anticipated and what kind of medical problems could possibly occur and how the kit relates to some of the problems."

In the event of an incident onboard during the Clipper Race, the skipper will be able to call PRAXES for medical advice. The on-call physician will have access to the crew members' medical history to be

able to diagnose remotely and recommend appropriate treatment.

PRAXES physicians are all highly trained specialists in remote triage, who regularly give telephone advice to naval vessels, oil rigs, air transport programmes, poison information centres and other health professionals in a variety of remote settings.

As well as providing peace of mind for crew and their loved ones, it is expected the service will significantly reduce the number of in-port hospital visits and medevac situations during the race.

The first leg of the race which officially started offshore at Southend on the morning of 2nd September ends in Marina da Gloria, Rio de Janeiro, the destination for the 2016 Olympic sailing events. The yachts then continue on via South Africa, Western Australia, Sydney (including the world famous Sydney-Hobart Race), Brisbane, Singapore, China, San Francisco, Panama, Jamaica, New York, Derry-Londonderry and the Netherlands before returning to London's St Katharine Docks for Race Finish in July 2014. ■

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Nominations are now open for the Norwegian Shipowners' Association's bi-annual Thor Heyerdahl International Environmental Award.

The Thor Heyerdahl International Maritime Environmental Award was launched in 1999 by Thor Heyerdahl (1914 – 2002) and the Norwegian Shipowners' Association to recognise candidates from the shipping industry that have made an outstanding contribution to the environment.

To qualify for the award, candidates must have demonstrated exceptional technical innovation and environmental

work in correspondence with Thor Heyerdahl's spirit for the conservation of the marine environment. Emphasis will be placed on measures that combine environmental benefits with improved profitability.

Since the first award in 2001, six winners have received the prize: Eidesvik (2011), Farstad Shipping (2009), Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (2007), NYK Line (2005), the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) (2003) and the Green Award Foundation (2001).

The Association is actively encouraging individuals from academia, science, research

institutes, governments, NGOs, media and the shipping industry to nominate. Eligible candidates are legal entities, organisations and individuals worldwide. Government agencies cannot receive the prize.

All proposals will be reviewed by an expert committee, chaired by Peter Hinchliffe, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the prize will be presented to the winner at the NSA Annual Conference in Oslo in March 2014.

To submit your nomination, go to www.rederi.no ■



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