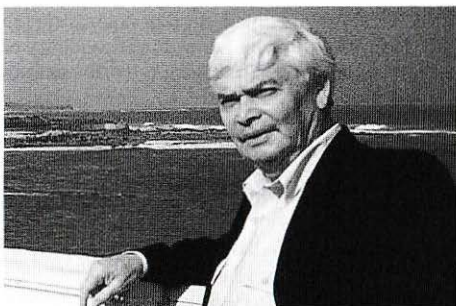


1952 Sydney-Hobart Race: Victory to *Ingrid* —

Bruce Dinham



The 1952 Sydney-Hobart race was won by a Squadron boat, *Ingrid*, owned and skippered by Jim Taylor, who for several years was Squadron Commodore. *Ingrid* was a 37'6" double-ended ketch by American designer William Atkins, often mistaken for a Colin Archer design. She was a comfortable, solidly built cruising boat in which you could have set off confidently to sail round the world.

Under the RORC [Royal Ocean Racing Club] rules then applying, *Ingrid* rated very well for her size. Because of this, Colin Haselgrove, who had won the Sydney-Hobart race in another Squadron boat *Nerida* a couple of years earlier, believed *Ingrid* would have a good chance of winning and had urged Jim to compete.

The crew for the race, apart from Jim, were Bob (Pappy) Kemp as cook and there were two sailing watches: Mark Tostevin, John Wray and Rod Linklater in one and Ian Smith, Bill Lumb and Bruce Dinham in the other. When not needed on deck the off-watch rested in bunks below. The practice of the crew sitting outboard along the weather rail as human ballast was something for the future, and in any case would have been discouraged as dangerous and creating unnecessary windage in the heavy displacement boats of the day.

'Pappy' Kemp as cook was a key member of the crew and produced regular hot meals, eaten at the saloon table. One of his specialities was armpit toast. 'Pappy' slept under a prized kangaroo skin rug, in a quarter berth adjacent to the galley and before turning in each evening would make a

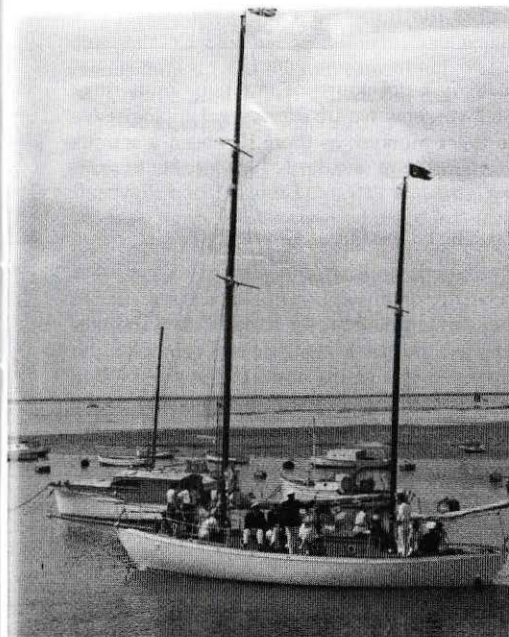
batch of toast that he would take to bed with him. As you came below at change of watch during the night, a hand would emerge from beneath the rug with pieces of body temperature toast, much appreciated by cold and weary crew.

Navigation equipment consisted of a magnetic steering compass and a hand-bearing compass. Depth sounding, if needed, was by leadline. Earth satellites and modern wonders such as GPS didn't exist. The system of navigation was essentially the time-honoured one of keep Australia on the right; if you can hear the dogs barking you're too far in, if the whales are blowing you're too far out. Mostly we kept to the rhumb line. There was some talk of using ocean temperature measurements to detect the south flowing current, but no data were available to enable such measurements to be interpreted reliably, or if there was information, it was being held very close to the chests of those who had it.

Radio was not compulsory and not all boats carried it. We had an HF set intended mainly for emergency use and occasional listening. The general objective was to find out where other boats were if possible, but not to let them know your position, in the hope that this might give you some tactical advantage.

Safety equipment was a dinghy lashed on deck. Safety harnesses were almost unknown; if conditions were bad enough to need one you tied a line round your waist and worked on the age-old principle of one hand for the ship and one for yourself. In the event we didn't have to worry much about this, because the only all-hands call we had was the first night out, when a small front came through with a southerly change. It only lasted for a few hours. Otherwise conditions throughout the race were mostly fine with light winds. These conditions suited *Ingrid*, especially when we were able to set the mizzen staysail, which helped to move her along nicely.

As we came down the eastern coast of Tasmania approaching Tasman Island, we could see several miles ahead another boat which we eventually identified as *Moonbi*. She had a very distinctive feature in the form of a perspex gun turret from an ex-WW2 bomber fitted over the



Ingrid.

helm position. *Moonbi* was an Alden design yawl, much the same in size and rating as *Ingrid*, owned and skippered by Hal Evans, an expatriate American who lived in Sydney. Hal was a friend of Jim Taylor, so we then began a friendly private race to beat her to Hobart.

That night, changing headsails, we managed to get the jib and staysail halyards mixed. There was a certain amount of discussion on the foredeck while we tried to sort this out, in which we were joined soon by the skipper, obviously anxious

about losing ground, especially to *Moonbi*. Eventually he lost patience with our futile efforts, banged on the deck and yelled out loudly, 'Mark!' With that Mark Tostevin, who was off-watch in a bunk below but obviously had been listening to what was happening on deck, emerged from the forehatch. Without a word he shinned straight up the mast into the darkness above. A few seconds later he reappeared with two separated halyards, said, 'That's the jib, that's the staysail.' and disappeared below again. As well as his remarkable agility we were also impressed by Mark's immunity to cold. For the whole trip he wore only a jumper, a pair of shorts and, occasionally, an oilskin jacket, while the rest of us, especially down south, shivered in several layers of clothes and full oilskins.

One of the most memorable moments of the race was on the last day. Coming on watch at first light on a calm and misty morning in the Derwent near the Iron Pot, we found ourselves in a group of about five boats all within hailing distance of one another, including *Moonbi* astern. It was a picturesque sight and also surprising that after over 600 miles and nearly a week of sailing, during which we had seen few other boats, we should all be so close.

At the finish, we were confident, from our own calculations of corrected times, that we were ahead of all the boats known to have finished so far and that there were only a couple of the lower rated small boats still at sea with any chance of beating us. We had to wait for the best part of a day before their deadlines passed and we knew we had won.

It was one of the slowest races on record but nonetheless satisfying for that. 50

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