



"Ingomar" with her racing rig during the early years of her long life

Vale "Ingomar!"

A Yacht Long Famous in the Annals of Yacht Racing Meets Her End

By WILLIAM H. TAYLOR

ONE of the most famous schooners in the history of American yachting, *Ingomar*, went to the bottom last February after a battle with the dreaded Frying Pan Shoals in which she put up as game a fight for life as she had ever put up for victory in her earlier racing career. *Ingomar* was one of the best known American yachts of a quarter of a century ago, both here and abroad, and if her loss is mourned, at least she went down with colors flying.

"Nat" Herreshoff built *Ingomar* for the late Commodore Morton F. Plant, in 1903, and no greater tribute can be paid her than the famous builder's own remark, made repeatedly in recent years, that she was one of the finest schooners he ever turned out.

Ingomar's last owner was Albert L. Hoffman, of New York, and at the time she was lost Mr. Hoffman was planning to take her abroad for a cruise over the waters where she raced twenty-seven years ago. The last edition of Lloyd's Register in which her name will ever appear shows her to be a steel schooner, 127 feet over all, 87 feet water line, 24 feet 3 inches beam, and 12 feet draft — dimensions which have varied a little during her career as the result of changes in ballast, and other minor details. She was a handsome vessel, with a rather straight sheer and her beam carried out into her ends, which gave her a look of power rather than grace.

Though Mr. Plant built her to race abroad, he gave her a season's try-out in American waters before she went. Her first racing was on the 1903 cruise of the New York Yacht Club, in which she was scratch boat of the

Class B schooners. She won in her class on her first start, Glen Cove to Morris Cove, beating *Emerald*, *Ariel*, *Corona* and *Chanticleer*. Furthermore, she won, in that class, every day's run of the cruise, took the Vice-Commodore's Cup for all schooners on the Vineyard-Newport run, won the Astor Cup for schooners next day off Newport, and was awarded the Navy Cup for the schooner that had won the greatest number of squadron runs on the cruise.

Encouraged by this record, Mr. Plant sent her abroad early the following summer under the famous Captain Charley Barr, and she anchored in Southampton after a fast crossing of fifteen days. Shipping longer topmasts, main boom and bowsprit, she started out to race in various British regattas and went on from there to the German races. The detailed record of her races in British and Continental waters is not readily available, but it is perhaps enough to say that she made twenty-two starts, won nineteen of them, and finished second in the other three.

The yarn of her voyaging and racing abroad is contained in Major B. Heckstall-Smith's book *All Hands on the Main Sheet*. As the Major was a member of *Ingomar's* afterguard during much of her career over there, the story is an intimate as well as an entertaining one, though too long to quote here in full.

"The 248-ton schooner *Ingomar* was an extremely grand vessel," writes Major Heckstall-Smith in opening the chapter that deals with her career, and he goes on to express regret that the British yachts of 1904 were



"Ingomar's" shortened rig which she carried at the time she was lost

unable to give her better competition — an eloquent, if indirect indication of the swath she cut in British waters.

Ingomar introduced to British yachtsmen what appear to have been innovations there in 1904, though they sound ordinary enough now. She was the first big racing yacht they had seen steered with a wheel, and they liked that. She had several handy winches around her deck — evidently a notable invention for handling sail. And below decks she had acetylene lights, of which Major Heckstall-Smith didn't think so much.

Another feature of the yacht, and a curiosity even to her last days, was the circular main saloon surmounted by a big circular skylight between the masts. It was an odd affair, delightful at anchor but not so good at sea, according to the Major. For one thing, the skylight worked like a mushroom ventilator and could not be opened on the lee side and closed to weather to keep out spray. Then, too, the saloon, with a fixed table and movable chairs, seems to have been a great place for falling around in, with no corners into which one could wedge one's self.

Ingomar's tendency to take a sharp angle of heel rather suddenly aggravated this difficulty, according to the Major, whose book abounds in incidents of elderly ladies and members of the royalty and nobility scrambling about on the floor of the saloon.

"Down by the lee settee," reads one such passage, "were pearls, plates, knives, forks, decanters, hairpins, hams, broken chair legs and salad." Another time, when a German prince was below reading a paper as the yacht left Ostend, she took a quick, sharp heel. Presently, the Major went below to find His Highness sitting on the floor to leeward, calmly lighting a cigarette, with the paper he had been reading impaled on a gas jet high above him on the lee bulkhead.

From the British ports *Ingomar* went to Boulogne and

to Ostend for races, and then to Cuxhaven, Germany, where she had her introduction to the Kaiser. There she lay at the quay alongside the Kaiserin's schooner *Iduna* and the Kaiser used to lean against *Iduna's* backstays and chat across the few feet of water with *Ingomar's* afterguard.

Kiel, however, provided the real show, and there occurred an incident that made *Ingomar* and her crew famous. Yachts belonging to the royalty of all Germany, and some other lands, were there, but *Ingomar* went right on winning, receiving a little time allowance from the Kaiser's larger American-built schooner *Meteor III*.

Major Heckstall-Smith found much to amuse him and his readers in German



A feature of the yacht was her circular main saloon amidships

racing tactics, and in the time allowances and the race committee which, over its bread and cheese and beer, worked them out. The allowances, it seems, varied inversely with the average strength of the wind at various points on the course. After finishing the race you waited while the wind velocities were reported to the committee, and the committee, using their steins as calculating machines, decided whether you had won or lost, and by how much.

But *Ingomar's* most famous exploit at Kiel was the near-sinking of the Kaiser's *Meteor III*. So many versions of this yarn have been circulated that we shall quote, in part, Major Heckstall-Smith, who was the official racing-rules expert aboard the American yacht.

Ingomar, on the starboard tack, and *Meteor*, on the port, were converging, each logging nearly eleven

(Continued on page 132)

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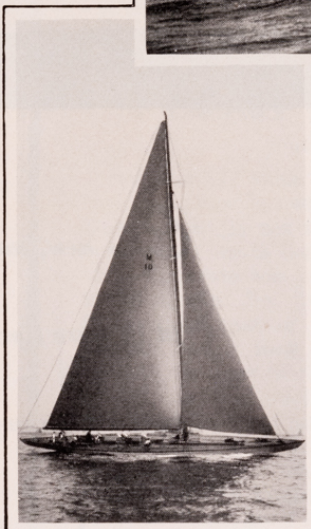
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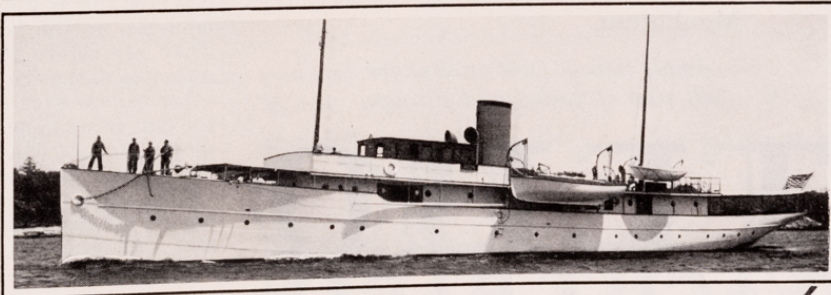
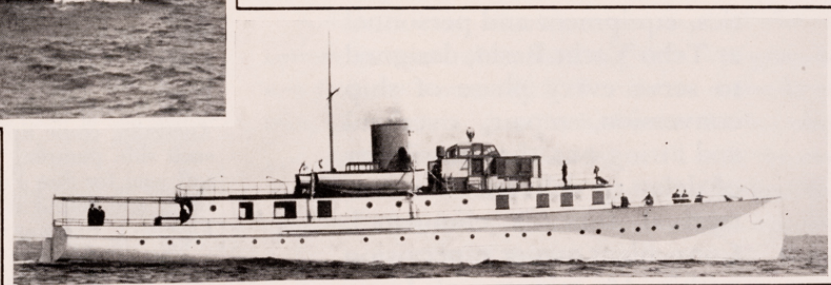
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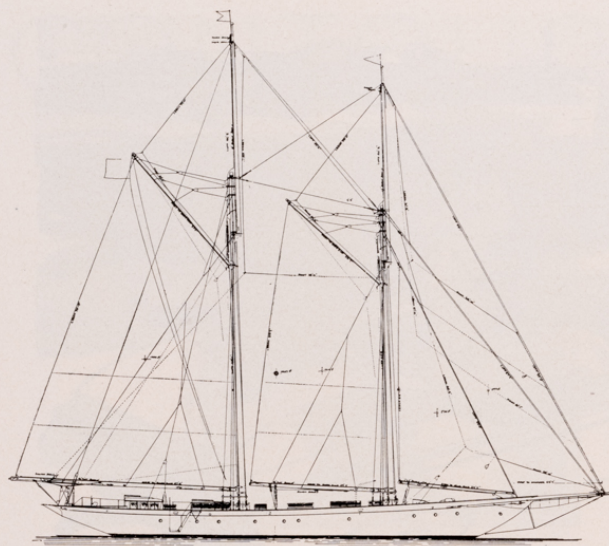


Owner's launch built by HERRESHOFF in 1931 for the "Aloha."



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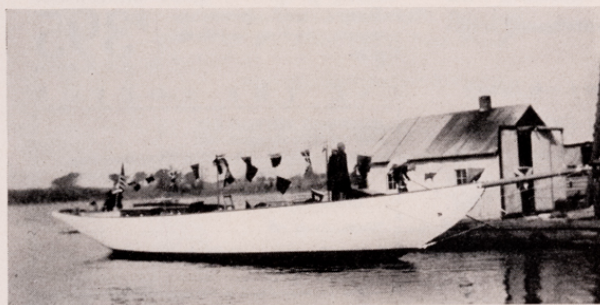
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sink, coal bin and all necessary appurtenances. Forward of this is a forecabin with full headroom, with accommodations for the paid hands, with ample lockers, folding basin and toilet.

A 4-cylinder $3\frac{1}{2}$ " by 6" Hill-Diesel engine is installed in the passage, being entirely enclosed with gas tight trunk leading up to the skylight above. Provisions also are made for getting at all necessary working parts of the engine. Current for all electric lights and auxiliaries is supplied by the main engine, which is equipped with a 1-K.W. generator and necessary storage batteries. A large amount of storage and hanging space has been provided, as well as an unusually large lazarette for the storage of sails and other gear. Provision has been made to carry 350 gallons of fresh water below the cabin floor, and also 130 gallons of fuel oil.

+ + +

[Ever since the Bermuda Ocean Racing Rule was formulated, in 1928, a number of boats have been designed to it with the evident intent of getting the most favorable rating possible under the formula. This has resulted, in some instances, in chopped off or abbreviated sterns, so that the belief is prevalent that to rate well under this rule a boat must have an abnormally short after overhang. Those responsible for the rule have contended that this is not a necessary result of the formula, and that a boat with balanced, normal ends could be turned out that would rate favorably, be good looking, and equally as fast as those designed to get the longest water line possible, irrespective of other considerations.]

The design shown herewith, prepared by Henry Gruber, of the firm of Cox & Stevens, seems to bear out this contention. As a matter of comparison with an existing boat, the design here shown is of practically identical dimensions with those of the fast *Mistress*, designed last year, has the same sail area within 50 square feet, yet she rates a foot less (47.56 rating to 48.56 for *Mistress*) and has a more normal stern. Whether she will be as fast as *Mistress* no one can say at present, but a study of her lines (which are not published) indicates that she should be very smart under ocean racing conditions. At any rate, her longer after overhang does not adversely affect her rating, and with the three rigs shown she makes a very interesting study. Ed.]

Vale "Ingomar"

(Continued from page 64)

knots. It became evident that if they held on *Ingomar* would ram *Meteor* square amidships and very likely drown the Kaiser.

"Mr. Smith. Rule?" yelled Charley Barr, who was at *Ingomar's* wheel and who knew the rule perfectly well.

"*Ingomar* right!" snapped the Major.

"Mr. Robinson," called Barr to Charles Robinson, who was Commodore Plant's "yachting representative," as the major puts it. "What am I to do?"

"Hold on," ordered Robinson.

"By God, Charley, you're the boy," chimed in Commodore Plant, who all this time was sitting peacefully in the companion. "I'll give way to no man."

So on they held, until Baron Von Kotwitz, a German naval officer who was aboard as pilot, gasped and goggled at the madness of these Americans who seemed bent on slaughtering his All-Highest.

Just as they braced themselves for the crash *Meteor's* helm was jammed down. At the same instant Barr rolled his own wheel down. *Ingomar's* quickness on the helm saved the day, for the two great schooners shot up into the wind side by side and scarcely a foot apart, then paid off on opposite tacks. The imperturbable Mr. Robinson ordered a protest flag set in *Ingomar's* rigging.

"Fancy catching an emperor on the wrong tack," mused Mr. Plant. "You know. I don't like that protest

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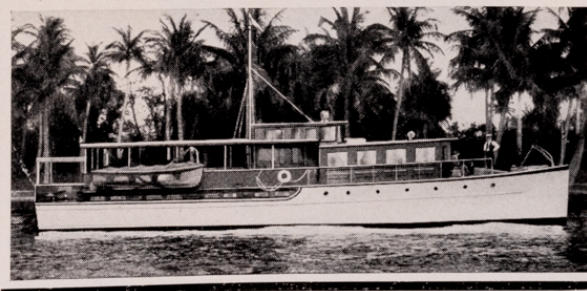
SPECIFICATIONS

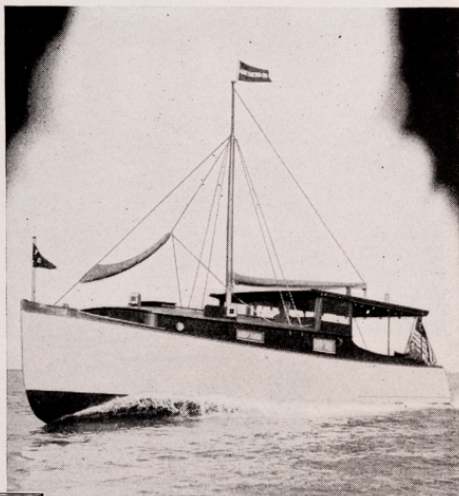
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flag. There's only one thing for us to do, and that's to go below and open a bottle."

A guest aboard *Meteor*, a British yachtsman who knew his rules, advised the Kaiser that his skipper had been at fault. Immediately the Kaiser ordered *Meteor* withdrawn from the race, and when *Ingomar* dropped anchor in Kiel after the finish, a launch came alongside with an admiral (of whom, says the Major, there seemed to be thousands at Kiel) bearing His Majesty's apology.

Apropos of admirals, one of the Major's most delectable anecdotes of *Ingomar's* cruise is that of the German admiral of mighty girth who came aboard to spend the night (with no baggage whatever) and mistook a shadow at the float for *Ingomar's* dinghy, with the usual results.

While they lay in Lubeck River shortly after the Kiel races, the Kaiser came aboard to inspect *Ingomar* in person, and to split a bottle or two of champagne with her afterguard while he expressed his admiration of the vessel. The Yankee schooner's afterguard were greatly impressed with the Kaiser's sportsmanship, wide knowledge, keen intelligence and pleasing personality.

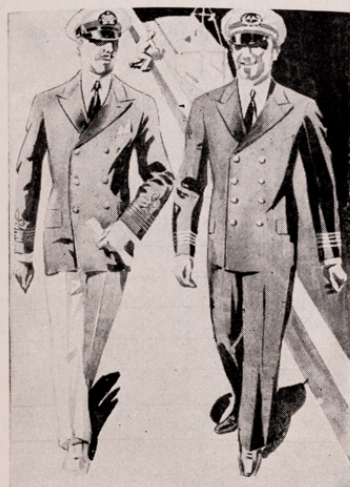
It was about this time that the Kaiser offered his Gold Cup for the Transatlantic race of the following year. Apropos of that cup, howls of rage, wrath and disappointment were raised here when, during the war, it was melted down and found to be practically all lead. But Fred Hoyt, who was with Commodore Wilson Marshall in *Atlantic* when she won it, says that her afterguard knew half an hour after they had received it that the "gold" cup was just so many potential codfish sinkers.

There is surprisingly little racing in *Ingomar's* record after her successful campaign abroad in 1904. Mr. Plant brought her home and raced her during 1907, but in the Glen Cove races of that year she met her match in the schooner *Queen*, which had been built for the late J. Rogers Maxwell while *Ingomar* was abroad. *Ingomar* won the Navy Alumni Cup for schooners on the Vineyard-Newport run that year, but most of the time she ran a consistent second to *Queen*.

In the following year *Ingomar* was sold to Daniel R. Hanna, of New York and Cleveland, son of the famous Mark Hanna, and never again does her name appear in the New York Yacht Club's racing records. Mr. Hanna kept her for eleven years, and cruised extensively in her. The war was on by then, and the price of lead was sky-high. With many another fine old yacht, *Ingomar* fell a victim to the popular urge to place all available lead within the ranks of the German army, and it is probable that though she never went back to Germany herself part of her keel did. Stripped of her lead and most of her other gear, she lay, a hulk, in the vicinity of New York for years. From 1919 to 1923 Lloyd's shows her as the property of Henry W. Howe, of Milton Point, N. Y. In the latter years she is listed as owned by J. A. Nickelson, of New York, but she was not put in commission, for when Spencer Borden, of Fall River, Mass., bought her in 1925 she was still out of commission.

Mr. Borden used her as a houseboat at first, and when the yachts came sailing into Mattapoisett Harbor for the next few summers they found *Ingomar* at moorings there, unrigged and inert, but at least no longer neglected. From the first, the Bordens planned to rehabilitate the old schooner, and in 1928, with a Diesel motor and a new rig, she got underway from her old home port of Bristol and headed south for Nassau. The new rig was a moderate one, bald-headed, with a Marconi mainsail, and her mainmast spliced out only a little taller than it had been without the topmast when she was racing. Still, she could roll off the knots in a breeze, and her hull was as sound as ever.

Mr. Borden cruised in her for a year or so and in 1929 she remained tied up in Kilburn's basin until Albert



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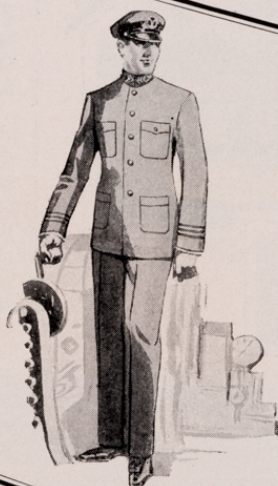
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L. Hoffman, who was to be her last owner, bought her the following spring, 1930.

Mr. Hoffman found her hull perfect, her interior less so, and set to work gradually to put her in condition below as well as aloft.

Last autumn Mr. Hoffman took *Ingomar* to the Chesapeake, and at Oxford, Md., much more work was done towards putting her in shape for a winter cruise to southern ports, which was to have been followed by a trip across the Atlantic and a cruise in European waters, following her old racing track. But it was not to be.

With nine men aboard, under Captain Leif Sparre, *Ingomar* sailed from Oxford on February 18th, bound for Charleston, S. C., to pick up Mr. Hoffman and a party. Fog delayed her inside the Capes, but she passed Cape Henry bell buoy at 4.00 p.m. on the nineteenth and headed down the coast under sail and power. On the evening of the twentieth, with a moderate N.N.W. breeze, she was logging nine or ten knots when the skipper went below, leaving the mate in charge. At 11:20 that night the mate picked up two lights which he believed to be the lightship and gas buoy on the Frying Pan, and the course was presently altered. As it turned out, the lightship had been moved offshore since *Ingomar's* charts were printed and one of the lights they saw was the lighthouse on Cape Fear.

At 12:10 A.M. *Ingomar* struck hard on the tail of the Frying Pan, slid over into deep water, and then, with a heavy sea driving her, went on again and began to pound. For six hours the seas lifted and pounded her on the shoal and washed her decks, smashing in her skylights and hatches and gradually beginning to fill her. Soon there was enough water below to set the heavy cabin furniture adrift, and as she rolled and pounded, the furniture smashed the bulkheads out of her until she was one seething, open room from stem to stern, with wreckage batting about so that no man dared go below decks, though it was scarcely less perilous on topside as the seas washed her. This loose debris, the captain believes, broke off some of her plumbing or other openings through the hull and hastened her filling.

Despite the hammering, the old ship refused to break up and at six o'clock in the morning she had washed clean over the shoal and was afloat in the deeper water to leeward. They anchored, but with the motor pump out of commission, the water gained two inches an hour despite desperate work with hand pumps and buckets, and at 10.00 A.M. they made sail again and headed for where they supposed the lightship to be, hoping that if they reached her she could signal help to them.

Failing to sight the ship as expected, and with *Ingomar* settling under them, they finally headed her for the beach, but by then she was almost unmanageable and settling faster than ever, with her smashed portholes now awash. At 4:30 they launched the lifeboat.

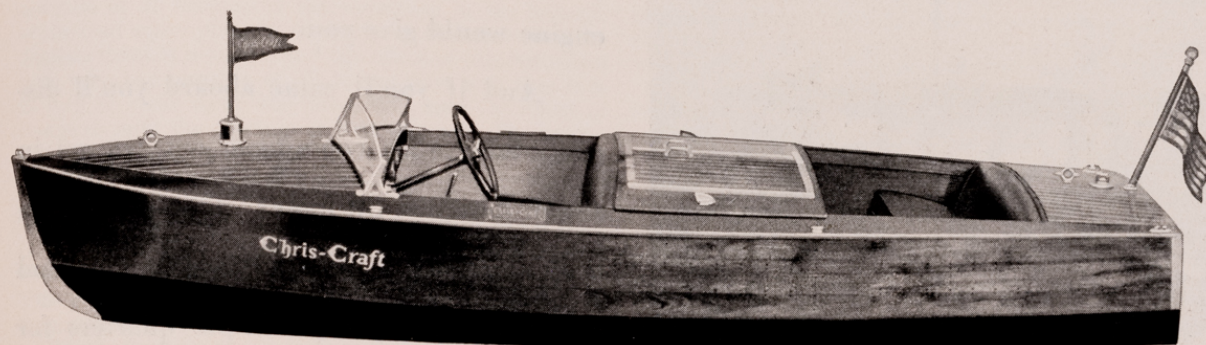
By great good fortune Mr. Hoffman had equipped *Ingomar* with a big, new, steel, motor lifeboat which he intended to use for fishing when he got south. The motor was soaked and useless, and they hove it overboard to lighten her and bent to their oars. The schooner sank a few minutes after they left her, in the deep water to the southward of the Frying Pan, and there she will lie as long as the steel lasts.

Twenty-two hours of rowing brought the shipwrecked crew to the beach at Cape Fear where the Coast Guard station took them in. The keeper of Cape Fear Light had reported seeing flares that Captain Sparre sent up after the wreck, but had misjudged their distance offshore so that two Coast Guard boats that had set out to investigate had gone only as far as the slue and failed to see her. Had they found her in time and towed her to shelter, *Ingomar* might still have made that trip abroad this summer.

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It has the famous Chris-Craft Philippine hardwood V-type hull and double planked bottom... lifting rings, automatic bilge bailer... automobile type

cam and lever steering for easy control and many other features found in the larger and costlier Chris-Craft, including full salt water equipment.

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