

RESTORATION QUARTERLY

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Lucie leads the pack on a downwind leg at the 2011 6-metre Worlds.

A Storied 6-Metre Returns to Racing

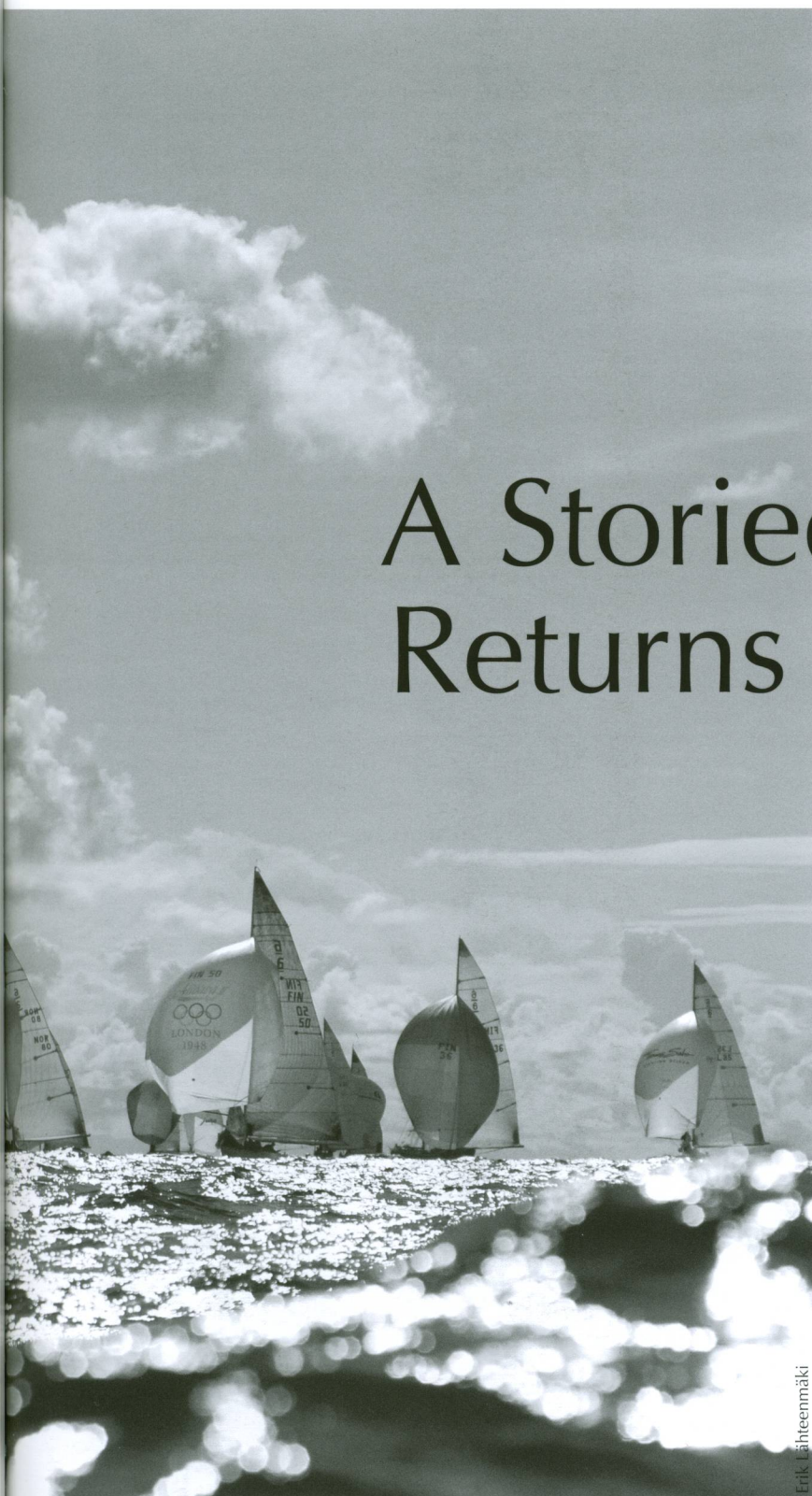
By Pam Rorke Levy

LUCIE US 55

proudly displaying the same sail number she was given in 1931, is a well-known name in the world of 6-metre racing. She was the last 6-metre designed by the notable New York designer Clinton Crane—and arguably his best. Built by the renowned Nevins Yard on City Island in New York in 1931, *Lucie*'s original owner was the noted sportsman Briggs Cunningham; he named the boat after his first wife, Lucie Bedford Cunningham Warren.

Lucie was named to three successive British-American Cup teams (her last in

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Erk Laitenmäki

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1936), and she is the only Crane design to stay in major competition after WWII. Racing on the Great Lakes in the 1950s, she often beat newer designs, such as *Goose* US 81 and *Stork* US 87.

Lucie was discovered in 2004 by International Six-Metre Association Vice President Toby Rodes. Rodes then sold the boat to Gregory Carroll, who began a complete restoration in 2005. Over the next five years, boat builder Brian Rieff of Brooklin, Maine, rebuilt *Lucie* in the exact manner of her original construction, including shellac between her double-planked hull.

The refit stalled before the mast, rigging and hardware were completed. Soon, however, a team of two passionate sailors would discover this storied 6-metre and bring her back to her racing roots.

A PLAN TO WIN THE WORLDS

According to IYRS President Terry Nathan, "Matt Brooks, Jamie Hilton and I were on a plane coming back from Antigua Classic Race Week. In a matter of 10 to 15 minutes, Jamie and Matt decided to buy a 6-metre, put a crack crew together, and win the Worlds in Helsinki—just like that."

What seemed like a snap decision may not be surprising to those who know both men. Jamie Hilton is a passionate sailor with racing accomplishments in a wide range of boats, from Comets to 12-metres (see sidebar on page 15). Matt Brooks is a savior of classic yachts who also recently purchased the famous S&S yawl *Dorade*. He will be entering the legendary competitor in many of the famous races she won during her impressive 82-year career, beginning with the Newport to Bermuda Race this June.

A few weeks after their flight from Antigua, Knight Coolidge tipped both men off that *Lucie* might be available

for sale. Brooks and Hilton wanted a classic 6-metre to race in Helsinki and considered other boats, either for charter or purchase, but they concluded that *Lucie*'s pedigree was undeniably the most promising.

In the spring of 2011, Matt Brooks purchased *Lucie* and his boat partner Jamie Hilton went to work, taking on the enormous challenge of preparing a boat that hadn't raced in decades for the rigors of international competition. Brian Rieff immediately went back to work at his yard in Brooklin—completing the



restoration he had started years before, doing hull preparation, deck gear installation, and rig construction and assembly. Marine architect Jacob Vargish was put in charge of optimizing the rig design for racing.

Within weeks, *Lucie* was trucked to Joe Loughborough's yard in Portsmouth,

Rhode Island (see RQ, Fall 2011) for fine-tuning. Phip Hallowell and Brian Fisher of Rig Pro completed her rigging, and Robbie Doyle of Doyle Sails delivered a complete inventory of new sails.

There were still countless details that needed attention. Hilton turned to a talented IYRS student, Zach DeBisschop, to take on some important projects. According to the measurement rules, the mast was slightly tall. Zach took two inches off the bottom and cut a new tenon. He also shortened the spinnaker pole four inches on both sides. He built a set of mahogany handrails, and with Jamie's guidance, designed a varnished mahogany cleat cover to avoid fouling lines on the cleat when racing.

On June 22, just four weeks after the final refit began, *Lucie* and her shortened mast were on their way to Helsinki. Zach shipped the handrails, cleat cover and a pigstick, from which Matt could fly a burgee, as they were completed—all in time for the start of racing. In those four short weeks, the extended team had built the rigging and mast (and made the above-mentioned adjustments), installed all of the boat's hardware, and painted her hull.

ROUGH BEGINNINGS IN HELSINKI

Lucie arrived in Helsinki just days before the start of the 2011 Six-Metre World Cup, accompanied by a sole crew member, Johnny Walker. The rest of her Corinthian crew—including owner Matt Brooks, helmsman Jamie Hilton, Robbie Doyle and Judd Smith of Doyle Sails, and bowman Chris Greenman—did not arrive until the first day of racing. When they all assembled dockside that day, the racing crew had only spent 45 minutes aboard *Lucie* together, sailing her from the Hinckley

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Erik Lähteenmäki

Lucie Team Skipper Jamie Hilton

BORN AND RAISED IN RUMSON, NEW JERSEY, Jamie Hilton's early days of sailboat racing were spent in Blue Jays. He eventually moved up to Comet Class dinghies and went on to win four Comet International Championships and two North American championships. He now lives in Rhode Island, in Tiverton, and has been actively racing Shields in Newport's Shields Fleet 9—the largest one-design fleet in Newport and the largest Shields fleet in the United States. Knowing all he's accomplished with *Lucie*, it may be surprising to learn that Hilton has a day job, as Senior VP and financial planner at the Hilton Group at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Newport. He also devotes much time to his family and to the 12-metre and two-time America's Cup winner *Courageous*, as helmsman and skipper. With Hilton as helmsman on *Courageous*, the team won the 12-Metre World Championships in 2005 as well as the North American championships in 2006 and 2008.

Lucie's remarkable success in the preparations leading up to racing in Helsinki was the result of a team effort organized by Matt Brooks and Hilton. "Jamie's always willing to give his time and knowledge selflessly," said Brooks.

Hilton plans to continue the partnership with Brooks to build upon *Lucie's* recent success at the upcoming 6-Metre European Championships in Sweden in July 2012. He'll also join the campaign on the historic *Dorada* for the Newport to Bermuda Race, hoping to see if the old magic of this legendary yawl is still there.

Terry Nathan and everyone at IYRS feel honored to have Hilton serve as co-chair of the 2012 IYRS Summer Gala. "Jamie has been very generous to IYRS, both as a supporter and an advocate," said Nathan. "He's also an incredibly organized 'can-do' person. I want him on my team—whatever the challenge, on or off the water."

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boatyard to her re-commissioning party at the IYRS dock in Newport.

The first day of the World Cup would mark *Lucie's* first competitive sail since the 1960s. The boat had always performed well in light air, so she was a perfect candidate for this regatta since Helsinki is well known for light air and sunny skies in the summertime. But the forecast proved otherwise: weather predictions for the first day of racing were squalls, with 17 to 25 knots of wind.

As the crew aboard *Lucie* made their way out of the harbor for the first day of the series, they quickly realized how challenging the day would be and how tender *Lucie* was with her new rigging and sails. After two hours of delays because of high winds, race officials finally announced the first start.

Just as they were starting the race, bowman Chris Greenman heard a splintering sound and looked up to see the jib cascading down on top of him, nearly sweeping him overboard. The sheave box holding the jib halyard had been wrenched out of the mast completely, splintering the wood down the face of the mast. At first it seemed the damage would be irreparable. And even if the mast and rigging could be fixed, *Lucie* had already scrubbed out of her first race.

Back at the dock, the determined crew swung into immediate action and looked for solutions. Marine architect and former IYRS Chairman David Pedrick, who had worked on the refit of *Lucie* for Gregory Carroll, introduced the team to Allan Savolainen, an extraordinary local boatwright who was up the mast within minutes.

By sheer coincidence, Jacob Vargish—the marine architect who optimized the rig—was also sailing that day on another boat. Together, these two men and the rest of the *Lucie* crew quickly came up with a plan to restore the damage and make *Lucie* sailable in the next day's race.

By the time *Lucie* was towed away



Maaike Bernstrom

ABOVE The traditional flowers adorn *Lucie's* deck at her re-christening party at IYRS.

BELOW (L-R) Matt Brooks, Pam Rorke Levy and Jamie Hilton address the crowd gathered at the IYRS waterfront.



Maaike Bernstrom

from the dock to Savolainen's yard—located on an island off the coast—many other boats had abandoned the race because of the heavy winds, and race officials called it off completely. *Lucie* would have a fresh shot at winning its class at the World Cup after all.

GETTING BACK TO THE STARTING LINE

After working with his crew all night, Savolainen had *Lucie* back at the dock in racing shape by the start of Tuesday's race. The next three days of racing were characterized by unseasonably high winds and seas. Despite the conditions, *Lucie* quietly rose through the ranks. With each race, the boat and crew performed better. Of the seven races scored, *Lucie's* last four finishes were 9, 4, 2, 2. "We were just starting to hit our groove," said helmsman Jamie Hilton.

In the final results, *Lucie* won her class, beating the next boat in the Vintage classification by 67 points. She also won the KSSS Trophy and the Baum & Konig Trophy, for boats with wooden masts and Dacron sails. Even more astonishing, given how the week started, *Lucie* came in sixth out of

a combined fleet of 45 classic and vintage 6-metres, beating many modern boats.

Remembering this duo's quick decision to launch this campaign at 30,000 feet just a few short months ago, Terry Nathan remarks: "They bought the boat, put the crack crew together and came so close to winning. The accomplishment is truly remarkable—in such stiff competition, with no practice."

COMING HOME TO THE UNITED STATES

Lucie is back in the United States now, undergoing a long list of maintenance and repairs overseen by IYRS graduate Jens Lange of Baltic Boat Works, who has hired IYRS student Zach DeBisschop to rejoin the boat. At the top of the work list was a thorough reassessment of the four sheave boxes in the main mast. The jib halyard sheave box damaged in Helsinki was completely redesigned as a single piece of bronze with "wings" that spread around the mast. The sheave box for the main halyard, which was also showing signs of stress, was also redesigned.

Both Jamie Hilton and Matt Brooks are duly impressed with the performance of their historic 6-metre, and they plan to campaign further.

"*Lucie* is one of the finest yachts I've had the privilege to sail on," said Hilton. And Brooks is already looking forward to their next contest: "There's no question that *Lucie* is a fast boat—and at the 2012 European Championship in Sweden, we'll see just how fast." ▲