

# The



Shefred/Linterwasser

On Lake Constance, Germany, a pack of 30-Square-Meters works its way to windward in the biannual Europe Cup.

*“The way the little ship went to windward and tacked was a revelation to me compared with what a heavy ‘R’ or 6-Metre would do under the same conditions.”*

—L. Francis Herreshoff, on being caught in a squall in his 30-Square-Meter



by Erdmann Braschos and Matthew P. Murphy

From the turn of the century through the mid-1940s, the world sailing community focused much of its attention on the Square-Meter Rule—a rule based on one simple notion: Design the fastest hull possible under a given sail area. Known as the Skerry cruiser, the sail-area classes, or the square-meters, the boats developed under this rule successfully challenged strict notions of seaworthiness and utilized many new develop-

ments whose origins are often attributed to more contemporary sources.

The square-meter classes are loaded with paradox: light, seakindly; inexpensive, high-quality; lightly built, strong. The boats are also loaded with innovation. For example, the first fully battened mainsails appeared on square-meters in Europe at the turn of the century, whip-shaped spars made their first appearances between 1910 and 1920, and

two-speed winches appeared in the '30s. The parachute spinnaker—considered *freakish* at that time—made its debut in the United States aboard 30-Square-Meter boats in the late 1920s.

The 30-Square-Meter is but one of several of the various square-meter classes that became popular in many small countries around the Baltic in the early part of this century. Other square-meter classes include 15, 22, 40, 55, 75, 95, 120, and 150. In 1914,

# Square-Meters

*Eighty years of innovation*



Michael Bertram

a 38-Square-Meter class was established, but this was later combined with the 40-Square-Meter.

The inspiration for the Square-Meter Rule was a vessel type called the Skerry cruiser. With their easily driven, efficient hulls, the Skerry cruisers were designed for the prevailing light conditions of a portion of the Baltic called the Skärgård (or Skerry Islands), a region dotted by myriad tiny, rocky islands.



Stephen Lauthmann

*The Lake Constance fleet inspired Fredi Winterhalter to revive 30-Square-Meter construction in Germany. His second boat, the Reimers-designed BIJOU II (above), now hails from Bainbridge Island, Washington. In the photo at left, the Lake Constance fleet prepares for the day's racing.*



*ALVAN, designed by Eric Salander and built in 1908, was the first 30-Square-Meter. This photo was taken in 1991 in Sweden.*

*“The ‘30s’ designed by Knud Reimers have almost always proved to be the fastest and finest sea boats, and it is because of this that 75 per cent of those at present building to this class in various parts of the world are to his design....”*

—Uffa Fox, *Sail and Power*, 1937

In 1908, Karl Ljungberg, president of the Svenska Seglare Förbundet (Swedish Sailors Association), and a group of 10 Association members agreed on the first edition of the Square-Meter Rule. This allowed boats that were not of a one-design class to race together without handicap. The rule, in its simplest form, involves a prescribed fixed sail area under which the designer must squeeze speed increases out of alterations to the hull. The hull must embody a trunk cabin that provides a certain level of accommodation.

Although the rated sail area of a class may be, for example, 30 square meters, the rule requires that only spars be measured; genoa overlap is unrestrained, and spinnaker size is unlimited. (However, the length of the spinnaker pole may not exceed the base of the foretriangle, and the 'chute may not be hoisted above the top of the foretriangle.) It is typical for a 30-Square-Meter to set 50 square meters of sail to windward, and 120 square meters off the wind. This and other loopholes encouraged the development of boats with excessive features, resulting in an ever more complicated rule.

In October 1919 the 30- and 40-Square-Meter classes were adopted by the International Yacht Racing Union at its London conference, but it was after modifications to the rule in 1925 that the modern square-meter boats began to develop. These modifications included the adoption of an ideal hull length, which may be increased at the expense of penalties imposed on other hull dimensions. For example, an increase in length beyond the specified ideal requires

proportionate alterations to displacement, freeboard, beam, keel length, and cockpit area. In October 1928, the IYRU adopted the 1925 rule as an international rule for the 22- and 30-Square-Meter classes. This international status lapsed in 1970, but at a recent meeting in Copenhagen, representatives of several countries agreed to apply for reinstatement. This work is now in the hands of the IYRU in London.

In the late 1920s, a young man named Knud Reimers spent much of his time toiling among the freight cars of the *Deutsche Reichsbahn* stopped in the Bremen Freightstation. The young Dane spent most of his weekends between the buffer stops, walking with a bucket and sponge from track to track, cleaning the undersides of the cars. It was a dirty, uncomfortable job, but it brought in double wages. At the time, Reimers was an apprentice designer at the renowned Abeking & Rasmussen Shipyard. The extra money he earned on weekends bought him accommodations, food, and good white shirts—an essential tool for presenting designs to customers. In those days, the 30-Square-Meter class was on its way to becoming the boat of choice for discriminating racers, and Knud Reimers was on his way to building his reputation on the various square-meter classes and their relatives.

During Knud Reimers' tenure, the list of clients at Abeking & Rasmussen was a who's who of German industry. Almost annually, Dr. Hams Stinnes ordered a new GLÜCKAUF at the yard, which built more than 33 of the highly reputed "30-Squares"

between 1920 and 1930. (In addition, there were several other European yards that were also building boats to the rule.)

When he finished his apprenticeship with Rasmussen, Knud Reimers went to work for Gustav A. Estlander in Stockholm. Estlander, who had a profound influence on the development of the square-meter classes, was a bit of a daredevil. At age 18, he had made a passage from Helsinki, Finland, his hometown, to Sweden—in an open sailing canoe. This is a risky feat, and there is speculation that Estlander received a sound thrashing when he returned home. However, as every person with some experience in life knows, a sound thrashing is of little use in halting the aspirations of youth.

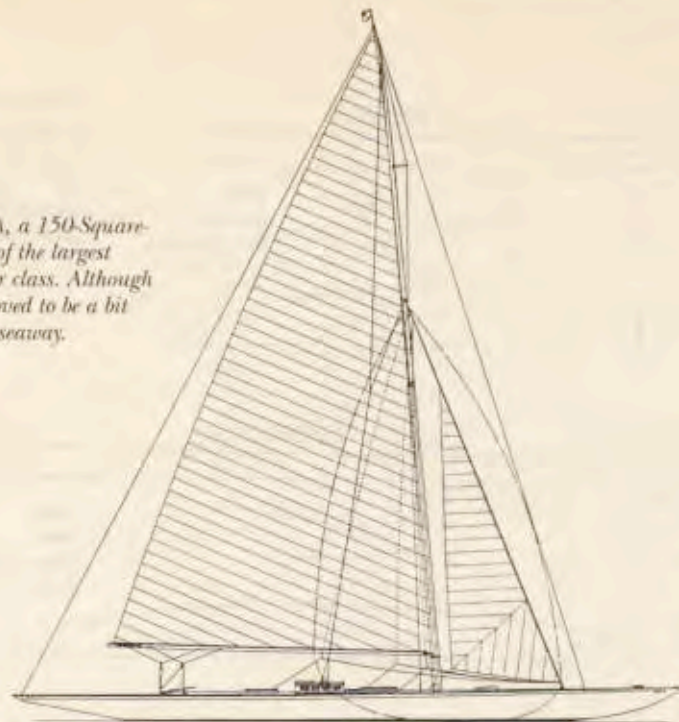
Competition and speed were Estlander's aspirations—he was the European ice-skating champion in the one-, four-, and ten-kilometer distances. Bored by Finnish sailing competition, he continued to return to Sweden—by safer conveyance than his earlier trip. When the square-meter classes became popular, he focused all of his attention on these high-performance boats.

It was Estlander who extended the lengths of the hulls in order to increase speed potential. Because of this, the powers-that-be were compelled to introduce the so-called "suitcase measurement" into the class rule—which was becoming more complicated from year to year. This measurement requires that an imaginary rectangle of given dimensions fit into the main frame of the design, thus guaranteeing that the minimum space for accommodations be achieved.

Estlander gravitated toward the large square-meter classes, ranging from 75 and up. SINGOALLA, a 150-Square built to his design, was launched at Hasthölms Boat Yard in Sweden in 1912. The hull was almost 79' long and just under 11' wide. The importance of high-aspect rigs was not apparent at this time; the boat's mast rose only 76' above the deck, and the length of the boom was half of this.

SINGOALLA had the dubious honor of catalyzing the exceptionally rigid scantling rules of the square-meter classes. According to Uffa Fox, this boat bent over the waves "like a sea serpent" when making 14 knots. Shortly after SINGOALLA's launching, the square-meter scantlings were increased to standards higher than those of the International Rule, whose boats were built under Lloyd's

*SINGOALLA, a 150-Square-Meter, was of the largest square-meter class. Although fast, she proved to be a bit lumber in a seaway.*



Uffa Fox, Sail and Power

survey. SINGOALLA was lost in a fire at Boebs Werft in Travemuende in 1923.

In 1920 Estlander ordered a 75-Square from Abeking & Rasmussen. That boat, SUN, was 56' long and only a little over 8' in beam. A year later, Estlander's yard, the famed Papst Werft in Berlin Koeppenick (a former village attached to, and now a part of, East Berlin), built TRUMPH, a 75-Square slightly over 1' longer than SUN and only 2" broader.

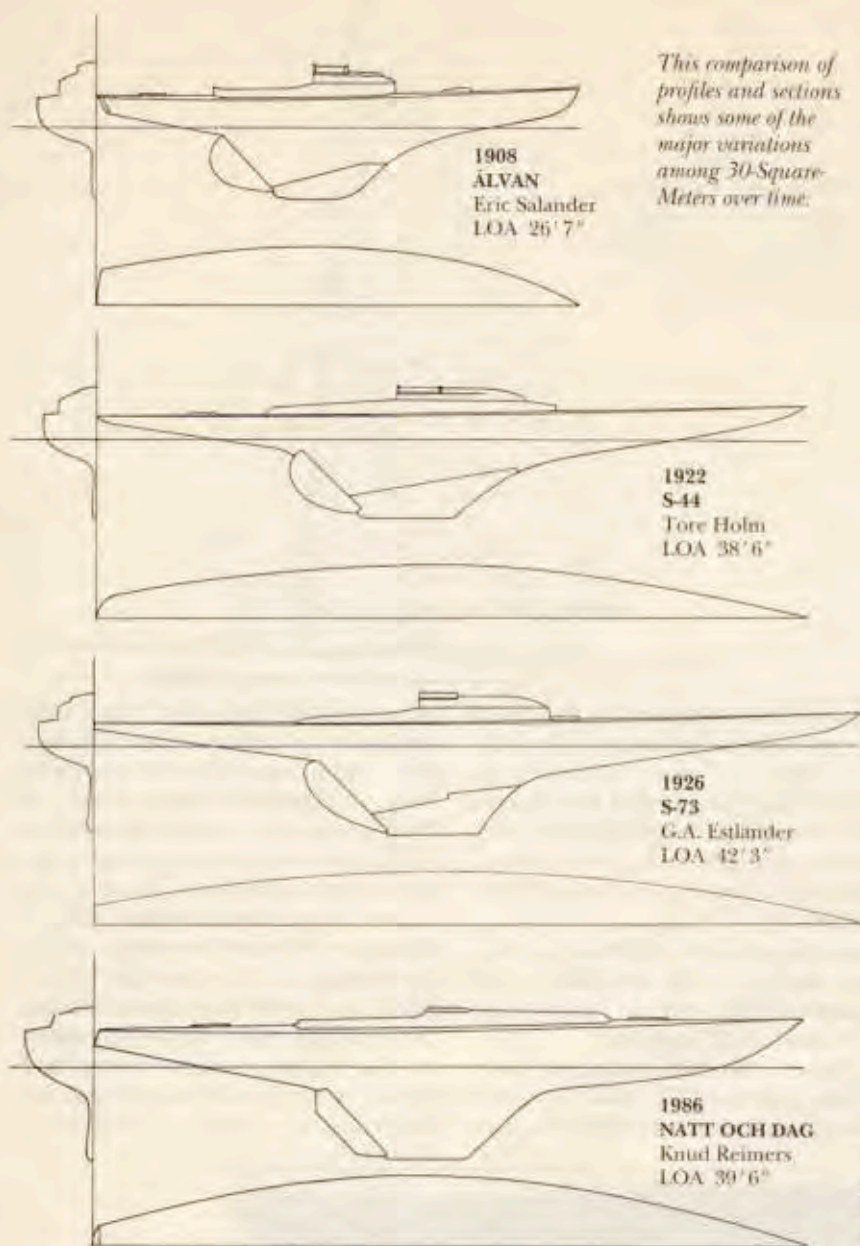
Noted Swedish designer Tore Holm (1896–1977) also designed Skerry cruisers—from 15 to 95 square

meters; like Estlander, his boats tended to be extreme. (Tore's father, Knut Holm, owned the Holms Yacht Varv at Gamleby, where many of Tore's boats were built.) Similar to the sublime tension that exists between the east and west coasts of the United States, there is some friendly animosity between the people living on the west coast of Sweden (Göteborg) and those from the east coast (Stockholm). Since the development of the square-meter classes had mainly occupied the sailors from the east coast, the sailors in Göteborg



Stigvard Larsson

*Probably because of their similarity in size, the 40-Square-Meter class never enjoyed the worldwide popularity of the 30-Squares.*



*This comparison of profiles and sections shows some of the major variations among 30-Square-Meters over time.*

1908  
ALVAN  
Eric Salander  
LOA 26'7"

1922  
S-44  
Tore Holm  
LOA 38'6"

1926  
S-73  
G.A. Estlander  
LOA 42'3"

1986  
NATT OCH DAG  
Knud Reimers  
LOA 39'6"

Per Evinlander

couldn't resist a little good-natured ribbing, such as: *The major principle in the design of the square-meter classes seems to be that Tore Holm pulls at one end of the boat and Gustav Estlander pulls at the other.*

Estlander's first boatyard was in Borgå, Finland. Later, in the 1920s, he owned the Papst Werft, where some of the most extreme square-meter-class yachts ever developed were built. Ironically, fire ravaged this yard at almost the same time as the one in Travemuende that destroyed SINGOALLA. It is unclear when, but sometime after this, Estlander moved to Sweden, where he opened a yacht design and construction firm. In 1927, he became a Swedish subject.

Estlander's designs were typically several feet longer than other boats of

the same square-meter class. For years, he would own four or five boats concurrently, and keep them at different locations. Dressed in a stand-up collar and black bowtie, he would board a particular boat just prior to a race and maybe win a couple of tacking duels and then disappear to his design office or to another race. A *trollkatten*, as the Swedes call their people of genius, Estlander concentrated fully when sailing. He was also pedantic and impatient with his crew.

In 1930, just one year after Reimers began working in Estlander's office, the restless and passionate Estlander died. Reimers pooled his resources, borrowed some money, and purchased the firm from the estate. Shortly thereafter he must have singlehandedly put a spike in the

demand curve for good white shirts. Over the next decade he established himself as a designer with worldwide appeal, forging his reputation largely on the Skerry cruiser type.

Reimers designed to more modest proportions than Estlander, however. One major variation in styles between the two was the shape of the 'midship section. Estlander preferred almost vertical lines between the sheer and waterline; the disadvantage of this is that the volume of the heeling hull does not rise. Reimers drew more pronounced curved sections above the waterline, so that the heeling boat is supported by a constantly rising volume; a much stiffer boat results.

Reimers had an international following. According to Uffa Fox, the Dane was "astonished and delighted" to receive a commission for a 22-Square-Meter from the Emperor of Annam (Vietnam). Because the boat was to be daysailed in the South China Sea, Reimers drew a hull that was more wholesome than extreme. The ballast keel flared at its bottom to keep the center of gravity low, and the rig had one of the highest aspect ratios seen to that date; the height of the mainsail was 3.75 times its base. The Emperor's new boat was so successful that he ordered a 30-Square-Meter from Reimers the following year.

The Emperor's sentiments echoed the worldwide opinion of the 22s in the late 1930s. Although they are wonderful boats, the 30s are longer, roomier, faster, and more comfortable.

Some notable exceptions to the underling status of the 22s did appear in later years, but by the early 1930s, the 30-Squares clearly dominated. In 1935, a Reimers design, MOOSE, was the most successful 30 in the U.S. Owned by John Lawrence, a former Q-boat ace, MOOSE has some striking features. As Uffa Fox pointed out, she has a low wetted surface combined with a fair amount of volume above the waterline, so her tendency is to lift over waves rather than to crash through them. MOOSE has three hatches—one at the after end of her coach roof, one abaft her mast, and one abaft her forestay. All sail handling can be done from these hatches, resulting in minimal windage. Under the caring ownership of Mike Bachler of Port Huron, Michigan, MOOSE is still going strong.

“...the 30s prosper at the expense of the 22s. The 22s are not found in any numbers outside of Sweden.”

—Uffa Fox, *Sail and Power*, 1937

The square-meter classes produced several spinoff types, ranging from elaborate light-displacement racers to modest racer-cruisers. For example, in the mid-1930s, Eric Lundberg, a wealthy Stockholm lawyer, commissioned Reimers to design a 75-Square-Meter. Lundberg had owned several 30-Squares, but in the new boat he was looking for something more than a large, fast, beautiful yacht for cruising the Stockholm archipelago; Lundberg dreamed of establishing a record for sailing across the North Atlantic from Ireland to Newfoundland. Reimers drew one of the longest and heaviest 75-Square-Meters ever built. The boat, BACCHANT II, is slightly over 63' long with a beam of not quite 10'. She displaces 19,841 lbs—an extraordinarily heavy figure for a square-meter of her length, but still lighter than the average boat. (A 12-Meter, which is approximately 5' longer, will displace over three times this.)

Lundberg died on January 15, 1940, shortly after delivery of the boat, and BACCHANT II was all but forgotten. In



Photo: Helen of Cowes

Aboard TRE SANG, Blondie Hasler began proving his philosophy of light displacement ocean racing—an idea he would later expand upon in his folk-boat-inspired ocean racer, JESTER.

the late '70s, she was purchased by Raymond Dodge, was revived, and today sails on the Great Lakes. Dodge, a former 22-Square sailor and a close personal friend of Knud Reimers, traces the development of the ubiquitous Reimers-designed Swede 55 (see WB No. 100) directly to BACCHANT II:

The comparison of the two yachts was striking. Other than being about 10' shorter, the 55 had a spade rudder and wheel steering. Although we were faster it was only by a slight margin. The interior arrangement was almost identical. Since that time, Jere Sullivan, who now owns BACCHANT, has installed a spade rudder and thus improved her handling tremendously.... Although influenced by the basic principles of the 22 and 30 sq. meter yachts, the Swede 55 is a true spin-off of the 75 sq. meter BACCHANT that Knud designed in 1934-35.

30-Squares have been recognized for ushering-in the era of light-displacement ocean racers. In times when a seagoing vessel was considered to be heavy, deep, and broad, the square-meter classes raised some conservative eyebrows.

Largely because of the writings of Uffa Fox, H.G. (Blondie) Hasler (see "JESTER: The spirit of singlehanded ocean racing," WB No. 113) was convinced of the seagoing abilities of the 30-Square-Meter. In the spring of 1946, he modified his 30, TRE SANG, for racing in Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) events. In the November 1946 *Yachting Monthly*, he praised the boat's abilities. Although Hasler found the boat sluggish in light air, as the wind picked up, he said, "she begins to go places."

In Hasler's opinion, a seaworthy boat was one that could continue on in safety while carrying sail. This differed from the general opinion of the day, which considered a boat seaworthy if it could heave-to safely. In his article, Hasler happily describes



Raymond Dodge

Eric Lundberg built the heavy 75-Square-Meter BACCHANT II to set a record for crossing the North Atlantic; he died before realizing the dream. The boat, now converted to a more modern configuration, is still active on the Great Lakes.



GLÜCKAUF II, later renamed VISITOR, is shown here on a flatbed railroad car after arriving in the United States. Purchased by L. Francis Herreshoff in 1928, she was the first 30-Square-Meter in the U.S.

“Germany, Denmark, and Norway will race at Marblehead next season with the 30-square-meter boats. There are now over 100 of the boats in Europe. The 30-square-meter boat which introduced the class on this side of the Atlantic has been purchased by L. Francis Herreshoff, the Marblehead yacht designer.”

—*The Rudder*, December 1928

The United States' fascination with the 30-Square-Meter was established in Marblehead in the summer of 1929. In 1928 Hans Stinnes had brought his 30-Square, GLÜCKAUF II, to Marblehead. Recognizing that the Universal Rule was going out of style, and believing that the United States' International Rule was a poor replacement, L. Francis Herreshoff purchased GLÜCKAUF II (he renamed her VISITOR) with the aim of establishing the square-meter classes in the U.S. The simplicity of a rating based on sail area had tremendous appeal to Herreshoff.

During the winter of 1928–29, four boats were built by American sailors (ORIOLE, YANKEE, TIPLER III, and RIMA) for a series to be sponsored by the Corinthian Yacht Club of Marblehead. A challenge was mounted by teams from Sweden and Germany. Henry Rasmussen recalled that the sailing publications of the day previewed the race, referring to the “undercanvassed boats of the stormy

passing, in TRE SANG, two large cutters that were hove-to, one of them under bare poles. He found that TRE SANG balanced beautifully to weather, but due to her short keel she yawed more than the average boat while running. He pointed out, though, that she was very quick to respond to her helm: “...lively, yet obedient,” he called her.

To the concept of ocean racing a 30-Square, there were plenty of nay-sayers:

TRE SANG has a number of critics, some of whom can be found around the bar of the R.O.R.C. towards the end of the opening hours. These horrid types insist that a 30-Sq. Metre can not be made into a good seagoing proposition, and that TRE SANG has only been successful through the superhuman skill and endurance of her crew. (H.G. Hasler, *Yachting Monthly*, November 1946)

However, to the charge that it was only the crew's skill that pulled the boat through, Hasler pointed out that he almost never sailed with the same crew twice. And, all of his crew were young British military officers with little or no ocean-racing experience.

The Italian yachting historian Carlo Sciarelli, in his book *Lo Yacht*, considers the square-meter classes to be the spearhead of light-displacement ocean racing. In a somewhat visionary 1946 statement, Hasler concurred:

...I am not suggesting that a 30-Square-Meter is the ideal light-displacement ocean racer, but only that it is the best one so far produced. Let us regard it as a good starting point from

which to proceed with the exciting work of developing the sailing boats of the future.

On the heels of TRE SANG's controversial season came the revolutionary MYTH OF MALHAM, designed by J. Laurent Giles. If TRE SANG opened the door to light-displacement ocean racing in 1946, then MYTH surely held it open the following year.

While the 30-Squares were being pushed to extremes, the 22s took a saner tack in their development. When it became apparent that the smaller boats were growing beyond the means of the average sailor, a variant—the B-22—was developed to keep the rule in check and to moderate costs. Simply put, harsher penalties were imposed on the B-class boats for extreme dimensions. For example, any increase in length beyond the ideal length of 7.3 meters had to be offset by a beam increase of .20—twice that required for the original 22s. As Uffa Fox pointed out, the B class did evolve beyond the ideal length, but this happened along healthier lines than those of the original 22s.

The B-22s had solid scantlings, but materials were kept very humble to keep the boats affordable. Native woods were specified; decks were canvas over pine; ballast keels were iron. The December 1932 *Rudder* reported that the new class matched the windward performance of the original 22s, but was slightly slower off the wind.

Baltic." The presumption was that the Baltic Sea usually has winds approaching 40 knots, and that the sailors of Northern Europe would install comparably small rigs to sail comfortably without reefing. Were they ever wrong?

The Americans spent most of the series looking at the transom of BACCHANT, sailed by Eric Lundberg; the Swedes didn't lose a single race in the championship series. Because of her very tall rig, BACCHANT was barred from racing in the Hoover Cup, which was sailed right after the German-American-Swedish series. The Germans took this trophy. "The Americans," read a report in the October 1929 *Yachting*, "learned a lot about new sails, such as genoa jibs, up to this time not very popular at Marblehead [see sidebar for a differ-

ent opinion], high-cut mainsails, and an enveloping spinnaker which the Swedes produced."

One bright spot for the Americans in this series was that Elizabeth "Sis" Hovey became the first American woman to skipper a boat in an international event. Sailing ORIOLE, she placed respectably, edging out the Germans for first place in the final race (see sidebar).

By 1930, a fleet of 30-Squares had been established at Northeast Harbor, Maine. Two boats were purchased from Holms Yacht Varv in Gamleby. Many eyed these boats with skepticism until their first hard romp in heavy weather, when their performance gained them well-deserved respect. That winter, four more 30-Square-Meters were ordered from Sweden for the Northeast Harbor

*"In the Swedish-German-American Series at Marblehead in August the 30-square-meter boat owned and sailed by Eric Lundberg of the Royal Swedish Yacht Club established a new record for a foreign boat in American waters by not losing a race."*

—*The Rudder*, October 1929

## Elizabeth "Sis" (Hovey) Morss

As the research for this article progressed, we were thrilled to learn that Sis (Hovey) Morss lived within a half-day's drive from our office. I contacted her, hoping we could spend a day together at the Museum of Yachting in Newport, talking boats, and hopefully sailing ORIOLE. I was delighted to receive the following reply:

Dear Mr. Murphy,

*I want to thank you very much for your nice letter and manuscript... Of all the boats I was lucky enough to sail, including J-boats, Herrershoff 12s, M-boats, R's, Q's, and others, my 30-Square-Meter was the most fun. I was lucky to have the opportunity to know Francis Herrershoff well when he designed both of my ORIOLES, and he actually invented the roller-reefing gear, ventilated spinnaker, and Genoa jib—which were used for the first time on ORIOLE when I took her to Kiel, Germany, and afterward in Sweden for team racing in 1930. Our jib was then known as the biggest biggest, and was copied in Italy and was called the Genoa jib. This bothered Francis, and I'm not surprised.*

*I had the great pleasure of seeing ORIOLE restored at the Museum of Yachting over a year ago. She's so beautiful. I was asked to come down to Newport for the launching. We had lots of people there, and I couldn't believe it when they had a race set up with another 30-Square and asked me to sail ORIOLE with the boys, for crew, who restored her. Well, with that setup and new sails that had only been tried the day before, I had the treat of being back at ORIOLE's tiller...and she was as fast as ever, winning two out of three races. There are lots of things I could tell you about the Germans and Swedes, etc., of that time, and I shall be back in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, at the end of May and shall be in touch.*

Sincerely,  
Sis Morss

Sadly, Sis passed away in mid-April.

—M.P.M.



*Sis Hovey (above, face partially obscured by boom), preparing to be towed to the starting line aboard ORIOLE for a 1930 team racing competition in Kiel, Germany. In the photo to the left, Sis (Hovey) Morss listens as Frank McCaffrey, manager of ORIOLE's rebuilding, says a few words at the boat's relaunching.*

Anything but an "old-fashioned Britisher," Uffa Fox put 2,000 miles under the keel of 22-Square-Meter VIGILANT—in one summer!



Photo: Belmont of Cowes

The square-meter classes did not become fashionable in Britain until the mid-1930s. Their introduction to that country was spearheaded by Uffa Fox, who blamed the lag time on "true British conservatism." He wrote that "...seven years is all too short a time for a new idea to be adopted by a really old-fashioned Britisher."

Fox, known for his flamboyant antics, inspirational accounts of his sailing exploits, and progressive thoughts on yachts, was anything but conservative. He accused the British yachting journalists of "dribbling down their bibs" when they speculated that the 22-Square-Meter would not stand up to the harsh conditions of the Solent. And he put his money where his mouth was. In his book *Sailing, Seamanship, and Yacht Construction*, he gave a glowing account of his 31-day trip from Cowes, England, to Sandham, Sweden, to Lowestoft, England aboard the 22-Square-Meter VIGILANT in 1930. Among the highlights of the trip was a full gale in which VIGILANT made nine knots under full sail. He sailed the boat over 2,000 miles that summer.

Uffa had a similar appreciation for the 30-Squares, and likewise disdained their late arrival to British waters; there wasn't an active fleet in Britain until 1938. But the idea caught on quickly once it was established, for there were 18 boats racing in that

fleet—one of them by Edsel Ford of Detroit. By 1933, there were eight 30-Squares at Northeast Harbor.

Great Lakes sailors have shown considerable interest in the meter classes. Eight 22-Squares were purchased in the spring of 1932 by Detroit-area sailors, and a perpetual trophy was immediately established. The class became an instant hit; toward the end of the first season, two

more boats were added to the fleet.

To this day, the 22-Square-Meter fleet of Belmont Harbor, Chicago, has an enthusiastic following. This fleet is largely a distillation of former fleets from points around the Great Lakes. To help moderate costs, a one-design 22-Square class—known as the Udell—was designed by Knud Reimers in 1953. However, the development class still sails in a separate fleet.

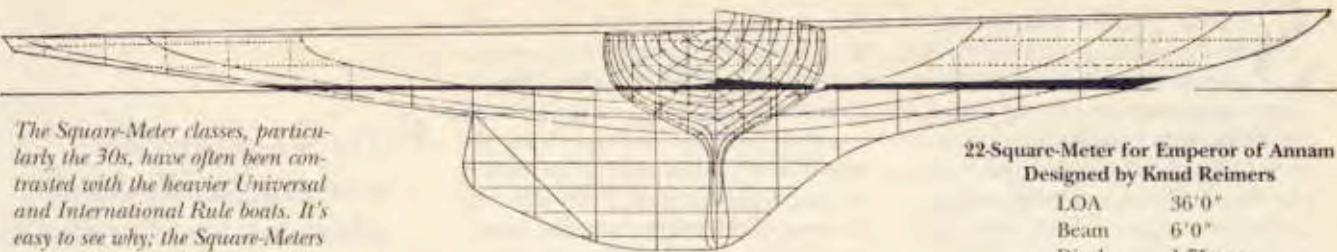
*"The starting of another racing class at Detroit recently was nothing new to local sailors, but the advent of a class so modern in design and rig as the twenty-two square metres caused more stir than the cancellation of all war debts."*

—Yachting, January 1932



Photo: Belmont of Cowes

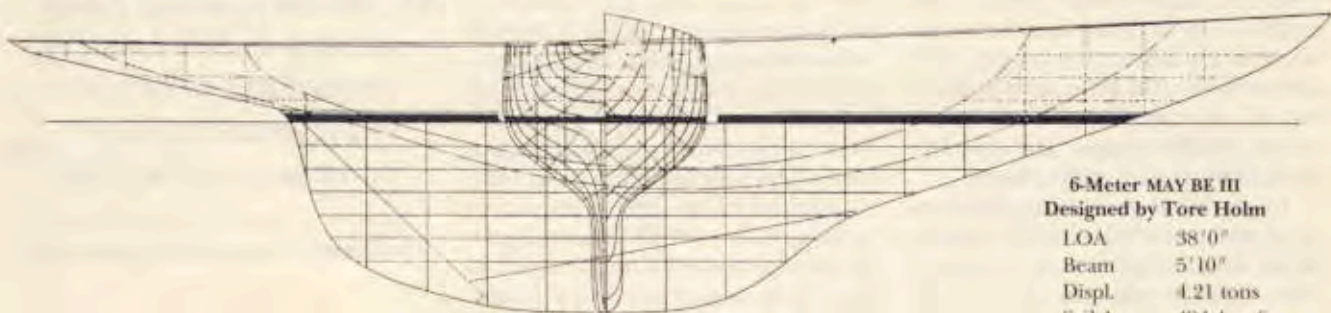
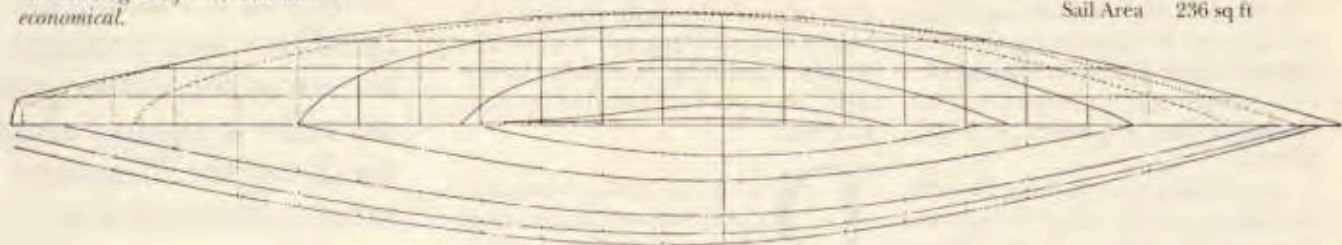
SEA SWALLOW, a 30-Square designed and built by Uffa Fox, shows a few Fox trademarks, including a turtle deck and a canoe stern.



The Square-Meter classes, particularly the 30s, have often been contrasted with the heavier Universal and International Rule boats. It's easy to see why: the Square-Meters are drier, lighter, faster, and more economical.

**22-Square-Meter for Emperor of Annam**  
Designed by Knud Reimers

LOA	36'0"
Beam	6'0"
Displ.	1.75 tons
Sail Area	236 sq ft



**6-Meter MAY BE III**  
Designed by Tore Holm

LOA	38'0"
Beam	5'10"
Displ.	4.21 tons
Sail Area	494.4 sq ft



Uffa Fox, Sail and Power

charter fleet. Fox was taken with the class because it coupled exciting sailing with able cruising, thus enabling him to take part in races across the Channel. Comparing the boats to a Six-Meter, he pointed out that the 22-Square-Meter is about the same length, both overall and on the waterline, but it has only half the sail area and half the displacement and half the cost—and is a more easily handled yet very lively boat. Interestingly, Frank P. Munro made a similar comparison between R-boats and 30-Squares in the December 1928 *The Rudder*:

Our present small racing boats are fast but wet. In the 30-square-meter class we have a boat that is half the displacement of our American R-Class, one half the sail area, one half the cost, nearly as long over all and a much drier boat. For day sailing the 30-square-meter boats are easily handled by one person.

Uffa built his first 30, WATERWITCH, to a Knud Reimers design, and later built canoe-sterned variations like SEA SWALLOW to his own designs. WATERWITCH and SEA SWALLOW were slated to race in an international contest in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts (where another active fleet of 30-Squares had been established), in 1938, but unforeseen circumstances prevented their participation. But they planted the seeds for the 30-Squares in Britain. They also perpetuated the international appeal of the class, for SEA SWALLOW was later sold to, and still sails in South Africa. In the late '30s, there were 18 Skerry cruisers in British waters, 100 in Germany, 13 in Switzerland, 24 in the United States, and more than 500 in Sweden. And it appeared that the popularity of the classes would only grow.

*“The fact that large fleets of these boats are racing in Germany, Norway, Denmark and France proves that they are most satisfactory. There is a strong probability that in 1931 [sic] the Olympics will be sailed in these boats...”*

—Frank P. Munro,  
*The Rudder*, December 1928

Several factors conspired to bring about a waning in the popularity of the square-meters. The classes remained strong through the 1930s, with boats still being delivered to England, the United States, and South Africa, but boats designed to the International Rule were gaining importance on the racing scene. The Six- and Eight-Meters were chosen over the 30-Squares for the 1932 Olympics, the 1932 British-America Cup was sailed in Six-Meters, and the Canada's Cup was sailed in Eight-Meters.

World War II put yachting virtually on hold worldwide. After the war, the demand for sailing yachts shifted toward creature comforts, which the square-meter classes could not embody in an affordable length. The advent of the IOR Rule, with its favoring of short-ended, broad, stable forms, further slowed the development of the square-meter classes.

In the latter years of its development, some confusion in the Square-Meter Rule led to some very extreme boats from Sweden. In his *The Common Sense of Yacht Design*, L. Francis Herreshoff lambasted these "freak" boats. According to Herreshoff, the only English translation of the Square-Meter Rule during the classes' early years in the U.S. was the German Schärenkreuzer rule. It was very complicated, but Herreshoff speculated that it would produce a fine boat for daysailing. The Swedes, however, were building to a rule that disregarded several things in the

German version; in fact, these oversized boats had to be raced in a separate division when they visited Germany. When one of these boats was purchased by an American, the new owner petitioned for the easing of length restrictions. Even after the removal of the restrictions, the Americans continued to build to their version of the rule while the Swedish boats continued to grow. "Under this childish condition," lamented Herreshoff, "the class was bound to become a failure."

During the 1960s, a revival of square-meter construction began to take root in southern Germany. Fredi Winterhalter, a journeyman joiner at the J. Beck & Söhne boatyard, often observed several 30-Square-Meters sailing regularly on Lake Constance. This active fleet had survived the war, and was continuing a long-standing tradition.

Inspired by the sight, Winterhalter renovated an old 30-Square-Meter. He later contacted Knud Reimers in Stockholm and requested a design. Over two years, during his leisure time, Winterhalter built the new boat, to be called BIJOU. The boat turned out to be fast, and Winterhalter built another 30-Square—to the same design—and sold her to William Stoll of Green Bay, Wisconsin. BIJOU II, as this boat is called, is now owned and impeccably kept by Russel deLombard of Bainbridge Island, Washington. Winterhalter made a mold from this hull and had a brief interlude

*"The 30-squares are now practically dead, which is always bound to be the end of classes with indefinite measurement. If the last of the Sondors gave the sailor a queasy feeling, the last of the 30-squares surely nauseated him.*

*"...the class, which I had started in this country, turned out to be one of the greatest disappointments of my life."*

—L. Francis Herreshoff,  
*The Common Sense of Yacht Design*, 1946

with fiberglass production, but is presently building another new 30-Square in wood.

Paul Litton of Dorset, England, has built two 30-Square-Meters to Ian Howlett designs. The first, US 49, was built for an owner in Vermont in 1986. Paul built the second boat, BLITHE SPIRIT (K 20), for himself the following year. Both boats are cold-molded

*The strict scantling requirements of the Square-Meter Rule have produced exceptionally long-lasting hulls. For example, HAXAN, a Reimers design built in 1957, was 42 years old when she was discovered leaning against a shed at Gravesend-in-Kent. Because of her scantlings—wedged-seam Honduras mahogany on oak, every third frame of steel—the boat was restorable.*





Paul Litton builds his modern square-meters in WEST SYSTEM epoxy and wood. The core of the hull, shown here, is strip-planked cedar. The surfaces of this will be cleaned up, and a diagonal layer will be bonded to the inside and a strip-planked layer of mahogany will be bonded to the outside.

With their low freeboards, sweeping sheers, and elegantly shaped and seemingly endless bows and sterns, boats designed to the Square-Meter Rule are lovely to look at, but they could be faster. Their long keels and comparatively large wetted surfaces make them noncompetitive against more modern designs, and their attached rudders limit their maneuverability in tight quarters. Despite these obvious limitations, a modification of the rule would destroy the spirit of the class: fair competition among boats, both old and new, of similar design—a refreshing concept in this day of disposable racing machines. **▲**

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with WEST SYSTEM epoxy. K 21, AEO-LUS, was built by Jansson and Zarins of Sweden in 1989 for Tony Walker (Walker owned TRE SANG subsequent to Blondie Hasler's successful RORC racing campaign). This was the last 30-Square-Meter designed by Knud Reimers.

Australia is also home to some serious square-meter activity. The original interest in the classes in that part of the world—as in many others—was instigated by the writings of Uffa Fox; in 1936, two boats were built to Reimers designs. One of these, LEWAN, is a copy of the 30 that Reimers designed for the Emperor of Annam. After the Second World War, two 30s were imported from Sweden, and approximately ten 30s were built in Sydney. Interest dwindled from time to time, but the recent surge in Europe has reinfected some Australian sailors.

During a vacation in Australia, Swedish boatbuilder Jonas Brundin met a group of square-meter sailors. He enticed a few of them to come to Europe by offering the use of a boat he was building so that they could compete in the Europe Cup. (The Europe Cup is Europe's big square-meter event—it is held every second year, alternately in Stockholm and on

Lake Constance.) Garth Stewart accepted Brundin's offer, and was so pleased with the boat that he invited the builder to Australia to build a new 30-Square. Brundin accepted, and has been in Australia since 1989, working as Longship Boats Pty Ltd.

Owing largely to rigid scantling rules, many of the early square-meter boats are still going strong. The second-place finisher in the 1991 nationals in Great Britain was the 68-year-old VIVI, number S-2. In Germany, two of the GLÜCKAUFs are still sailing, and on the Biggensee, a lake 93 miles north of Frankfurt, a 69-year-old 30-Square (formerly S-1) is still sailing every season. The Museum of Yachting in Newport, Rhode Island, owns and actively sails ORIOLE, the 30-Square sailed by Elizabeth Hovey in the 1929 international contest at Marblehead.

*TEAL (bright hull) and LEWAN are two early 30-Squares that got the square-meter bug started in Sydney, Australia. LEWAN, built in 1936-37, is a copy of the 22-Square that Knud Reimers designed for the Emperor of Annam (she was later converted to a 30-Square). TEAL is a Swedish-built boat that was imported to Australia after World War II.*

