

Basic Detail Report

ANMS1543[382]

Title

Schedule matrix

Date

1936-1988

Primary Maker

Ben Lexcen

Medium

Ink on film

Dimensions

Overall: 770 x 540

Name

Plan

History

During the time the two Australian 12mR America’s cup challenge yachts were designed and built, from late 1980 to 1983, the modern-day computer, and project management software, were not widely available. The first project management software was released in 1984, eventually becoming the standard tool used by yacht project managers. The chart made by Ben Lexcen in December 1980 allowed him and his team to plan, track and monitor the many parts, fittings and items required to build two complicated racing yachts of 63-feet overall. Designed work for the 12mR AUSTRALIA II and CHALLENGE 12 initially took place in Australia but during the early part of 1981 Ben Lexcen set up an office at the Netherlands Ship Model Basin in Wageningen. He spent four months designing, building and water tank testing 1/3rd scale models of the hulls and ballast keels. Returning to Australia during the summer, he drew the hull lines plans, full size on the workshop floor, making final adjustments as he went along. Both yachts were built by Steve E. Ward & Co. in Perth, Western Australia, and launched in 1982. Extensive sea-trials and crew training took place but it soon became clear sailing AUSTRALIA II was not like other 12mR yachts. Alan Bond sold CHALLENGE XII to the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria (AU), in 1983 and the yacht sent to Newport in the US for the challenger trials. Ben Lexcen’s AUSTRALIA II, was a revolutionary yacht design, far beyond just the inverted, winged keel. It was much lighter in weight and had the shortest waterline length ever measured on a 12mR yacht. It also used a radical ‘vertical sail’ designs, all Kevlar running rigging and a lightweight carbon-fibre boom. The Australian crew, skippered by legendary John Bertrand, spent months of rigorous training, as the best yacht is only as good as its crew. The America’s Cup trophy was held by the New York Yacht Club, successfully defending twenty-four challenges for 132 years. It was suggested the trophy was ‘bolted fast to the New York Yacht Club table’ and would never leave the US.

This all changed in 1983, when the Australian yacht AUSTRALIA II (KA-6) designed by Ben Lexcen and representing The Royal Perth Yacht Club of Australia, beat the American yacht LIBERTY.