

# Basic Detail Report

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## Skirmish

**Vessel number**

HV000747

**Date**

1969

**Primary Maker**

Bluey Williams

## Description

SKIRMISH was built for Clarence Noble in Brisbane. Bluey Williams's yard was a cowshed in Lawnton near the North Pine River, on the northern side of Brisbane and inland from Redcliffe. SKIRMISH was a 32-footer carrying an Aboriginal motif on her bows, recalling Skirmish Point, where Flinders landed and encountered the local Aboriginal community. The November 1969 Modern Boating magazine included an article about Bluey Williams and SKIRMISH. It notes that SKIRMISH's design was commenced the day after BILLY BUDD was launched in 1969, which was also designed and built by Williams. SKIRMISH was intended to be an improvement on the good-performing Williams design TEQUILA. The article continues: "Williams says of her: "The owner wanted a 24ft. waterline boat with generous accommodation, as he intends to do a lot of cruising later and may be living aboard for quite long periods. But he still wanted her to be fairly fast and rate quite well. Williams returned to the Sydney tank and towed models of improvements to the 'Tequila' design. He had a look at the latest overseas trends in the Sydney-Hobart fleet, a talk with Alan Payne, then altered the model for more tests before the design was finally settled. Theoretically, the tank showed the new boat would be faster on the wind and reaching, about the same running square. Drag was reduced by a very worthwhile 8 percent by adding a spur to the back of the short keel, below the trim tab, to move the vortex from the keel further aft. A "fence" was built from the root of the keel to the rudder, mounted on a small skeg almost on the waterline to keep the centre of lateral resistance aft." Both the spur and the fences may have been added following his discussions with Alan Payne, he was keen on moving the tip vortex to the lowest aft point on the appendages, and employed the fence on some of his yacht designs. The article goes on to describe the hull shape. "The hull is rather full bodied and quite hard in the bilge. The centre of buoyancy is fairly well aft to improve windward performance. She's quite fine in the bow, fills out under the mast, then the buttock lines run almost parallel, before tucking up sharply to the transom. This gives her a very long, straight run aft." SKIRMISH was planked in Queensland pine over frames of Crow's Ash on 15mm centres. The deck is three laminates of ply covered by Dynel. The interior used a special wild-grained, bleached maple panelling, and teak trim. The cockpit floor is rounded, with "tramway" seats for leg-room. Tiller steering is used with a smaller lever at the base of the tiller to adjust the trim tab. Trim tabs were employed on a number of ocean racers at that time following their introduction on the 12 metre yachts racing for the America's cup. Later penalties and rules eventually saw them discarded, but William's earlier designs for TEQUILA and BILLY BUDD had tabs, although the one on TEQUILA has

subsequently been faired into the keel. The “spur” below the trim tab on SKIRMISH remains in place too, and according to the current owner “gives me nightmares every time we slip the boat in case we inadvertently put weight on it.” The chainplate arrangement on SKIRMISH is also unusual, and in some aspects, similar to the arrangement used on the larger FARE THEE WELL, an Alan Payne design built by Williams in a disused Brisbane church. Instead of turnbuckles, the arrangement has U bolts that pass through the swaged eyes on the shrouds. These penetrate the deck through synthetic seals and then pass through a piece of horizontal rod which in turn is “clasped” by the chainplates which stand out from the internal hull planking on laminated knees. To tension the rig the U bolt nuts are tightened from below the rods. However, in a recent rigging replacement the current owner has included turnbuckles above the U bolts, to limit the risk of fresh water penetration into the ply deck occasioned by disturbing the U bolts (and to save the difficulty of adjusting the rigging from below decks). SKIRMISH was raced and cruised extensively out of Brisbane. It came 8th in the Brisbane to Gladstone in 1970. It has participated in the Queensland cruising yacht Club vintage yacht regatta in 2011, 2012, 2015, & 2016. It was owned by Paul Gaggin 2011-12 and Tony Harland 2015-16. When told that SKIRMISH was for sale in 2016, and knowing it was a Bluey Williams boat in excellent condition, the current owner couldn’t help purchasing it even though he already had a classic Jubilee class yacht. It remains well used in excellent condition and the only dilemma the owner has is which boat to sail in the classic races, JASON the Purdon and Featherstone built Jubilee or SKIRMISH the Williams racing yacht?

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 9.75 m × 7.31 m × 1.68 m, 4.57 tonnes (32 ft × 24 ft × 5.5 ft, 4.5 tons)