

# Basic Detail Report

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**00049286**

**Title**

FELIX about to pass Endeavour Boatshed, Kogarah Bay, 1936

**Date**

1936

**Medium**

Black and white photographic print on paper.

**Dimensions**

Overall: 240 x 290 mm

**Name**

Photograph

**History**

Fred Grove (1897-1983) was a life member of the St George Sailing Club and self taught boat builder. He left school at 14 and established a boat building business in the Sydney suburb of Banksia. Grove built his first boat, a 10-ft skiff made of New Zealand kauri at 14. Four years later he was specialising in building and sailing 16-ft racing skiffs. During the Depression Grove built canvas racing skiffs including the ALICE II. They were constructed with a stretched canvas skin over a carvel planked hull to seal gaps in the timbers. As the sport of racing canvas skiffs became more popular the gaps between the planks became almost nonexistent and a rule requiring a knife blade gap between hull timbers was instigated. Grove built the 16-ft skiffs NEREID (NSW Champion 1933-34 and 1936-37) and NERIES (NSW Champion 1938-39) for Bill Hayward. Grove also built and raced his own 16-ft skiffs including eight called NEPTUNE. Grove won his first club championship with NEPTUNE IV. He experimented with a Marconi sail on the skiff and won a team's race on Botany Bay by more than three minutes in 1927. In 1929 he took NEPTUNE VI and its crew (Alf Poldore, Peter Depena, Ted Nichols and Ted Collis) to Perth at his own expense to compete in the Australian Championship. This ensured that New South Wales subsequently hosted the national titles. In the 1930s Grove designed the first narrow beamed 18-ft skiff. While a model was made the boat was never completed as the Sydney Eighteen Foot League would allow a narrow beam under its rules at the time. The rule was subsequently changes and all 18-ft skiffs became narrow beamed. During World War II Grove built small vessels for US forces in New Guinea and repaired and built boats in Cairns. In 1953 Grove built the Olympic Dragon Class yacht BANDASNATCH, one of the first to be built in New South Wales. The lofting plan was drawn in full scale on sheets of plywood on the floor of the St George Sailing Club. During the 1954-55 sailing season BANDASNATCH won 8 first, 6 second and 2 third places in sixteen races. It went on to win a world championship. Other vessels built by Grove include the 35-ft motor boat PEDORA (used by the RAN during WWII) and the fishing boat SARAH ANNE, named after his mother. The FELIX emblem went

to WWII with Grove's nephews. It was held up by them on crowded troop ships as a signal to let waiting relatives know they were on board.