

Viking longboat a Pittwater attraction

By **TIM BYRNE**

WHEN BORIS Valentin built a boat, it had to be a Viking longboat. And since late last year, that boat has been gracing the waters of Pittwater, just off Church Point.

Boris is a Dane and built his boat, Bifrost, in 1988. It took him 12 months to build, from starting the research into Viking longboats, to setting off on the maiden voyage.

"I had a deal with myself that I would work 12 hours a day when building the boat. If **people** wanted to visit me, they could come round and do some work on the boat," Boris said.

Boris had some help when building Bifrost, which means 'rainbow to Valhalla'.

His father is a professor in Viking history, translating old Viking scriptures, and he also worked with John Cleese in the making of the movie *Erik the Viking*.

Boris spent a month researching Viking longboats and a month making up the drawings before setting out to build the 27 ton ship — 18 of these tons are in the keel.

It took eight months to build the hull and the rest of the time was spent fitting Bifrost out.

Part of the construction was to ensure the bow of the boat was solid, so Boris constructed three water tanks in the bow and surrounded them with cement, giving the ship an almost ice-breaker capacity, something he needed while sailing Bifrost on the seas close to his Scandinavian homeland.

Bifrost is 54 ft long with a 16½ ft beam and a 3½ ft draught. Her mast is 56 ft high and it carries 1000 square ft of sail.

It has a steel keel and ribs and the keel is filled with cement, while the ribs are covered with sandwich fibreglass.

The bow is wider than the stern and Boris said it has a shape similar to an Orca whale, and below the waterline the hull has a "zig-zag configuration so that the curl of the bow wave **decreases** to nothing and then reverses, converting drag into thrust", Boris said.

It carries two tons of water and three tons of diesel to run its 150 hp six cylinder Perkins diesel engine. Bifrost is also fitted with satellite navigational gear and radar.

According to Boris, the Perkins is rated to use eight litres of diesel an hour when travelling at seven knots, but the thrust Bifrost obtains from the hull means she uses just 5.5 litres an hour at that speed.

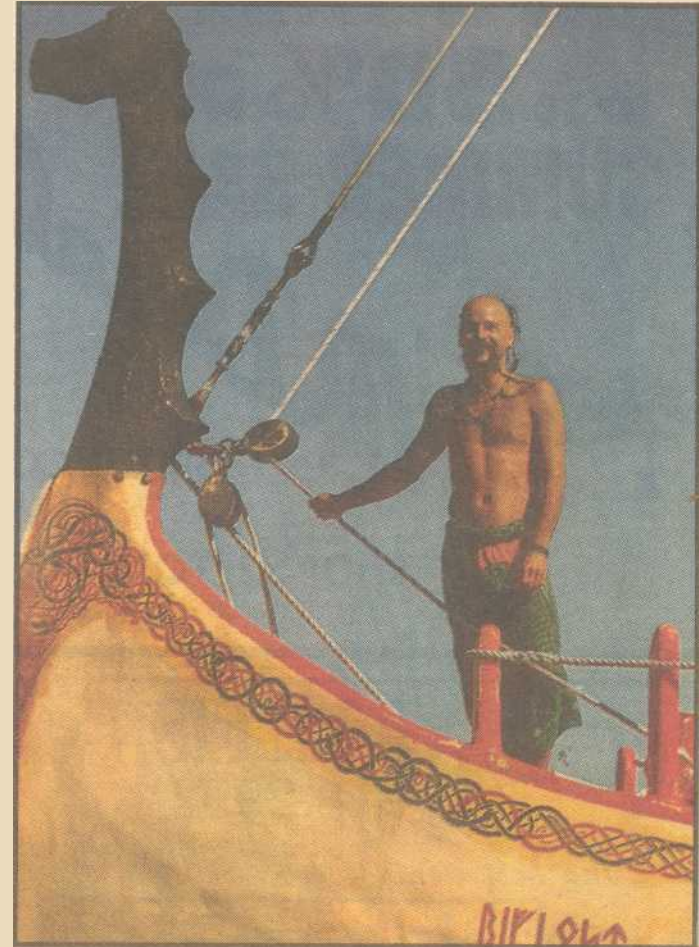
"You can feel the acceleration from six to eight knots with the thrust," he said.

Bifrost was put into the water in April 1989 and Boris left Denmark in **September** that year to spend a year sailing European waters.

"I wanted to stay within radio contact of helicopters while testing her," he said.

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Photo by Helen Huntly-Barratt



NORTHERN BEACHES WEEKENDER.
FRIDAY, 4th FEB 94.