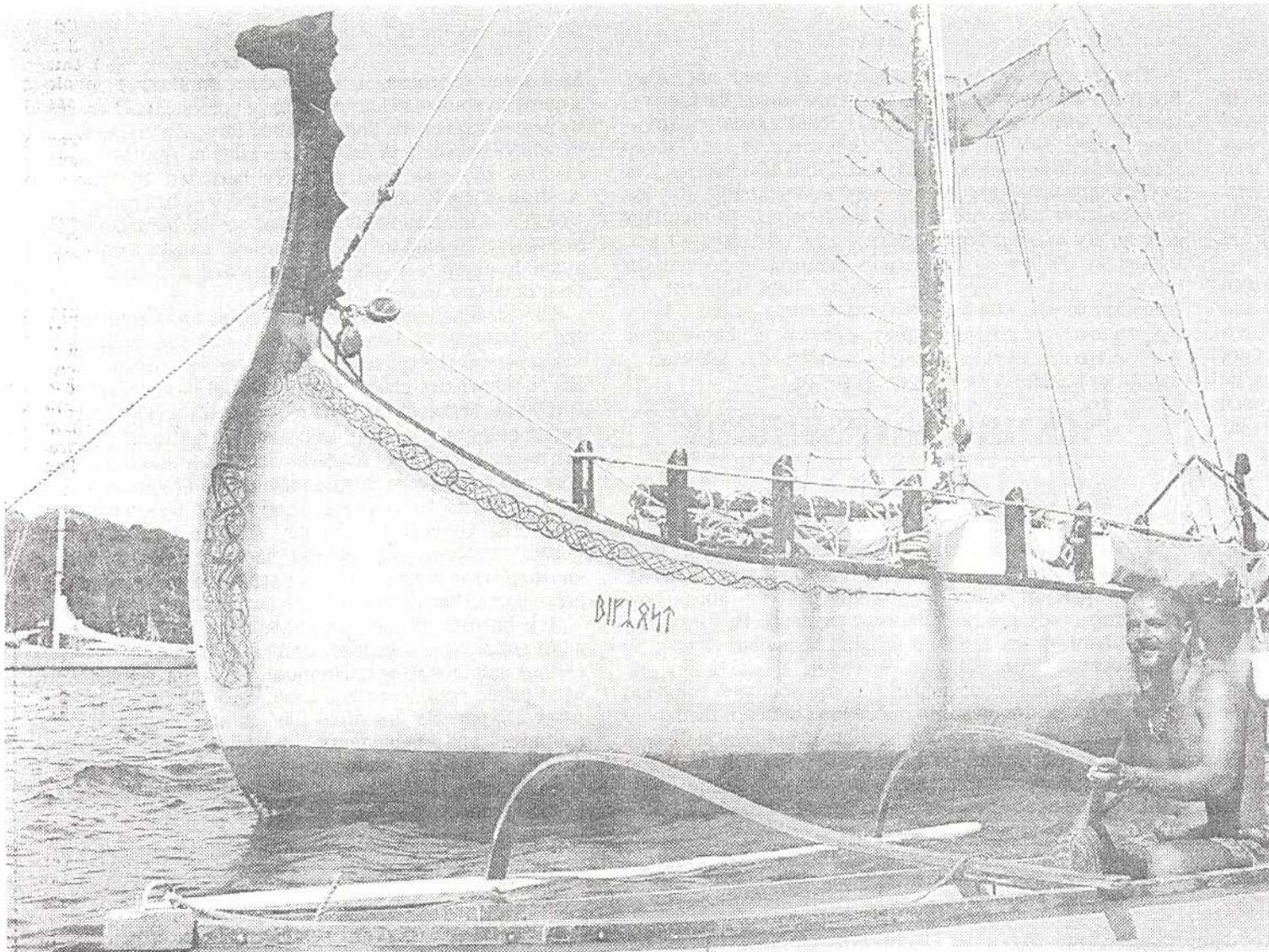


Modern-day Viking conquers the



Mr Valentin with his replica Viking ship, the Bifrost, which he built himself, at Church Point, north of Sydney — Picture

BY JODY SCOTT

TALES of Vikings, pirates and swords tumble from the lips of Danish-born Boris Valentin as he describes the past four years sailing around the world in a replica of an open trader Viking ship.

Mr Valentin, now in Sydney, built the 30m ship single-handedly after spending months researching the techniques and dimensions used by Viking boat builders.

The Danes have long been associated with Vikings but Mr Valentin had a special connection — his father was a professor of Viking studies at the Viking Museum near Copenhagen.

"I had a dream for many years to build a ship," Mr Valentin said, "So when my father died ... I had to build a Viking ship."

Mr Valentin modelled the vessel on the ships used by the Vikings for trade missions to Greenland, Africa and Asia.

"They think these ships also went to the South Pacific but that hasn't been proven yet — the rest has," he said.

the helm constantly for 21 days while the rest of his crew's stomachs churned below.

"The worst times are when you don't have stable weather," he said.

"From Jamaica to Panama we were getting 50 to 70-knot winds in the opposite direction when the clouds came — every four to six hours there was a storm."

The Bifrost was also trailed by pirates off Panama but Mr Valentin said he and a crew member gave them a bit of a scare.

"We were *both* naked on deck waving swords and a gun and they just *turned* and went the other way," he said, laughing. "They must have thought these guys are crazy."

Even after years at sea, Mr Valentin said he was always in the middle of his journey.

"When I left I told my friends I would be sailing for between three years and 30 years," he said.

"I can't go back to Denmark right now — it is only half a trip so far.

"My biggest belief I have is the less