

## Wir Guizer Jarl - James Nicholson

James has been attending Up Helly Aa since 1982, firstly involved with the school squad, as all Cullivoe youngsters are, then moving on to join his dad in the Fealzie squad, playing Malcolm Younger, in 1992. In 2005, James became a founding member of a new squad formed by the youth of Cullivoe- the Young Turks. Few among them qualify as young any more...



Having lived on a Viking settlement all his life, along with his father Alex, James has grown up steeped in Viking heritage both historical and cultural. After the new year, Breckon would be in full Up Helly Aa mode, (when calving cows allowed) as squad meetings filled their weekends, and the squads all calling Breckon to submit their names and guizer numbers. These details were dutifully taken down by James' mother Jennifer in Alex's absence. She was also a keen participant in Up Helly Aa.

James was delighted to be asked by Laurence to be this year's Jarl, having known him most of his life through crofting circles and more recently in their shared interests of the Yell Show and Yell Community Council. Both men are true islanders keen to see Yell flourish.

Friends and family from near and far will be gathering for the weekend celebrations and James looks forward to sharing the procession and burning with those dear to him. He is also hoping that all the animals keep their legs crossed so that he doesn't miss any of the festivities!

James wants to note his appreciation for the community spirit and the work that goes into the festival from folk across Yell and beyond. Many thanks go to Burravoe, Mid Yell and Cullivoe communities for hosting the Jarl squad over the duration of the festival. He would also like to thank Fiona and Susan for their hard work making the kirtles.

James has chosen to donate any funds collected over the weekend to two charities close to his heart: Bloodwise (formerly known as Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research) and the British Heart Foundation.

"A genuine thanks goes to our wives for donating their husband's time and energy to Up Helly Aa. The squad are all looking forward to spending our weekend with the lasses that make our lives easier (mostly). I have been truly humbled by the effort folk have put in to making the whole experience, so far, wonderfully memorable.

Here's to a good helly!"

- James Nicholson



## Schedule of Events

#### Friday 22nd February

- 08:00 Jarl Squad breakfast at Cullivoe Hall, specially prepared by resident gourmet chefs Michael Henderson & Andrew Nisbet.
- 09:30 Jarl Squad walk to Moarfield Garage to meet the school and pre-school bairns.
- 09:45 Jarl Squad accompany the galley full of bairns to Cullivoe Primary School.
- 10:00 Tea, coffee and biscuits in the school. Photographs taken with the bairns.
- 11:30 Jarl Squad visit residents of Cullivoe, starting at Greenbank Road.
- 12:45 Jarl Squad return to the school for dinner with the bairns.
- 13:45 Photographs of the squad are taken at a location of the Jarl's choosing.
- 14:30 More visiting by the Jarl Squad throughout the township.
- 17:30 Jarl Squad return to the Hall for food and rest.
- 19:00 Guizers gather at Cullivoe Hall to start the procession sharp at 19:30. The bar will be open for a short while before the procession begins.
- 19:30 Procession leaves the Hall bound for the marina. Immediately following the procession squad performances will begin in both the Hall and school. Following the acts there will be a dance with music from Leeshinat.

#### Saturday 23rd February

- 11:30 As many hands as possible are called upon to help clean up the Hall and school.
- 13:00 Bus leaves for the Burravoe Hall in South Yell where food, drink and music will be served. Charges apply for all but the music.
- 17:30 Bus departs Burravoe heading back to Cullivoe.
- 19:30 Guizers' Hop Variety Concert, followed by another night of dancing to **Leeshinat**.

#### **Sunday 24th February**

- 16:00 Again, hands are required to help clean up the Hall.
- 17:00 Fish and chips will be served from 17:00 to 19:00 and all are welcome to come and enjoy their supper in the hall. The Jarl Squad will conclude the festival by having their hair and beards redesigned in "interesting" styles.

## Jarl Squad 2019



Former Jarl Laurence Odie



Guizer Jarl James Nicholson



Jarl-Elect Craig Dickie



Brian Brand



Alex Nicholson



**Emmanuel Msalila** 



Michael Nisbet



**Brydon Barclay** 



**Russell Anderson** 



**Brian Spence** 



David Henry



Creighton Anderson

## **Princesses**



Elsie Msalila

## **Junior Members**







## Musicians



**Andy Stephen** 



**David Spence** 



**Barry Nisbet** 

## **Jarl Squad Introductions**

**Laurence Odie:** Our Former Jarl's overall commitment to Up Helly Aa has helped the festival go from strength to strength across the isle. His keenness to bond the squad has led to much merriment in the galley shed.

**Craig Dickie:** Jarl-Elect Craig is gearing up to dig out his own squad next year and construct his own Up Helly Aa. We hope he builds on what he has learned this year and doesn't take it for granite...

**Alex Nicholson:** Chief Guizer in 1967, Alex has been on the Up Helly Aa committee for 50 years, most of them spent as secretary. All told, Alex has only missed three festivals. A Breckon man born and bred, Alex has a love for his community and all things Up Helly Aa.

**Brian Brand:** First in tow with our Jarl whilst working mischief at agriculture college in Orkney. Despite being in two other Jarl squads this year he is wholly committed to his Yell roots and completing his treble at our Up Helly Aa.

**Brian Spence:** Our least hairy Viking, Brian has been a friend and shipmate of James' since Primary 1, sharing a 'Marvel'lous desire for Aberdeen FC to Transform into a league winning team. Brian and James will raise a peerie glass to Uncle Jeemie over the weekend.

**Brydon "Bags" Barclay:** An aficionado when it comes to Up Helly Aa, Brydon is part of our UHA inclusivity programme for Unst folk. He has been a popular choice for many a squad as he brings intricate workmanship and an enthusiastic work ethic.

**Creighton "CJ" Anderson:** As a seasoned South Yell joiner, James' cousin's talents have been put to good use. Creighton's quick wit and dry sense of humour have entertained throughout the season.

**David Henry:** Ever-present and ever-active in the Galley Shed, David's skills have been invaluable. A fellow crofter, and neighbour to James, David himself was Jarl back in 1998. He is enjoying another run in the Galley Shed with his two young sons.

**Emmanuel "Kulwa" Msalila:** Hailing from Tanzania, his Norse blood is thicker than you might expect, with a German granddad and a love of fire water. Emma has become known in the Galley Shed for his rousing (football) chants so he will hopefully be in fine voice. Married to Fiona's mum, he finds the saying "Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka" wholly appropriate all too often.

**Michael Nisbet:** Another former Jarl, and another life-long pal (in spite of his allegiance to Everton), Michael's meticulous ways have benefited the squad and the programme alike. Hopefully he'll find time to set down his axe and pick up his guitar for a tune over the helly.

**Russell Anderson:** The elder of the Punds Boys and another joiner extraordinaire, Russell has swelled the South Yell contingent in this year's squad. Russell has been keen to share his skills with his big cousin, helping him craft his look, always keen to take part in a spree.

#### **JUNIORS**

Ollie Nicholson - Junior Jarl: Heir to the Breckon dynasty, Ollie has gained vast knowledge through his love of 'Hiccup the Viking'. This is Ollie's third squad in Up Helly Aa, having been a member of the school squad, the Fealzie squad, and now as Junior Jarl, making many of the decisions for his dad.

Elsie "Macaroni" Msalila & Hannah "Cheese" Msalila: These two are a formidable duo. James' sister-in laws and his "creatives". Together they have worked on crafting the shields and painting the beautiful proclamation, among a host of other tasks.

**Elsie** is a multi-talented lass, musical and artistic as well as quite the philosopher. A friendly and familiar face she is always happy to chat and expand her curious mind.

**Hannah**, also quite the talent, has been keen to take part in many events throughout the Cullivoe calendar. She has a keen eye for photography so make sure and give her a smile.

**Lee Henry:** As thoughtful as his dad, always giving a considered answer, the junior faction of the Jarl Squad would not be compete without Ollie's compadre and fellow Pokemon trainer. A dab hand with a paint brush and an asset to any squad.

**Mark Henry:** His enthusiasm for a fun has ensured there is never a quiet moment in the Galley Shed. His Minecraft skills have fairly helped with the construction tasks.

#### **THE HOUSE BAND**

**David "Spinner" Spence:** A former Jarl himself, David will be an apt musician for the squad. He is a skilled guitarist, and is very experienced playing with the other two musicians. Along with Barry Nisbet, Brian Spence and Michael Nisbet, we have half of Rack n Ruin in the squad with us.

**Andy "Shakin" Stephen:** Andy will be shaking it all night long with the squad, in what is not his first foray with Cullivoe Up Helly Aa, and surely won't be his last.

**Barry "Sessions & Sail" Nisbet:** The squad are delighted that Barry has stepped off his modern Viking ships to join family and friends and add to the squad's musical talent.

James is very lucky in not only having these three fantastic musicians in the "house band", but also more great musicians within the ranks. It's sure to be a tuneful festival!





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**Good luck from Orkney!** William Shearer's wish the Guizer Jarl JAMES NICHOLSON and his squad a good voyage and a memorable weekend.

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## Proclamation 2019

WIR JARL DECREES THAT GUIZERS WILL REPORT IN GOOD TIME TO COLLECT THEIR TORCHES AND START THE PROCESSION FROM THE HALL AT 7.30PM.

WIR JARL WHEN ENTERING INTO THIS WEEKEND'S JAMBOREE SHOULD BE ON FOR A FINE HELLY, OOT ON DA SPREE WI ONY YELL GUIZERS, ANY BULLISH BEHAVIOUR MAY BE SMART BUT THE RAMIFICATIONS COOD RESULT IN SPARKS FLYING, AND FEWER FOLK SCRAMBLING TROO DA HILLS. HE WILL BE TRACT(OR)ING AND TRAIL(ER)ING AFTER ANY CROFTER SEEN SLIPPIN ON DA ICE, CLIPPEN DA BORDERFIELD, SHIPPEN A LUMP OR SKINNY DIPPIN ON DA WAY HOM DA NIGHT.

YOU'LL AA BE **LEESHINAAT** DA NIGHT HAYIN A GREAT FESTIVAL WE RECKON, SO LET DOON YOUR HAIR AN HAY SOME FUN WE WIR JARL JAMES O' BRECKON.

WAN PERSON YOU WIDNA TINK TA CAUSE ANY SORT O' STRIFE IS DA JARL'S OWN LOVING AN CARING WIFE. AABODY ENJOYIN A NIGHT IN MID YELL DANCIN TA RACK 'N' RUIN, BUT DIS JARL'S WIFE DID LEAVE OLGA FUMIN. TAMPERIN WE DA XMAS TREE AN PULLIN DA CURTAINS ON DA STAGE. WID BE DA ANTICS OH SOMEEN HALF HER AGE.

CAN DU TAK DA HELM WHILE I REST MY WEARY EYES, SAID THE VERY TIRED MASTER WHO WAS ALSO SMALL IN SIZE. NO BUDDER TA ME SAID HIS PEERIE MATE, I CAN EASY DO DAT. ILL MIBEE EVEN GET DY JOB WHEN DU HANGS UP DE HAT. GAZIN TROO DA FOG, HE THOUGHT I'M LOST AND SHOULD CONFESS. FUR DEY'D BEEN AROOND SOOND GRUNEY ON DIR WAY TA HAMMERS NESS.

DEY WIR MAKIN FUR NAMPARA, HEED WEETIN WUS DA TASK,
NAE FRANKINCENSE OR MYHRR DEY TOOK BUT GOLD ATHIN A FLASK.
DID DEY HAE A STAR TAE FOLLOW AS DEY CAM UP OWER DA HEIGHTS,
DA STAR DEY TOWT WUS IN DA EAST WUS LINNADIELD'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

AN EX -JARL GOT A WINDSPEIL TA GENERATE FREE POWER, BUT ALONG CAME A SOUTH EAST GALE AN BLEW IT OWER.

LERWICK UP HELLY AA BEGAN WE A SPARK, DA FLARES GLOWED BRIGHT AS DA TOON FELL DARK. BUT WHIT DAMPENED DIR CHEER, AN CAUSED A MASSIVE UPSTEER, WUR DA DRONES ABUNE DIR PLAYPARK.

IF YOU CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY ON XMAS DAY, YOU REALLY SHOULD WATCH OOT FUR SANTA. HE'S NO VERY GOOD AT STEERING HIS SLEIGH, HE MIGHT RUN YOU AFF DA ROAD, OH WHIT A MISANTER.

RACK 'N' RUIN HIV ENJOYED MANY A SPREE - DANCIN, TUNES AN BEER, AN DIS YEAR MARKS A SPECIAL OCCASION, DIR BEEN PLAYIN FUR 25 YEAR!

THE CHIPPY NEEDS CLEANIN, THAT'S EASY THEY SAID, WE DON'T WANT WIR CHIPS TO BE SPOILED. IT SEEMED TO GO FINE THE CHIPPY WAS CLEAN, BUT THE HALL AND KITCHEN FLOORS WIR WELL OILED.

HOO MANY MEN DOES IT TAK TAE CLIP SOME SHEEP IN GLOUP? DA ANSWER IS TWO.

DARREN AN DARREN SKEETED AFF DA ROD, WIR DEY JUST HAPPY TA BE PAID OR WUR DEY FOO?

YELL FOLK ARE A PRETTY LAW ABIDING LOT, FOR ANY MISDEMEANERS THEY ARE RARELY CAUGHT, BUT THIS IS SET TO CHANGE OF COURSE THE POLIS ARE GOING TO BE OUT IN FORCE. AS IT SEEMS THEY HAVE BEEN REPRIMANDED FOR TOO FEW CRIMINALS APPREHENDED.

A BRAND NEW VIKING AT WIR UP HELLY AA AN HE'S GOIN TROO QUITE AN ORDEAL, NOT CONTENT WI JUST DA WAN GALLEY, HE'S BRUNT TWA IDDERS ASWEEL.

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE DA JARLS IN THE MIDDLE AN DA COW JUMPED ONTO HIS CAR. DA PEERIE DOG TRIED TA RUN OWER HIS DAD WHILE FIONA WATCHED FROM AFAR.

IN SHETLAND DA FOLK ALL LIKE TO COOK AND ENJOY DA MANY RECIPES IN A BRAND NEW BOOK.

DA NEW GLOSSY PICTIRS WERE FINE TO SEE, BUT WHIT WIS DIS? OH DEARIE ME. DA AUTHORS

WERE SILLY, DEY MADE A BAD DECISION AN DA WHALSA FOLK ARE TREATIN DA BOOK WI DERISION.

BREXIT RUMBLES ON AN ON, IT'S REALLY BEEN QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.
THERESA MAY AN DA REST O DEM MAK DA S.I.C. LOOK FAIRLY COMPETENT.

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS FETLAR FOLK ARE KEEN TO TRAVEL HOME WHEREVER THEY'VE BEEN. THEY WANT THE FERRY TO TAKE THEM THERE BUT FEEL THE BOOKING SYSTEM IS NO VERY FAIR. SO WHEN STOPPED AND ASKED TO VACATE THE DECK OUR HERO GOT STROPPY AND SAID "WHAT THE HECK". MY CAR WON'T BE MOVING UNTIL I GET HOME AND WI THE KEYS IN HIS POCKET HE STOMPED OFF BELOW.

E.S. TOWING SERVICES IS A GREAT LITTLE BUSINESS, OFFERING YOU A PULL OR A PLUCK.
ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE DRIVING HOME AN RUN OOT O' ROAD AN LUCK.
TAE DRIVE INTA DA SAME BUG TWICE WITHIN HALF AN HOUR IS ENOUGH TO MAK YOU GREET.
IT SEEMS JOHNNIE WALKER'S DRIVING ISNA ALL DAT NEAT.

#### THINGS WE'D LIK TA KEEN:

WHICH ONE WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL IN THE SILAGE? ALAN WI CRAIG'S OR CRAIG WI ALAN'S TRACTOR?

HOW DO YOU RIP OFF A BUNCH OF STAGS? SEND THEM TO PRAGUE?
WHO HAD THE MOST SPECTACULAR OFF ROAD EXPERIENCE? CALVIN, KENNY, JIM OR RAYMOND?
HAS ANYBODY BEEN LAWSON OOT BY NO USIN DA GALLEY SHED TOILETS?

DEFACERS OF OUR BILL WILL BE AI'D WITH NO BULL, AND GIVEN THE J.O.B. OF FARMING OOTROO!

BY ORDER AND UNDER THE SEAL OF THE GUIZER JARL.







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We wish Jarl James o' Breckon and his squad all the best for Cullivoe Up-Helly-Aa 2019

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The 2019 Bill Head, painted by Elsie & Hannah Msalila





Wishing Jarl James Nicholson and his squad all the best for Up Helly Aa 2019



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## **Squad List**

Hall	Name	School	Guizers
1	JARL SQUAD	1	17
2	We're Going on a <del>Bear</del> Jarl Hunt	8	13
3	Fireball & Brimstone	9	16
4	Breckon's Greatest Show	10	16
5	I'm a Viking Get Me Oot o Here	11	9
6	Gender Bender	12	9
7	James O' Breckxit	2	21
8	Fifi We've Shrunk Da Jarl	3	10
9	Byre's Got Talent	4	9
10	Breckon Safari	5	6
11	Breckon Bad	6	7
12	Supercalifragilisticexpialobreckon	7	21

<sup>\*</sup> Running order subject to change

## Roars fae da past...







Squad 5 - "Russia Comes to the Rescue" [1961]



Andrea Dickie lighting a cigarette for a guizer from another squad. [1990]



Introducing the next squad...
Jarl Euan Henderson [2009]





Jarl Hubert Dickie [1977]





Jarl Derek Jamieson with cousin Lee Jamieson [1991]



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Everyone at R.S. Henderson Ltd would like to wish James Nicholson and his squad a hearty Up Helly Aa 2019!

#### The Outfit

Shield - The squad logo on the shield was designed by June Brown, with the inspiration coming from Sleipner,
Odin's eight-legged horse. The bull was affectionately christened the
"Octobeast". The shield was made using an ash board base, which was blow-torched to give a burnt finish. The squad logo was then stenciled onto the shield and carved out. The shield was then finished with leather strapping cut from cow hide.



**Kirtle** - The wool for the kirtles came from some of Breckon's many strong-willed Shetland sheep, and was expertly spun and woven at the Jamieson's Wool-mill in Sandness. After visiting the mill, James picked out colours that evoked the waves of Breckon beach, the silvery grasses and of course, the sands. You can see that the material is closely linked back to Breckon. James' wife Fiona and her mum, Susan, have burned through hours, needles and G&Ts, cutting and sewing the kirtles that the squad will be wearing this weekend.

**Skins** - With his mind never far from the croft, James opted for skins from Belgian Blue kye, a breed he has kept at Breckon for several years. The skins were imported from the EU (without a tariff), then shaped to each squad member, with Lawrence, Alex and David being the key craftsmen.

**Dresses** - The lasses are wearing a huge cape made from contrasting tweed, again made at the Sandness Mill, which includes a Swedish lining to bring together the Viking heritage. Their dresses are made from the same material as the lads and fashioned in a female Viking style.

Horns - The Jarl and Junior Jarl both sport sheep horns on their helmets. The magnificent horns worn by James came from a ram bought a few years ago from the Westside of Shetland. A battle-hardy critter, much like all the Westsiders in James' life. This fine chap spent most of his life roaming the hill at Vigon, living the high life, for a ram. Ollie's horns are home grown from a fine peerie Shetland ram lamb.

**Boots** - These are another nod to James' livelihood - a hybrid between the leather Viking footwear of days gone by and a fine pair of rubber böts!



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## List of Jarls (1957-2019)



1957 - Peter Spence	1978 - Alex Watt	1999 - Brian Thomson
1958 - Willie Barclay Henderson	1979 - Andrew Anderson	2000 - Robert Thomson
1959 - George Henry	1980 - Laurence Tulloch	2001 - Steven Henderson
1960 - Basil Willie Tulloch	1981 - Robert Jamieson	2002 - Johnnie Clark
1961 - Gilbert 'Bertie' Henderson	1982 - George Tulloch	2003 - Kevin Tulloch
1962 - James Bruce Spence	1983 - Gordon Jamieson	2004 - NO FESTIVAL
1963 - Charles Spence	1984 - George Gunn	2005 - Ian Anderson
1964 - Bruce Spence	1985 - Andrew Nisbet	2006 - Timothy Fraser
1965 - John Henderson	1986 - Gilbert Tulloch	2007 - Raymond Henderson
1966 - NO FESTIVAL	1987 - Christopher Thomason	2008 - Leslie Tulloch
1967 - Alex Nicholson	1988 - Michael Henderson	2009 - Euan Henderson
1968 - NO FESTIVAL	1989 - Gilbert Nicolson	2010 - Martin Henderson
1969 - Robert Henderson	1990 - Bob Severn	2011 - Campbell Dickie
1970 - Andrew Williamson	1991 - Derek Jamieson	2012 - Graham Hughson
1971 - Charlie Henderson	1992 - Neil Nicholson	2013 - Michael Nisbet
1972 - Daniel Nicholson	1993 - Danny Jamieson	2014 - David Spence
1973 - Laurence Williamson	1994 - Marvin Thomason	2015 - John Williamson
1974 - Danny Anderson	1995 - Trevor Henderson	2016 - John Saunders
1975 - Alex Robertson	1996 - Brian Nicolson	2017 - Mark Lawson
1976 - Victor Jamieson	1997 - Colin Nicholson	2018 - Laurence Odie
1977 - Hubert Dickie	1998 - David Henry	2019 - James Nicholson

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#### **Up Helly Aa Night Long**

Welcome wan an all, tae Up Helly Aa,
Da Jarl Squad are comin' an you'll hear wir call,
See da Breckon man, he's got da plan,
Wi his squad full o freends, an his owld man,

Wir here ta see, dat you hae a spree, Wi wir axe an wir shield, wir lookin brawly mean, Listen in da breeze, you'll hear across da seas, Roars fae grand old Viking centuries...

#### Chorus

Come you! It's Up Heeeelly Aa, Cull-i-voe, Up Heeeelly Aa...

So light da flares, torches idda air, An drink up folk, til you can tak nae mair, Efter a winter o makin, we'll be takin, You doon da rod, ta burn wir galley....

Chorus x 2

#### **Breckon**

Breckon lies at the northernmost tip of Yell, where the fertile ground has been cultivated for many generations. Sheltered from the southwesterly wind, Breckon has been a place to settle and work the land since the earliest periods of human settlement in Shetland.



Some confirmation of the earliest periods of human activity remain: a burial site, evidence

of an ancient community, and even early agricultural activity. This dates from the Neolithic/Bronze Age to modern times. Breckon displays a rare example of Iron Age funerary practice, and evidence of a quartz knapping site found within the confines of a stone circle, towards the top of the cliffs. There was once a broch that stood proudly at the Heads of Toft, thought to have been built before 100BC. It was still standing as recently as 1878, although it was noted that even then "the greatest portion of the building has fallen over the cliff." It has since succumbed to the ocean.



The remnants of a cairn are visible, surrounding a cist (a structure normally used for burial purposes; formed from stone slabs set on edge and covered by one or more capstones). In 1983 this was excavated and found to be full of ashes, midden material and a "horned" human skull. The skull was sent to Edinburgh for further analysis but mysteriously disappeared before it reached its destination.

There is early evidence of travel to and from Breckon. Archeological finds include two Roman coins: one of Hadrian and the other of Justinian I, which date back to the 6th

century. As could be expected,

opportunistic Vikings were keen to settle the green grounds of Breckon. In fact the footprint of a Viking longhouse can still be seen. It would have had many similarities to those built in Haroldswick, including traces of outbuildings for housing animals. It can still be seen roughly marked out the hillside between the Sands of Breckon and Silvergeo.



James has grown up steeped in the rich history of Breckon and is acutely aware of his strong Viking heritage. As such he has chosen not to portray a Viking, this year, but has instead reflected upon Freyr, a Norse God that would have been significant to the early Norse settlers at Breckon. Freyr, the god of harvest, was in control of the rain, the sunshine and the natural increase of the Earth and surely must, in part, be responsible for Breckon's bountiful supply.



James has many similarities and links to Freyr. These include his wish for prosperity, the good maintenance of land, peace and the harvest of fruitful yields for all.

"There is no better a load a man can carry than much common sense; no worse a load than too much drink."

> "Be a friend to your friend, match a gift with gift, meet smiles with smiles, and lies with dissimulation."

These quotes from the Havamal, a series of poems attributed to Odin, echo the sentiments of both Freyr and James.







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Best wishes to Guizer Jarl Steven Cassidy and his squad for a successful Up-Helly-Aa







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L **J'S** Diner & Pizzeria **Mid Yell** 







The original 'Octobeast' design on slate next to the Jarl's shield





DESIGNED & WOVEN IN YELL



Congratulations to the Jarl and all the guizers!



#### The Up Helly Aa Song

(first verse & chorus)

From grand old Viking centuries Up-Helly-Aa has come,
Then light the torch and form the march, and sound the rolling drum:
And wake the mighty memories of heroes that are dumb;
The waves are rolling on.

#### **CHORUS:**

Grand old Vikings ruled upon the ocean vast,
Their brave battle-songs still thunder on the blast;
Their wild war-cry comes a-ringing from the past;
We answer it "A-hoy!"
Roll their glory down the ages,
Sons of warriors and sages,
When the fight for freedom rages,
Be bold and strong as they!

(Words by J.J. Haldane Burgess) (Music by Thomas Manson)

#### **The Galley Song**

(first two verses)

Floats the raven banner o'er us, Round our Dragon Ship we stand, Voices joined in gladsome chorus, Raised aloft the flaming brand. Voices joined in gladsome chorus, Raised aloft the flaming brand.

Every guizer has a duty,
When he joins the festive throng,
Honour freedom, love and beauty,
In the feast, the dance, the song.
Honour freedom, love and beauty,
In the feast, the dance, the song.

(Written by John Nicolson, to the tune of an old Norwegian folk song)

#### Guizer Jarl 1967 - Alex Nicholson



The Nicholson family has always been intrinsically linked with the Cullivoe Up Helly Aa. James' father Alex grew up with the festival - which moved to Cullivoe from Sellafirth in 1958 - and is widely credited with helping to ensure its survival throughout a 'low ebb' of interest in the mid 1960s.

He spent a grand total of 50 years on the organising committee, keeping the books and acting as Secretary, after convincing a group of his former schoolmates to help him revive the festival - men like Robert and Charlie Henderson, Laurence Tulloch and Andrew Williamson. They worked

together to establish a new wave of interest in Up Helly Aa, and not only within the boundaries of North Yell - but around the isle - encouraging squads from elsewhere, and laying the groundwork for the expanded version of the event that exists today.

Alex was Guizer Jarl in 1967, leading a Jarl Squad of four members - former Jarl John Henderson (Gloup), Hamish Nicholson (North House), Ivor Tulloch (Gronadjeld) and James Henry (Sellafirth). His late brother Daniel followed him as Jarl a few years later in 1972. Alex's brother Jeemie was also in Daniel's squad.

Alex describes those earlier festivals as fairly "primitive" and localised affairs by today's standards, with many things having changed over the years - but with the event's reliance on goodwill and community spirit remaining at the core of Up Helly Aa today. "We need the whole island to keep Up Helly Aa running now, and it couldn't be otherwise" says Alex. "They thought that Up Helly Aa was done for in the 1960s, but actually - when you came to organise it - you always got a lot of support. Even some folk who do very little else in the public eye will always be willing to do their bit for Up Helly Aa."

He adds that his experience of the festival has always been centered on family. Throughout the decades that he spent on the Committee, he was often helped behind the scenes by his late wife Jennifer - who was also a women's squad member and kitchen volunteer - as well as James and their daughter Johnina.



The 1967 Jarl Squad [L-R] Hamish Nicolson, James Henry, Alex Nicholson, John Henderson, Ivor Tulloch

This is Alex's third ever outing in a Jarl Squad, with his time having often been constrained by the duties of running the festival itself. He remembers squad members paying 10 shillings towards the cost of their suits, which amounts to about 50 pence today, and no other commitments were really required - aside from the Jarl making a speech. However - as well as his Jarldom in 1967 - Alex managed to appear in the Jarl Squad of 1990, led by his good friend Bob Severn.

Having had such a vital hand in reviving Up Helly Aa, Alex admits that there could be a few poignant moments in store for him this weekend, as he watches his only son step up to lead the proceedings. He's expecting Thursday's trip to the Burravoe School, where Jennifer worked as a cook, to be especially sentimental - as well as the visits to the Burravoe Hall - which was the venue for their wedding reception in 1976.

After having initial doubts about his own ability to commit to the demands of a modern day Jarl Squad - a "young man's game", as he calls it - Alex says that he is delighted to be joining James this weekend.

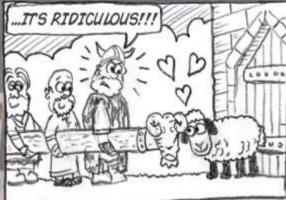
"I've known many Guizer Jarls over the years, and I've sat around a table with most of them, as Secretary of the Up Helly Aa Committee" says Alex. "There's been plenty who have wished that their fathers could still have been around to take part, so I'm pleased that I'm still on the go - and able to be out with James this year - but I don't know whether I'm brave, or foolish!"

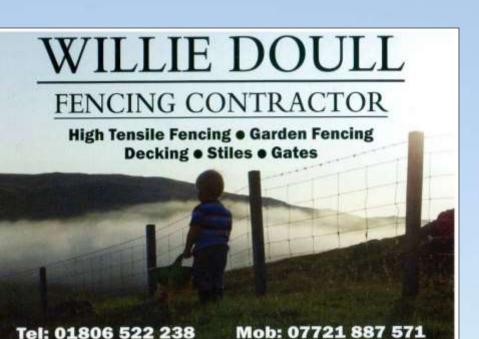
However, when asked if he has missed a single meeting over the winter, the answer - delivered with a telling smeeg - is: "No, I don't think it."













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