



Da birth o' da "Nestin' an' Girlsta Up-Helly-Aa"

As da celebrations cam tae an end on New Year's nicht at Vassa, somebody said, "Weel, dat's da last nicht o' it noo." Fur a fun, da reply cam, "Weel du could hae an Up-Helly-Aa!" Dat wis in 1961, an hit never occurred tae dem dat we wid be celebrating da 25th anniversary o' dat Up-Helly-Aa dis year.

Tony Herculson wis da Jarl, and dey wir individual guizers bit nae squads. Wi' Charlie Tait tae marshal proceedins, Tony an' his galley - da "Lady C"- wis towed by Alan Sandison's tractor, "Da President." Tony's bridder Maxi wis drivin' and dey took her richt roond Nestin' afore sho wis brunt dat nicht at da quarry atween da Hall an' Aswick.

As Tony minds it, he made da head an' tail and shields fur his galley. Sho wis an aald boat dey got fae da Coxs at Gletness. He wore a turquoise nylon peenie wi silver trim at da boddam, a sheepskin cloak, black breek wi white laces tae da knee, an' carried an axe wi a widden shield wi crossed axes an' a star painted on it. His helmet wis da half o' an aluminium bouy wi wings aff o' a raven shot by Willie Hunter at Brunt Hamarsland. Da Friester shop donated da paraffin an' da torches wis made fae wrack-wid; da whole Up-Helly-Aa cost not wan ha'penny! Da fun continued in da Sooth Nestin' Hall wi tae an' sandwiches fur supper an' music provided by Mavis Tait an' Bobby Sandison.

Up-Helly-Aa continued in a similar wye, wi regalia bein' handed on fae year tae year, an' some things bein' borrowed fae Lerwick squads.

In 1976 Pat Read fae Girlsta took peety on da Jarl Squad an' made dem a right outfit o' red kirtles an' black tunics. Dis wis used fur a few years till every Jarl Squad chose tae mak dir ain regalia.

Wan important feature o' da Nestin' an' Girlsta Up-Helly-Aa is da fact dat dey aye hed female guizers an' still hae female squads.

