

UP HELLY AA

Five hundred men in a torchlight march carried the minds of Lerwick people back over 900 years of history, to the last big invasion of Norsemen. The capital of the Shetlands in this way celebrates Up Helly Aa, complete with model of a Viking ship, one third the size of the 160-strong fleet used in the invasion. Just why they end by setting it on fire no one knows, but it rounds off the march with a big spectacle. As well as recalling history, Up Helly Aa celebrates the end of Winter - wishful thinking if you like.

The conquering Norsemen then went to the dance hall, to give the local girls a look over. Victory over, the rest of the evening was to be spent dancing; and with all these warriors around, civilians didn't stand an earthly.