

The New Year Song

As sung by James Fotheringham, Templeha, Sanday. Recorded by Ernest Marwick a short time before James died in 1969, when he was in his eighties. Orkney Archive Reference: D31/TR/133

Peace be to this burly biggeen,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
From the steeth unto the riggeen,
An' that's before Our Lady.

This is guid New Year's Even Night,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' we've come here to claim wur right.
An' that's before Our Lady.

The morrow is guid New Year's Day,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
And we've come here to sport and play,
An' that's before Our Lady.

The hin'most hoose that we came from,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
We got oatcakes and sowens scones,
The three-lugged cog wis standan foo,
We hop' to get the same fae you,
An' that's before Our Lady.

Guid wife, gae to your kebbock creel,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' see thou counts the kebbocks week,
An' that's before Our Lady.

Guid wife, gae to your gealding vat,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' let us drink till our lugs crack,
An' fetch us one and fetch us twa,
An' aye the merrier we'll gang awa,
An' that's before Our Lady.

Guid wife, gae to your butter ark,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' fetch us here ten bismar mark,
See that ye grip weel in the dark,
An' that's before Our Lady.

May a' yur mares be weel tae foal,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' ivry een be a staig foal,
An' that's before Our Lady.

May a' uyr kye be weel tae calf,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' ivry een a quoy-oo calf,
An' that's before Our Lady.

May a' yur yows be weel tae lamb,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' ivry een a yow and a ram,
An' that's before Our Lady.

May a' yur hens run in a reel,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' ivry wan twal at her heel,
An' that's before Our Lady.

Here we hae brought our carrying horse,
We are a' Queen Mary's men,
An' mony a curse light on his corse,
He'll eat mare meat that we can get,
He'll drink mare drink than we can swink,
An' that's before Our Lady.