

December 2011 Newsletter

for Ancient Pathways and Mauri Natural Therapy:

Hello Phoebe,

We Welcome you to our December 2011 Newsletter, the last for 2011.

We would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and intend that 2012 bring you much joy, peace, health and abundance.

With much love from Paul and Phoebe McHoogendyk



copyright Jo Elliott

Standing in front of the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, Scotland on the day before we flew home

Now to our 11th Sacred Stone Journey.



Copyright Paul Hoogendyk

### The Standing Stones Of Callanish

On the Isle of Lewis, the Standing Stones of Callanish were just a stones throw (pardon the pun) from where we were staying at Leumadair B&B. A light dusting of snow had fallen overnight and had changed the whole landscape of the stones and the pale morning light had given them a surreal look and feel.

We had arrived the day before in the late afternoon and after throwing our bags into our rooms, raced out to stand among the stones in the fading light. The wind was howling and cold then, the energy of the stones and the area they stood in felt powerful and almost overwhelming. Now as we stood among the stones the next morning, it was still freezing and eerily quiet. Every step we took crunched in the snow and ice that lay all around. We could see a larger snow storm coming in from over the sea and knew our time was limited and so stayed only until the first flurries began to fall. How long were we there? Could have been a minute or an hour, who knows. In places like this time is not important and does not exist. We all soaked in the energy of all things past, present and future of Callanish and then left with a sense of having been welcomed to this wonderful land.

Mind you we had the worst storm in a year greet us on our arrival at the Staffin Inn on Skye three days earlier and the wind whipped around that beautiful Inn for the whole time we were there.

Didn't stop us tho.....we were out sight seeing and "doing" the whole time and taking in the energy of the landscapes, sights and towns.



Pic by Jo Elliott

The Old Inn at Staffin. One of the most lovely self catering places we could have picked to stay. Highly recommend it if you are visiting the Isle of Skye

And on the day we were to fly out to Orkney, the worst storm in ten years hit Glasgow and other parts of the UK and had us grounded for a day. There were wind gusts of up to 165 miles per hour.

It was still a little bumpy the next day and that only added to the adventure. Instead of six days at Odin in Stenness, Orkney, we now had five and just had to cram all we could into those days.

We travelled with Paul's Aunty Jo and our friends from the US Carla Woody, Lucinda Brogden and Doug Easterling.



The Gang at the Standing Stones Pub on our last night in Orkney, Scotland. From left to right: Jo, Lucinda, Doug, Paul, Phoebe and Carla.

Pic courtesy of Carla Woody

Oh before we forget to tell you, whilst at Leumadair, Don our host who is a falconer, brought one of his hawks, named Silk in for us to meet and Paul got to hold and connect with this beautiful bird. He connected so well that within minutes Silk had ruffled her wings and tucked one of her legs up under her to stand easy on his arm...apparently this behaviour normally takes up to eight weeks of bonding and working with the bird, to happen.



Paul and Silk the hawk.

For those who like information Silk was named after the assassin from the Belgariad series of books.

We are not going to say too much more about the journey...have to save something for book 3, other than to let you, our loyal and very much appreciated, readers and supporters, in on the first part of the stone ceremony as the most amazing natural events occurred during that moment which we were all unaware of until much later.

This story is of trust and faith and whatever else it says to each one who reads it,

is our gift to you.

Long before we began our journey to Scotland and specifically Orkney for the 11th stone ceremony and placing, Paul had the strong knowing that the stone and the bullroarer needed to be bathed in the light of the winter solstice sun of Maes Howe, perhaps one of the world's most famous chambered cairns. Remembering that we arrived in Orkney a day late and in the middle of a huge storm which had past..so we thought. The chances of seeing a sunset were remote to say the least, let alone seeing the shaft of light that comes down the long, low entrance corridor to enter the chamber and fill it with light.

Full of hope and trust we entered the cairn at around 2pm on the 10th of December, a full moon. Clouds filled the grey sky as we listened to our guide fill us in on a little of the history and the protocols around being in the chamber. Walking almost doubled over through the pitch black entrance, a tap on our shoulder by our guide signalled that we could stand and walk into the tomb which has been lit with artificial light.

" I doubt that it will happen and we have a 50/50 chance of it, if you see the sun coming down the passage way, yell out and I will switch the lights off." stated our guide.

Fascinated by the stories we were being told of the cairn, its builders and history we listened intently, with one eye out for the light of the sunset. At one point a little feeling of doubt crept in, followed quickly by a voice in my head that said..."Oh yea of little faith." and then a chuckle. Once again we had no idea of how long we had been in the chamber and Paul and I had the stone and the bullroarer ready and waiting....

One of our group called out.."There it is."

Right on cue at sunset the clouds had parted and a golden ray of sun crept down the corridor and into the chamber. We bathed both stones in its light as we answered our guides question.

"What are you doing?"

All too soon it was gone and our time in the cairn was over. Our guide had said how lucky we were. He had been bringing groups in for many years and this was the first time in seven that he had seen the light. We know the owner of Odin, Olive thought so also as she has never seen it. We were not allowed to take photos inside and the ones that were taken outside, after, all came out rather blurry.

If you would like to read more about the cairn just go back to the link we attached to Maes Howe or click [here](#).

As we emerged over an hour after we entered we noticed the clouds had once again covered the sky. We all went back to Odin feeling pretty pleased that we had seen the sun come into the chamber and were able to complete the first part of Paul's vision where the stone ceremony was concerned.

On the last night of our stay we had arranged to go to a traditional story telling night. Normally these would happen earlier in the year and yet the storyteller was more than happy to put on an evening for us. We drove past the house twice on a pitch black night as we looked for the blue boat out the front, a sign that said VIA and the lights on in the car park. They ended up calling us to find out where we were...turned off the lights they had because the pigs were trying to jump the fence to get to the light...OK!!

Was a great night and there is so much truth in those old scary stories told to children around the peat fires at night. We spoke to our hosts about why we were in Orkney and told them about our time in Maes Howe. In turn they told us that at the moment we had entered the chamber, a total lunar eclipse began....it went on the whole time we were in there. Not only that, a friend of one of our group who had been watching the weather, had texted her to say that in fact we had only been in the eye of the storm and yes! it coincided with the time we were in there as well.

How amazing is that: In one of the most powerful ceremonial areas in Scotland, in the eye of a storm, seeing the solstice sunset, (not on the day of the solstice tho)on a full moon as a total lunar eclipse was occurring.

One of our friends we told at home said that it was a wonder we didn't all vanish into another dimension....now that would have been the icing on the cake..just so long as we all came back tho! Lots more to do in this one yet.

As we say goodbye to 2011 we will leave you with a sunrise shot of the Stones of Stenness and

one of the watch stone that stood guard over us during our stay in Odin. It stands at the entrance to the driveway and dominated the skyline. Wouldn't let Paul photograph it until the ceremony had been completed. His camera just wouldn't work when he tried to take shots...worked perfectly once he had walked away.



The Stones of Stenness at sunrise



The Watch Stone at the end of the entrance to Odin at 4am as the moon was setting behind

Blessings to you all  
Phoebe and Paul.