THE NEW YORK OPEN CENTER PRESENTS

AN ESOTERIC QUEST IN THE WESTERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND

MEGALITHIC, CELTIC AND NORSE CULTURES IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES

Lews Castle • Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
August 22 to 27, 2017

WWW.ESOTERICQUEST.ORG

A Journey Around the Isles of Lewis and Harris & Pilgrimage of Life: A Day of Spiritual Reflection
August 21 - 22, 2017

Pre and Post Conference Journeys

Findhorn Spiritual Community & Eco-Village and the Isle of Iona
August 27 – September 3, 2017

WWW.ESOTERICQUEST.ORG
Scotland is a country rich in esoteric traditions. The rock of the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides is some of the oldest anywhere on earth, and the island is dotted with enigmatic megalithic sites, most famously Callanish, that echo an ancient culture.

Lewis, like the other Western Isles, has been inhabited by Picts, Celts and Vikings, and Gaelic is still spoken by a large portion of the population. This year’s Esoteric Quest, the thirteenth in a series stretching back to 1995 on Western spiritual traditions, will continue our theme from our 2016 Quest in Iceland of exploring the mysteries of the North. This time we will investigate the geometry and alignments of the evocative standing stones, ponder the meeting of Gaelic and Norse cultures, experience the mystical beauty of these islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, and learn about Scotland’s more recent esoteric traditions, from Hermeticism to Freemasonry. Our home base will be Lews Castle overlooking Stornoway harbor, a 19th century estate recently restored to perfect condition.

There will be an optional Pre-Conference Journey that will take us around Lewis and Harris, visiting some of its megalithic sites and other places of beauty. This will be followed by a half-day retreat in which we will be invited to reflect on our life’s journey. Our optional Post-Conference Journey will begin with four nights at the celebrated eco-village and spiritual community of Findhorn, which emerged from an esoteric worldview, and will be followed by three days on Iona, the most sacred of all Scottish islands and the birthplace of Celtic Christianity.

We invite you to join us on this Quest and participate in this highly regarded conference series, widely considered among the finest explorations anywhere of the half-forgotten spiritual history of the West.
Poacher’s Pilgrimage: An Island Journey
Alastair McIntosh, Ph.D.
What are we within when we come to these islands? What does it mean to touch base with places so elemental, so visceral, in the roaring of the sea, in the whisper of the wind through heather and the fields of summer flowers, and in an ancient people who are at once gentle and ruggedly determined? We are living in times that have neglected the spiritual, and the consequences are playing out. It is time to ask again, and more deeply than ever before: What gives vision and meaning? Alastair will discuss his pilgrimage by foot through Lewis and Harris, and his book about it, Poacher’s Pilgrimage, an ecology of the imagination.

Megalithic Construction and the Rise of Civilization: What Did They Know And When Did They Know It?
Steve Bass, M.A.
The stone circles and chamber and passage monuments of the Neolithic period are awesome in scale, inspired in conception, subtle in execution and deeply moving to experience. From a modern point of view, it seems miraculous that early people could have created such works. This presentation traces a body of spiritual and intellectual knowledge, sometimes called sacred geometry, that lies behind our ancestor’s achievements. It hopes to illustrate what Neolithic people had to know to build such structures and how they could have come upon such knowledge. Such an exploration creates a bridge to the past and could provide helpful insights to transcend our present world of materialistic alienation.

The Secret Common-Wealth: An Overview of Esoteric Scotland
Leonard George, Ph.D.
The ancient Greek explorer Pytheas visited the Isle of Lewis, where he viewed a “round temple” marking the place where the moon visits earth. Pytheas likely saw the stones of Callanish. This site, and others like the Ring of Brodgar, were millennia old when Pytheas sailed, and they still grace Scotland with some of the world’s first traces of esoteric activity. Scotland’s rich inner life has continued ever since, finding expression in Arthur and Merlin, alchemists and cunning folk, Templars and Freemasons, Findhorn and even Hogwarts (which J.K. Rowling’s novels set in the Highlands). The Scottish witch hunts and Reformation violence show what can happen when we fear or forget the esoteric depth.

Mysteries of the Lands of the British Isles: From the Megalithic to the Viking Age
Haraldur Erlendsson, M.D.
We will focus here on the key sacred sites of the British Isles, starting with early Megalithic stones such as Callanish, and then consider how sacred trees and the saints of the Celtic Church, principally St. Patrick and St. Columba, assumed the role of the ancient gods. We will also examine the stages of transformation within the solar mysteries, and the significance of the visit in 986 AD of King Olaf Tryggvason to the monastery of Tresco – The Wood Island - in the Isles of Scilly. There a prophecy sets him on a journey to reawaken and realign the new Christian culture to the old ways - the Celtic and Nordic mysteries. We will also touch on the significance of Stornoway, location of our conference, from this perspective.
Out from the Shadow of the Vikings
Mary McCormack
Mary shares with us what was it like to grow up on a ‘Viking’ island, believing herself to be, as a Macleod, descended from the son of Olaf the Black, King of the Isle of Man and Iceland, and part of a proud Viking clan that once were the overlords of Stornoway and its surrounding areas, only to discover that the reality of her story was far more complex. How do you embrace your newly revealed Celtic/Gael roots when everything you were told from childhood pointed to your Viking blood? Mary will tell us her story.

Hidden Order in the Runes of the Elder Futhark:
The Most Ancient Runes and Their Cosmological System
Halvard Hårklau, M.Sc.
Are the Nordic Runes strange signs imbued with magical power, or simply a set of phonetic idioms for common writing? Popular opinion today, as well as scholarly opinion in a more romantic era, certainly associates them with mystery and magic, contrary to the more dismissive current academic view. This presentation suggests that the runic forms and their sequence contain a complex mathematical structure that may cast new light on their origin. We will also investigate possible esoteric currents, Eastern and Western, that may have conveyed the cosmological system that inspired the creation of the runes.

The Continuing of the Celtic Spirit
Tess Maginess, Ph.D.
The Celtic spirit may be defined in many ways, but its essence includes a deep respect for, and connection to, nature. Often this is expressed in a theology where the divine lives in nature, and so we must not wound nature. A further aspect is a humility which allows that there may be many otherworlds beyond us, imagined as physical or as metaphysical. Crucially, otherworlds are not seen as remote or abstract, but as modes of being that are just across the threshold. Whether within a Pagan or Christian nexus, reaching out to that which is Other is a guiding imperative. This plenary will concentrate on how this Celtic spirit inscribes itself in Irish literature and arts, continuing a dynamic that has lasted thousands of years.

Freemasonry: The Scottish Connection
Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.
The history of Scotland and that of Freemasonry are closely interwoven in a dense fabric of fact, fantasy, legend and romance, surrounded by many intriguing questions. Was Scotland the birthplace of what is now called speculative Masonry? What of places like the 15th century Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburgh with its amazing carvings, some of which suggest Masonic motifs? Key names that need to be mentioned include: King James VI of Scotland, who is credited with having put Scottish Freemasonry on an organized footing; and Andrew Ramsay, a Jacobite who spread the mystique of Scotland among continental Masons, leading to the creation of the Ancient and Accepted or Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. This talk will explore this fascinating tapestry, looking at both the historical record and the mythical dimension.
workshops

The Knap of Howar: Neolithic Sacred Geometry in the Orkneys
Nicholas Cope, M.A.
The remarkably well-preserved, stone-built Neolithic ‘dwelling’, known as the Knap of Howar, was constructed over 5,500 years ago on the remote island of Papa Westray in Orkney. This talk demonstrates that its architecture is governed by geometric proportions that are not usually considered known before the time of Euclid, Pythagoras and Plato, around 300-500 BC. Various geometric principles are highlighted such as the golden mean ratio, Alexander Thom’s megalithic yard, and Scottish Neolithic stone balls with the goal of discovering pre-modern wisdom traditions.

Hebridean Storytelling
Ian Stephen
Born on Lewis and living there still, Ian Stephen is an acclaimed novelist and poet who will recount his Island background and how storytelling and humor were strong aspects of his upbringing. This Hebridean sensibility is evident in his recently published Western Isles Folk Tales and Waypoints, both of which share stories of wit, premonition, and local naming tales that are fixed to specific points of land. In this workshop, we will be introduced to such tales from Lewis and Harris, exploring the role of stories in other areas of Scottish culture and in today’s world, and discover the ways in which we may pass them on.

Fairies and Familiar Spirits: Encounters With Uncanny Beings
Leonard George, Ph.D.
“Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen, We daren’t go a-hunting, for fear of little men.”
—William Allingham, The Faeries
Encounters with strange beings have been reported in every culture and age, and nowhere more so than in Scotland. These meetings are often unsought, but some folk have cultivated relationships with the beings, and found their own lives transformed. The entities have played the roles of initiator, guide, disrupter, tempter, motivator, and deadly menace. In this presentation we will consider the ways people have tried to understand and harness the enduring mystery of the visitors.

The Cailleach, Maiden and Bodach in Celtic Folk Tradition
Peter Vallance
Within the Celtic tradition there are stories and remnants of rituals that bear witness to the cycle of transformation from young maiden to old crone. Curiously, this is connected to the role of the male trickster or bodach, as he is called in Gaelic. We will hear traditional stories, look at historic and current photographs of rituals, artefacts and sacred sites, and learn more of the early Celtic and Christian traditions and their use of sung prayers and chants connected to the Cailleach and to Bridget.

Bridget: Goddess, Saint, Feminist
Tess Maginess, Ph.D.
It has been suggested that the encounter between paganism and Christianity was frankly confrontational, but in the figure of Bridget we see another approach – one which tends to integrate aspects of the original Celtic Pagan goddess with the historical figure of St. Bridget. Some aspects of Bridget have huge resonance for our own time, including attitudes to enslavement and ‘othering’ (Bridget’s mother was a slave), and attitudes toward women (as in the story of Bridget’s Cloak). The Druidic Bridget is associated with light, inspiration and fire; in Christian belief she is the patroness of a panoply of vocations from poetry to dairying, from healing to metalcrafts. Bridget’s life work as healer, friend of the poor and older people, founder of convents and a school of art, offers a radical vision of border-crossing, of inner healing, of vital, empowering energy.
The Second Sight
Jonathan Bricklin

“We should have had little claim to the praise of curiosity, if we had not endeavored with particular attention to examine the question of the Second Sight.”

—Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland

Second sight, a translation of the Gaelic An da shealladh, was defined by Johnson as an “an impression made either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant or future are perceived, and seen as if they were present.” While accounts of second sight (a.k.a. precognition) are broadcast over the entire range of recorded history, the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland lay claim to an unparalleled richness of accounts over many generations—accounts so compelling that the preeminent 17th century linguist George Hickes wrote to Samuel Pepys: “I told you, when I was in Scotland, I never met with any learned man, either among the Divines or Lawyers, who doubted of the thing.” We will explore some of these accounts as well as their place in the burgeoning field of consciousness studies.

Scotlands Ancient Wisdom
Scott Olsen, Ph.D.

Over 425 Neolithic carved stone balls have been unearthed in northeastern Scotland near Aberdeenshire. These extraordinary Neolithic petrospheres, often discovered around stone circles, reflect a sophisticated knowledge of geometric principles underlying Platonic and Archimedean solids. Embodying the mathematical symmetries of root 2, root 3 and the golden ratio, some of them are dated 2500 years before Plato. This is suggestive evidence for an advanced body of ancient wisdom, perhaps a neolithic golden age, or remnants of an advanced ancient civilization.

Gardener of the Gods: The World of Ian Hamilton Finlay
Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.

The great Scottish poet and artist Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925-2006) is best known for the enchanting garden, Little Sparta, that he co-created in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh, combining horticulture, art and poetry in a unique way. Little Sparta has been declared a Scottish national treasure. Much more than a garden, Little Sparta became a vehicle for conveying Finlay’s traditionalist philosophy, which involved a kind of classical paganism. The garden is dedicated to Apollo and is full of classical references in the form of sculptures, monuments, poetic inscriptions and much else. Christopher McIntosh, who was a close friend of Finlay for 30 years, offers a window on to his work.

The Sibyls’ Vision: The Epic Poem of the Poetic Edda
Haraldur Erlendsson, M.D.

Völuspá is an epic poem at the heart of Nordic spiritual culture and remains the principal source of Nordic mythology. The Viking seeress Völva, speaking as mother of the world, describes the creation of the cosmos and humankind. The Gods of Wisdom wage war against the fiery giants, the Midgard serpent and the Fenris Wolf. The Aesir Gods and their allies the Vanir are defeated, and the world destroyed in Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods. But worthy men are granted a sacred, eternal abode. A new world arises, and the Golden Tablets of Wisdom reappear, thanks to Viðarr (Wood Lord), son of Odin (Wood God of Wisdom). Continuing our explorations from Iceland last summer, we will examine this epic as a manual for the transformation of consciousness.

Ritual Initiations in Norse Culture
Halvard Hárklau, M.Sc.

Ritual initiation seems to be a rather universal phenomenon, but did the ancient Norsemen also have such rites and, if so, what were they? Some have argued that there are in Norse culture striking parallels with symbolic elements in Freemasonry. In this workshop, we will consider the general traits of ritual initiations, and then look at the evidence for initiation rites where the cults of divinities like Freyja and Odin may have been celebrated over an extended period, even into the Christian era.

The Hermetic Union of Scotland and England
Paul Bembridge, M.Phil.

Viewed by himself and others as a court poet with Hermetic leanings, King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England in 1603, amidst hopes of the advent of that renewed Egyptian golden age promised in the Corpus Hermeticum, a body of ancient, esoteric texts that had reappeared in the Renaissance. Accordingly, James left Edinburgh with medieval legends of Scotland’s Egyptian origins ringing in his ears, and was met in London’s streets with triumphal arches replete with Egyptian symbolism. The hope was that the united nations of Scotland and England would now become what Egypt had been, “the temple of the world.” This workshop reflects upon what happened to those esoteric hopes as the new century progressed.
AFTERNOON EXPERIENCES

THE CALLANISH STANDING STONES
The Callanish stone circle complex is famous worldwide for its enigmatic, magical quality. The stones are said to be aligned with the 18.6 year cycle of the moon. Within the landscape are stones and features that appear to represent the triple goddess and her consort. The range of hills in the distance, Cailleach na Moineach (Old Woman of the Moors), can be seen as a recumbent female figure who acts as a ritual focus for viewing the moon.

BOAT AND SAILING TRIP OUT INTO THE ATLANTIC
We will have the opportunity to venture into the Atlantic on a rigid, inflatable boat that launches near the north westerly point of the UK. This ninety minute ride will allow us to see sea eagles, seals and other local wildlife, sometimes including whales. On the final evening of our conference, weather permitting, we will also have a chance to sail in some of the traditional small sailing ships used for centuries by local seamen and fishermen.

THE BLACKHOUSE, ARNOL
Built around 1880, this traditional Lewis thatched house gives a special insight into island life. Once the residence of a Hebridean crofting family and their animals, it takes us back to an existence that endured for centuries, with its peat fire still burning in the open hearth.

EVENING EVENTS

AN ISLAND CEILIDH
With The Stephen Drummond Band
Anyone who has joined a Scottish Ceilidh in the Highlands and Islands knows that this evening of live music, dance, and song is one of the most exhilarating and energizing events you could possibly experience. We will learn the dance steps, have a party, and imbibe a joyful dimension of the Scottish soul.

WAYPOINTS:
An Evening of Poetry and Storytelling with Ian Stephen
Ian fell in love with boats and sailing as a boy, pairing this love affair with a passion for the beautiful but merciless Scottish coastline, an inspiration and motivating force for his poems, plays and radio broadcasts for many years. This evening he speaks about his new book, Waypoints: Seascapes and Stories from Scotland's West Coast. His themes will include the many parallels between storytelling and navigating coastal waters.

COSIR GHÂIDHLIG THUNGA:
The Tong Gaelic Choir in Concert
This evening’s performance will illustrate the music, culture and history of the Gais through song and harp, from lively Puirt a Beuls (mouth music) to work songs and everything in between. Although the songs are in Gaelic, the lyrics will be explained to illuminate their context and meaning. The Tong Gaelic Choir, whose members come from all over Lewis and Harris, perform regularly at the Mod Nàiseanta Rioghal (Royal National Mòd), the yearly celebration of Gaelic music. Tonight’s program also features choir director Carole B. Miller performing on the traditional, triangular Celtic harp.
DAY ONE

**A Journey Around the Isles of Lewis and Harris**

*With Alastair McIntosh, Ph.D.*

**August 21, 2017**

The Outer Hebrides sit on the very edge of Europe, at the meeting point of Celtic cultures from Ireland and the south, and Norse cultures from Scandinavia. A traditional way of life with the land and sea has continued into the present, with a deep Celtic spirituality of Catholic expression in the southern isles, and of the Protestant faith in the north. The *Carmina Gadelica*, in which the old spirituality of the isles was collected by the folklorist Alexander Carmichael, is recognized by UNESCO as comprising *Memory of the World* heritage status. The renowned Rough Guides place Scotland among the top world destinations to visit in 2017, and nowhere is this more justified than in these isles, with misty Lewis in the north, rocky Harris in the south, and a mountain range between.

Guided by writer and activist, Alastair McIntosh, we begin on the 21st with a visit to the western coast of Lewis, where the ocean and distant mountains spread out before us. From there we journey to a *bothan*, or beehive dwelling, that had the reputation of being a ‘druid’s house’. It sits alongside a small prehistoric stone circle overlooking the dramatic Callanish Standing Stones that we will experience later in the week. We then head down to Harris by the spectacular Atlantic route. At St. Clement’s Church in Rodel, we will learn about the islands’ spiritual history and hear stories from a local seafarer, from the time of the faeries and the Celtic Church up to the present. No visit to these islands would, of course, be complete without a stop at the “social distillery” for a taste of the ‘water of life’, otherwise known as whisky and a stop at the center for the renowned Harris Tweed.

**DAY TWO**

**Pilgrimage of Life: A Day of Spiritual Reflection**

*With Alastair McIntosh, Ph.D.*

**August 22, 2017**

Most visitors to the Western Isles see only the outer surface of what is offered – the beaches, the unpredictable weather, and the archaeology. However, that can miss the greater depth of the place. To visit an island can also be a spiritual homecoming to who we are. It can open windows upon life itself. How so? We are all on a journey, a pilgrimage of life, a quest: one that has its departure; one that might be in the midst of initiations, or trials and tribulations; or one that moves us ever onwards to eternal return. This calling takes us to the edge of normal understandings of space and time.

When you are in the Hebrides, you walk a land that has known human habitation almost since the ending of the last ice age. *Menhirs* such as the Callanish Stones date back some 5,000 years. Some of the “temple” religious sites are said to go back to druid times. When standing in such places, you get a feel for deep time, and this opens doorways to the spiritual world.

During this contemplative half day we will consider these matters: where is your life at present, where are you on your journey of departure, initiation and return? After a morning spent indoors, and an afternoon at a sacred natural site at the ruins of Saint John’s Temple on the west of Lewis, we’ll just be still, listen inwardly, and experience.

**Note:** The 21st and 22nd of August programs must be taken together.

**Price:** $390

Includes one-way coach and ferry travel from Inverness to Stornoway, hotel transport from the ferry, fully-guided two-day tour, all entrance fees, ground transport and all meals from dinner on the 19th through lunch on the 22nd.

One night’s hotel in Inverness and two nights’ hotel in Stornoway are priced separately. For accommodation options and costs, please see www.esotericquest.org.
Findhorn Spiritual Community & Eco-Village and the Sacred Isle of Iona
August 27 – September 3, 2017

We begin our Post-Conference Scotland experience with a visit to the spiritual community and eco-village of Findhorn in Moray, east of Inverness. Here, we will explore its esoteric roots and its evolution from a remote possibility on a windswept caravan park in 1962 to global renown today as a center of reverence for nature and its warm, convivial community. How did it begin and what were the spiritual streams that influenced it? We’ll learn about the post-war esotericists who founded and inspired it, and come to understand why Findhorn was deeply green long before it became fashionable. We’ll come to know the artistry of its many unique buildings, the humor and openness of its members, and the beauty of its surroundings. We’ll also have opportunities to enjoy sacred dance and hear vespers at a medieval abbey.

After Findhorn, we will travel down Loch Ness and across the island of Mull to the birthplace of Celtic Christianity, the incomparable island of Iona. St. Columba sailed here from Ireland in the 6th century to establish a spirituality deeply rooted in a sense of communion with the natural world. Iona is truly a holy place which, once experienced, is never forgotten. We will take gentle contemplative strolls among the coves and hillocks of its serene western side, come to know the island’s spiritual history and significance, meet local artists, and immerse ourselves in the unique meditative state engendered by the atmosphere of this ancient island. Our experience will also include sailing to Fingal’s Cave on nearby Staffa that inspired Mendelssohn’s Hebridean Overture.

Price: $1815 per person in double accommodations; $1985 in single accommodations
Includes seven nights’ accommodations and all meals through breakfast on the 3rd, all coach transport and round-trip ferries, fully-guided tour, all entrance fees and programming, and transfer to Glasgow Airport or central railway station on the 3rd of September
Biographies

Steve Bass, M.A., studied architecture at Pratt Institute, and traditional arts at the Royal College of Art, London. He has taught at Notre Dame University, the Institute for Classical Architecture and Art, and the Grand Central Academy of Art. His book, Beauty Memory Unity—A Theory of Proportion in Design, is currently in preparation by Lindisfarne Books.

Paul Bembridge, M.Phil., was a staff tutor at the University of Exeter’s Centre for the Study of Esotericism, working alongside its founder, the late Professor Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts with a lifelong interest in the esoteric traditions of the West, particularly as they are transmitted in the works of its poets.


Nicholas Cope, M.A., studied at the Royal College of Art (1991) where he specialized in Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts. In 2016, he was appointed Professor Emeritus of R.I.L.K.O. (Research Into Lost Knowledge Organization). He is the co-author, with Keith Critchlow, of The Knap of Howar and the Orions of Geometry. www.ncope.co.uk

Haraldur Erlendsson, M.D., is an eminent Icelandic psychiatrist and specialist in the treatment of psychological trauma. He has long had a keen interest in the esoteric, particularly dream symbolism and yoga. His recent novel, The Man Who Drew Triangles, draws on his research into earth energies and sacred geometry.

Leonard George, Ph.D., is a Canadian psychologist, educator, writer and broadcaster, and a lifelong student of Western esotericism. He is a faculty member of the Department of Psychology and the Department of Music Therapy at Capilano University, British Columbia. The author of two books and dozens of articles, he has been an advisor and presenter for the Esoteric Quest conferences for many years.

Tess Maginess, Ph.D., is co-writer with Grace Clunie of The Celtic Spirit and Literature and the author of a collection of poetry, Variarum. She is currently a senior lecturer in Queen’s University, Belfast, working in adult education. She has published widely on literature, adult education, mental health and older people.

Halvard Håklau, M.Sc., a biochemist by profession, is a long-time student of the esoteric traditions whose research aims to combine the best of academic rigor with authentically spiritual. An instructor in Mindfulness Meditation, he is also a practitioner of Tai Chi and Qi Gong.

Mary McCormack was born and raised on the Isle of Lewis and, barring six years when she studied English and Scottish History at the University of Aberdeen, has lived on Lewis all her life, though she has traveled extensively. A native Gaelic speaker, her daughter, Alyth, a singer/actor, currently performs with The Chieftains.

Alastair McIntosh, Ph.D., is a leading writer and speaker on spirituality for our times. Raised on the Isle of Lewis, he holds an honorary professorship from Glasgow University and a fellowship in divinity at Edinburgh. His most treasured books about the Hebrides are Soil and Soul (2001) and Poacher’s Pilgrimage (2016).

Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil., is the author of The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason; Gardens of the Gods; and Eliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival. His fictional writing includes the short stories Master of the Starlit Grove and The Wyre Garden. Christopher also was on the faculty of the Centre for the Study of Esotericism at Exeter University.


Ian Stephen is a native of Lewis and a former coastguard who, since winning the inaugural Robert Louis Stevenson Award in 1995, has worked as a poet, novelist, artist, storyteller and broadcaster. His first novel, A Tale of Death and Fish, was chosen as a book of the year by The Guardian and been compared to Moby Dick.

Peter Vallance was born and raised in rural Scotland. He has lived for the past thirty years in the Findhorn Community where he is Artistic Director of the Universal Hall and organizes the Festival of Sacred Dance, Music and Song. He tours internationally with his work as a dance teacher and storyteller and organizes tours to the sacred sites of Scotland and Ireland.

Conference Staff:
Director: Ralph White, New York Open Center
Coordinator: Carrie Wykoff, Events That Matter
Registrar: Andrea Lomanto, New York Open Center
Director of Finance: Nancy Rotger, New York Open Center

Ralph White is co-founder of the New York Open Center, one of America’s leading institutions of holistic learning. He has directed the Esoteric Quest conferences since their beginning in 1995, and is the author of the highly regarded memoir, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited.

Carrie Wykoff has been the conference coordinator for the Esoteric Quest since 1998. She produces all types of events and the Quest is truly one of her favorites. She is also an interfaith minister, a musician, a fitness instructor and a home educator.

Andrea Lomanto has served as the registrar for the Esoteric Quest since 2006. She is also a puppetista, educator, and founder of Power Up Youth Project.
Registration

Main Conference Fee
Main Conference Course Code: 17SQUEST
Registration through May 25, 2017: $2670
Through June 28, 2017: $2920
The conference fee includes the full conference program, select afternoon activities, evening events and all meals.

Accommodations Fee
Accommodations are provided in Stornoway, Scotland, for the five nights of Tuesday, August 22 through Sunday, August 27.
August 22 - 27 (five nights) in Stornoway
Double rooms with private bath: $360 per person
Single rooms with private bath: $700
Single Castle rooms shared bath: $600
Double Castle rooms shared bath: $375 per person
Single Castle rooms with private bath: $700
Double Castle rooms private bath: $450 per person

For booking double rooms, please specify whether you will be attending as a couple, sharing a room with a friend, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

Registration
The Open Center invites you to register on our website at www.esotericquest.org, where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

Payment
All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Scotland. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 x101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

Travel Arrangements
Main-Conference participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Scotland. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 x101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

Travel in Scotland
Participants will arrive into Inverness Airport on August 21 for optional group travel to Stornoway via Ullapool, or into Stornoway Airport (SYY) on August 22, to make their own way to the conference. Those of us attending

About the Conference
Our conference begins with an opening night reception and dinner at Lewis Castle in Stornoway on the evening of August 22. Each day, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch. Afternoons will feature workshops and excursions into the surrounding Outer Hebrides. Evenings will have dinner and events exploring Hebridean culture. The conference ends with lunch on Sunday, August 27.

Refunds
A full refund, less a $200 processing fee, is offered for cancellations made by Thursday, May 25, 2017. Travel insurance is strongly recommended in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control.

Scholarships / Work Study
A limited number of partial scholarships are available. A scholarship application can be found on our website at www.esotericquest.org.

“Hast thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-haired son of the sky! The west has opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is there. The waves come to behold thy beauty... Rest, in thy shadowy cave, O sun! Let thy return be in joy.”
— Ossian
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CONFEREE HIGHLIGHTS
Bridget: Goddess, Saint, Feminist
—Tess Maginess, Ph.D.
The Hebridean Soul—Ian Stephen
Fairies and Familiar Spirits: Encounters With Uncanny Beings
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The Hidden Order of the Runes—Halvard Hårklau, M.Sc.
Freemasonry: the Scottish Connection
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Megaliths and the Rise of Civilization
—Steve Bass, M.A.
Out of the Shadow of the Vikings—Mary McCormack

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