

AstroUpdate – October 2013

Welcome to the Stella Starwoman October AstroUpdate! Well here I am back from long service leave and how the time has flown by since I last wrote to you back in April. It's been great to have a break and I feel refreshed and motivated with lots of new ideas and inspiration.

I'm now back in business with readings, birth chart reports, monthly stars and the AstroUpdate newsletter and will soon be planning courses and workshops for 2014. If you have a gift voucher that you'd like to use, don't worry about the voucher expiring, just contact me to book in on 9534 5021. I'll also be re-opening my shopping cart in the next couple of weeks so you'll be able to purchase 2014 diaries and calendars and all the usual stuff. Once the shopping cart is back in action and I've organised my 2014 courses, I will let you know.

Walking the Milky Way



Hot and Sweaty at O'Cebreiro

While in Europe I fulfilled a long held dream and walked the 800 km Camino de Santiago (Way of Saint James) from St Jean Pied-de-Port in the French Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain. Pilgrims have been travelling the road to Santiago on foot or horseback for over a thousand years and, at the height of its popularity in the 11th-12th centuries, over half a million people a year made the pilgrimage from all over Europe. Santiago de Compostela was one of the top three medieval pilgrim destinations (alongside Rome and Jerusalem), with pilgrims flocking to embrace the statue of the Christian apostle James the Greater whose mortal remains are said to lie buried beneath the silver shrine in the Santiago cathedral.

A friend walked the Camino back in 1985 and I'd always promised myself that one day I would do the same. Her interest was medieval history and there was certainly plenty of that on offer, but I was more interested in the idea that the Camino followed the path of the Milky Way past Santiago towards Cape Finisterre (Land's End) the most westerly point on mainland Spain and a place revered by the Celts who built a solar altar there to worship the setting sun.



Like other places with Celtic origins, I found Galicia to be full of megaliths, standing stones and prehistoric sites and some basic research revealed that many of the Christian cathedrals, shrines and holy places on the Camino were built on the site of more ancient temples. Santiago de Compostela was no exception, with excavations revealing not only the remains of an older cathedral destroyed by the Moors but also a Roman temple and an even older Celtic well. Another famous Camino landmark, the Cruz de Ferro or Iron Cross, marks the highest point of the track and was originally the site of a pagan monument.

‘Santiago’ is Spanish for ‘St James’, while ‘Compostela’ means ‘field of the star’. The official explanation for the city’s origin is that in 835 AD, the secret burial place of St James the Apostle was revealed by a bright shining star twinkling over a remote field. However, further research shows that when Christian pilgrimages to the burial site began in the 9th century, this road of the stars already existed and had done for hundreds if not thousands of years! In fact the whole of the Camino from St Jean Pied de Port to Santiago de Compostela, is peppered with villages, places and mountain passes named after stars or after a trail of light, as if it were a stellar route, a route leading to a special destination - the field of the star.

I discovered that in Roman times, the road to Santiago was a trade route known as the Via Lactea or Milky Way. And today those stars can be seen everywhere – on signposts, in churches, on rose windows in the Gothic cathedrals, on the stone wells and monuments and on restaurant menus. And before the Romans came the Celts. The trademark Camino scallop shell is an ancient symbol for the setting sun and was a focus of pre-Christian Celtic rituals in Galicia long before the birth of James. The scallop shell is also a pagan fertility symbol connected with the goddess Venus and the divine feminine.

PHOTO: SUNSET OVER CAPE FINISTERRE (LAND’S END)



So Who Built the Camino de Santiago and Why?

Thousands of years ago, our ancestors believed the earth was a living organism, linked by power channels through which life energy flowed. They marked these places of energy and power with dolmens and megalithic structures, linking them to each other with roads and pathways across the surface of the earth. And they built temples near the sacred places, nexuses of power, where the telluric currents of the earth met with the astral currents of the skies - a manifestation of the concept ‘as above, so below’. The Camino de Santiago following the path of the sun from east to west across Spain appears from an earthly perspective to lie directly under the Milky Way.

Both the French and Spanish sides of the Pyrenees are dotted with dozens of stone circles or cromlechs, dating back to prehistoric times. Studies have shown that these stone circles represent stars reflected on earth from the sky above and if viewed in groupings reveal the precise configuration of constellations in the same way the three major pyramids of Giza mirror the stars of Orion’s belt.

During a conference at Salamanca University in 1999, Juan José Ochoa de Zabalegui presented his hypothesis that the original pilgrimage towards the west of Spain, which later became the Camino de Santiago, originated with the people who built these stone circles in the Pyrenees. In de Zabalegui’s study, he emphasises the widespread belief in the ancient world that both ends of the

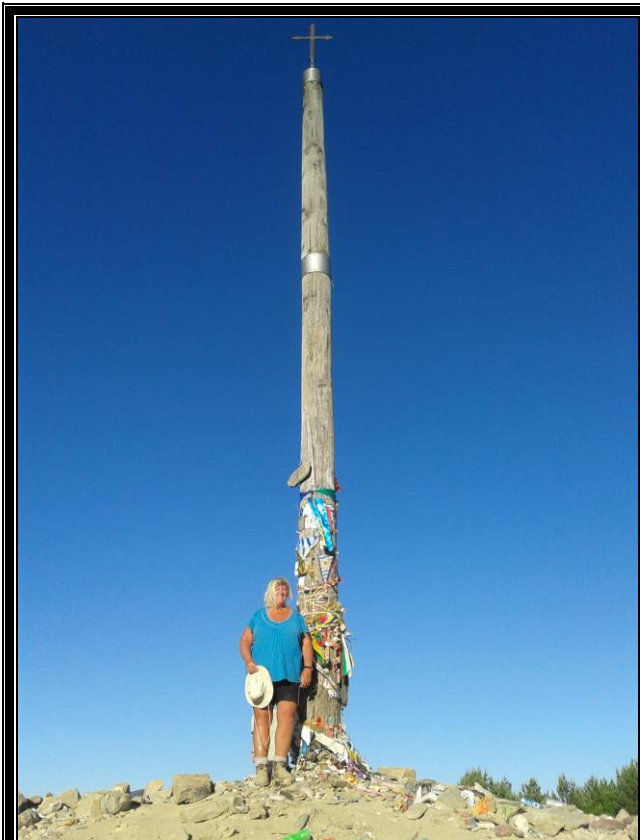


Milky Way possessed a star gate. He writes of a stellar cult dating back to the 6th century BC who believed there were two doors for the passage of the souls, a northern gate in the constellation of Orion, represented by the summer solstice, birth and descent into the body and a southern gate at the tail of the constellation of Sagittarius, represented by the winter solstice, death and ascent to the gods. The Camino de Santiago following the Milky Way to the setting sun at Cape Finisterre was quite literally an earthly re-enactment of the soul's journey from life to death.

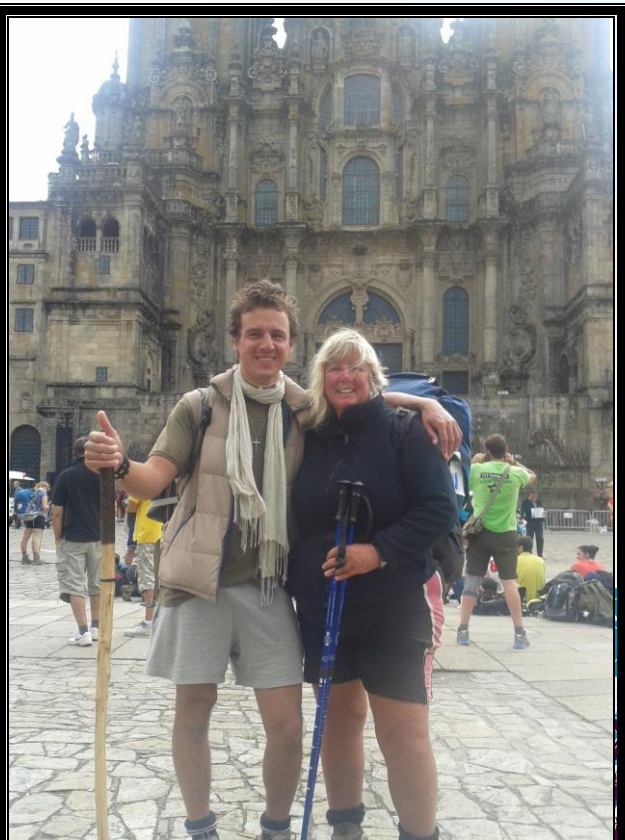
I found an interesting quote from the 20th century French alchemist Fulcanelli: "The Way of Saint James is also called the Milky Way. Greek mythology tells us that the gods followed this route to go to the palace of Zeus and the heroes as well followed it to enter Olympus. The Way of Saint James is the stellar route, accessible to the chosen ones, to the courageous, persevering and wise mortals." Metaphysically therefore, a pilgrimage to Santiago and Finisterre, whether Christian or pagan, represents initiation and a return to the source or dwelling place of the gods. If this seems a bit farfetched (and when you're taping up your blisters on a top bunk wearing wet shorts believe me it does...) consider this. Icons of St James show him preceded by a dog as he travels the Camino towards the sacred field of the star. The band of the Milky Way passes through the constellation of the Great Dog containing the brightest of all stars – Sirius. And when is Sirius the Dog Star at its brightest? In the lead up to the northern hemisphere winter solstice as the dying sun travels through Sagittarius (the constellation associated with St James) at the time of year associated with death and ascent to the gods.

Many people believe that walking the Camino de Santiago opens them to life-changing personal and spiritual experiences powered by the energy from the Milky Way above and the millions who have trodden the earthly path below. I certainly met men and women whose lives had been completely transformed by their journey across Spain. My own experience was one of open-hearted love and I often found myself overcome by tears of joy, wonder or gratitude. Apart from the soul's natural response to the incredible natural and architectural beauty and energy of the places we visited, I have rarely encountered so much goodwill, kindness, openness and warmth from a group of fellow travellers. It really was a magical journey and while I'm not sure that I returned to the source or even became a courageous mortal, I watched the stars of the Milky Way twinkling overhead every night.

Iron Cross (Cruz de Ferro)



Arrival at Santiago Cathedral



Featured Sign - Libra



The Sun travels through air sign Libra from 23rd September until 23rd October this year. Libra is the seventh sign of the zodiac with keywords “I balance” and “I seek my other half”. Those born under the sign of the Scales promote love and harmony and teach us about the importance of give and take. They adore relationships, are often cultured or artistic and are experts in charm, diplomacy and negotiation. Negatively, Librans can be superficial, indecisive, manipulative or dependent and because they hate unpleasantness or disagreement, they often avoid conflict and bury their heads in the sand. In medical astrology, Libra rules the kidneys, lumbar region and skin, so when Librans are out of balance they tend to suffer from lower back pain, kidney problems, urinary tract problems and skin diseases such as eczema. The Libra colours are ivory, pink, turquoise and blue. Libra’s greatest lesson is to learn to develop their ‘inner partner’ and become whole rather than seek an outer partner to feel complete.

Mercury Retrograde

From 22nd October to 12th November, communication planet Mercury turns retrograde and travels backwards through water sign Scorpio. Mercury retrograde occurs three to four times a year and is known as a time when everything seems to go haywire. Delays, computer problems, broken promises and relationship problems are typical manifestations of Mercury retrograde. Problems with transportation and crucial bits of missing information that prevent us from achieving understanding or "moving forward" are also common during a Mercury retrograde period.

Think of the thrice yearly Mercury retrograde transit as a three week opportunity to get your life back on track and regain integrity. Pay particular attention to gut feelings, hunches and pieces of information that randomly come your way. Avoid starting new projects; instead focus on completing or revising existing ones. If things do go pear-shaped, ask yourself: “What am I trying to learn?” “What is the hidden message behind this event?” And as Mercury travels backwards through Scorpio (inner truth and integrity), ask yourself: “How can I speak my truth openly and honestly?”



October New Moon, Full Moon & Aries Lunar Eclipse



This month's new moon falls on the 5th October in air sign Libra. The Sabian Symbol for this degree of the zodiac (11-12°) shows miners surfacing from a deep coal mine, representing the never ending quest for knowledge. This new moon asks us to dig deep to find new answers to existing problems.

The October full moon occurs in fire sign Aries on the 19th October. The Sabian Symbol for this degree of the zodiac (25-26°) shows a man with more gifts than he can handle. There is a lunar eclipse at the full moon representing a complete new beginning – a clean state. We are being asked to express our full potential, honouring all our gifts and talents. This is an important and emotional time for Librans with birthday within a day or two of the eclipse and the eclipse will also affect those born around 17th-21st April, or anyone with planets or personal points, such as the Ascendant and Midheaven, close to 25-26° Aries, Cancer, Libra or Capricorn).

Key Astrological Events - October

Relationship planet Venus enters fire sign Sagittarius from the 8th October to 5th November – a good time to plan adventures with your partner and friends or take up a new and exciting pastime. You should feel like moving out of the comfort zone and have an increased ability to relate to people from all walks of life. Be wary of overspending as Venus in Sagittarius can be quite indulgent. This period is particularly beneficial for the fire signs, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius

Action planet Mars enters earth sign Virgo on the 15th for the rest of October helping us pursue our personal goals in a practical and methodical manner. The second half of the month is a great time for doing any kind of paperwork, odd jobs, gardening, manual work or work which requires attention to detail

The Sun shifts from air sign Libra to water sign Scorpio on the 23rd and meets up with the karmic north node on the 31st. The insights you gain now can propel you forward onto a new path. Others may assist you on this journey.



October Moon Calendar

Launch projects at the New Moon, bring them to completion in the period from just before the Full Moon to the Third Quarter phase and wind them down and reflect on developments in the week before the next New Moon. The period between the New Moon and the Full Moon is the waxing moon (moon getting bigger and fuller). The period between the Full Moon and the New Moon is the waning moon (moon getting smaller and thinner).

You can use this moon table to select the most favourable days to slow or increase hair regrowth. Full instructions can be found in my Lunar Hair Care guidelines at www.stellastarwoman.com/files/LunarHairCare.pdf but to get you started I've marked the best dates for waxing/shaving to slow regrowth in yellow and the best dates to cut hair for thicker, lusher growth in green. If you're serious about Lunar Hair Care - order your own Moon Calendar from the Stella Starwoman Store then you'll know exactly what time of day the moon changes from one zodiac sign to the next meaning you can fine-tune your activities with confidence.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Moon Phase</u>
1 st -2 nd	Leo	Fire	New Moon 5th
2 nd -4 th	Virgo	Earth	
4 th -6 th	Libra	Air	
6 th -8 th	Scorpio	Water	
8 th -11 th	Sagittarius	Fire	First Quarter
11 th -13 th	Capricorn	Earth	
13 th -15 th	Aquarius	Air	
15 th -17 th	Pisces	Water	
17 th -20 th	Aries	Fire	Full Moon 19th Lunar Eclipse
20 th -22 nd	Taurus	Earth	
22 nd -24 th	Gemini	Air	Third Quarter
24 th -27 th	Cancer	Water	
27 th -29 th	Leo	Fire	
29 th -31 st	Virgo	Earth	
31 st	Libra	Air	

Thanks for being part of AstroUpdate. If there's something you'd like to see featured, or have something you think would interest others, please contact me at stellaw@ozemail.com.au

PS – Don't forget to check out your October Monthly Stars at www.stellastarwoman.com to see what's coming up for you this month.

Happy Stargazing

Stella Woods

www.stellastarwoman.com

