

The Othona Community in July 2021.

Written this time by Ruth Bull.

July – that wonderful month when the trees are still fresh and green, gardens and verges are showing off their beauty, and school children break up, looking forward to that long holiday – and our hope, this year, that the holiday season will bring some joy to us all.

Othona has a new 2021 Summer Programme now on the Othona Bradwell website, (<https://www.othonaessex.org.uk/events-listing>) with events running from Monday to Friday, including Music, Art, Olympics and Permaculture – a chance to share in producing and tasting our delicious home grown fruit and vegetables - with the weekends free of a set programme. You are very welcome to book either for meal, a weekend or for the event weeks. Will July be the month we all – including Othona – see the beginning of the end of the pandemic in Great Britain? Othona is open, but we look forward in hope to the relaxing of some of the regulations that keep us at a social distance. We hold in our hearts those who are not likely to be permitted to share time with us because of travel restrictions, including our regular visitors from Germany and France, and our intended group of European Volunteers – remember previous years when their friendly faces appeared, helping out at the Bradwell Community shop and other local events?

The Othona Community welcomes everyone to the activities in our published Programme, and to book outside of these times for a few days of peace, relaxation and spiritual refreshment. Othona also includes what used to be known as “outside groups” – but no-one is “outside” at Othona, even when the booking is for an organised group of people who may not already know Bradwell. We are now welcoming some of our returning Church and student groups: and the diary is already filling for the autumn, and on into 2022. Did you know that the Community often hosts family events such as reunions and birthday parties? The marking of Christian celebrations is a special joy at Othona here at Bradwell and at Othona West Dorset. In June we were delighted to host the good number of guests who came to mark the centenary event at Bradwell’s St Peter’s Chapel, and it is always a huge pleasure and privilege to offer hospitality to those who choose Othona as the place to celebrate weddings, anniversaries, Christenings and other blessed occasions.

A few lines from our founder, the late Revd. Canon Norman Motley are often included here, reminding us that although times change, many things hold their truth. In September 1976 he wrote (“Letters to a Community 1970-1960”) –

“I wonder sometimes if those who appear just for a week, or even a fortnight, always appreciate the great strain (as well as the great joy) under which those who constitute the permanent community work. We still have not a sufficiently strong team to facilitate all that ought to be done without what sometimes appears to be excessive pressure upon those involved, but perhaps it was ever thus in the service of the Kingdom of God. For all that, let me urge you to pray very seriously for our permanent staff.....that those who are with us may be given particular strength and grace

Tim, Debbie and Richard appreciate volunteering from those who have a few hours to spare on a one-off or regular basis – and new Trustees are also needed, ask us for information.

To learn more about Othona or to make booking or a donation, do take a look at our website. Tim Fox is Warden/Manager, with Debbie and Richard Sanders. Email bradwell@othona.org. Website: www.othonaessex.org.uk. Telephone 01621 776564. Keep in contact for details of re-opening times – hoping to meet and greet you in 2021.