

## **The Othona Community in July 2022. Written this time by Ruth Bull.**

Looking forward to July, we also reflect on June – a lively month at Othona. Half-term is always an adventure, with families, singles and couples gathering as the children who visit the Community grow up having fun together. My first stay at Othona was with a youth group in 1963 – many of us continued or returned to Othona, making a new diversity of friends and taking responsibilities in the running, planning and management of the Community across its two Centres, Essex and Dorset. I have been on the staff team in the past, and more recently have been chair of the Bradwell Centre Committee, as a Trustee and Director of the Othona Charity. As my ten-year stint comes to an end, I happily hand over those responsibilities to Paul Coleman.

June also saw the first of our School groups returning – often a first time away from home for the younger ones, but not much time for home-sickness when there is so much to do on the beach, round the Chapel and Roman fort, and competing for the team with the furthest flying water rocket! Other groups also enjoyed time at Othona: if you thought Quakers were a quiet lot you should join us for the BBQ and beach bonfire. If you know of a group who would like to visit or stay at Othona, do let us know.

More school groups join us in July, as Othona's team balance the time available to group bookings, with the times we are open for all-comers. That open Programme is now on the Othona's Bradwell website, or if you prefer a paper leaflet do pick one up locally. You will see that Camp Do Re Mi returns from 21 – 24 July, a great time to join in the singing, led by Werner Ullah and Michael Walker. Our popular Wild Worship, led by Rachel Summers, runs from 25-29 July, and we end the month on a quieter note, with a relaxing Summer Weekend from 29 – 31 July. You are welcome to book and join in these activities, or contact Debbie and Richard, our Warden/Managers, to offer your services as a Volunteer. A good number of local people share a little of their time with Othona – gardening, cooking, fixing things or whatever gifts you have to bring as you enjoy a cuppa together and make new friends.

Norman Motley founded the Othona Community just after the second world war, to bring together those who were in turmoil, and thirty five years later in his book "Othona, Much Ado About Something" he tries to identify the elements that brought people in and "held them to the Christian faith for many years."

"First there was and is a local feeling of peace and solitude if necessary – not in the dining hut – but outside – on the saltings – and the shell ridge - a strange tongue of myriads of shells amid the salting and leading to the open sea. Secondly, the mystery of the chapel with its fifteen centuries of prayer and work. Thirdly, the fact that much of the pressure of modern life is neither imminent nor operative here. Fourthly, the fact that transistors and TV are not available – nor encouraged – and that those present are gently and sometimes painfully forced back upon their own resources."

Forty years on from Norman's writing, and although the temptations of "transistors" has given way to a reliance on mobile phones, the essence of this writing remains – that at Othona people may find a sense of tranquillity that opens the door to peaceful self-reflection and awareness of our fellow men, women and children. WW2 is history, but Othona now has an opportunity to welcome Ukrainian people seeking refuge from yet another devastating war close to home. People change, Community remains.

To learn more about Othona or to look at the Programme, and make booking or a donation, do take a look at our Website. Find us down the track through East Hall Farm East End Rd – through the wind-

powered electric gate; don't forget your exit token to use on the way out. Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Warden/Managers.

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