

## **The Othona Community.**

In September 1976 the founder of the Othona Community, Canon Norman Motley, wrote: "Othona is a strange phenomenon where the fraternal dialogue may truly take place. No-one can define precisely what happens, but of this we may be sure. The Holy Spirit is free there to direct and lead in the lives of people without prescribing (as the Church so often has done) His mode of operation. To put it more crudely, the Divine Spirit, Who blows where He lists, and who does not take kindly to being confined to the intentions of men, does seem to express Himself in a hundred and one new ways in the uninstitutional character of the Community." (Letters to a Community 1970-1980.)

Othona is still a strange phenomenon. Many people ask what it is, what it's for, what goes on down there. Those of us who have shared in community at Othona over a number of years have still not found the answers – but we still need the questions. For each who visits, stays for a while or joins the Team, the answers are different – and changing imperceptibly, as we realise when we look back. The Christian Spirit, and thus the Holy Spirit, leads us to new openings as the Community shifts and changes shape – which it does each day, as the make-up of the Community changes. As one who has visited, stayed and worked at Othona over hundreds of days, I believe there has never been a time when I have sat down to a meal with the same people around the table. Yes, there will be the stability of many familiar faces - alongside new faces, and the return of those who have held the memory of Othona for many years.

Picture a day in early September, as the Summer Season drew to a close. Astronomy week was well attended, and many stayed on over the Bank Holiday Weekend, joined by others. Two surprise visits – a retired woman I had known as a young and somewhat troubled young Mum, returned after 30 years because she simply could not keep away, and was so happy to find familiar people in Community; and who was drawn, as a Windrush immigrant, to give comfort and advice to a new family of refugees fleeing the corruption of a South American country. Also – a return visit by a woman who had kept Othona in her heart for 50 years, soon enjoying conversations and music as if the troubles of the years were melting away. Conversations are frequently light-hearted, funny, good-humoured, and inclusive. Encounters turn to friendly chats, and it is a surprising reality of Othona that at times, as an unexpected gift of the Holy Spirit, true friendships and lasting relationships develop, taking the spirit of Othona beyond the confines of space and time. Then, 101 new ways of sharing Othona spring from the Spirit.

We had an Autumn Retreat on the Weekend of 23/25 September, led by our Bishop John Perumbalath, then our ever-popular Harvest Working Weekend from

30 Sept to 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct – local people welcomed to come and share the fun, fellowship and fruit. **More activities in October include:**

**De-Stress Weekend** Friday 7 Oct – Sun 9 Oct, Stress resilience, Tai-chi and more with Royston Kymberly.

**The Joy of the present Moment** Fri 14 Oct – Sun 16 Oct, a Meditation-Based Retreat.

**October Half-term** Mon 24 Oct – Fri 28 Oct, Join us for a fun and family week.

## **!!! FIREWORKS!!!**

Fri 4 Nov – Sun 6 Nov, Come along for our dazzling fireworks event.

**Fireworks Supper and Fireworks Display on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November. See the website for full details.**

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, assisted by Phil, Chris, Peter and volunteers.

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