

The Othona Community – August 2023.

When the Othona Community first welcomed people to Bradwell in the mid-1940s, August was really important, the main summer holiday season, with school children and overseas students around, and some adults able to take a week or two of paid leave to come and join in. We are thankful that Othona now has two centres, Essex and Dorset, both able to open all-year-round, with staff, volunteers and comfortable accommodation.

“Thankful” is a very significant word to Christians, recalling the old hymn “that which Thou desirest, our humble, thankful hearts.” The Psalms encourage us to give thanks even when times are hard: It means that we have noticed one another, our wonderful world, and our God, and found so much to appreciate with gratitude. At mid-summer, a group of Quaker friends shared a weekend at Othona, and Young Friends wrote the following report.

“Dear Friends, from the 23rd to 25th June 2023, 53 Friends of all ages gathered at the Othona Community in Bradwell-on-Sea. We came together for a weekend of community building, art and music making, and thriving in the beautiful nature that surrounds Othona. We worshipped in the chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall, both in the traditional Quaker way and in an all-age worship in which children and young people shared the art that they had created. We thank all the staff and volunteers that made this event happen and we thank the Spirit for gracing us with the gifts we were each able to bring to the event. We are all extremely looking forward to coming back next year! Signed in Friendship.”

Giving thanks is an important way to recall happy memories of an event –or a person. At the Pilgrimage weekend – an event shared joyfully with the Village and Diocese – a gathering on the Saturday evening gave us a great opportunity to give thanks for the life of Dave Hodgson-Brown, who sadly and too young, died in April. He and his wife Sandra were well known to many people locally, as they were on the staff team at Othona until few years ago, returning as volunteers. It was a privilege to be able to share with Sandra and their family, in giving thanks for David’s interesting and fulfilling life, as we gathered in the Chapel and then at Othona.

In June and early July the Community changes complexion, as we host a number of residential groups of school children: much hard work in the preparation and delivery of the programme, but their faces and shrieks of laughter are thanks enough. And as that happy time passes, we prepare for the main summer Season. You may already have enjoyed the Quiet Day, the Shape Note Singing, the Wild Worship and the Wellbeing weekend in July. Coming up in August:

Environment Week 31 July to 5th August. **Music Week** 5th to 12th August with a **Concert at St Thomas**.

Art Week 12-19 August; **Survival Week** (Bushcraft) 19th to 24th August. **A Time to Simply Be**, a relaxing week from 28 August to 1st September.

All are welcome, as resident or day visitors. For more details of all these events, and activities taking place throughout the autumn too, do phone, email, take a look at our website or pick up a leaflet locally. Debbie and Richard Sanders are our Warden/Managers, Othona is accessed through East Hall Farm, East End Rd, Bradwell on Sea (electric entry gate, collect free exit token from the office.)

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