

## Dear Friend



Today's photo shows our part-completed Four Seasons Studio. Our contractor Dave Fowler and his team closed down and left the site on Tuesday. Whenever it's safe to return we look forward to having them complete a lovely building.

Since I wrote on Sunday we have Lockdown (of a sort) and here on the south coast certainly a turn in the weather that seems almost too ironic for words. Perfect weather to visit... when nobody can.

I'm feeling so privileged to be here - in a glorious place and not alone. And uncomfortably aware of how different conditions are now for countless people - perhaps for you.

To reach out as best we can, today Othona brings you resources from the seriously brainy to the musically joyous. From poetry to a family meditation. Plus extracts from your own delightful emails. There's a way to renew friendships, a plea (from me) for tech-savvy help, and some thoughts on the NHS and international measures in the crisis.

### **Strengthen this intricate spiderweb**

Sitting here in the Othona office can feel like being at the centre of a web. Umpteen radial threads going out in all directions. But Othona is also about the connections *between* those threads, many of which we at the centre never know about.

So it occurs to me to ask: Would you like to reach out to someone you know from Othona, but don't have their contact details? A phone call or an email from you might make their day!

Of course we can't just dish out individuals' details, can we? But here's how.

1. Write to me giving the name of the person you'd like to contact and supplying your own phone number as well as permission to give them your email address. (If it's

all you know, just a first name and hints of when you met *may* enable me to identify him/her.)

2. I will then try to contact them and give them those details so they can make contact... or they can give me permission to tell you theirs and you take the initiative from then on in.

### **How We Help**

So, we now have a National Help Service for half a million volunteers! Lots of Othona folk will be doing their bit, I know. Our tireless chair of trustees, Clare Gough, as a recently retired pathologist is standing by to rejoin the NHS when Salisbury Hospital needs her.

Let us support her and *all* the carers and health-workers. With thought and prayer, yes, but also in any practical way to lighten their other loads, And most of all by sticking to the rules that limit the spread of infection.

Another thing. Today we hear the UK is ordering 10,000 ventilators from Dyson. Sierra Leone, by contrast, has one. That's not one thousand, but apparently just *one ventilator in the entire country*. There's a great little charity we have links with (founded by an Othona member) doing something really practical with young people to help that country protect itself against the virus. If you'd like to know more or donate just follow [this link](#).

### **'Community Without Buildings' Resource**

[This page on our website](#) is where you'll be able to find everything we put online during this crisis (including back numbers of this e-newsletter). Today we've added:

- Fiona's Favourite Antidotes: ideas for music (with youtube links) to help us stay sane and cheerful
- What *you* are saying: selected quotes from your emails to us
- Graham Fawcett's first online Poetry Talk (Graham has led many inspiring events at Othona)
- A futurologist speaks - an expert well-known in the German-speaking world reflects on how the virus may change the world for good

### **Shall I, shan't I?**

Twenty five years ago this very week, I left my job as a broadcaster (BBC R4 and World Service) so as to move to Othona. I've never missed that work. But I'm beginning to wonder if I might dip my toe back into some 'narrowcasting' while we're all so physically removed from each other.

What I have in mind is an occasional podcast. Trouble is, neither I nor anybody else here has any experience of how a podcast works technically (or editorially). Is there someone reading this who does have that experience and would be prepared to coach us a bit? We'd love to hear from you.

## **Let's not forget the bigger picture**

The mobilising of resources for this crisis is staggering. Too little and too late sometimes, indeed, but still momentous. Thank God.

I can't avoid reflecting, however, that our rich western countries are now experiencing all-at-once the kind of threat to life and society that our brothers and sisters in war zones and in many developing countries live with, year in, year out.

When it comes closer to home and is more dramatic, suddenly we can find unprecedented financial resources. Trillions to stave off a virus. But here's my question. How much borrowing, how much disruption of 'normal life', how much ingenuity and concerted action could we - *will* we - bring to bear on the peril of climate change? Because it will ravage the world far more than Covid-19. I don't mean to depress myself or you. More to remind us that change *can* happen.

## **STOP PRESS**

There's a free online meditation session for families at 10.30am on Friday 27th, led by Othona regular Julie Leoni whose blog I shared in a previous newsletter. [Here are the details.](#)

If you'd like to know about future online stuff with Julie (and less at the last minute!) please think of [signing up for her emails here.](#)

That's enough for now. I pray you are staying well and hopeful.

Every blessing in our common humanity

Tony - and on behalf of Liz, Kate and Robin