



Summer 2015

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The Othona Community is an open Christian Community, whose purpose is to provide, mainly through its two centres in Essex and Dorset, a welcoming, accepting place with a pattern of work, worship, study and play where people of different beliefs, cultures, classes, abilities and ages can discover how to live together, learn from each other, explore together the relationship between faith and life with a view to more positive action in the world, and encourage one another in caring for the world and its people.

Deadline for Spring Full Circle

March 1st 2016

Registered Charity No. 1154204

Editorial

Dear friends,

I (Ruth) have recently read a wonderful book which I think is very relevant to life at Othona. The book is 'The Return Of The Prodigal Son - A Story of Homecoming' by Henri J. M. Nouwen (ISBN 0-232-52078-x). The author was inspired by the Rembrandt painting 'The Return Of The Prodigal Son' which Paul and I have seen in The Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Henri Nouwen revisited this painting many times, and over the years, through meditating on it, he came to understand more and more about the characters in the picture.

Most Othona members will identify with the love and forgiveness shown by the father for those who, like the younger brother in the story, feel that they have gone wrong and are lost. Othona has an ethos of love and acceptance, from which many of us have benefited and through which we have become more whole.

But, as Nouwen asks, who is the elder brother, portrayed in the picture as standing aloof and tall, dressed in fine clothes, with an austere expression on his face. One of several of Nouwen's suggestions is that he is someone who feels himself superior to the lost brother and stands in judgement and disapproval of him. My observation is that we at Othona may not always have had much patience with such people, yet the Bible story makes it apparent that the father loves the older brother too. The father says to him 'All that I have is yours'. Nouwen discovered over time that he (as we too may find) possessed, in fact, many of the characteristics of the older brother which had until then remained unacknowledged.

And finally, what of the father, who is tenderly touching the humbly kneeling figure of the lost son, and who is portrayed in the picture as a bent, sightless old man with one large hand and one small, feminine one. Can he/she be both a man or a woman? Nouwen's book teaches us that we should strive not just to become the forgiven son/daughter, but ultimately to take on the characteristics of the father, and that

communities, such as Othona, have a great need of people who have grown to become the father.

For many years Nouwen worked for the L'Arche community, and he explains how much he has learnt from the great gifts which many mentally challenged people have to offer us, with their warm, smiling welcome, non-judgemental attitude, openness and lack of a hidden agenda and their clarity of vision. We at Othona have certainly experienced this.

I won't say more, BUT I recommend that you read Nouwen's' book. You may well, as I did, find it inspirational, and possibly, life-changing.

This Full Circle might be dubbed the issue of the warden and ex wardens. As far as we know a total of six of them, or maybe seven(?) have contributed to or been described in this edition! How many can you find?

With our love,

Ruth and Paul

Othona West Dorset – 50 Years Young! **Tony Jaques**

By the time you read this we'll have celebrated our Golden Jubilee: 50 years since Othona first opened its doors here in Dorset. So the historical perspective on our present situation is much in our minds this year.

In July 1965 Community House was nothing like the place it is today. For a start it was smaller; the extension wing with its extra 7 bedrooms wasn't added until 1979. And for Othona's first few years the facilities were particularly frugal. The women of the Community of Christian Contemplatives (CCC) – the last of whom had died here in 1960 – left a legacy of extreme simplicity. A house with no electricity or gas, only

collected rainwater for drinking and washing, open fires the only source of heating, and 'earth closets' instead of WCs.

Can you picture it? The uneven walls were whitewashed, not painted. Sagging bookshelves housed multiple copies of the books and pamphlets written by the CCC founder Adela Curtis, as well as her extensive library. There were heaps of equipment and material still left over from the Second World War (when the house had been requisitioned for use by the army). The grounds were in such an overgrown state, I'm told, that originally we didn't even realise there was a terrace outside the french windows!

The first Othona warden, John Cross, together with wife Peggy, sister-in-law Jean and daughter Elizabeth, moved in under those conditions. Gradually, with all sorts of volunteer help, they made the house more habitable. Othona folk in those days were used to very basic conditions at the 'camp' at Bradwell, our first centre: carrying all the water from a standpipe in another field, for instance. So roughing it a bit didn't deter John, Peggy, Jean and the 'early adopters' of this new Othona at Burton Bradstock. Over the next few years they oversaw so many important changes. Bringing mains electricity and water to Othona meant a benefit also for the few other houses in the surrounding woodland. They too could now be connected. Three of those houses – small timber bungalows actually – were sold off by Othona to raise our capital contribution towards the mains connections. Now of course they are highly desirable residences, redeveloped beyond recognition; but when Othona was given the property they were outlying ruins-in-the-making.

Given the property? Yes, the trustees of the original charity were required not to sell it, but to find an appropriate organisation that would accept it as a gift. (Norman Motley tells the story in "Much Ado About Something" – his account of Othona's early years.) And what a gift it has been!

Another difference you'd notice if you leapt back to 1965 would be in the chapel. Not at all as it is today: no Quiet Room at the back or gallery above. It was all one very large room, with rows of wooden

chairs and specially designed oak chapel furniture. There was a large wooden altar, a communion rail to kneel at, and of course only candles for illumination. The dividing wall creating the Quiet Room was put in during the 1970s and our oaken floor with underfloor heating was added (above the old, cold concrete floor) as recently as the 2000s.

What are the palpable connections, day by day, between life here now and the Cross family and other Othona pioneers who held the first 'season' here in 1965? A few come to mind. Those pioneers weren't afraid of making changes where change was necessary. The CCC dining room, for instance, was tiny. So they knocked it through to the kitchen and shifted the cooking into an adjoining scullery area – today's kitchen. In 2015 we have a similar need to enlarge our art and craft (and games) building. As a very generous donor to the project said to me recently "I have always loved the *old* art room, but life goes on..."

The same person wrote of "a concern that Christianity should change, grow and 'go on'". Without making any arrogant claims for what we do, the resident teams here over the years have tried to provide a setting in which that can happen. Since 1965 the signs of death and decay in Western Christianity have become ever more marked, but we still hold Othona as a meeting place for people of any faith or outlook and of none. A place to explore that sense of deep community which anyone may experience and which in Christian language is "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit".

Does that sound too grandiose? It's not meant to be. And in the end, for Othona, it all boils down to people. Unexpected connections have a habit of reminding us. When Norman first visited to see if this place would suit Othona, with him were Joyce and Robert Meadows (both Othona members from London, Robert being an architect). And just the other day, among a group of singers filling this house with a weekend of glorious music and fun was none other than their daughter Vicky. She knew Bradwell as a child but had never made it down here until two years ago. It was a fitting moment to remember her late parents – Othona members and progressively-minded Christians to the

end – and all those many, many more without whom our community in West Dorset would never have come about.

50th Anniversary at Othona West Dorset

Ali Tebbs

Othona West Dorset celebrated its 50th Anniversary this July, marking it with a weekend of meeting old friends and eating a lot! There were displays of photos from bygone days, a concert, and many memories and anecdotes.

Mart and I may have been the people with the heaviest involvement for the longest time, having lived, worked and volunteered there since 1972. Some have known it for longer and many have lived there for longer, most notably Tony clocking up 20 years in May, but we have been in and out almost constantly apart from a very few years when we lived nearer to Bradwell. All of us have left our mark on Othona and it leaves its mark on us. I have been finding old photos and have put together an anniversary book showing how the physical place has changed since Miss Curtis first built there. There is almost no part of the house and grounds which hasn't had some alteration, even if it is only new window frames. It has been fascinating to see just how quickly we come to accept them and how we forget what has changed. The pioneering spirit of fighting brambles and trying to see the wood for the trees is not quite the same now - although the brambles probably are!

The heart of the community has also undergone some changes over the years, from the way we use the chapel to the format of the day and the variety of activities. I remember sitting in rows in chapel in front of a wooden altar. Our food has changed – I can remember serving omelettes to the few who were vegetarians - and when fair trade and gluten free diets were only a twinkle in someone's eye - if that. I remember lectures – most often of a very Christian nature – and the subsequent discussions between 5 and 7 pm, a far cry from art, music or walking weeks and a more varied spiritual diet. Groups of children have grown up here and moved on and returned with their own

children. It has been a safe haven or a second home for many, for as long as they needed it.

Various styles of management have been tried, with a huge number of people over the years who have worked or volunteered to keep the place alive for those who come and go. Whether it has been a family, a group, a couple managing alone or our current Core Community model, the aims and spirit of the place are the one constant in all this change. Put a group of people together for a while in the particular atmosphere and expectation of Othona and something magic happens, time and again. It may be different each time depending on content and characters but it is also the same every time too. That is what keeps me here, even when I wonder what on earth I'm doing! So thank you Othona Burton Bradstock or West Dorset or whatever you are now, and thank you to the very long list of people who have made you grow.

Interview With Tim Fox (Warden of Bradwell) **Ruth Gilman and Tim Fox**

When did you first come to Bradwell?

I cannot remember a time when I did not come to Bradwell. My parents brought me here as a small child in the mid sixties.

What are your hobbies and interests?

I am a very keen golfer and really enjoy spending my time off on the golf course and in fact I am just back from a week's golfing holiday in Turkey. I am happy to report that I came back as tour champion. I was captain of my old golf club before I moved out here. Also for my sins I am a passionate West Ham fan and will still be regularly attending

games with my dad, Paul and son, Aaron. When not able to go to the matches I go to the local pub to watch the game on the big screen.

Is Othona special for you? If so, why?

Othona is very special for me, firstly because I have so many good friends here and wonderful memories going back a lifetime, but I think what makes it most special for me is that it is and always has been my church. I've always found so called "conventional" churches quite difficult regardless of the denomination. My experience is that the churches expect those who join them to be "like them" whereas at Othona you are truly accepted for who you are and Othona is a place where you are able to explore faith and spirituality without inhibition or having to conform to dogma or tradition. Also Othona is so much fun. On the whole we don't take ourselves too seriously. Invariably when you sit with other Othona members who are relaying their stories and experiences there is a huge amount of happiness and laughter.

You were warden before? Why did you choose to come back a second time?

I was asked this question at my interview and the truth is I am unable to know whether this was a sense of calling, or selfish desire, but what I do know is that it did and does feel very right.

Is there anything you would like to change about Othona?

My wishes are not so much about what we should change as about what we should do more of. In particular I want to see far more youth participation and believe that we can only truly achieve this by empowering our young people to be able to fully contribute, and to be fully represented in our decision making processes. Also we need more space and freedom for young people.

How do you see Othona, Bradwell developing over the next few years?

One thing that was evident when I returned to Othona Bradwell last autumn was that whilst having plenty of bed spaces, we were inhibited by the number of bedrooms. The recent addition of five yurts allows us to accommodate larger groups, and offer more choice of accommodation. The new barbecue while in itself is enormous fun, helps us to cater for larger numbers throughout the summer season and beyond. The next steps will be to determine the future of the Bank, and the accommodation this used to provide, and the hut in the lower field. Alongside these practicalities I'd love to find ways to better give our so-called 'outside' groups a fuller experience of Othona, which in turn will encourage people to join the community as members and come along to community events. I'm encouraged by the number of members and friends who have offered their time and skills in facilitating community and group events – I see this as Othona at its best, and want to offer more opportunities and involve more people. I view the participation of members as essential to what we do.

What are your hopes and dreams for Othona?

My hopes and dreams are always about people and the community; to see a thriving and growing community which is true to the original aims of 70 years ago, because those aims are just as relevant and valuable today as they were in 1946. If we hope to be here in another 70 years' time, we have to start meaningfully involving and empowering our younger members. So I'm keen that we look at ways in which younger people (16+) can stay and volunteer.

News from Bradwell **Mark Russ**

The fruit cage is bursting with redcurrants and raspberries, the vegetable beds are full of courgettes, and sweet-peas decorate the stoep. Our grape vine is looking lush and all manner of butterflies and

bees are hard at work. The badgers appear on cue for the peanuts we scatter nightly, and all the swallows have fledged.

It's been a busy spring and early summer season here at Bradwell, with groups too numerous to mention them all. We've baked bread and made rockets with primary school children, we've hosted Anglican and Baptist churches from Hackney, Islington and Shadwell, we've welcomed Mid-Essex Quakers, a group of Russian Orthodox pilgrims, local Buddhists and provided a safe and supportive space for recovering addicts on a 'Came to Believe' event.

We celebrated Easter in community, with a bonfire-lit vigil on the beach and early morning fireworks, and our May Bargain Break saw us welcome over eighty guests. We've christened the new barbeque, and the yurts, now fully broken in, are proving very popular. We've named them after Celtic Saints, so if you're yet to meet them, do come and say hello to Aidan, Brigid, Cedd, Dunstan and Ethelburga on your next visit. The Solar Building is nearing completion, thanks to a lot of hard work from Pete and Olly, and the peace garden and labyrinth is in full bloom.

We've said fond farewells to our housekeeper Wendy and cook Marie, and short-term volunteers Hana and Mirsha. We wish them all well, and are so grateful for all they gave. We have welcomed Olly and Sam to the core team, as well as a growing pool of energetic and indispensable volunteers, as we get ready for a very busy summer

The Psalms (Part 2)

Colin Hodgetts

You can find part 1 of Colin's article in the Spring 2015 edition of Full Circle.

I sent copies of the psalms to Donald Swann and Rabbi Albert A. Friedlander, and more recently, to Archbishop Rowan Williams. The responses were heartening. Donald wrote, "There is a happy modal simplicity about the tunes and their varied tempi; and the quite

unassuming language, that you use in verse, fits so admirably. Are all these texts recent? It really beats me how you find ways of putting all this Hebrew into clear language”.

This was the Rabbi’s response: “I have read them through carefully and think that you have done an excellent job. Needless to say, I prefer the Hebrew version to any translation, but I also feel that the Psalms should speak to many communities and should meet the needs of our generation”.

Archbishop Rowan, whom I approached as both poet and theologian, was equally positive, describing the collection as “an extraordinary achievement”. He also raised some interesting points about ‘register’ to which I have been attending in a recent revision.

The canticles I chose to include were controversial as they included settings of words from Buddhist, Hindu and Moslem sources. Many of these were later published separately by Stainer & Bell.

The launch of The Othona Psalms at St Martin-in-the Fields was a bit of a disaster as the printers, the Burlington Press, failed to get copies there on time. In those pre-photocopier, duplicator days we were able to run off a handful of psalms for the congregation, but without the music. We could sing but we could not sell.

Back in St Peter’s chapel we sang from the book each day, sometimes with a guitar, sometimes with guitar, clarinet and double bass and, when musicians were available, with other instruments as well. I later added three and four-part antiphons to some of the psalms for those who wanted something for the choir to sing.

I was interested to discover that, when players were teaching themselves the tunes, they had little difficulty getting the notes right but often missed the spirit of the piece. Sometimes a psalm that required a gentle arpeggio accompaniment would be treated to a chord thrashing. I realised that a recording would need to be made. For Dave James, a blind guitarist, I recorded a tape, but the quality was not good enough for general circulation. The opportunity to do something more came a few years later.

Schumacher College offered a course on 'Performance', led by Anthony Rooley, Emma Kirkby and Evelyn Tubb. "The greatest task immediately ahead of us is...to state afresh a philosophy of the performing arts so that once again they may serve the highest aspirations of humanity", wrote Anthony. I was intrigued to discover more and signed on.

As part of the course we each had to give a performance. I included a couple of my psalm settings. Evelyn Tubb liked what she heard and offered to record some of them. On my return home I set about arranging accompaniments for nine instrumentalists. Evelyn's partner, Michael Fields, played the guitar; Tina Bennett, a professional viola player and leader of the Hartland Chamber Orchestra, violin and viola; Idan Piercy, a graduate of the Royal Military School of Music, clarinet and violin; Nick Crump, a founder member of the Hambleton Hopstep Band, recorders and trumpet; Tim Dollimore, a student at the Small School, 'cello; John Keys, accordion; and Brian Davison, formerly drummer with the Nice, percussion. I contributed double bass, keyboard and clarinet. Evelyn also played the trumpet. In the winter of 1993 we spent a hectic weekend in the chapel at Burton Bradstock rehearsing and recording seventeen of the psalms.

The weather was freezing and road noise required the abandonment of some takes. The recording engineer was Antony Askew, who had worked for the BBC, who insisted on whole takes: no patching. Unfortunately the distributor he recommended went bust and I lost all but a few handfuls of tapes and had no more money to invest in the project.

Since publication I have continued to work on the collection, and recently have been making a root-and-branch revision as a result of developments in theological thinking. A major critical inspiration has been the American theologian Sally McFague who, in her books *Metaphorical Theology* (1982) and *Models of God* (1987), is critical of 'outmoded or oppressive metaphors and models' that are triumphalist, monarchical and patriarchal. As an alternative she experiments 'with the models of God as mother, lover and friend of the world, and with the image of the world as God's body'.

Following in her footsteps has resulted in a reworking of many of the psalms. The question now is, What next?

I am happy to email a copy of the latest version – words only – to anyone contacting me on colin@hodgetts.me.uk.

Editor's note: Colin was a warden at Bradwell during the 1970s. He is now our Chair of Trustees.

Amanda's Adventures in Spain

Amanda MacKenzie

Editor's note: Amanda is currently a member of the core community at Bradwell.

During my break from the gardening at Othona Bradwell I travelled across Europe and Spain for eleven weeks over the winter, covering more than 6,000 kilometres, mainly by train and bus. It was so relaxing reading, knitting and watching the changing landscapes as we sped past.

My first stop was at the Buddhist retreat centre of Amitavati in the hills outside Valencia in eastern Spain. The plan for the working retreat was to help with the olive harvest, but following several years of drought this year's harvest was very poor and was completed in two days by five of us! We picked 113 kilos of olives compared to their usual harvest of 2,000 - 4,000 kilos. However there were plenty of other jobs to be done, including the gardening!

It was a lovely experience sharing the life of the small community created by Vidyasri and Suratna in their lovely home at Casa Rosa. We were just a small group and nearly all British, I found myself fitting into the routine of life at the centre very quickly; shared chores, porridge making, evenings around the log fire. I even managed to get up for the early morning meditation sessions (those who know me will understand how challenging that is for me!). The sessions took place in

the meditation room on the olive tree terraces. The contrast between the night time temperatures and the daytime sunshine was really surprising. We would trundle down to the meditation room in the dark wrapped in coats, hats and scarves and then step out an hour later as the sun came over the hills turning the valley a glowing golden pink. Later in the day emerging from the candlelit hut out onto the hillside after our evening meditation session and witnessing the vast star-filled sky and the Milky Way was one of the highlights of the my time there, as were the wonderful meals shared together on the terrace of the casa. We also had time for relaxing and walking in the beautiful hills with stunning views from the peaks across to Valencia and the coast 60 kilometres away.

I then travelled on to Madrid for three days as a tourist, particularly to visit the trio of famous art galleries, the Reina Sophia, the Prado and the Thyssen Bornemiszen collection. Highlights for me were seeing Picasso's Guernica and the stunning collection at the Prado, particularly the Velasquez and Goya's. It was so good to see some of the works I had studied for my degrees for real. I also enjoyed the Botanical Gardens and the Royal Park in the lovely sunshine. And I found a brilliant chocolate shop and cafe that not only had amazing chocolate but also specialised in fine teas, champagne and cava, my idea of bliss.

From Madrid I travelled to the Mediterranean coast for two weeks staying in a roof top apartment, on my own, in the foothills of the National park of the Sierras de Tejada, Almijara and Alhama, close to the sea at Nerja. I spent lots of time walking in the hills and swimming in the sea. I spent part of Christmas day on the beach, swimming in the crystal clear waters in a beautiful small sheltered bay, along with a few other individuals who preferred to spend Christmas that way, very reassuring!

The first week of January I moved on to the retreat centre Cortijo Romero, in a beautiful valley in the Alpujerras with the snow capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada above. I was part of a small team (all British) whose job was to paint the accommodation blocks and the swimming pool terrace with the traditional white paint that all the buildings of the area display. We worked for 20 hours over the week, in

return for the opportunity to stay at the beautiful centre at a greatly reduced rate. We bonded really well as a group with much laughter, lots of sunshine, good food and quite a good amount of local wine too. I also had the opportunity to explore some of the mountain villages, take a couple of good hikes and visit the Buddhist retreat centre of O Ser Ling on the peak of one of the mountains overlooking the Poqueria Gorge, absolutely stunning and somewhere I would really like to visit again sometime.

From there I moved on to Granada and Seville to attend language schools to improve my Spanish, with a view to returning to South America again to work with the children's charities I volunteered with in 2012 and 2013. I loved exploring the art and architecture of these old Islamic cities, so different to Northern and Central Spain.

My last placement was on a small holding in the Sierra de Gata near the Portuguese border. Alejandra bought the property and land 18 months ago with the hope of transforming it into a flourishing smallholding and community. She knows it will take a lot of work and commitment, but it is her dream for a different life now her son is grown up. I found the placement on the HelpX website. From the small amount of information we exchanged before I arrived it was amazing to find how alike we were and the dreams that we both shared. Another reason I chose the placement was to be immersed in Spanish. Alejandra spoke very little English, nor did anyone in the small community of Torre de Don Miguel. The tiny village has a population of 600, but despite this it has a flourishing social network. I was warmly welcomed at the latino/salsa dance classes and the knitting group! After struggling with Spanish for so long, I finally felt I was improving, although when the ladies of the knitting group all started talking at once I was completely lost, again.

Working in the garden each day at Alejandra's reminded me of my work at Othona and I started to look forward to my return. Writing about my experiences now, immersed in the community life and the gardens here at Bradwell my travels in Spain seem a long time ago and another world!

Malaga Mysteries

John Hardy

Editor's note: John is known to many long standing Othona members. He too was a warden at Bradwell during the 1970s. For many years now he has lived in Andalusia, Spain.

EXCITING NEWS – MALAGA MYSTERIES BY JOHN HARDY IS NOW PRINTED AND PUBLISHED!

So once again I am looking for help from friends and family to promote my book.

The ISBN is 9781784622756

It can be bought directly from Matador at http://www.troubador.co.uk/shop_booklist.asp?s=malaga%20mysteries (with a 10% discount if purchased before the 28th June!)

If you click on the book cover there, you will see the author page with more information about the book.

It is available from all bookshops, including Waterstones, W H Smiths etc, although it might have to be ordered.

You can see a trailer about the book on youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLcVOzGMPPo&feature=youtu.be>

It's also available as an ebook from various places, amazon, kobo, iBooks and nook, for links see the author page at [http://](http://www.troubador.co.uk/book_info.asp?bookid=3245)

www.troubador.co.uk/book_info.asp?bookid=3245

Book Reviews

Linda Clover

Two years ago I joined a Book Club in my small Norfolk village and I decided that I would like to share some thoughts with Othona members about the books I have read.

H is for Hawk by Helen MacDonald ISBN 978-0-099-57545-0

This book is about a woman who has recently lost her father. As a young girl she was obsessed by hawks and falconry and after the bereavement she was determined to own and train a goshawk. In doing so she learnt more about herself and her father and was able to come to terms with her grief.

I enjoyed the book very much, I thought it was well written and I liked the references to the earlier books she had read about birds of prey.

I'll Never be Young Again by Daphne Du Maurier ISBN 1-84408-069-2

This book is about a young man who has a poor relationship with his father and leaves home. He meets Jake who becomes his mentor and together they travel and work around Europe. This book was Daphne Du Maurier's second book and she wrote it when she was only 23 years old.

I liked the book and felt it was good considering the age of the author. She shows an insight into the troubled relationship Richard has with his father and describes the feelings of the young people he meets with some sympathy and understanding. I am sure I will enjoy other less well-known novels by Du Maurier in the future.

When we were Orphans by Kazuo Ishiguro ISBN 0-571-20516-X

This book is about a young man whose parents disappear when he is a small boy and living in Shanghai. He is sent to England to be looked after by his aunt. As an adult he becomes a very famous detective and eventually returns to Shanghai to try to discover the whereabouts of his parents.

This is the first book by Kazuo Ishiguro I have read and I was very impressed by it. It was well written in a style I enjoyed reading and I shall look forward to reading more of his books. The scenes set in China before and during the war were real and quite raw at times. The young man's yearning to find his parents and unravel the mystery behind their disappearance was described well with genuine feeling.

I wonder if anyone else would like to share their thoughts over recently read books by sending something to the Full Circle.

Editor's note: Thank you Linda. you have given me a desire to read these books. I really like your idea of sharing reviews of good books we have read.

The Unsung Heroes of Othona: John Cross Jan Marshall

In this Golden anniversary year of Othona West Dorset it seems appropriate to recall with love and thanks John Cross who was the first warden of our centre at Burton Bradstock. He came in 1965 with his wife Peggy, daughter Elizabeth and sister in Law Jean Ling to pioneer the new venture.

John met Norman Motley through Toc H in the early 50's and soon he and his family were coming to Othona at Bradwell. He soon became one of Othona's strongest supporters and by 1956 was editor of the Newsletter.

By 1964 the numbers in the summer weeks at Bradwell were so high, often reaching between 80 and 100, yes really! that it was decided we needed a second centre. So the search started, resulting in the Community acquiring the house, chapel and land at Burton Bradstock with its wonderful position overlooking the sea. However it was certainly not as we know it today. There was no mains water. It all came from a tank on the roof which was filtered through sand and was rain dependent, though to my knowledge it never dried up. If anyone wanted hot water it had to be heated on the stove and carried up to the

bath or wherever needed. This prompted John's comment that he now knew why they washed so little in Tudor times; it was too much effort. There was no mains electricity or gas. Heating and lighting came from oil lamps which had to be cleaned and filled every night and they cooked on an old oil stove until a second hand Calor Gas stove was installed. Central heating wasn't even a dream. There were no flush toilets and the soil closets had to be emptied daily. When we first arrived, like Sleeping Beauty's castle the weeds and brambles were so high and overgrown that we did not know there was a terrace overlooking the sea, and paths up to walled lodge and the other small houses had to be cut with machetes.

The question was asked, who of all our members would take on the exciting but daunting task of becoming warden of this beautiful but primitive centre? It was natural that Norman would turn to John Cross to discuss the situation and John who accepted the challenge not only for himself but for Peggy, Elizabeth and Jean.

With the help of groups from Toc H, the CMP and many of our regular members the house and grounds were cleared and Community House opened for its first season in July 1965. Gradually the jungle was pushed back and the cottages, Littleness and walled lodge were repaired and decorated for use.

To help support himself John worked as a teacher of children with severe learning difficulties, and Jean also worked outside, while Peggy held the fort during the day. Not an easy task for a Londoner born and bred suddenly dropped into a country house with no mod cons.

From the start of those early days John and Peggy created an atmosphere of love and caring and acceptance which set the tone for the future Community. I think few people would have had the courage and stamina to take on such a task, but John believed with all his being that "Othona should provide a place where the Spirit can blow freely and enable new growth, to offer an experience of love without strings, and a space where those who come may experience God within themselves and in others".*

John and Peggy retired in the 70's to nearby Walditch and John Robson took over. He was another of our heroes. Peggy died in 13/3/85 and John in 20/11/2010. Happily Jean still lives in Walditch and still visits the Community occasionally.

**Quote from one of John's letters.*

High Brown Fritillary Butterfly

This is one of Britain's fastest declining species. The wild flower meadow next to the chapel at Bradwell is a breeding ground for many rare species of butterflies, moths, bees and other insects as well as flowers.



drawn by Geoff Langwith

Obituaries

Otto Greenfield (Grunfeld)

written by Sylvia Dadd

Editor's note: Sylvia and Peter were wardens at Burton Bradstock during the 1980s.

It was with sadness that we learnt of Otto's death in November, aged 90. Otto and his wife Rosemary were frequent members of the Community at Burton Bradstock in the 80s and contributed a great deal.

Otto, a Czechoslovakian Jew, was survivor of Auschwitz. In 1942 his parents were arrested, deported and never seen again. Otto and his elder brother Paul were soon also arrested and sent to Terezin and then to Auschwitz where, on arrival, during selection, Paul was sent straight to the gas chambers, while Otto, physically stocky, was selected for work. During the days that followed the survivors were ordered to group into squads of professionals and skills. Otto and three friends from Terezin quickly realised it was best to opt for the lowest manual skills as the Nazis hated Jewish intellectuals. This led to an early departure for the labour camp of Kaufering, near Dachau. The work grew heavier and Otto's health deteriorated. When he was put on heavy night work in freezing temperatures he thought he would not survive. Then liberation. Otto was 21.

Managing to reach England it took four years for Otto's health to recover. In 1947 he gained a place at the Guildhall School of Music where he met Rosemary. Settling on Oswaldkirk, NorthYorkshire, they taught music at Ampleforth. Rosemary is a Roman Catholic and Otto became a Quaker. They have two sons and an adopted daughter.

As part of his therapy, Otto wrote of his experiences in a book, 'The Survivor's Path'. A compelling read. In the month in which he died he also wrote a powerful piece about survivors' guilt and forgiveness. He was able to live a creative life till the end.

Jenny Buck

Crematorium Speech - written by David Buck

"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places". If this were a sermon that would be the text . . . **but it isn't**.

Jenny came to Israel three times - basically to support my interest - when Rev. Peter Louis, our vicar, took us to Tantur (an ecumenical institute) - 2 miles from Bethlehem and 5 miles from the old City of Jerusalem - we had to go as an "Ecumenical Group" . . . so Jenny came as "An Enquirer".

On our final evening at Tantur someone spilt some wine and immediately Jenny was down on the floor mopping it up! (No surprise there!) Peter quipped "At last I've got Jenny Buck on her knees" But actually Jenny had a very straightforward belief! It was simply: "God is Love" and that's all there was to it!

So I'd like to talk about Love.

I'm sure you all remember that passionate reading by John Hannah as Matthew in Four Weddings and a Funeral. In Jenny terms that would read:

*She was my North, my South, my East and West;
My working week and my Sunday rest;
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song . . .*

But then Auden gets it wrong,

Love Does Go On.

Twice during her last illness, I was able to say to Jenny: "A part of me will die with you . . . BUT a part of you will still live with me".

"I know, I know" she replied on both occasions".

So I would rather remember Jenny in the verse of a poem I wrote after Fiona Meyrick died. Like now there seemed to be quite a number of funerals around.

When I wrote this particular verse, I was actually thinking of an American friend Bill Shade. He told the most corny jokes - but we laughed because of the way he told them.

But when I read it in January it struck me quite forcibly that it fitted my Love for Jenny perfectly - little did I know I would read it so soon:

We played Life together

It was but a dream

When you were beside me

The Magical Team.

Thank You for 60 wonderful years.

I walked in the hills **copyright David Buck**

I walked in the hills
And I knew you were there
I'd have quietly reclined
Joined the wind in your hair
Please cry when I die.

I walked by the sea
we threw stones just for fun
Together we swam
'Til we sank neath the sun
Please cry when I go.

We played life together
It was but a dream
Whilst you were beside me
The magical team
Please cry at my death.

God spoke when you died
His hand is so near
He'll keep us together
There's nothing to fear
No need to cry now.

But I still want to talk
You know and you care
So well do you know me
I'll always be there
Don't cry any more.

Remember his Life
For his Love that still lives
Remember his Death
for the Hope that it gives
He cries for us all.

Report of Othona A.G.M. and Accounts 2014

Othona apologises that last November members did not receive the promised newsletter containing reports from the 2014 A.G.M. and the statement of accounts for the year. This is because the person responsible for creating the newsletter was unable to obtain all the necessary reports.

This situation will be rectified this year, and in November members will receive a newsletter containing the above information for 2015.

If you would like a copy of the accounts for 2014 please contact Colin Hodgetts, Chair of Trustees. His contact details are on the back of Full Circle.

Please note that the next issue of FULL CIRCLE will be in March 2016. Please send your contributions as soon as possible.

A.G.M.

**Notice of the
2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

of

The Othona Community

**To be held at 2.00pm in the Lower Hall, St Andrews
Church, Short Street, Waterloo SE1 8LJ**

on

Saturday 26th September

<http://www.stjohnswaterloo.co.uk>

Fully accessible

1.30pm - arrival with tea or coffee

2.00pm AGM

Followed by service and a bring and share tea

Please note that we must vacate the hall by 5.00 pm

LOCATION: Between Waterloo and Southwark Stations. From Waterloo walk down Waterloo Rd., and turn left up "The Cut". From Southwark Station turn right down "The Cut". Short St. turning is almost opposite the Young Vic Theatre. Buses 63 and 45 to Blackfriars Rd.

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