

FULL CIRCLE
THE OHIONA COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER



Spring 2016

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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 Summer Full Circle
July 1st 2016**

Registered Charity No. 277843

Editorial

Dear friends

Last year I (Paul) finally got round to reading Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, having had the book on my shelves for many years. I was interested enough to move on from that to wade through a biography of Tolstoy by Rosamund Bartlett. One of the later chapters discusses the worldwide influence of Tolstoy's religious ideals, founded on the Sermon on the Mount, and how this resulted in the foundation of colonies to put these ideals into practice. I was particularly interested to read that one of these colonies was established at Purleigh in Essex, as part of the Brotherhood Church. This encouraged me to find out more about the various experimental communities that have been set up in Essex. For example, whilst the Purleigh colony included a number of people who had met Tolstoy himself, there was a community at Wickford of people inspired by his ideas. Curiously, this community was referred to in an episode of *Downton Abbey* when Lady Rose talks about a 'nudist colony' at Wickford! Other colonies in Essex were devoted to rehabilitation, such as the Salvation Army's Farm Colony at Hadleigh, which aimed to train and resettle the poor and destitute from London, and send overseas to other colonies. A retreat for wealthy alcoholics was created on Osea Island, ironically by a member of the Charrington brewing family. Religious settlements included those of the Peculiar People, and there were other socialist ones as well, for example at Mayland on the Dengie.

These and others are mentioned on a website called 'Utopian Essex' (see <http://www.utopia-britannica.org.uk/pages/ESSEX.htm>) and the attraction of Essex for this kind of community has been discussed in books by Ken Warpole, and on television by Jonathan Meades. However, most of these communities had short lives (Purleigh only lasted four years) and are long gone or have changed their purpose. Although Othona as a community can be seen as being within this tradition, our community is still alive and well and will this year be celebrating its 70th anniversary. So, as a contribution to this, Ruth and I would like members to send us their ideas about why The Othona Community has survived when so many others have fallen by the wayside. We look forward to hearing from you for the next issue (copy due by 1st July). In the meantime, you may be interested to hear of an

exhibition that is being planned for Focal Point gallery in South Essex later this year. As part of a project on the theme of 'Essex and the Modern Movement', the exhibition will look at the history of radical and utopian communities in the county, including some of those mentioned above. The organisers are particularly interested to include information about Othona and would very much like to hear from people with archive documentation about the community's history. More information about the exhibition can be found on p. 25.

With our love

Paul and Ruth

Othona West Dorset Report

Aidan Childs

Six months ago I became a member of the core community here. The time since then has been a huge experience for me, and what follows can only be a snapshot. I offer this as a selection of the memories that stay with me most strongly from the last half-year at Othona. There could be so much else to include! And much, much more that I've forgotten.

All along, what has stood out most for me has been the richness of this place. I arrived in August, halfway through the round of summer events, as an 'Astronomy Week' event was underway. From that first week, looking at the stars and planets through a telescope and listening to professional astronomer Roger's talks, I remember the dizzying sense of how vast this universe is. I remember the energy of a 'Let's Make a Musical' week, when, with the help of songwriter Joanna Eden, a small group of children and adults created a piece of musical theatre from scratch.

Later on, through the autumn there are memories of candles glowing through the chapel from the chandeliers as a day of singing ended with chanting into the night. A few months later, I remember sitting in the same chapel, gripped by the urgency and broad-mindedness of John Philip Newell's vision of the 'Rebirthing of God'. His weekend course

stirred us with its image of a renewed Christianity, founded, like the Celtic Church of old, in a sense of the sacred in each person and in the world around us. In December a cloth labyrinth covered almost all the chapel floor for one of our 'One World Worship' services. Nickie and Nigel, who will be back to lead a labyrinth retreat over Easter, invited us to reflect on our own journey through the winter and into the new year as the path guided us, turn by turn, twist by twist, into the centre.

And there have been so many more events: dancing weeks, writing retreats, energy-filled singing weekends... The visitors who have come to join the community here have brought such gifts, whether in music, in poetry, art, or in the art of community-building itself. I value the different views on world events, on spirituality and life's journey that I have heard round the dinner table, over cups of tea or beside the fire in the evening.

As autumn has turned to winter, when weeks pass without events here, I have learned that there is something full and rich about Othona at the times of quiet too. The practice of living and working, week on week, with a small core group of people has probably taught me more than anything else here so far. And after half a year the Dorset landscape still amazes me. It has been a source of strength to sit in our wooden shelter out in the grounds, our 'pagoda', and just breathe with the sound of the sea as the sun goes down. The coast paths and the views from the hills have woken me up on my days off. And just odd moments outside stick in my mind: even this morning, just walking to the bus-stop while the sun rose behind Portland and the frost still weighed on the grass. This is a special place.

As the seasons have turned, these months have also been a time of changes, of comings and goings, in our core community. Antje joined us in November. Our new housekeeper, she brings a wealth of experience from the L'Arche and Iona Communities. As I write this, we will soon be joined by Caroline, who will be taking on our office role. We still wait for a new caterer and new short-term core members. On the other side, last autumn we wished Ellie, Kimbers, Corrina and Juliet good luck for the next steps on their journeys. Katherine, our caterer for much of the last year, is moving on in March and goes with our gratitude and high hopes for her new job in London..

It is sad to say goodbye to many of the people who first welcomed me here. But it has been a privilege to work in such a shifting, varied team. Othona seems always to be full of a sense of new beginnings. In seeing core members take their next steps after Othona, there is a feeling that this place can be an important staging post in people's lives. Certainly I can say already that Othona has been a place of learning for me. There is a world of practical tasks here to stretch me and challenge me: the cooking, the housekeeping, giving the notices, chairing meetings, facilitating welcome sessions. Living in community, in a 'place to be real together', has started to show me, more sharply than I've seen before, how my instincts tend to work in a group setting. There are times when it feels easy to give to others, to draw nourishment from Othona. There are situations that feel much more strained and confusing, that kick against my ingrained behaviours and ways of thinking. It is not always easy, but I value that kind of learning.

So I am grateful for all that this fabulous, colourful place has given me. As our spring programme starts, and the cycle of arrivals days and farewells quickens towards the summer, I look forward to the months to come.

New Day, New Life

Sandra Hodgson Brown

Our time at Bradwell came about after a series of fortuitous and some rather sad events which eventually prompted us to leave our jobs and life in Buckingham for a few years. We had always wanted to become more involved with the Community and here was our chance. We arrived during the last week in August with a van load full of essentials and began work on 1st September 2015. A bit of a gap year or two for us.

Adrian was to work with me during the next couple of months showing me all the office systems and procedures whilst Dave got to grips with the housekeeping and phosphate free environment.

On our first day at work we eagerly awoke and rushed over to the main building to be greeted by the rest of the team leisurely having breakfast and chatting. Breakfast is now no longer the 'eat whilst you're getting

ready and running out of the door' affair it was previously. There was a high tide on that first day and we walked to first beach in the afternoon and took photographs. I still can't quite believe I live here. Our beautiful surroundings prompted us to start a keep fit regime and we began going for an early morning walk before breakfast. This was interrupted once the weather turned and the mornings became dark although we are now back on track.

A surprising aspect of living here has been our interaction with the residents of Bradwell village. Othona has a volunteer slot in the local village shop and we all take turns to do it. We've met a lot of the villagers through working there and also through joining in their many quiz evenings. Very soon after moving here in September we went for a Christmas dinner with the other shop volunteers.

Eager to explore the area we joined the National Trust but, although we have visited local towns and the Tiptree Jam factory, we have not yet used our membership. We did try finding the only Roman circus that has been found in England but when we got to Colchester all we could find was a housing estate which had been built on top of it. One of the highlights of our day trips was at Gainsborough's house and garden in Sudbury. I heard a woman commenting on the tree she was stood next to, saying "I think this must be a quince tree". "No it's not a quince tree, it's a medlar. We have one at home in our orchard", I replied.

The office, which is where I spend my time, is very busy and I look forward to my weekly answerphone message of a 'burp' sound. This has apparently been happening for years from our phantom raspberry blower who always leaves his message in the small hours. Dave on the other hand gets messages from the sultry, dulcet tones of Alexis from Merthyr Tydfil.

It has taken me some time to settle into community living and living in Essex away from my grandchildren, although Dave settled here almost immediately. An example of me not knowing where I live came when I was asked to check the cinema times for Star Wars so that we could go on a staff outing when Mees was leaving. I found out the days and times and eight of us set off to Burnham on Crouch on a freezing cold evening. Once there we found the cinema closed and we stood

outside freezing and knocking on the door. Strange, as I insisted I had phoned; though eventually realising that I had phoned the Ritz in Burnham on Sea and not the Rio in Burnham on Crouch.

After six months we have now stopped setting our alarm for 6.30am and are learning to pace ourselves Othona-style. We are now looking forward to the summer and meeting friends old and new. No worries.

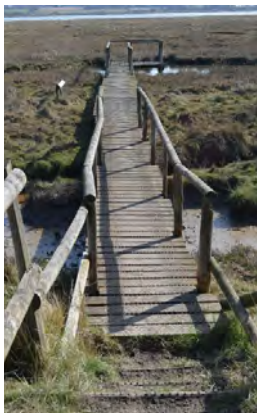
A Collaborative Coastal Project

The Othona Coastal Park

Angenita Hardy-Teekens

A little bit of history

In 2014 I started an MA in Sculptural Practice at the Colchester School of Art. During the first year of my research I spent a lot of time at Fingringhoe Nature Reserve: more or less opposite Bradwell power station. As an artist I concentrate on environmental art and art in the landscape. I spend time looking at how we access landscapes and what we use to observe the landscape; to come really close to it, to enter it. Once we have been in a landscape what do we take away from it? A sense of wonder? A feeling of peace? A taste of freedom? The observations of plants and animals? How do we take the landscape with us? In our hearts? On our cameras?



A boardwalk gives access to a habitat that is otherwise inaccessible. It is built to give us another experience of the landscape. It helps us observe. It is also a sculptural form. This is a boardwalk jutting out over the marshes at Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve.

The first photographic method

I am studying and experimenting with blue prints; the first photographic method ever, widely used and published for the first time by Anna Atkins a photographer/ botanist in Victorian times. Anna Atkins used this technique to document British seaweeds, an extensive and remarkable bit of visual research. I find it interesting that the first photograms, prints of objects left on a light sensitive surface, were used for the depiction and administration of nature. It was for that reason that I started thinking about the administration of our experience with nature. What do we use? Poetry, photography, numbers or measurements?

So walking on a path, a boardwalk, to a place otherwise inaccessible, we can observe and ponder. I wanted to leave some of those



A cyanotype photogram made by Atkins which was part of her 1843 book, 'Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions'

observations behind on a path/boardwalk, strewn like leaves on the wind. Poetic Images on a path. Looking like an integral part of that landscape. To deepen our understanding and enhance our observations. To visualise something of the poetry of the landscape. For that I developed a way of blueprinting on outdoor wood with the idea of building a boardwalk in an existing landscape. This was how far I got with my MA in July 2015.

A little bit more history



View of the pond area taken from the reed beds.



A cyanotype experiment on wood, using images on acetate of species occurring along the Essex coast. (A.M Hardy-Teekens 2015)

It so happened that I was visiting the Othona Community in July 2015 and that Tim Fox mentioned a plan to rejuvenate the area around the dipping platform, including turning the pigsty into a resource room to make it more usable for school groups. Some generous funding had been received from The Bradwell Wind Farm Community Fund. Always interested in Othona projects, I decided to have a look at the pond area. This is what I saw:

a spanking new dipping platform and a derelict overgrown pigsty full of rubbish. The Dutch would call that 'a flag on a shit ship' (it's what my mum used to say to me if I wore a new shirt above torn, punkish jeans). Standing there on my own it looked like a Herculean task of a project. From the workings of the sewage system, the health of the pond to a fresh and new usable landscape design for the area; all this to make it an economically viable asset for the Othona Community.

Just the sheer people power and expertise one would need to make this come off the ground is enormous. An architect, a water engineer, a wildlife expert, an environmental scientist, graphic designers, people experienced in this area regarding the sewage treatment and the wildlife, a handful of skilled hard working builders, cooks, clearers, cleaners and buckets of enthusiasm. In short a project like this needs the unique mix of people who visit Othona regularly plus all their friends, family and acquaintances. Pigs can fly!

I decided to sit on the new platform for a while and ponder. An adder was sunbathing next to the platform, it's geometrical zigzag a lovely contrast with the bushy greens. The reeds were singing in the wind and warblers were making their territory crystal clear. A salty sea breeze and the hot sun topped the experience. This would indeed make a rich educational environment worth sharing with the next I decided to sit on the new platform for a while and ponder.

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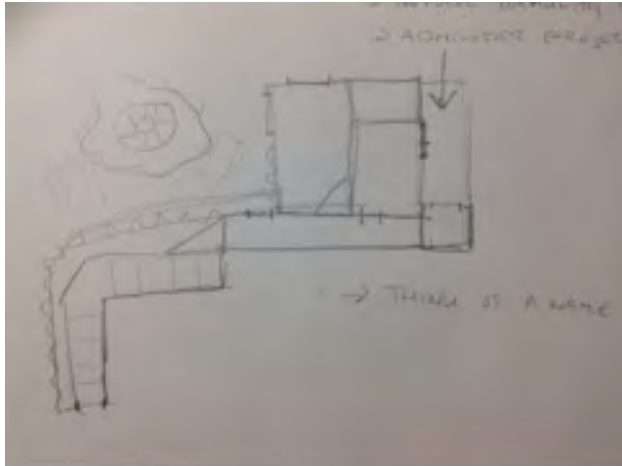


View from platform to pigsty

generation. It became obvious sitting there, that to connect the pigsty with the new platform it needed some sort of access. A path, a walkway. Or perhaps a boardwalk. So I drew a tentative sketch.

A design started to form in my head and the project bit me in the ankle. This could be the place for my final piece of work for my course. Outdoors as I envisaged, useful, functional and with visual poetry. Hopefully a work that would reiterate our relationship with this unique landscape.

After negotiating with my tutor Terry Flower at the Colchester School of Art and with Tim Fox, the project was set up. My role was to be organiser and artist/designer. The Othona Coastal Park project took off. A design was drawn up, discussed and accepted. The design is pinned on the information boards near the kitchen.



The aim of this project is to create a fresh educational narrative with the landscape around the pond for future user groups. Practically this means: the rejuvenation of an overgrown and neglected pond area to make it accessible, landscape designing the whole area, restoring the pigsty and involving the Othona Community.

Educationally this means that activities like pond dipping, bird observation, bug hunting, identification, measuring water quality and a structural immersion in this landscape will be made practically possible. Financially this means creating an economic resource for Othona. For my MA it meant making this project a work of art and presenting it as such within the wider Artistic Community via talks and exhibitions.

A narrative

It is impossible to have a narrative on your own. My MA had become a collaborative rejuvenation project with art that comments on the environment.

We blue-printed flags for the opening ceremony, on one side a photo from the archives and on the other some prints of leaves and plants from around the pond. Reinforcing our relationship with nature.

From the individual to the collective

The inclusion of the boardwalk made it possible for me to run this project as the last year of my MA. So this walk way will be designed by myself and installed as part of the larger landscaping features. There will be workshops (see below for the dates) which will result in the construction of a permanent tiled wall in the pigsty and some bunting for the opening ceremony. During the workshops, I'll explain how a blue print works and you will have a chance to design your own flag and or tile.

In December during the winter working weekend one flag printing workshop was run and resulted in a string of flags.

The tiles will have prints on from plant materials and leaves taken from around the pond and on the beach. They will look like this. The tiles will hopefully look good as a tiled wall above the cabinets. They can however also be used as an educational tool for identification of plants and for explaining the cyanotype printing process. Of course there is the natural historic reference to the botanist/ photographer Anna Atkins. In short ,a historical educational narrative with the landscape is made.





Oak and Beech leaf

Please join me making a tile/flag for this project. Come along.

Spring working weekend April 29th- 2nd May

The workshop in February Half term consisted of printing more flags and mapping favourite views using a quadrat. As I also have to present some work showing my thoughts and ponderings behind this project I had the idea of combining art and science in a very direct way in the landscape. So using the quadrat we mapped our favourite spots/views in and around Othona.

This work might well be the basis for the final MA show.



Sketchbook page with impression of cabinets for the resource room.



Through all this work involving a lot of people we create a narrative with the landscape and the landscape talks to us. It moves and educates us. All that art and restoration does is to create more opportunities for this narrative to take place. At a time when as humans we spend less and less time with our landscapes whilst having to take far reaching decisions about our landscape, this seems a very worthwhile action.

The Board walk

As an Artist I have always been tremendously inspired by the landscape. The marshes are dominated by *Phragmites*; a reed. I know we have far too much of it in the pond, but nevertheless reeds sing and swoosh and form great banks of colour in the landscape. They are also a haven for wildlife. Inaccessible for humans, the reeds lead their own life. The board walk, the jetty and the pier are well represented in the landscape of Essex. Without these features the landscape/ water would be far less accessible. We would be less able to observe and learn.





From observing the landscape making prints to building a pathway that will give access to a habitat otherwise inaccessible and unobservable.

Community

This project has had some tremendous input from a large variety of people: the fundraisers, Dave and Ruth Bull and Tim, without whom the starting block for this project would not even exist, Peter Baird for his building, labouring and management skills on site, Mees and Olie as incredible hard labourers dragging Kentish ragstone from the beach to build up the walls of the pigsty, Susanne Kelly for her architectural input in altering, drawing up and applying with great skill the many ideas thrown at her, Malcolm Hardy for his science skills regarding water quality testing and interpreting the outcomes in a rejuvenation plan and maintenance structure for the pond, Jonney sharing the years of technological experience, patiently explaining the workings of the reed beds and the sewage system no doubt for the umpteenth time, Kevin who has shared his knowledge of flora and fauna and education, Annabelle Jacobs-Teekens who is drawing the plants and animals for the information boards and Lynn and Mike Ongyerth who are helping out with the graphic design and the printing. There are many more people who have verbally or in writing shown vision and enthusiasm

for this project, and all those who are printing flags during the workshops.

My tutor and fellow students who with enthusiasm and criticism helped me to think and make in a more meaningful and thorough way. They also acted as a gate way into the wider art world. Which brings me to the following: the project has been presented to the Landart Network during a symposium in London (<http://www.landartnet.org/>). A synopsis of the presentation can be accessed via my website or the Landart website (arteekens.weebly.com). Two exhibitions where work about the project has been exhibited are in the Minories in Colchester and in First Site, also in Colchester. The project has also been put forward as part of the Arte Util Archive. An exhibition of this archive runs in the Art Catalyst Centre in Cromer Street in London, a brand new centre for Art, Science and Technology. If you are interested see: <http://www.arte-util.org/> and <http://www.artscatalyst.org/>. I am waiting to hear from them.

I was wondering why it has been possible to slip this project with relative ease into the wider art world. The answer I think is simple. Othona is a community based on principles of reconciliation. A collective spiritual conscience about others is nurtured. But it has always used the landscape, the arts, and care for the environment as the carrier of such a message. Since the questions of our environment and sustainability are urgent, artists will comment, respond and create debates. In Othona such debates have happened from the day it opened. Peace and a sustainable environment go hand in hand. I found that a project like the Othona Coastal Park resonates within the art world's current discourse.

On the 22nd July there will be a private view of the Final Show of my course. The project will be presented in the Minories in Colchester. You are all very welcome. Times and directions will be published nearer the time.

Thank you all again for making this project possible.

Please feel free to contact/follow me with news about the project. See my website arteekens.weebly.com, tweet @angenita64 or email angenita64@gmail.com about this project.

The Return of The Prodigal Son - A Response

Dear Editor

I was interested in Ruth's editorial in the last "Full Circle" about Nouwen's book and Rembrandt's painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son". This parable is told as a story about "forgiveness" - which it is. But it ends uncomfortably with an elderly man cajoling his "good" son into the "rightness" of celebrating the prodigal's return.

What I liked about the article is the comment that communities need Fathers. In that moment when the father recognised his son - unkempt and ravaged by hunger - maybe he reproached himself for lacking wisdom when apportioning the legacy too soon and to one son rather than both and he grew into his role of being a father.

In the story the reader is not told whether the elder son joined the party. It was unfair; this profligate coming back and getting a ring on his finger, the finest robe and, in his honour, the fatted calf killed to make a feast. But, has anything EVER been fair?

Like the two preceding parables in Luke 15 about the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, it is about rejoicing with others over what was lost and is found and, in the Prodigal's case, was dead and is alive. And to do this we must grow up. This requires maturity.

Yours faithfully,

Janet Wilkes

Editor's comment: Thank you Janet for these thought provoking ideas. It is very good to receive this feedback.

A Time to Say THANK YOU!

As a long-standing member of the community I have always looked forward to receiving the Full Circle! The articles are varied, thought-provoking and amusing, interspersed with drawings and photos submitted by members. The magazine is a means to reflect on the varied and different talents of members, plus giving regular updates of both centres.

To compile the editions takes a lot of thought and time. I would like to extend to Ruth and Paul an enormous thank you for their commitment to Full Circle; it is appreciated. In the age of technology and instant communication, I do like the physical experience of holding the magazine and choosing when to read it, or taking it with me when travelling, enjoying a coffee etc.!

Thank you to all past editors and to our present ones. Long may Full Circle continue.

In appreciation,

Sue Mead

***Editor's comment:** Thank you Sue. It has been good to hear from you, and also verbally from quite a number of others, that Full Circle is something you value and enjoy and that you look forward to receiving it.*

Of Porridge, Legacies and Thankfulness **Rosie Sinden-Evans**

As many of you know, we have a tradition at Othona Bradwell of rapturously applauding whoever has been kind and able enough to prepare breakfast for us all. I'm more than happy to join in the uproar – all the more since breakfast invariably involves porridge, which I relish and tend not to make at home (I tend not to do any cooking at home!) and if there is demerara sugar to accompany the porridge, my joy is complete! There's always toast too. I'm not so big on toast and hadn't given it much consideration until Chris Jones expounded on his toast-making techniques. He had tried for some years to produce perfect

toast for the Community, experimenting with different times of cooking until he found the preferred result and then attempting to achieve consistency across the grill. More recently Chris has realised that the inevitable spread of slices, from burned to underdone, is exactly what is required by our varied Community members. It's a complicated business, producing breakfast - you have to get up early too! - and earns commendation. I'll always admire all those who have the talent and willingness to cook at Othona. They deserve our heartfelt thanks. Recently I have found myself thinking back across the years and realising just how many people we have to be thankful for in the Community. We're not always so good at expressing our thanks to them all. There's our inspired and inspirational founder, Norman Motley, and our visionary pioneer forefathers. There are the wardens over the years at both Centres, whose role is clearly indispensable, tough and exhausting but hopefully also deeply rewarding, plus the Core Community members and other volunteers who help to run the Centres. Where would we be without them? Then there are the Trustees who carry the burden of responsibility for the Community (and come in for a fair amount of stick at times), our Patrons who give their names and support to our cause, and the Centre Committees and Groups who spearhead developments in various aspects of community life (often people don't even know who they are!). In my current role as Chair of the Programme-Planning Group at Bradwell, I have particular reason to feel thankful for our speakers/course leaders, many of whom give their services freely as part of their commitment to Othona. They enrich our experience of community, as do our clergy, whose presence is often an invaluable, if intangible, blessing. Finally, many community members give of their skills and of their unique selves. Let's be thankful for each other!

One group of people who I have long thought do not receive their due thanks are those who give money to the Community and specifically those who leave legacies. Maybe this is because these people are no longer physically available to receive our thanks. But I have a hunch that it's something more than this. Something to do with an awkwardness around money. I'm feeling my way here – but I'm going to give it a go!

As a Community we seem to be quite good at expressing our thanks to those who give of their practical skills, less good at recognising the value and thanking those who give of their administrative skills and rather hopeless at thanking those who generously give of what they have financially. I wonder why? Like it or not, the Community can't exist without money!

There's maybe even an attitude that those who give money are those who have plenty to spare, for whom giving is easy and requires no effort and therefore deserves no thanks. This is surely erroneous. Usually, not always, money is accrued by going out to work. Those with skills not so directly useful to the Community may decide to use those skills in jobs and give part of their earnings to the Community instead. Different jobs receive different levels of pay – but there's always choice as to what one spends one's money on, or what one leaves one's money to. It would be good to know that a legacy will be appreciated as well as spent!

Ten years ago we had a major fund-raising exercise at Bradwell in order to provide much-needed extra accommodation. This was quite a task. We were incredibly fortunate to have amongst our members a few key individuals with the insight and know-how to secure a substantial grant from EEDA (East of England Development Agency) towards an ecologically-principled building. This grant needed to be matched by money raised by the Community.

I took over the membership cascade for the fund-raising project and was very aware of the generosity of members – not because I knew (or needed to know) who gave what, but because I could see a growing building fund. But we were a long way off our target. Then, miraculously, we received a large legacy from a lady called Rosemary Fleming. I don't think I ever met Rosemary. Clearly her experience of Othona at Bradwell was deeply significant. The legacy transformed our situation and resulted in what we needed: our Solar Building.

Subsequently we have benefitted hugely from three other major legacies. George and Ivy Romney, great supporters and friends to us at Bradwell, where they lived for many years, left a legacy to be divided between the village, the Chapel and Othona. David Warwick,

a professional musician who ran thoroughly enjoyable and successful music weeks in Essex and West Dorset, donated money which was rightly divided between our two centres. Tony Rickwood, a friend of many of us, asked for his legacy to go to the church where he worshipped and it was established that this was St Peter's Chapel. We were delighted to see the chapel supported in this way - it lies at the heart of our community life. We are truly grateful for the generous gifts these friends of Othona bestowed on us. They have enabled us to further develop our site, where their support is embodied, without more fund-raising.

Othona has received many legacies over the years. In some cases people prefer their giving to remain anonymous. In other cases it would be appropriate to express thanks. One legacy that I am aware of and believe was never really acknowledged, was given by John Squires, a technical author and long-standing member, whose gentle friendship and kindness I well remember. Thank you for all you gave us, John. And thank you all for your legacies which have helped us to continue our work over the years, even if these thanks come decades late!

Of course, we're not all in a position to give substantial sums of money to Othona. We know from the gospel story of the widow's mite that the smallest amount of money if given with love is cherished, and may represent a greater sacrifice than larger amounts given by richer folk. Othona has always needed and received all the gifts which members bring: money, skills, time and prayer. And aren't we lucky - or blessed is probably a better word - to have in Othona something we value and care about so much that we want to give it of our best. We all have cause to be thankful to Othona and to its source.

One opportunity to express our thankfulness together is the Othona 70th Anniversary Service to be held at St Michael's, Cornhill on Saturday 24th September. This will be a wonderful service in which we'll be able to share our thanks for Othona and raise the roof! Moving on to St Botolph's Hall, we'll hear reports from our two marvellous (not to say miraculous) centres, share brief other AGM business, and then a party with excellent Othona cabaret accompanied by drink and food (though regrettably not porridge!). See you there, if not before!

This personal article (which I'm writing entirely as an individual, not as a representative of a Committee or Group) gives me the opportunity to express in *Full Circle*, in my 50th year of membership, my own special thanks. Thank you Dad - Rev Sam Evans: 1917-1990 - for introducing me to Othona in 1965, when I was 14. Thank you Othona, for being the golden thread that has run through my life ever since.

Let's sum up and finish with a song - lyrics often come to my mind in relation to a whole range of issues - and I like to get people singing, as many of you know! I'm going to sing this to the tune in *Godspell* but you can sing it to any tune you like!

***All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above
Then thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord
For all his love***

Membership Payments and Dates

Ali Tebbs

Most people who wish to be members of Othona and support the community by paying a yearly fee now do so by Standing Order. Thank you very much! This makes life much easier for me as I am the person keeping track of the payments! Membership supports Othona and entitles you to posted programmes and Full Circle.

If you have not set up a standing order and you wish to do so, the details are as follows:

Amount: £12 on October 1st Annually

Pay: The Othona Community

Sort Code: 20-39-07

Account Number: 60036765

Please put your name in the reference box.

A few of you still have standing orders which are for the old subscription rate and date, so if you are paying £10 please could you amend your standing order to £12 and make the annual payment date October 1st. This will save me even more work!

And thank you to those who give more than the standard subscription. Your contributions help us to develop and grow and are very much appreciated.

Vote for Musicals!!!!

Richard Syms

Over the years we've done a whole variety of musicals at Bradwell - a heady experience, amazingly often throwing together a complicated show in a matter of days. Not even the pros would risk it, and we don't have to worry about rights so we do what we like!!

So which has been the show you've most enjoyed either being in or watching? Place your vote, and in our glorious 70th year, we will present gems from your top eight or ten shows. It'll be a countdown to no 1, and we'll try to keep the secret until the awards are announced and presented on the Friday night of music week at an event in Bradwell Village Church, where there will also be cheese and wine. It'll be a giddy night of songs from the shows Othona-style!

It's only one vote you need to register - scribble an email, give us a call, add your vote to the book in the office or the list in the foyer, or fill in a slip and return it somehow. Just name one musical that has stuck in your mind, and watch the competition unfold... See you on the night.

A Tribute To David Warwick

Alison Tebbs

David Warwick was well known to both the centres at Othona. He died recently and has left the Community a generous legacy which will be shared between the two centres. David was a musician and teacher who led Music Weeks for many years starting in the 1980s. He had a gift for persuading people to do far more than they imagined they could and he invariably got the best out of any group of willing or unwilling participants! Thank you David, for the pleasure you gave us and your legacy which supports us.

'Peculiar People' Exhibition

Focal Point Gallery, The Forum, Elmer Square, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1NB Tel: +44 (0)1702 534108. Website:

<http://www.focalpoint.org.uk>, espendmail:

focalpointgallery@southend.gov.uk. 19 April to 2 July 2016

Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am to 6.00pm

Focal Point Gallery is proud to present 'The Peculiar People', an exhibition and event series that examines and traces a history of radical, ideological and social-political communal living experiments throughout 20th Century Essex, extending to the present day and beyond.

From pioneering industrial worker estates created for East Tilbury and Silver End, to alternative ideological communities such as The Peculiar People and Tolstoyan naturist colonies, Essex was a county where utopias were imagined, traditional ways of living were challenged and revolutionary politics, art, architecture and literature were born.

The Gallery's main exhibition space will feature an extensive archival display speculating on alternative living experiments from the late 1800's to the 1980's, alongside visual art, architecture, design and literature that relate to these counter-cultural histories. In Gallery two, artist Christian Nyampeta's installation gives framework to an evolving radical library and dynamic programme of performances, permaculture experiments, readings and public discussions, which extend, question and re-examine modes of non-conformity within a wider cultural and political context.

The exhibition culminates with a shift from socialist focused agricultural developments to the growth of the financial sector in the East End of London and Britain's first credit card company establishing itself in Southend-on-Sea. This shifting landscape is explored through the inclusion of Cedric Price's 1972 model of an unrealised proposal for a lightweight pneumatic roof over the pedestrian shopping area of the town's High Street.

'The Peculiar People' marks the beginning 'Radical Essex', a project aiming to re-examine the history of the county in relation to radicalism

in thought, lifestyle, politics and architecture, through a series of exhibitions, commissions, events and festivals. Programming under the themes 'The Modernist County' and 'Arcadia for All', the project will assess the crucial role the county has played in the history of British Modernism, and the utopian ideologies in unique living practices and innovative thinking in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

'Radical Essex' is a project led by Focal Point Gallery in partnership with Visit Essex and Firstsite, taking place throughout Essex in 2016 to 17. It is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

For more information on the exhibition and public programme please contact:

Ellen Greig: ellengreig@southend.

OTHONA 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

on Saturday 24th September

THANKSGIVING SERVICE
in St Michael's Church, Cornhill
2.30 p.m. arrival for 3.00 p.m. start

speaker Rev, Nicholas Henshall, Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral

followed by

cup of tea and

A.G.M. from 5.00 - 6.00 p.m.

and PARTY from 6.00 - 9.00 p.m.

at St Botolph's Hall (without Bishopsgate)

Both venues are accessible and are close to Liverpool St. Station. Buffet food and soft drinks will be provided during the evening. People who can read music may volunteer to be part of the choir during the service.

Volunteers are also needed to perform Othona-style acts during the evening cabaret (about 5 minutes each).

More details in the July edition of Full Circle or contact Rosie at rosie.sindenevans@yahoo.com

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