



Othona
WEST DORSET

The way we were

1921 – 2018

1921 **Adela Curtis** has a simple farm-style house built on a bare hillside near Burton Bradstock in Dorset. She is joined by fellow members of the Community of Christian Contemplatives ('The White Ladies'). Adela and her companions live a frugal life, each in a cottage in the grounds.

1937 A chapel lined with beautiful Portland stone is added to Community House.

1946 The Othona Community is founded by **Norman Motley**. First summer camps in Essex.

1960 Adela Curtis, the last of her 'sisters' surviving here, dies aged 96.



The old kitchen

1965 The White Ladies' community house, chapel and various outlying cottages, all somewhat overgrown, are given by their trustees to the Othona Community.

Our first warden **John Cross**, his wife Peggy, sister-in-law Jean and daughter Elizabeth arrive in July and form the first resident community for Othona.

Over some 5 years, mains water, electricity and flush toilets are installed.

Two adjoining cottages are sold to finance these developments.

1970s Wardens: **John Robson**, followed by **Christine Clavering**. Core includes **Mart and Ali Tebbs** and **Tim Fox**. The chapel is divided to create Quiet Room (library) and Gallery. Gradual development of a fuller programme with many visiting groups. The chapel is re-ordered so that worship is 'in the round' and less formal. Changes outdoors include orchard planting and a chicken run.

1979 The Norman Motley Extension Wing adds 7 extra bedrooms. (Norman dies in 1980.)

1980s Wardens: **Peter and Sylvia Dadd**. They opt to run the community with no resident core group, but aided by volunteers at specific times. The art and craft building is erected. The programme includes more creative activities and a wider spread of influences including our first Buddhist groups.

1990 Peter and Sylvia hand over to wardens **John and Sue Theobald**.

Key alterations make all ground floor rooms accessible for wheelchair users.

Poetry and drama become a strong part of the programme.



Peter and Sylvia Dadd

1995 John and Sue hand over to incoming wardens **Tony Jaques and Jaq Piercy**, who reinstate the model of running with a resident core community. The programme is expanded with more bookable events the year round. The National Trust opens a path from Othona to the beach. (Tony continues in post after Jaq's departure in 1997.)

1996 Community House gets central heating, the Walled Lodge cottage is replaced by a new self-build chalet, The Lodge, to house core members.

Programming reflects a growing sense of 'global ecumenism', an inclusive welcome of people of many different spiritual outlooks.

'Green' improvements: reed beds for sewage and (later) photo-voltaic solar power.

2000 Local committee, working with the warden, takes a more active role, with more executive responsibility. Having a core community brings new management challenges and responsibilities under employment law. Our first website is built.



2005 One World Worship introduced on 1st Sunday of each month, open to all.

Chapel gets double glazing, new furniture, an oak floor and underfloor heating.

2007 Core community re-organised so that members are recruited to specific roles.

2009 Warden's cottage Littleness is demolished, to be replaced by new build. Seedtime and Harvest formats devised for morning and evening chapel gatherings.

2011 Warden Tony and his soon-to-be wife Robin Shaw move into the new house Largesse. Downstairs flat to be occupied variously by core members, volunteers and visitors.

2012 After 2 years of consultations Othona grants its two centres much greater autonomy and financial accountability, while remaining as one charity.

2015 July Celebration of Othona West Dorset's 50 years.

2017 New website brings online booking. Planning approval for the Four Seasons Studio.

2018 Launch of the Othona Gold Appeal.



Self-build team members celebrate



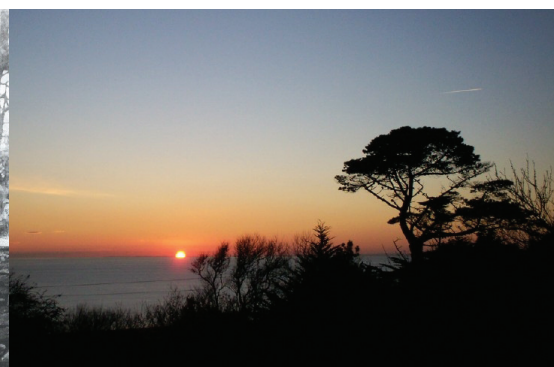
Largesse



Othona seasons come and go...



many of these are parents now...



but sunset and sea are timeless