

The Othona Community – December 2022.

If you came down to Othona on 5th November, you would have been among 250 people who oohed and aaahed at the amazing fireworks display, munched on a (vegi) burger and shared a great time with other local people, and with a full house of those who came to Bradwell from far and wide. This year the display was set against the backdrop of Mersea Island's fireworks and reflections in our beautiful estuary – and more reflections later, as some of us tried to recall Othona fireworks events over many years. So often we reflect on the past, recalling those events which had an impact on our lives – and Othona has a long memory, because those who came in the earliest days in the 1940s hand on the stories of love, devotion, eccentricity and determination, to those who are beginning to take the baton and run with our Community into the uncertainties of our ever-changing planet.

Welcoming people of all faiths and none, the Othona Community, which has Centres here in Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex and at Burton Bradstock, on the West Dorset Coast, is founded on the Christian faith of our founder, Norman Motley. This was a faith that he, and those close to him, simply had to share.

Christmas is Jesus Christ's Mass – the celebration of the Eucharist – the time when Jesus shared his very last supper with his closest friends. That wonderful message of sharing and devotion was so profound that it touched not only the lives of his circle of close friends, but those in his wider community, making memories to be shared as stories from mouth to mouth, reaching through space and time, to the hearts of each one of us in our 21st Century communities. As we enter into our Christmas preparations at Advent, we are encouraged by the words of Jesus, who did not see his death as an ending, but as the way for us to build on his new start for his people on earth: "In truth, in very truth, I tell you, he who has faith in me will do what I am doing; and will do greater things still because I am going to the Father." (John's Gospel 14 V 12.) This is a remarkable challenge- to do "greater things" than the Son of God – but we live in remarkable times here on earth.

Community Christmas at Othona runs from Friday 23rd December to Tuesday 27th December, when you are invited to come and enjoy the Christmas Spirit in community. All the residential spaces are already booked, but if you would like to share some time and a cuppa with us you are welcome to join us in friendship and perhaps join our worship in st Peter's Chapel. If you would like to book a meal, please contact Othona first, to be sure we have space at the table. Our food is homemade and locally sourced where possible. We always provide a vegetarian option and can cater for most dietary requirements.

Othona celebrates New Year, open for bookings from Friday 30th December to Monday 2nd January.

We wish you all a Happy and Blessed Christmas, with time for fun, good food and friendly company.

Othona is accessed through East Hall Farm, East End Road, through a wind-powered electric gate – don't forget your exit token to get out again. Our Warden/Managers are Debbie and Richard Sanders.

Email bradwell@othona.org. Website: www.othonaessex.org.uk. Telephone 01621 776564.