

Dear Friend



Welcome if you're new to receiving these newsletters from the Othona Community in West Dorset. Maybe you've just signed up online, or maybe you're among a small group of Othona contacts who *for software reasons* hadn't been getting the newsletters in recent weeks.

For backnumbers of these *Community in spite of Virus* newsletters (and some other links and resources) please visit [this webpage](#). (And of course you can unsubscribe if you want to - you'll find details at the foot of this email.)

On the agenda

Today I'm including a reader's poem, reflections from one of the UK's foremost spiritual teachers (and an Othona favourite), the most powerful piece of radio I've heard in ages, and links to online yoga and poetry from two regular teachers here.

First though, the picture shows the sloping lawn just below Community House, with our treehouse and slide. I like the way the daisies seem to be processing down towards the woodland path and the sea!

Nature is determinedly on the move at this season - even this year when our own movement is so limited. Very early this morning Kate heard what sounded like cattle on the coast road outside Othona. Sure enough, with so little traffic they were being *walked* all the way from West Bexington village to fresh pasture at Cogden! If you're

a Facebook user you can click through to the [farmers' FB page](#) where you can find a video of the cattle and also an armful of lambs!

I Just Called to Say...

This morning's "Sunday" programme on BBC R4 finished with a truly remarkable contribution from a doctor, Mark Tan, echoing Stevie Wonder's song. Please do yourself the favour of hearing it. [This link](#) gives you the whole programme, but the item that stunned me, **Telephone Lament for Coronavirus**, begins 37 mins 25 seconds in.

Yoga and Poetry

I find it hard to follow that. But maybe I can recommend online offerings from two Othona favourites. **Debs Albon** runs yoga retreat weekends here. She's starting some classes by Zoom - to enquire or sign up please email her at deborah.albon@gmail.com.

Graham Fawcett is a poetry expert and translator and regular facilitator at Othona. He's now offering his unique lecture/readings online; Edward Thomas and William Wordsworth are the next two subjects. [Click here](#) for details.

They say...

Thank you, reader **Liz Diamond**, for this poem.

They say the seas are filling with fish again,
the water is cleaner, clearer.

They say the skies are clearer too,
and over the cities at night
Venus is burning more brightly.

They say the air is purer now;
the earth is regaining her lungs again,
the rainforest is spreading.

They say out in the meadows
butterflies rarely seen are nudging
the flowers, along with rapturous bees.

They say the earth is healing.
They say this disease is the only way
that people would learn. Human greed
wouldn't have it any other way, they say.

But what they don't always tell you
is that in every city, town or village,
in blocks of flats or rows of terraces,

even in houses with gardens,
some people are quietly sickening inside.

Not with a virus
but with a longing that won't subside.
For the sound of somebody breathing,
a voice in the same room saying their name.
The touch of somebody's hand, the feeling of safety
when they are held tightly by somebody's arms again.

A Wider Picture

John Philip Newell is a former warden of the Iona Community in Scotland and a sometime speaker at Othona. But these days much of his work is in the USA and with younger people in search of spirituality and integrity.

His is a prophetic voice - rooted in Celtic christianity but universal in his passionate call for oneness among people and communion with the natural world. We often draw on his prayers in our chapel.

There's a series of short videos he's just published - free to view and perhaps raising our eyes from the current crisis to longer term changes in consciousness. I recommend having a look [here](#) and you may find he's someone whose writings or website you want to connect to.

Next Week

Some of the things I hope to include in our next two newsletters: another 'virtual walk', something to think about from the other Othona centre in Essex, more of *your* news, commentary from the Othona cats(!), and access to a live Zoomed **One World Worship** next Sunday. That's our monthly open event that local Dorset friends can usually attend... but this time anyone anywhere can, albeit remotely!

With best wishes

Tony - on behalf of all of us isolating at Othona: Robin, Liz, Kate, Gavin and Sean