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Y900005

## Quaker, Socialist and other philanthropic influences in YHA's early history (1929-65)

### Study Guide

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YHA archivist

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Note: the youth hostel paragraphs are extracted from the all-hostel file Y900003, which should be cross-checked for additions and corrections.

A Guide to abbreviations is included at the beginning of that file.

### 1 Quaker Influences

The following paper is recommended, and is available to view freely

Freeman, M. (2009) *Fellowship, service and the "spirit of adventure": the Religious Society of Friends and the outdoors movement in Britain c.1900-1950*. *Quaker Studies*, 14 . pp. 72-92. ISSN 1363-013X. Viewable as an eprint: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/29901/>

#### a) Key Quaker figures and families:

Arthur Leonard, founder of the Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA) and YHA Pioneer & vice-president

Egerton St John (Jack) Catchpool (1890-1971), first YHA General Secretary

Oliver Coburn, author, *Youth Hostel Story* (1950)

Graham Heath

John William Major, Wear Tees and Eskdale Region pioneer and YHA National Executive member (information from his son Ken Major to the Archivist, November 2004, as in YHA Archive document Y610001-2):

John William Major (1895-1966) was a key figure in the earlier years of the YHA. He had travelled extensively in Germany prior to 1930 and was enthusiastic for the DJH in that period. He was from a Quaker background.

JW Major set up the Wear, Tees and Eskdale YH Region (while a schoolteacher in Stockton). He helped open Whitby hostel in 1934. There were many dignitaries at the opening ceremony, including Ellen Wilkinson, future Jarrow MP. He may have had an architect's role in setting up the hostel.

JWM had moved to Leigh, Lancs, in 1932. He was on the YHA National Executive, often travelling to London, staying at Highgate YH for meetings, and became Chairman of YHA 1938-1940 (check).

He also helped open:

Great Ormond Street YH (toured estate agents for suitable property – it was part of the Rugby School Estate)  
Holland Park YH  
Halesworth Fruit Farm YH: he encouraged his friend, the farmer, to open a hostel. (Quaker connection).  
Eskdale YH  
Borrowdale (Longthwaite YH) – he was at opening – it was designed by the son-in-law of Lord Trevelyan of Wallington  
Kemsing YH – where he persuaded a young female Lancashire cotton mill worker to be the warden

Rowntrees of York

Cadburys of Birmingham

Len Clark, former YHA Chairman and Vice President

## b) Youth Hostels with Quaker connections

ASHTON KEYNES 1939 to 1965.

Old Manor Farm, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Historic County: Wiltshire

YHA Region: WIL; MD

GR: SU 042946\*

▲Opened Whit 1939. The original YHA plans were for a model hostel in close proximity to the Cotswold Bruderhof [WILar1937]. The hostel was opened with the aid of donations from the King George V Jubilee Trust and the WA Cadbury Trust.

Wartime arrangements: the operating pattern in 1939-45 is uncertain as bednight figures are unrecorded. The hostel was reported as operating during 1939. A national notice was issued to state that the hostel would reopen 29/6/1940. It was in use in 1941, but *still requisitioned* in 1945. During other years it may not have functioned.

Ashton Keynes Hostel reopened after war, at Easter 1946. The premises were very dilapidated [WILar47]. It was shortly to be equipped with electric light [YHAar49].

✚Closed 22/9/1965. It ran at a loss and major work was needed. The property was sold 14/12/1965 [YHAPB].

*Handbook 1939-40; 1946-65.*

Property profile: stone roofed farmhouse hostel, parts of which are 600 years old.

Property tenure: purchased (to YHA Trust 13/4/1939) [YHAPB].

YHA Archive file [ð & «]: Y600013 diaries Mabel Pratt Diaries.doc

AYLBURTON 1944 to 1948.\*\*\*

The Warren, Aylburton, Lydney, Gloucestershire.

Historic County: Gloucestershire

YHA Region: GSE

GR: SO 588038 or SO 588039

Positional note: the exact location of the hostel at the Warren has yet to be determined.≠

▲Opened Easter 1944.

Wartime arrangements: after opening, the hostel operated each year of the war. A member's card is stamped *Aylburton work party 11/3/1944*.

The hostel was temporarily closed to YHA members 20/7-31/8/1947; the Phoenix Group Summer School recorded 326 bednights during this period [GSEar47].

✚Closed 30/6/1948 [GSEar48] and replaced by St Briavels Castle, equipment being transferred from the redundant Aylburton Hostel [idem].

*Handbook 1944-48.*

Property tenure: an adopted hostel.

Property profile: The Warren is a large country house, though the present building is not recognised by volunteer work party member F Blampied, who remembers a house at the end of a long drive, with extended open-pillared porch and outhouses (converted to ablution block) to the left.

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Aylburton 751 ≈† RG47.tif

A hostel with an interesting Quaker link was Aylburton. The warden was Walter Birmingham (with his wife). Walter was an Economics lecturer at Cardiff University and returned to Aylburton each weekend. He was a prominent Quaker in his day. He also had an informal settlement at Tiger Bay in Cardiff, where I stayed on occasion [Len Clark, reporting in 2012].

## CLOUGHTON 1931 to 1934.

Cober Hill Bungalows, Cloughton, Scarborough, Yorkshire.

Historic County: Yorkshire N Riding

YHA Region: YSH

GR: TA 015950\*

▲Opened 1931, the start of the season being 1/5/1931.

✚Closed mid 7/1934 [YSHar34].

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-34(1st edn only).*

*Alternative name: 'Cober Hill Bungalows' (1931(1st edn)-32).*

**Property tenure:**

Property profile: chalet-type holiday bungalows built in 1921 by the neighbouring Cober Hill pioneers as an experimental provision for the needy families of Durham miners. The bungalows were reconstructed First World War army huts. All were demolished by about 1951.

Cober Hill was the vision of John Wilhelm Rowntree, of York's great chocolate family, to develop a centre where people working in education, social service, and other voluntary and charitable activity could gather for residential courses and conferences. And it was his cousin Arnold Rowntree who brought that vision to fulfilment by the purchase in 1920 of a splendid Victorian mansion in Cloughton, Cober Hill. Arnold wanted to provide space and facilities for groups reflecting his interests in Adult Education and also for families who wanted something more than a conventional holiday by the seaside. For the past 90 years that vision has been amply fulfilled, and under the guidance of its two principal shareholders, two of the Rowntree Trusts, Cober Hill's buildings, facilities and grounds have been steadily enhanced and its user groups widened [Cober Hill website].

## GREAT BAVINGTON 1948 to 1959.

The School, Great Bavington, Capheaton, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Historic County: Northumberland

YHA Region: NOT

GR: NY 984802\*

▲Opened 7/1948 [NOTar48]. Officially opened 9/1948. This was one of the Northumberland hostels opened under the influence of the Trevelyan.

✚Closed 1/4/1959 just after the death of the warden [NOTar59].

*Handbook 1948 supplement-59.*

**Property tenure:** purchased property [YHAar48].

Property profile: former school in a tiny settlement, now called Easter Cottage. The warden lived in the next cottage.

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Great Bavington 751 ≈† RGc50.tif](#)

[Web resource: http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1176855](http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1176855)

## HALESWORTH 1933 to 1940.

Mellshill Fruit Farm, Holton, Halesworth, Suffolk.

Historic County: Suffolk

YHA Region: EAN

GR: TM 406760\*

▲Opened 1933. The hostel was based in a converted barn, with womens' quarters in the farmhouse. It was leased from Ernest Holmes of the same address. Wear, Tees and Eskdale pioneer worker John William Major encouraged his friend, the farmer, to open a hostel. There was a Quaker connection [Keith Major].

Wartime arrangements: there were 153 bednights in 1940SY, before closure. A national notice of 20/6/1940 was issued to state that provision of accommodation was uncertain because of the restriction of movement.

✚Closed 14/6/1940 [EANar40].

*Handbook 1933-40.*

**Property tenure:** leasehold (to YHA Trust 15/3/1939 as part of Mells Hill Farm).

Property profile: farm buildings.

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Halesworth 751 ≈† RG35.tif](#)

## HENLEY-ON-THAMES 1934 to 1985.

45 Northfield End, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 2JJ.

Historic County: Oxfordshire

YHA Region: LON; LN/EA

GR: SU 759831\*

▲Opened early 1934.

Wartime arrangements: a national notice of 8/10/1940 advised that the hostel was operating then. Bednight records for 1941-42 are missing, though in all probability it continued to function: a member's card dates a visit on 26/6/1942. From 1943-45 the hostel was in use.

✚Closed 1985, the end of season being 31/8/1985.

*Handbook 1934(1st edn supplement)-85 (1934(2nd edn) brief details only).*

*Alternative name: 'Henley' (1934(2nd edn)).*

**Property tenure:** fully controlled from 10/1937 [LONar37].

Property profile: the hostel was in part of the Quaker meeting house, a red-brick slated building. Access was by an alley at the north side of the building. The warden's accommodation was in the half-timbered cottage adjoining to the south. In 2010 the building continues its original function as Friends' Meeting House.

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Henley 751 ≈† RG35.tif; Y050001-Henley 752 ≈† RG57.tif; [ð & «]: Y600013 diaries Mabel Pratt Diaries.doc

Published material: article, *A Changed Hostel* [Working Party at Henley], Youth Hosteller January 1964.

**HIGH FLATTS** 1933 to 1938; 1942 to 1943.

Strines Hostel, High Flatts, Denby Dale, Huddersfield, Yorkshire.

Historic County: Yorkshire W Riding

YHA Region: WES

GR: SE 214073\*

▲Opened 7/1933 [WESar33]. The warden was Mr Spencer, and accommodation M15W15 (1936).

In its first period hostellers shared accommodation with the owners, the Adult School movement; at first it was offered any night but Saturday [WESmins 1/6/1933]. A frank review described the hostel as so unimportant that it called for no comment [WES hostels report, 1/12/1938].

The final 6 bednights of this period of use were recorded 10/1938. The Adult School had asked YHA to withdraw.

War-time arrangements: the hostel was not available in 1940-41, as it was used at first by evacuees, then left empty from the beginning of 1942 [WES Newsletter 7/1942]. It was reopened late 8/1942 (93 bednights) rather too late to help stem overcrowding that season [WESar42]. That December the youth hostel operated at weekends only and was on the list of those open in Rucksack New Year 1943; 385 bednights were recorded in 1943SY.

✚Closed 1943 because of low overnights and very high rent, then taken over by Barnsley Youth Committee [WESar43]. It was *closed* in alterations at the back of the 1943 Handbook.

*Handbook 1933 supplement-38; 1943.*

Property tenure: at first an accommodation hostel, the Regional Group receiving a proportion of the overnight fee [WESar35]. In 1942 it became briefly a rented fully controlled property.

Property profile: originally the Yorkshire Adult Schools' Guesthouse, sometimes called the Strines Guest House, consisting of two timber huts joined at right-angles, with the men's dorm in one wing and women's in the other, and modern services at the angle. There were very fine recreational facilities and a detached tea pavilion. All was demolished by about 1996 and a new private residence built [local historian D Cook].

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-High Flatts 751 † RG36.doc

A Yorkshire Quaker website (<http://www.heritageinspired.org.uk/>) describes the property as follows: an Adult School (used by Yorkshire Adult School Union) was set up. In 1908 a 'Rest House' (later 'Guest House') for the use of those attending longer sessions was established in 'Three Wells' (just above 'Green Hollow'). When 'Three Wells' was sold in 1925, another Guest House had to be found. Two World War One army huts were purchased from Woodhouse Grove Methodist School at Apperley Bridge, Bradford and erected on the site of two old and unusable cottages at 'Strines'. By 1932 this building was being used as a Youth Hostel (possibly YHA) as well as a Quaker Guest House. It was sold by Barnsley Council at the outbreak of the Second World War and used by evacuees throughout the war. After the war Barnsley Council erected a new Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Scout Dyke. Until this new centre opened, the boys used the Scout Dyke ex-army huts while the girls still had to use the Strines building. Later the Strines Guest House was sold to the farmer on whose land it then stood. He used it as a barn and chicken hut. During the late 1990s a house replaced it.

**JORDANS** 1933 to present.

Welders Hostel, Welders Lane, Jordans, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Historic County: Buckinghamshire

YHA Region: LON; LN/EA; C

GR: SU 975910\*

▲Opened 3/1933. Officially opened 12/8/1933. At the beginning of that year negotiations were proceeding [no details in 1933 Handbook; details in 1933 supplement].

War-time arrangements: the hostel operated in 1940, at least in November and December. Records are missing for 1941-42, but it almost certainly remained in operation. An internal circular of 18/3/1941 stressed the need to keep it from requisition, as it was much used by young people from north-west London. Bednights were recorded in the years 1943-45.

Jordans Hostel was temporarily closed [LRN 11/1945], but reopened 8/3/1947 after about a year's closure due to *administrative difficulties*. The hostel was refurbished in the mid 1980s [YHAar1987].

*Handbook 1933-2009.*

*Alternative names:* 'Welders Hostel' (1933 supplement); 'Jordans (Welders)' (1938-51).

Property tenure: currently (2011) leasehold.

Property profile: timber huts built by Society of Friends, originally for workmen refurbishing Jordans Meeting House.

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Jordans 751 ≈† RG35.tif

YHA Archive file [ð & «]: Y600013 Mabel Pratt Diaries transcribed.doc

KIRKBY STEPHEN [Friends' Meeting House] 1931 to 1980.

Folk Hall (Friends' Meeting House), 40 High Street, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria CA17 4SH.

Historic County: Westmorland

YHA Region: LAK; LK

GR: NY 774083\*

▲Opened 28/6/1931. It was the Lakeland Region's first hostel. Wardening arrangements soon changed to provide a fully controlled hostel [YHAar33].

Wartime arrangements: the hostel operated each year of the war. An internal circular of 18/3/1941 stressed the need to keep it from requisition, as it was important to members from South Lancashire and West Yorkshire towns.

✚Closed 1980 and replaced by Kirkby Stephen (Fletcher Hill).

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-80.*

*Alternative name:* 'Folk Hall' (1931(1st edn)-(4th edn)).

*Property tenure:* accommodation hostel, though described as controlled [LAKar39]. There was a determinable leasehold arrangement for the upper storey of the premises (eg for 1 year from 1/10/1973) from the Official Custodian of Charities and Society of Friends (to YHA Trust) [YHAPB].

*Property profile:* on the upper floor of the Quaker Meeting House, which continues in use downstairs.

The upper part is now a flat [KF].

[YHA Archive file \[?\]: Y050001-Kirkby Stephen A 751 † RG32.doc](#)

ONCE BREWED 1934 to 1968.

East Bog Farm, Military Road, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland.

Historic County: Northumberland

YHA Region: NOT; BD

GR: NY 752668

▲Opened late in 1934; it had just opened, and building was completed, in 9/1934 [NOTar34].

Plans were prepared by YHA Architect F Austin Childs and Lady Trevelyan.

Wartime arrangements: it was closed on the outbreak of war but reopened for week-ends, 4/11/1939 to the end 3/1940; then in constant YHA use [NOTar40] 1940-45.

In the early 1960s there was a thwarted plan to extend the old farm buildings:

The Once Brewed extension project is now moving ahead fast. The National YHA gave the scheme their encouragement. Mr Austin Child was engaged as our architect. Promise of financial help was won from the Ministry of Education. The extension will include extending west from the present common room and then running south and east to join up with the womens' dormitory. The south and western sections will be largely small dormitories. There will be good drying facilities and facilities for warden's catering and for an assistant warden. There is, however, still a tremendous amount of work necessary before this improvement is achieved [NOTar61].

✚Closed 1968; demolished on the instruction of the County Council for road widening.

*Handbook 1934-68.*

*Alternative name:* 'Roman Wall' (1934).

*Property tenure:* early Demonstration Hostel a gift from Professor Trevelyan, and supported financially by the Carnegie and Cadbury Trusts, part purchased 1934 (to YHA Trust 5/10/1934); part a later freehold purchase 28/4/1947 [YHAPB]. Sir Charles Trevelyan, in his will, donated the land at Once Brewed to YHA [NOTar59].

*Property profile:* part of East Bog Farm. It was reportedly Lady Trevelyan who coined the hostel's name, suggesting that tea was a more suitable drink than that found at the Twice Brewed Inn.

PARDSHAW 1932 to 1938.

Meeting House Hostel, Pardshaw Hall, Cockermouth, Cumberland.

Historic County: Cumberland

YHA Region: LAK

GR: NY 103254\*

▲Opened 1932: the hostel was operational for 2 months in 1932 [LAKar32].

✚Closed end of 9/1938, as the key holder moved away.

*Handbook 1933-38.*

*Property tenure:* a controlled hostel.

*Property profile:* old coach house of Quakers' Meeting House, thought to be the hut establishment directly opposite the main gates. ≠ As recently as 2005 this hut had *Hostel* painted on the door, though possibly of a different era to YHA.

[YHA Archive file \[?\]: Y050001-Pardshaw 751 † RG32.doc](#)

PLYMOUTH [Swarthmore] 1938 to 1940.

Swarthmore Settlement, Mutley Plain, Plymouth, Devon.

Historic County: Devon

YHA Region: DAC

GR: SX 483558\*

▲Opened Easter 1938 [DACar38], though first mentioned in 1936 [DACar36]. A large amount of work was necessary to reconstruct the Swarthmore Institute and arrangements were in hand [DACar37, Handbook 1937, minimum details]. Accommodation was M20W20, overflow 25 [Regional Guide 1938]. For a time the YHA Regional Office was located here.

Wartime arrangements: the hostel had a mere 308 bednights in 1940SY. Usage and closure date in late 1939 or 1940 is uncertain, but the hostel was definitely withdrawn by 14/10/1940.

✚Closed 1940, probably before the end of season, 30/9/1940.

*Handbook 1937-40.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: educational buildings. The Swarthmore settlements were Quaker institutions. They spread from Leeds and York (with connections to the Rowntree family); the Plymouth centre was instigated by the Society of Friends and the YMCA.

YHA Archive file [Ⓞ]: Y050001-Plymouth A 751 ≈† RG38.tif

**ROTHLEY SHIEL** 1949 to 1956.

Rothley Middle Shiel, Hartburn, Morpeth, Northumberland.

Historic County: Northumberland

YHA Region: NOT

GR: NZ 034914\*

▲Opened July 1949 [NOTar49], the projected date advised as 1/7/1949 [BRR 7/1949]. The warden was Miss E Carmon.

✚Closed 8/4/1956.

*Handbook 1949 supplement-56.*

Property tenure: made available at nominal rent by Sir Charles Trevelyan.

Property profile: a very small wooden bungalow built as a shooting lodge, and named *Wideopen Cottage* on a recent OS map, but a ruin obliterated by vegetation in 2007. It had no rear exit.

YHA Archive file [Ⓞ]: Y050001-Rothley Shiel 751 ≈† RG50.tif

**SPICELAND** 1943 to 1946 or 1947.

Blackborough House, Blackborough, Cullompton, Devon.

Historic County: Devon

YHA Region: GSE/DAC

GR: ST 089096\*

▲Opened by Easter 1943 [GSEar43]. The address was given as Spiceland in 1943-44, though Blackborough House was ¾ mile north-west of Blackborough village, not in Spiceland; it was given this name after a Friends' Meeting House some miles away.

Wartime arrangements: after opening, the hostel operated each year of the war.

✚Closed late 1946 or early 1947, there being just 74 bednights in 1947SY.

*Handbook 1943-46.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: once-ruined mansion, partially repaired c1931 and used as a *training home for young wayfarers* [Rucksack Easter 1943].

It passed to the Quakers in 3/1940 and was used as a home and place of training and recovery for refugees from the Nazis until they could find ordinary work. The house is in poor repair nowadays, at the centre of a car-breaker's yard [correspondents Adrian Smith and Valerie Belsey].

YHA Archive file [Ⓞ]: Y050001-Spiceland 751 ≈† pc.tif

Web resource: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/143908>

**STREET** 1931 to present.

The Chalet, Ivythorn Hill, Street, Somerset BA16 OTZ.

Historic County: Somerset

YHA Region: GSE; SW; S

GR: ST 480345\*

▲Opened 19/3/1931, with wardens Mr & Mrs Cozens. In the 1930s, at least, the hostel was run by a special Street Committee, with the Regional Committee [GSE] holding less influence than normal. In 1933 the premises were enlarged and improved [YHAar33]. The provision of a separate timber hut to the east (now the staff quarters, but originally the men's dormitory) may date from these alterations. Early in 1939 some Spanish refugees had used the hostel [GSEmins 3/5/1939].

Wartime arrangements: the hostel closed as a wartime measure in 1939, apparently soon relaxed as there were good numbers staying in 1940SY. A national notice of 5/11/1940 advised that it was closed until further notice. It was unavailable 1941-43, but reopened 1/4/1944 and operated 1945. Meanwhile, the Street Committee had been unable to find an alternative hostel locally [GSEmins 21/7/1941].

At some stage post-war an extension on the west side for dining room and kitchen was added.

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-40; 1944 -2009.*

Alternative name: 'Street (for Glastonbury)' (1956-73).

Property tenure: leasehold was extended (eg) for 10 years from 1/8/1978 from the Mid-Somerset Society of Friends (to YHA Trust) [YHAPB]. Currently (2011) leasehold.

Property profile: previously the private home, of idiosyncratic Swiss chalet appearance, of two philanthropic Quaker sisters. A building date of 1914 is visible on some photographs. The house had served as a holiday and rest centre and a convalescent home for tuberculosis sufferers. There were historical connections with the Clark's shoe empire in the

town, itself a Quaker concern. In the early hostel days there was no mains water and the balconies were supported by beams of an antiquated rustic appearance, later changed.

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Street 751 ≈† RG37.tif; Y050001-Street 752 ≈† RG47.tif

YHA Archive file [ð & «]: Y600013 Mabel Pratt Diaries transcribed.doc

## TREALAW (ADOPTED HOUSE) 1931 to 1946.

Mid-Rhondda Community House, Brithwenydd [Brithweunydd] Road, Trealaw, Rhondda, Glamorgan.

Historic County: Glamorgan

YHA Region: SWA

GR: ST 003921\*

▲Opened about Easter 1931: the hostel was *already open* [SWA circular spring 1931]), and thus may have been one of the very first pioneer hostels.

Members of the Youth's Hostel Association [sic] made Community house, Trealaw, their headquarters during the recent holidays. They were so well pleased with the accommodation afforded that negotiations were entered into with a view to it becoming a recognised hostel for hikers, and these negotiations have been crowned with success [The Rhondda Leader 16/4/1932]. The article goes on to describe an ingeniously constructed building. Volunteers had put in 15 months of hard work, with 2,000 hours of overtime. There was a garden of ease, a lily pool, a gym and tennis courts. Inside, book-binding, woodwork, weaving, carpentry and cookery classes were held, and there was a retreat room to act as common room. A Chapel of Holy Grace, with stained-glass window, was the nucleus around which the whole house was built.

A curiosity in the above is the mild suggestion that the hostel was not fully functional in 1931.

Wartime arrangements: the operating pattern in 1940-43 is uncertain as bednight figures are unrecorded. A national notice of 8/10/1940 advised that the hostel was operating, however, and it is likely that it saw service each year. There was certainly YHA business in 1944-45.

Though 0 bednights were registered in 1946, F Blampied stayed here four nights, 1-4/9/1946.

✚Closed late 1946. The warden would not continue to provide a youth hostel, however [SWAar46] and it was closed permanently [SWAhr 3/47].

*Handbook 1931(2nd edn)-46.*

*Alternative names:* 'Mid Rhondda Community House' (1931(2nd edn-3rd edn)); 'Trealaw' (1931(4th edn)-37).

*Property tenure:*

Property profile: the Community House, *Rhondda's Temple of Social Service*, was opened on 26/9/1929. The idea was conceived by the pastor of the Central Wesleyan Hall, Tonypandy, as a church without a pulpit, and represented the monastic ideal without the segregation of a monastery [synopsis of anonymous press article, 10/8/1929]. It was an educational settlement set up by the Quakers following the hardships of the General Strike in 1926, led by William and Emma Noble. The Hostel was in Maes-yr-Hâf, a *mid to large-size house* [F Blampied] on a plot of ground north of Brithweunydd Road. Two bungalows in front and various other buildings were associated with the centre. This centre has now been demolished [extra information by courtesy Anthony Pritchard, Rhondda-Cynon-Taff Libraries, 2009]. Trealaw Hostel thus forms an interesting comparison with that at St Athan.

## WALLINGTON 1931 to 1955.

The Granary, Wallington Hall, Cambo, Morpeth, Northumberland.

Historic County: Northumberland

YHA Region: NOT

GR: NZ 027842\*

▲Opened 5/1931 as a YHA hostel [see below]. A hostel had been opened in 1929 by Northumbrian Trampers Guild, forerunner of YHA's Northumberland and Tyneside Region. In the first year it had the distinction of a hostess, Lady Trevelyan, instead of a warden. Members were advised to approach the building from the back: *where the road from Cambo takes a sharp left-hand turn at cottages, enter past the cart-shed and go on to the hay-shed at end of path. The hostel is behind the shed.*

Wartime arrangements: the hostel operated each year of the war. Sir Charles Trevelyan put evacuees in West Hall so as to allow the hostel to continue. As examples, it was reopened for week-ends, Christmas 1939 to the end of March 1940; then was in full-time hostel use [NOTar40].

In 1949 the hostel was further improved by switching the common room and girls' dorm [NOTar49].

✚Closed 1955. *To close 31/12/1955* [NOTar55].

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-55.*

*Alternative name:* 'Cambo' (1932).

*Property tenure:* the hostel was loaned free of rent, or at nominal rent, by the President of the Region, Sir Charles Trevelyan.

Property profile: a stone-built granary at the north-west corner of the Wallington Hall, the National Trust's first property. The granary still operates as a private bunkhouse. The open wooden barn adjacent features in an early YHA film and may also have been used.

Northumberland and Tyneside Region was founded in 1931. The Regional Group was formed out of the pre-existing Northumbrian Trampers Guild, of which Edith Bulmer was a member. The first Hostel was Wallington. The Northumbrian Trampers Guild at a General Meeting on 28th May 1931 resolved to seek affiliation to the YHA and by resolution constituted itself the Northumberland and Tyneside Region of the YHA. Certainly Wallington was in operation as a hostel from the very beginnings of the Region, and should I suppose be regarded as having been opened as a Youth Hostel on 28th May 1931 [J Philipson, writing in 1945 and 1946].

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Wallington 751 † RG32.doc; Y050001-Wallington 752 ≈† RG50.tif

Press report:

YOUTH HOSTELS – Scottish Movement’s Anniversary – PROGRESS IN TEN YEARS

Mr J Wilkie, of the Carnegie Trust, recalled how Sir Charles Trevelyan, in 1924, had converted an old stable block into the first hostel in the country [1924 is 5 years earlier than most sources and seems incorrect] [The Scotsman 17/2/1941].

Web resource: (account of wartime evacuation) <http://www.cultureshock.org.uk/stories/wallington-hall.html>

## WILDERHOPE MANOR 1937 to present.

Wilderhope Manor, Longville in the Dale, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6EG.

Historic County: Shropshire

YHA Region: BMW; MD; C

GR: SO 545928\*

▲Opened Easter 1937 [BMWAr37]. Officially opened 29/5/1937. The following year the hostel was expanded [YHAar38].

Wartime arrangements: the hostel was requisitioned during 1940SY [BMWAr41], and not used at all by YHA during 1940-41. It was released in time for Easter opening 1942, in which year it was hoped to increase accommodation [BMWAr42]. Thereafter the hostel operated each year of the war.

In the 1970s there was an extensive and extended programme of modernisation; the official reopening was 28/5/1977. The Hostel was dedicated as the John Cadbury Memorial Hostel in 1986. In 2011/12 there was a £½m refurbishment, of which the WA Cadbury Charitable Trust pledged £50,000, with many features restored to the original 16th-century style.

4Do It 4 Real Summer Camp Site, 2005-06 inclusive.

*Handbook 1937-39; 1942-2009*

*Alternative name:* ‘Wilderhope’ (1937-39; 1942-64).

*Property tenure:* leasehold (to YHA Trust 10/5/1937) from the National Trust at a peppercorn rent. An example of this was for 21 years from 25/3/1979 [YHAPB]. Currently (2011) leasehold.

*Property profile:* originally the Elizabethan home, built 1588, of the Smallman family, six generations of which occupied it. It was later a farmhouse. It was bought and renovated and presented to the National Trust in 1936 by the WA Cadbury Trust for use as a youth hostel, John Cadbury having discovered it. The property is Grade I listed.

YHA Archive photofile [ð & «]: Y691008-1.doc

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Wilderhope 751 ≈† RG39.tif; [ð & «]: Y600003 Logs G Greenhough.doc

Published material: Hostel Close-Up 67, Wilderhope, Youth Hosteller May 1959.

Published material: article, *A Night in Wilderhope Manor*, Youth Hosteller April 1961.

Web resource: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1062884>

## YORK [Haverford] 1945 to present.

Haverford, Water End, Clifton, York YO30 6LP.

Historic County: Yorkshire N Riding

YHA Region: YSH; YK; N

GR: SE 589529\*

▲Opened 5/1945, replacing York (97 Heslington Road). Officially opened 8/5/1948, after 2 years’ war-damage repair [YDM 5/1948]. Conversion of the former garage block would increase accommodation by 15 [YDM 5/1948]. It was planned to add another 20 beds by rebuilding war-damaged buildings [YHAar50]; extra dormitory space was available by 1951 [YHAar51]. A large wooden hut was purchased from a local aerodrome and re-erected in the grounds to increase the accommodation to 140 [YSHar57]. Considerable extensions were provided with new members’ kitchen, dining room, dormitories and washroom [YHr 1/1959]. A new project was started in 1986 and completed 2/1987 to build a new 80-bed annexe as a replacement for the old wooden structure.

*Handbook 1946-2009.*

*Property tenure:* the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust purchased Haverford Estate at Water End for YHA and gave immediate possession; in the near future ownership would pass to YHA [YSHar45]. Freehold purchase (Ministry of Education grant-aided) (to YHA Trust 24/5/1947). *Ford Cottage* was also assigned on this date. *Haverford* is currently (2011) freehold.

*Property profile:* the former home of Rowntree family was built 1842 for a draper named William Catton, and was originally known as Cliffe View. The house was later purchased by the Rowntree family, and in 1908 became the home of Francis Henry Rowntree, the nephew of Joseph Rowntree and son of Henry Isaac Rowntree, founder of the world famous chocolate company. Being from a strong Quaker family, Francis renamed the house *Haverford* after the town in Pennsylvania where a large Quaker community existed and where a number of the family studied at Harvard College.

Following Francis's death in 1918, Haverford was managed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, having a succession of tenants, including the army during the Second World War. As soon as the war was over, the building was *given* to YHA. Since its opening, the building has been extended many times, including the dining room in the 1950s and the annexe in the 1980s. York YHA welcomes over 35,000 guests each year [framed information in hostel].

However, other information indicates that Haverford was *purchased* by YHA at favourable rates. YHA bought the house from the Rowntrees for £5,750 with a covenant that stipulates that if YHA wants to change the use of the property it first must offer the property back to the Rowntrees at the price it was bought [YHA Property Dept].

*Youth Hostel Story* by Oliver Coburn states that the British War Relief Society of America gave a grant of £7,000 raised by American Trade Unions. The gift went towards new hostels at Cambridge, Oaklands (Llanwrst) and York. Coburn adds that the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust made two extremely generous loans to YHA at very easy terms and one of these also contributed to the acquisition of the new hostel in York, Haverford House. The Ministry of Education also contributed to the opening.

## 2 Influences of the Socialist movement and of other similar bodies (in addition to those in section 1)

### CANTERBURY OLD HOUSE 1931 only.

4 Station Road West, Canterbury, Kent.

Historic County: Kent

YHA Region: LON

GR: TR 144581\*

▲Opened 1931, about April or May. There were (eg) 121 bednights between 5/1931 and 9/1931 [LONar31]. The hostel was located on the upper floor of this curious building. There were two large rooms, bathrooms, etc. Mrs Boake, who was *willing and capable*, would take over the wardenship for a remuneration of 35s a week for the summer months; apart from this and the rent the London Region received all revenue from this hostel, though in all probability it ran at a loss.

✚Closed 1931 and replaced by Canterbury (All Saints Lane).

*Handbook 1931(1st edn-4th edn).*

*Alternative name:* 'The Old House, Canterbury' (1931(1st edn only)).

*Property tenure:* rented from ToCH for £1 per week for 16 weeks from Whitsun; a small sum was specially given, it is not clear by whom, for furnishing. Perhaps this was the £25 offered by the National YHA to set up a Canterbury hostel. *Property profile:* the *Old House*, or *Quaint House*, was a ToCH property [LONmins5/1931]. It was a remarkable testimony to the work of local historian Walter Cozens, who in 1906 had rescued the 14th-century timber-framed building from demolition at its site on Upper Bridge Street and had it moved wholesale to a new position on Station Road West, where the various sections were reerected in a new configuration. Once reconstructed, it housed swimming baths on the ground floor and a museum of antiquities collected by Mr Cozens on the first floor. The building was destroyed in the 1942 Blitz.

### CHELWOOD GATE 1934 to 1939.

Chelwood Gate, Hayward's Heath, Sussex.

Historic County: Sussex

YHA Region: LON

GR: TQ 415304\*

▲Opened 21/7/1934 [LONar34] and officially opened 8/1934.

✚Closed 1939 on the outbreak of war.

Wartime arrangements: closed for the duration of the war. The 1945 Handbook stated that it might reopen, but with no details. It was not returned from requisition, however [LONar1946].

*Handbook 1934-39; 1945.*

*Property tenure:* lent to YHA by the Manor Trust.

*Property profile:* this specially-designed hostel was constructed by the Manor Trust on behalf of YHA. In 2006 the property was advertised as divided into flats.

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Chelwood Gate 751 ≈† RG35.tif](#)

### CHOLDERTON HILL 1953 to 1957.

Hugh's Settlement, Quarley, Andover, Hampshire.

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Region: WIL

GR: SU 251435\*

▲Opened 11/7/1953 [LRN 8/1953]. The property had been obtained 5/1953 [WILar53]. There were at first only 12 beds. As the hostel was often overcrowded additional accommodation was made available in a 50 feet long marquee forwarded to this hostel by the National Council [WILar54-56]; this idea would suffice until the hostel could be extended [YHAar54].

✚Closed 9/1957 [YHAF]; the hostel was uneconomical to the owners, Hugh's Settlement [YHr 10/1957, WILar57].

*Handbook 1953 supplement-57.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: Hugh's Settlement, started about 1928, was a 120 acre experimental model settlement as prototype for other rural and overseas settlements. Hugh's Settlement built its own houses and aimed at community food production and industries [Website]. The Settlement was acquired by a Mr Nixon in memory of his friend, Hugh, who did not survive the First World War. With assistance from the Rowntree Trust, the area was set aside for conscientious objectors in the Second World War. They built their houses, including the hostel, from chalk dug out of the ground, and thatched them with grass. They grew produce for the local markets at Amesbury and Andover. Little remains today. The old Cholderton Youth Hostel was modernised and a second floor added. It is now a private house [Website]. It was at *Buckingham House*, formerly known as *Windy Dido* [David Preston, local resident].

Web resource: <http://www.utopia-britannica.org.uk/pages/HAMPS.htm>

[http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/pdf/Plan\\_AmportVDS.pdf](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/pdf/Plan_AmportVDS.pdf)

DODDINGTON 1947 to 1980.\*\*\*

Ellenscourt, Lady Margaret Manor, Doddington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 ONT.

Historic County: Kent

YHA Region: LON; LN/SE

GR: TQ 925551\*

▲Opened early 6/1947.

✚Closed 1980 when the Stansfield Association withdrew from YHA.

*Handbook 1947 supplement-80.*

Property tenure: there was an arrangement that the hostel be operated by the Stansfield Association.

Property profile: the buildings incorporated an oast house and had been a private hospital for the 'aged unemployed'. In 2012 the Ellens Court provides long term care for nine in a rural setting.

Published material: *Hostel Close-Up 2, Doddington, Rucksack Magazine March/April 1950.*

Doddington was a hostel with a 'progressive' link. Half-timbered on the high land near Faversham it boasted on the entrance 'Rich and Poor, Same door.' It belonged to a well known, Bernard Shaw like, figure called Dr Josiah Oldfield, lawyer, Colonel (?) medico and enthusiastic vegetarian. He had a mini hospital there for mental problems and the hostel running was by an East End Charity called the Stansfield association. In turn they employed as warden the brother of John Parfitt, another romantic, who subsequently became a postman at Fort William [Len Clark, reporting in 2012].

SHINING CLIFF [original huts] 1947 to 1976.

Shining Cliff Woods, Ambergate, Derbyshire.

Historic County: Derbyshire

YHA Region: NMI; PK

GR: SK 335522\*

▲Opened about 4/1947 [NMIar47]. The region took over a hut encampment on the wooded slopes of a secluded Derbyshire valley and the necessary conversion work was being pressed forward [NMIar46]. After a short period of use the cliffs above the hostel were threatening to fall on the hostel buildings and the only remedy was to move the huts away from the danger area [NMIar49].

✚Closed 1976, destroyed on 1/4/1976 by a conflagration caused from drying clothes around a fire.

*Handbook 1946 supplement-76 (1946 supplement published 3/1947).*

Property tenure: tenancy was recorded from 19/8/1949 (to YHA Trust 19/1/1950).

Property profile: collection of nine timber huts, formerly a working men's commune in the depression and the Shining Cliff Camp School.

YHA Archive file [ð & «]: Y600010 Carr Winter

SPICELAND 1943 to 1946 or 1947.

Blackborough House, Blackborough, Cullompton, Devon.

Historic County: Devon

YHA Region: GSE/DAC

GR: ST 089096\*

▲Opened by Easter 1943 [GSEar43]. The address was given as Spiceland in 1943-44, though Blackborough House was ¾ mile north-west of Blackborough village, not in Spiceland; it was given this name after a Friends' Meeting House some miles away.

Wartime arrangements: after opening, the hostel operated each year of the war.

✚Closed late 1946 or early 1947, there being just 74 bednights in 1947SY.

*Handbook 1943-46.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: once-ruined mansion, partially repaired c1931 and used as a *training home for young wayfarers* [Rucksack Easter 1943].

It passed to the Quakers in 3/1940 and was used as a home and place of training and recovery for refugees from the Nazis until they could find ordinary work. The house is in poor repair nowadays, at the centre of a car-breaker's yard [correspondents Adrian Smith and Valerie Belsey].

YHA Archive file [2]: Y050001-Spiceland 751 ≈† pc.tif

Web resource: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/143908>

ST ATHAN 1931 to 1937; 1946 to 1947 or 1948.\*\*\*

The Holiday Camp, St Athan, Glamorgan.

Historic County: Glamorgan

YHA Region: SWA

GR: ST 026671\* (main building)

▲Opened Easter 1931, and *already open* [SWA circular spring 1931]. It was mentioned in the Region's Statement of Accounts [SWAar31].

✚Closed 1/7/1937 and replaced by Llantwit Major. In 1937 the hostel was for men only.

Reopened 2/11/1946; the warden was Ivor Llewellyn [SWAhr 11/46, SWAar46].

Closed [YHAB 2/1948]. There were only 48 bednights in 1948SY, suggesting last use late 1947.

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-37. Handbook 1946 supplement-48 (1946 supplement published 2/1947).*

*Alternative name: 'St Athan's Holiday Camp' (1931-32).*

Property tenure:

Property profile: this was a special hostel annexe of the Miners' Welfare Group. According to a map of the camp [1936 and 1937 St Athan Camper magazine] the youth hostel was located in an annexe attached to the large Sports Hall and overlooking the Chapel. This location matches an early lantern slide image of the Sports Hall and single-storey sloping-roof timber annexe, with Jack Catchpool standing in front. The annexe seems about the right size for a YHA common room and members' kitchen; sleeping accommodation was probably elsewhere in the camp. The annexe may have been the hub of the 1947 and 1961 [qv] resurrections. A postcard of the chapel of about 1960s vintage shows that the annexe had been demolished.

Press report:

The boys' village was opened in the 1920s and was built by the Ocean Coal Company to provide holidays for miners' children. The Company's chairman, Lord Davies of Llandinam, and its welfare officer at Treorchy, war hero Captain J Glynn-Jones, were the visionary forces behind the formation of the boys' village (in the 1920s). Ocean donated £300 for equipment, land was bought on a £500 overdraft and the firm's welfare fund donated £42,000 over four years to the village. The camp, as it was then known, was built to give miners' families a holiday, opening its doors initially for a two week experiment. It cost 3s a week to stay in the early days [unattributed, 1990s].

ST ATHAN 1961 to 1988.\*\*\*

St Athan Boys' Village, St Athan, West Aberthaw, Barry, South Glamorgan CF6 9JA.

Historic County: Glamorgan

YHA Region: SWA; WS; W

GR: ST 026672\*

Positional note: the Grid Reference is for the new 1965 building. The 1961 location within the Village is uncertain.≠

▲Opened 1961.

As a preamble to our annual report in recent years it has become our custom to record a notable event during the year under review. The event of 1961 was the re-establishment of a hostel in the Vale of Glamorgan at the St Athan Boys' Village near West Aberthaw, thus providing a much-needed link between Chepstow hostel in the east, and the Gower hostels in the west. We are grateful to Capt Glynn-Jones, General Secretary of the Boys' Clubs of Wales, for his active interest in promoting this project, and also to Mr. Ivor Llewellyn, warden of the Boys' Village, for his enthusiastic co-operation in operating a hostel temporarily in a hut placed at our disposal during the summer of 1961. It is pleasant to note that Capt Glynn-Jones now renews his connection with the Regional Group: he was one of the band of enthusiasts who founded the Group in 1932. Indeed it was he, on behalf of the Miners' Welfare Association, who provided the region with its first hostel at St. Athan in that year [sic]. He was also the first chairman of the Regional Executive Committee. We are making every endeavour to provide a permanent hostel by erecting our own building on a site generously made available to us in the Boys' Village, the aim being to provide a small, attractive hostel with twenty-two beds. We wish to pay a tribute to the Barry Sub-Regional Group in particular, and to others, including Mr Llewellyn of the Boys' Village, for their excellent work getting the temporary hostel ready before it was officially opened on 1st July. The ceremony was performed by our President and was featured in the BBC Television news [SWAar61].

Members were advised that after one season it was *now closed permanently* [YHR 1/1962], but YHA usage continued every year from 1961 through to the official opening of the new hostel building on 29/5/1965.

✚Closed 1988, 31/10/1988 being the end of season.

*Handbook 1961 supplement-88.*

*Alternative name: 'West Aberthaw' (1961 supplement-63); 'St Athan (West Aberthaw)' (1964-87). In 1964 the name was changed from West Aberthaw at the request of the Boys' Village authorities.*

Property tenure: leasehold (Department of Education grant-aided) was taken from 1/4/1962 for 26¾ years from the Trustees of St Athan Boys' Village. At first this was for *land at St Athan* (to YHA Trust) [YHAPB].

Property profile: the 1961 building was a hut within the Boys' Village [P Packham]. The new 1965 building, at the northern extreme of the camp, was a red-cedar hut with central entrances on either side, purpose-built by and for YHA. Between the central entrances, one on either side, was a combined common room and kitchen. The larger camp consisted of the original well-designed chief buildings in brick, wood and corrugated iron. There were a church, swimming pool, and numerous dormitory huts, as well as post-war buildings of less distinguished design. In 2007 the whole of the Boys' Village, including the final YHA structure, was in a vandalised and ruined state.

Most of the Boys' Village and the YHA-built hut had been demolished by 2010 [KF, 2011].

### 3 Influences of the YMCA, YWCA, GFS, Scouts and of other similar secular and church bodies

#### YMCA

BARNSTAPLE 1932 or 1933 to 1951.

YMCA, 46 High Street, Barnstaple, Devon.

Historic County: Devon

YHA Region: DAC

GR: SS 557333\*

▲Opened 1/4/1933 [Handbook], though a hostel (YHA or YMCA?) opened by 24/6/1932, as the result of the efforts of a committee formed at Barnstaple under the chairmanship the Mayor [Western Times]. The warden in 1933 was Eric P Matthews, and meals were obtainable *next door*. It was closed during 1937, the premises being no longer available, and a new hostel was being sought [GSEar36,37]. Yet the facility continued after many alterations were made [GSEar38].

Wartime arrangements: despite exclusion from Handbooks 1941-45, it is known that YHA functioned here under special circumstances each year of the war, with the possible exception of 1945. A request from the YMCA to allow soldiers and airmen to continue to stay when proceeding to or from leave *boosted overnights considerably* [GSEar41]; as previously, the hostel was reserved for the use of servicemen travelling to or from leave [GSEar42,43,44].

Barnstaple Hostel reopened 18/4/1946.

✚Closed 30/9/1951 [DACar51].

*Handbook 1933-36; 1938-40; 1946-51 (1949 in supplement only).*

Property tenure: accommodation hostel, at least up to 1936, with a tenancy, or sub-tenancy involving YMCA (rent in 1933SY, for instance, was £19.10s.0d, and income £46.2s.0d) [GSNDar1933]. Yet there was a shared income agreement between YHA and YMCA; a change to financial arrangements was suggested [GSEar38] so that of each shilling, YHA, YMCA and the caretaker took 4d. apiece.≠

Property profile: the premises have now been demolished. The site now forms the entrance to the Green Lanes shopping centre.

CHELTENHAM 1931 only.

YMCA, The Promenade, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Historic County: Gloucestershire

YHA Region: GSE

GR: SO 947223\* (YMCA)

▲Opened 13/6/1931, according to Handbook. The men's room and the common room were in a hut at the rear of the YMCA; women's quarters were at Bayshill Lecture Room, 2 minutes away [GSND Regional Guide 1931].

✚Closed 1/10/1931.

*Handbook 1931(2nd edn-4th edn).*

Property tenure:

Property profile: YMCA at the rear of a street of distinguished classical architecture.

DOVER [Barnet Hut] 1931 to 1940.

The Barnet Hut [YMCA], Liverpool Street, Dover, Kent.

Historic County: Kent

YHA Region: LON

GR: TR 322413\*

▲Opened 1931. There were (eg) 41 bednights between 5/1931 and 9/1931 [LONar31].

Wartime arrangements: it is not clear how much use there was in 1940, if any, before closure, as bednight figures are unrecorded for that year. A national notice of 20/6/1940 was issued to state that provision of accommodation was uncertain because of the restriction of movement. It was withdrawn by 14/10/1940.

✚Closed 1940 and eventually replaced by Dover (Eastcliff). It was *now closed* [Rucksack Summer 1940 and LRN 7/1940].

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-40.*

*Alternative name: 'Dover (Barnet Hut)' (1931(1st edn)-32).*

Property tenure:

Property profile: large wooden hut, demolished many years ago. It was the building marked 'Club' on the 1:500 1937 OS map, immediately inland from Guildford Lawn.

The whole area was cleared and rebuilt as a large residential block 'the Gateway' with gardens towards the seafront [KF].

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Dover A 751 † RG35.tif; Y050001-Dover A 752 ≈† RG37.tif

FALMOUTH 1938 to 1951.

YMCA, Bank House, Grove Place, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Historic County: Cornwall

YHA Region: DAC

GR: SW 811324\*

▲Opened 1938, replacing St Mawes Hostel.

Wartime arrangements: the hostel was unavailable for the duration of the war.

Closed 1939, but reopened after the war at Easter 1946 [Rucksack Summer 1946]. In late 1949 it was reported as closed temporarily [Rucksack Autumn 1949].

✚Closed 30/9/1951 [DACar51].

*Handbook 1938-39; 1946 supplement-51 (1946 supplement published 3/1947).*

Property tenure:

Property profile: valley-roofed detached Georgian building with porch dating from 1788. YMCA property, previously the Bank House Hotel.

Awaiting possible conversion to flats [GD, 2008]

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Falmouth 751 ≈† RG38.tif

FOREST GREEN 1939 to 1940.

Red Triangle Club, Forest Green, Dorking, Surrey.

Historic County: Surrey

YHA Region: LON

GR: TQ 124412[GD]

Positional note: the location shown in the Regional Guide map of c1942 (probably somewhat out-of-date) suggests a position just south of the Forest Green Inn.

▲Opened 7/4/1939. The hostel was open on Saturdays and bank holidays only.

Wartime arrangements: the strength of usage in 1940 is uncertain as bednight figures are unrecorded. A national notice of 8/10/1940 advised that the hostel was operating, however. A month later, 5/11/1940, it was closed until further notice.

✚Closed 8/1940, or somewhat later (see previous comment).≠

*Handbook 1940.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: YMCA building, also Forest Green Library.

The hut dated from 1920 and was located between the Parrot Inn and the Congregational Chapel (a postcard view shows a pair of huts). The hut was destroyed by fire in 1954 and a village hall constructed on the site [GD].

YHA Archive file [ð]: Y050001-Forest Green 751 ≈ RG42.tif

LEWES 1932 to 1946.

St Wilfred's YMCA, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex.

Historic County: Sussex

YHA Region: LON

GR: TQ 412100[GD]

▲Opened 1932 (*open*, Hiker and Camper 10/1932). In 1939 a new hostel building would be open at Easter [LRN 3/1939], presumably the building in the garden that is shown on contemporary postcards.

Wartime arrangements: the hostel operated in 1940 and was restricted for a time. A national notice of 8/10/1940 advised that the hostel was operating. It was then available again for at least part of 1941SY, when defence area regulations were in force [LONar41]. It was restricted to men only in 1942 and only partially available in 1943, closing during that year [LONar43]. It was not available in 1944-45.

Lewes Hostel reopened after the war in 1946, with Easter intended [LRN 3/1946]. This Newsletter also reported that beds for 20 women, two kitchens and a common room were located in a new building, while men were accommodated in the gym.

✚Closed 1946, the end of season being 30/9/1946. It proved impossible to open during 1947, contrary to expectation [LONar47].

*Handbook 1933-42; 1946-47.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: the hostel was at Lewes YMCA. Initially men were accommodated in a former army hut and women in chalets in the garden. The 1939 hostel development is the building in the garden that is shown on contemporary postcards. This housed a men's dormitory (provided with bedspreads) with sanitary annexe, a common room and kitchens for members and the assistant warden. It seems that after the War the allocation of beds changed [GD].

The later building incorporated a simple brick structure.

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Lewes 751 † RG35.tif; Y050001-Lewes 752 ≈† RG39.tif](#)

PORTSMOUTH (MEN) 1933 to 1940.

YMCA, 56 High Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Region: SOU

GR: SZ 632993\*

▲Opened 1933; a well-used facility [Portsmouth RG ar33] for men only.

Wartime arrangements: a national notice of 20/6/1940 was issued to state that the hostel was closed.

✚Closed 1940. It was unable to accommodate hostellers [SOUar42, reporting on period 1939-42].

*Handbook 1933-40.*

*Alternative name: 'Portsmouth' (1934-37).*

**Property tenure:**

[Property profile: YMCA building now demolished, opposite Portsmouth Cathedral.](#)

[On the site is Fountain Court, 55 High Street, split into flats \[KF, 2011\].](#)

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Portsmouth B 751 † RG35.tif; Y050001-Portsmouth B 752 ≈† RG39.tif](#)

SOUTHAMPTON (MEN) 1938 to 1939.

YMCA, The Avenue, Southampton, Hampshire.

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Region: SOU

GR: SU 422129\*

Positional note: the hostel was at the foot of the Avenue, on the corner of Dorset Street and Cranbury Place.

▲Opened Easter 1938, then Whit to 15/9/1938 [SOUar38]. There was accommodation for men only.

✚Closed 1939, the end of season being 15/9/1939.

Wartime arrangements: the premises were closed as a hostel; our equipment was destroyed by enemy action [SOUar42, reporting on period 1939-42]. There were 0 bednights in 1940SY.

*Handbook 1938-39.*

**Property tenure:**

[Property profile: handsome yellow-brick two-storey Georgian-style House with central entrance and angled bays, and extensions to either side. it is now called George Williams House. The YMCA remains here in 2010.](#)

[The house was formerly 'Cranbury' \[GD\].](#)

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Southampton A&B 751 ≈† RG38.tif](#)

## YWCA

LONDON (WOMEN) Temporary hostel for women planned 1933.

Danish YWCA, 65 Fellows Road, Hampstead, London NW3.

Historic County: Middlesex

YHA Region: LON

GR: TQ 268844 approx.

▲✚Negotiations were proceeding [Handbook 1933]. It was described as *opened 1933 only* [YHAF], though this is possibly a perpetuated mistake and the source is not conclusive. There is no record of its operation.

**Property tenure:**

## GFS

SOUTHAMPTON (WOMEN) 1938 to 1951.

Girls' Friendly Society, 31 Carlton Crescent, Southampton, Hampshire.

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Region: SOU

GR: SU 419128\*

▲Opened 1/6/1938. There was accommodation for women only.

Wartime arrangements: the hostel operated each year of the war, except for 1944 (bednight returns). Usage was minimal in 1940-43, but more substantial in 1945.

✚Closed 1951. *Now closed* [YHAB 8/1951], though elsewhere the final date was put at 30/9/1951 [SOUar51].

*Handbook 1938-51.*

**Property tenure:**

[Property profile: at the centre of a fine Georgian Terrace; the property featured a typical half-rise entrance flight, with arched doorway, arched transoms to either side and railed balcony above. At one stage of its history the Girls' Friendly Society initials was emblazoned across the building.](#)

[The building is now offices \[KF, 2011\].](#)

[YHA Archive file \[ø\]: Y050001-Southampton A&B 751 ≈† RG38.tif](#)

## Woodcraft Folk

WEST HOATHLY 1953 to 1955.

c/o Woodcraft Folk, Chapel Road, West Hoathly, East Grinstead, Sussex.

Historic County: Sussex

YHA Region: LON

GR: TQ 364330\*

▲Opened Easter 1953. It was planned to open the hostel in 1952, but the property was in a deplorable state. Several Nissen huts were available, but not all were taken [LONmins 1952].

✚Closed 12/1955, due to *unsatisfactory circumstances at West Hoathly* [LONar56].

*Handbook 1953-55.*

Property tenure: accommodation hostel tenancy [YHAar53].

Property profile: huts, of Nissen and block form, part of a former prisoner-of-war camp, later Women's Land Army. At the time of opening it was part of the Woodcraft Folk holiday and education centre and rented from them [LRN]. The premises were always viewed by YHA management as a short-term expedient, because of the poor condition. Newer houses on a short street called the Beacon have replaced the old huts.

### Other church / welfare body connections

[CAPEL-Y-FFIN: there follows a summary of the uncertain history of the four earlier youth hostel premises in the Nant Bwch valley, to the west of the small settlement at Capel-y-Ffin. The story of the YHA locations here in the period 1943-52 is complex and as yet incomplete. As well as the usual Handbooks and South Wales Annual Reports sources include some (sadly not all) of the contemporary South Wales Hosteller Magazine. These often give explicit information about developments at Capel-y-Ffin, though gaps in the Archive and a tendency to publish historically incomplete statements frequently hamper understanding. Of particular value have been the personal memories passed on to JM in 2007 by Len Clark, original volunteer Fred Blampied, Marjorie Harmer (a tireless SWA worker) and Mary Griffiths (daughter of H Williams, the warden of the Old Rectory (Grange Farm) and Monastery hostels; she still lives at the Farm). Understandably, after a period of 60 years, not quite all aspects can be remembered by these contributors with absolute sureness.

All four early hostels were connected in some way to Capel-y-Ffin Monastery. This cluster of buildings had been the focus of the project by Father Ignatius to establish an Anglican monastic centre along Cistercian lines, first at Llanthony Abbey, but when that idea was rejected, at a new site at Capel-y-Ffin. The Monastery was built as a cloistered abbey, and a church constructed alongside. The church structure was unsound and soon fell into disrepair and the roof removed. The religious centre lasted barely 40 years. The Monastery then became the home of Eric Gill for a few years; he left in 1924.

The first youth hostel here (1943) was at a small house, St David's Bungalow, about 1/2 mile further up the valley, on the north side of the tiny road running up Nant Bwch. It was presided over by Father David, a curious non-conformist figure who acted as hostel warden. When he left in 1945, the continuation of the hostel here was in constant jeopardy, mainly because of wardening provision, but it managed to last until 18/7/1948, when it transferred to a pleasant stone building at the entrance to the Monastery. This was called the Old Rectory in YHA literature (it is now Grange Farm) a short distance west of the Abbey. There were 20 beds.

The three hostels close to the Monastery: this Old Rectory, the Monastery (or Abbey) itself, and the enigmatic tin hut, were by now in the ownership of the family of Mr H Williams, who was running his home in the Monastery as a guest house. Mr Williams daughter, Mary Griffiths (who lives now at Grange Farm) recalls that there was a fire there in 1948, which seriously damaged the east side of the building, including the monks' cells and the roof. While it was repaired, the builders also prepared some rooms in the Old Rectory for youth hostel use, including the provision of bunks. It seems perfectly possible that the original intention was therefore to move from St David's Bungalow directly to the Monastery, but that events were altered by the fire.

The term Old Rectory was not an address, but may have referred to its function as being the retirement abode of the Rev Williams (no relation) from Cwmyoy in the period leading up to the bad winter of 1947. The property had been built in 1870 for the mother of Father Ignatius, the founder of Capel-y-Ffin Monastery, and was called Plas Genevieve in her name. After the Rev Williams vacated the property, it was available for use as an accommodation hostel in 1948. Hostellers took meals in the Monastery itself, and there were members' cooking facilities there also.

As the Old Rectory in turn proved inadequate for members and inconvenient for the warden, the hostel premises were moved again in 1949 into the Monastery accommodation itself, the large extant building adjacent to the ruined church. Perhaps this move was in stages, or the two operated at first in tandem. 50 beds were now advertised. The monastery cells (men) and Abbots quarters (women) were in turn surrendered at the end of the 1951 season when Mr Williams wished to concentrate on his guest house at the Monastery.

As a temporary measure for 1952, the original St David's Bungalow was readvertised in the annual Handbook, with a Grid Reference to match. However, a persistent conundrum arises from the distinct memories of Marjorie Harmer and Mary Griffiths of the use of a further building as youth hostel, a corrugated iron structure that had formerly served as the convent accommodation for the monastery. It had many years previously been sited between the Monastery and the church ruin adjacent, but was demolished and reconstructed on a site below the Old Rectory, adjacent to the road and only a 100 yards or so from the Monastery and the Rectory. It was a green painted hut sometimes referred to as Willy's Hut. Mary Griffiths at Grange Farm remembers that the hostel operated here at some time, and SWA voluntary worker Marjorie Harmer (who helped prepare the hostel) is sure for personal reasons that it was in 1952 (which conflicts with the advertised resurrection of St David's Bungalow). Its period of use remains unclear (it may have replaced St David's Bungalow for some reason at the start of or during the 1952 season, have operated in tandem with it, or may even have been the controlled hostel referred to in 1947-early 1948).

No hostel was available in the valley in 1953. An intended King George VI Memorial Trust model hostel was to be built 1954-55, but eventually Castle Farm was opened in 1958.

### LOTHERSDALE 1931 to 1935.

Stone Gappe, Lothersdale, Keighley, Yorkshire.

Historic County: Yorkshire W Riding

YHA Region: WES

GR: SD 967457\*

▲Opened by Easter 1931. Formally opened 20/6/1931.

✚Closed 31/7/1935 [WESar35]. Numbers staying had been in steady decline and the hostel had run at a loss almost from the beginning.

*Handbook 1931(1st edn)-35.*

*Alternative name: 'Stone Gappe' (1931(1st edn)-32).*

*Property tenure: at first YHA were sub-tenants of Rev PM Aldous; that agreement finished 31/10/1931, changing to a principal tenancy arrangement [WESar31].*

*Property profile: large country house. The Rev Aldous's provision of rooms for Band of Youth members at Stone Gappe from about 1926 had been a precursor to the Youth Hostels Association [Wharfedale & Airedale Observer 1/9/1950].*

### CHEPSTOW (TUTSHILL) 1932 to 1935.

Ty-Gwilym, Tutshill, Chepstow, Monmouthshire.

Historic County: Gloucestershire

YHA Region: SWA

GR: ST 537950\*

▲Opened 1932, the season being from 15/6/1932 to 30/9/1932 [List of New Hostels Opened in 1932: South Wales Hostel leaflet]. Tutshill was a rare tented hostel, considerably extended [SWAar33]. It was one mile above the town on the Gloucestershire bank of the river. The common room was a marquee and the sleeping quarters were bell and patrol tents (with wooden floors and camp beds).

✚Closed 1935, and replaced by the Old Labour Institute Hostel. The Rev RJ Stockdale, founder of the local group, with keen scouting interests, and Hon. warden of Tutshill, had resigned [SWAar35]. The hostel was unable to continue because he was setting up West Hythe Hostel [SWAar36].

*Handbook 1933-35.*

*Alternative names: 'Chepstow' (1933); 'Tutshill' (1934).*

*Property tenure:*

*Property profile: in tents, the Watch-Tower Camp in 1935. Tut is a local name for watch-tower.*

*YHA Archive file [ð & «:]: Y600004 Fred Travis.doc*

### WEST HYTHE 1936 to 1939.

Selby Farm, West Hythe, Kent.

Historic County: Kent

YHA Region: LON

GR: TR 107335\*

▲Opened 1936. In 1937 accommodation was increased to almost 60 beds; school parties were specially catered for [LONar37]. The warden was the popular ex-warden of Tutshill (Chepstow) Hostel, the Rev RJ Stockdale, who converted the old farmhouse largely by himself [LONar36]. West Hythe became fully controlled in 1938 [LONar38]. Lack of mains services was a problem. A field was hired for extra capacity in 1939 [LONmins]. The Rev Stockdale floated the idea of a large replacement hostel at Littlestone-on-Sea, rejected.

✚Closed 1939.

Wartime arrangements: the hostel was requisitioned at the beginning of the war. It was omitted from the list of hostels still open [LONar1939].

*Handbook 1936 supplement-39.*

Property tenure:

Property profile: an old farmhouse within two miles of the sea.

YHA Archive file [0]: Y050001-West Hythe 751 † RG37.tif; Y050001-West Hythe 752 ≈† RG38.tif