



YHA (England and Wales)

Youth Hostel Profile

compiled by the Association's volunteer archivist, John Martin, rev2020-01-01

Haworth Youth Hostels

Haworth [Old School] Youth Hostel 1950 to 1958

Old School, Church Street, Haworth, Keighley, Yorkshire

Historic County:

YHA Region: West Riding

GR: SE 029372

Yorkshire (West Riding)

The Haworth Old School Room website describes how the Reverend Patrick Brontë strove for a number of years to establish a school within the village. In 1831 he finally succeeded in his attempts, raising £80 from the National School Society (a charity set up to promote Church of England Schools) towards the building of a Sunday School located between the parish church and the Brontë family home. More funds came from public subscription, the land being donated for building by the Church Lands Trust. In 1832 the school was completed and was soon expanded for day school use. It was built by and taught at by all the Brontë family, and from 1845, managed by Charlotte Brontë's future husband, Arthur Bell Nicholls. In 1854 it hosted the celebration of their wedding, and accommodated some 500 guests.

A final extension was added in 1871. The school closed and moved in 1903, but the building retained its focus as a community building, being used for a variety of activities, including a gymnasium, a library, an army billet during the Second World War and, in the 1950s, a youth hostel.



The only known postcard image of Haworth Old School youth hostel. On the other side of the road, left of the figures, is the Parsonage, now the Brontë Museum. The hostel's YHA sign was idiosyncratic (YHA Archive)

HAWORTH

The old youth hostel at Wainstalls near Luddenden Dean closed at the end of 1949, and YHA replaced it with this historic building. The first hostel in Haworth, it was leased from Haworth Parochial Church Council, the tenancy having been agreed for a term of 14 years from 1 February 1950. The lease was vested in the YHA Trust, but not until 31 December 1951.

At first 38 beds were to be provided, 22 for men and 16 for women. *Rucksack Magazine* for May-June 1950 was soon announcing modified plans:

Because of unforeseen difficulties, the opening of the new hostel at Haworth has had to be deferred. Owing to the high cost of adaptation, the original plan for converting the old Sunday School into a thirty-bed [sic], meals provided hostel has had to be abandoned in favour of a modified scheme. The new plan is to use voluntary labour only, to convert the building into a simple hostel of the self-cooking type. Working parties from Leeds, Bradford and Halifax sub-regional groups are to start there immediately. There is much to be done, but the work will be carried out as quickly as possible.

All the adaptations were carried out by volunteer work parties, most of whom were actually drawn from the local YHA area groups in Halifax and Huddersfield.



Work parties at the Old School, Haworth. 1: a noble tradition of volunteer work was firmly established by local YHA groups in the Yorkshire wool towns. Hostellers regularly gave up their weekends to supply skilled and unskilled labour, and would be glad of any old jalopy to transport goods and personnel; 2: light transport for plumbing work; 3: the future common room (YHA Archive)

The youth hostel opened on 31st July 1950. It had been operating for about a month when an official opening took place, on 2nd September 1950.

By 1957 extensive roof repairs had to be carried out. Numbers staying at Haworth had dipped to below 2,000 annually, however, and the Council decided to open only on Saturday nights during the winter months as an economy measure. Speaking in 2004, Maurice Wall of Whitby recalled that the building was very cold and damp. Fred Robinson was the part-time warden, and lived some distance away. Mr Penryn took over in the final year.



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1: Haworth hostel's opening. The photograph is dated July 1950, so this may not be the official opening ceremony;
 2: stoveside chat. On the notice board is the souvenir booklet produced for the YHA's 21st birthday celebrations in 1950;
 3: crowd scene picnic. The state of the groundwork suggests that this may have been a working party refreshment break;
 4: pristine dormitory scene. The footbath was de rigueur in better 1950s youth hostels, while the provision of a hot tap suggests greater comfort than usual;
 5: dedicatory plaque; 6: probably the second dormitory, looking a degree more used (YHA Archive)

On 19th April 1958 the lease was terminated, somewhat short of its initial 14-year term, and the hostel closed. More recently, Haworth Old School is still used for parochial functions and as a valuable community resource.

Haworth [Longlands Hall] Youth Hostel 1975 or 1976 to present

Longlands Hall, Longlands Drive, Lees Lane, Haworth, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD22 8RT

Historic County:

YHA Region:

GR: SE 038378

Yorkshire (West Riding)

West Riding, Yorkshire, North

Longlands Hall was the former home of Edwin Robinson Merrall, one of three family members who owned the Lees and Ebor Mills, Haworth and filed a patent for 'improvements in machinery or apparatus for scouring or washing wool or other fibres'.

Built in 1884, Longlands was typical of a number of grandiose Victorian industrialists' mansions, built in a flourish of ostentatious wealth, that were to outlive their original purpose and pass to YHA within a century. The portecochère makes a grand statement, and leads to a fine round-arched hallway and an impressive sweeping stairway, lit by stained glass windows depicting citrus groves. Throughout the house hand-carved heavy oak features extensively.

The Merralls left Longlands Hall at the start of the First World War. The property then passed to Mr Inglis, who in 1933 turned the billiard room into a ballroom with art-deco styled floor and fireplace, and to Mr Paley just before the Second World War, who had plans for a hotel. It was later sold to become a hostel for immigrant mill girls. Developers built on adjacent land in the 1960s, and the house fell into disrepair, but was again sold for use as a retirement home for a short period.



Dixon postcard of the south side of the house, dating from about the time of the opening of the hostel. The lighter-coloured stonework marks the position of the original orangery. The grounds were once extensive, before the coming of the neighbouring housing development (YHA Archive)



Since its first hostel closed in 1958 Haworth had grown as a tourist centre, with the Worth Valley Railway and the Railway Children film supplementing an international interest in the Brontës. The lack of a hostel here was hindering the Association's development. YHA purchased Longlands Hall for £23,500 in 1974 and it was vested in the YHA Trust on 18th October. The hostel received an official opening on 8th May 1976; operations may have begun earlier in that year, or even late in 1975. A plaque by the entrance acknowledged generous grants from the Countryside Commission, West Yorkshire County Council and the Department of Education and Science. From the outset the hostel had showers, a good drying room and three smaller rooms often used as family rooms.

The first wardens were John and Sue Page and at first there were 90 beds. Early 1980s wardens were David and Sandra Wood, then Bob and Jacki Fisher, followed for a longer period, 1984 to 1992, by John and Dawn Poyner.



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1: hostellers stroll along the south side of the house in the hostel's early days; 2: small folded brochure from about 1980; 3: washday at Longlands Hall hostel – a fine portrait dated 1976 by Lincolnshire member George Miller; 4&5: Dixon postcard views of the heavy balcony canopy and of the dining room, since somewhat altered (YHA Archive)

Tina Hurt and Andrew Head managed the hostel jointly from 1992 to 1994. Andrew continued from then to 1996.

Extensive modernisation of hostel facilities began in 1994. Previously, YHA had used the ballroom, lounge and other rooms on the ground floor as wardens' and staff quarters. The members' lounge had been located in the north-east corner of the first floor, where Room 11 is currently situated. The improvements included the process of freeing up staff quarters for additional guest space, establishing a members' lounge and a meeting room in the original wardens' lounge and bedroom and beginning the subdivision of large dormitory rooms into smaller bedrooms. At this time YHA purchased a bungalow nearby on Longlands Drive for a manager's house, but this additional facility soon became assistants' quarters.

In 1996 Alan and Lorraine Clarke moved from Malvern Hills hostel to take the reigns at Longlands. Further changes to the staff arrangements followed: the Longlands Drive bungalow reverted to the manager's use (it was finally sold by YHA in 2013), while assistant staff moved to newly adapted accommodation in a traditional stone cottage next to Oakworth Station. This allowed the hostel capacity to be boosted to 100 in 1997 for six years or so before it reverted to about the 90 mark in 2003. Alan continued with a long-term project to reconfigure each of the largest dormitories on a roughly yearly basis so that, for instance, the huge 16-bed attic men's dormitory was altered to provide a 7-bed, a 3-bed and two single-bedded rooms, along with small public spaces and plenty of showers and toilets – ideal for groups and school parties. Large dormitories on the first floor were similarly divided, the meals kitchen enlarged and improved, and the members' kitchen, previously squeezed in at the back of that space, was taken down to the cellar. A key feature of these improvements was that the design was made to match Victorian styles as much as possible, sometimes with authentic patterns, as on William Morris-inspired wallpapers, though often with carefully disguised modern materials. Such techniques were applied especially to the reception hall, where in the 1990s the curved-arch grand entrance from the porte-cochère was replicated in a new screened doorway to the staircase, and in the first-floor stairwell, where a horizontal safety screen was sympathetically designed. More improvements were brought to the hostel with a major refurbishment in 2009 and a Fit-for-Purpose scheme in 2012. The hostel saw further development with a Springboard programme later in 2016.

YHA's youth provision summer camp provision, Do It 4 Real, used Haworth hostel from 2005 to 2008 inclusive. New markets have continued to be pursued through the YHA website, with an Affordable Family Holidays advertising programme bringing a strong response in 2015.



1: Walter Scott postcard of the impressive porte-cochère on the east side;
2: Dixon postcard of stained glass, oak stair and decorated ceiling (YHA Archive)

The 2016 YHA website described the provision at YHA Haworth as 89 beds in a variety of rooms: two singles, two 2-bedded, one 3-bedded, three 4-bedded, six 6-bedded (one en suite), one 7-bedded and three 8-bedded. In 2016 Alan celebrated his 20th year as manager of Haworth youth hostel, before retiring in July. Paul Keegan took over briefly before moving to YHA York. Laura Cook and Chris Garden had brief spells in charge before Amy Holman arrived in 2019 from YHA Hathersage.



Northern Grit – author's photographs, June 2016.

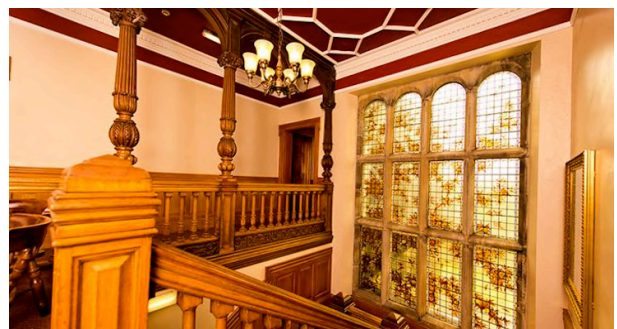
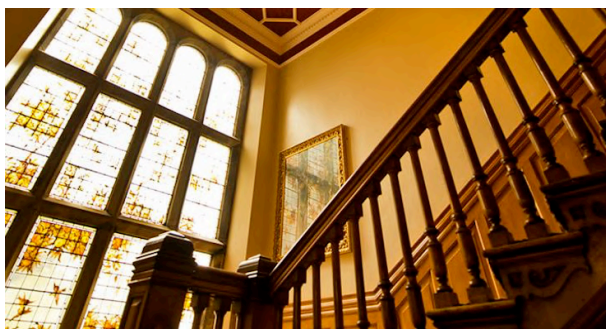
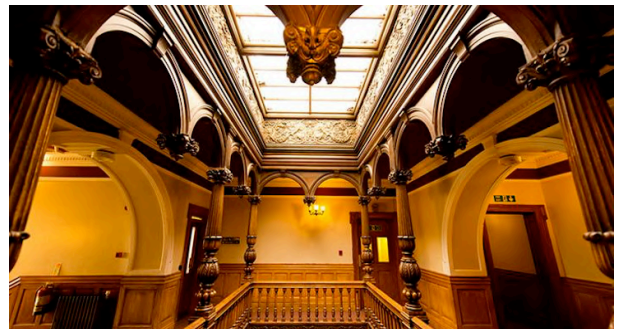
1: the west side of Longlands Hall and its steeply terraced garden – the house took advantage of its elevated position above the mills and workers' cottages of the Worth Valley below, a dominance exaggerated by the tall chimneys;
2: cellar entrance, west side; 3: the kitchen extension from the east side

Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows

1950-1991: previous Oct to Sept; **1992:** Oct 1991 to Feb 1993; **1993-present:** Mar to following Feb

¶: Old School Hostel; Δ: Longlands Hall Hostel; *: 17 month period

1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
521¶	2200¶	2138¶	1992¶	1967¶	1942¶	1889¶	1753¶	589¶	...
1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
...	7406Δ	8348Δ	11057Δ	9453Δ
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
9521Δ	9603Δ	8781Δ	9658Δ	10175Δ	openΔ	openΔ	10745Δ	13786Δ	15733Δ
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
12756Δ	13692Δ	16977*Δ	13105Δ	13335Δ	14169Δ	13659Δ	14245Δ	13276Δ	12122Δ
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
12109Δ	10774Δ	12489Δ	11759Δ	12113Δ	13540Δ	13395Δ	12211Δ	10380Δ	11048Δ
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
11288Δ	10006Δ	9279Δ	10408Δ	10656Δ	12583Δ	12969Δ	12986Δ	12634Δ	11566Δ



The lavish interior of Longlands Hall youth hostel, Haworth, is portrayed in these recent YHA publicity images. The Victorian property boasts impressive public spaces, a grand arched entrance, authentically decorated walls, statement fireplaces and a sweeping staircase with stained glass illumination (YHA Archive)

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