



YHA (England and Wales)
Youth Hostel Profile

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

Lostwithiel, Golant and Eden Project Youth Hostels

Lostwithiel Youth Hostel 1949 to 1970

St Faith's, St Winnow, Lostwithiel, Cornwall

Historic County:
Cornwall

YHA Regions:
Devon & Cornwall, South-West

GR: SX 113596

Peregrine Hall, overlooking Lostwithiel, stands on a hill where a gun site was located during the Lostwithiel Campaign of the Civil War in 1644. The Hall is a remarkably imposing building in ecclesiastical style, and dates from 1864. It was founded by the Rev William Everest, the Chaplain of Bodmin Jail, and built on land donated by Thomas James Agar-Robartes, 1st Baron of Lanhydrock. The designer was George Edmund Street, an eminent architect of his day, who had connections with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and designed the Law Courts in The Strand, London, as well as Gothic style churches throughout Europe. The chapel, a separate building to the west, was added about 1867, while the Rectory, forming the west wing, was built in 1875. The small gap between the hall and the chapel was closed in with a 3-storey fill in 1910.

The house was also known as St Faith's House of Mercy. It was home to a Church of England order of nuns, the Sisters of the Community of St Mary the Virgin, from Wantage, a specially-commissioned penitentiary for wayward girls, who were put to work running a laundry serving the Lanhydrock Estate, Lostwithiel town, and possibly the Bishop of Truro's house nearby.

YHA bought the property freehold, with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Education. The youth hostel was vested in the YHA Trust and opened on 1st July 1949. Mr (and his new bride Mrs) Jones wardened at the newly opened hostel. Field Study facilities were later provided.

LOSTWITHIEL

St. Faith's,
Lostwithiel,
Cornwall.

(Tel.: Lostwithiel 559)

FRIDAY

Situation and Approaches.
A hostel since 1949, St. Faith's was originally a Nunnery. The names over the dormitory doors (Faith, Hope, Charity, etc.) bear witness to this. It is the only hostel with a private Chapel; this is still in use. Later it was a Girls' Reformatory.
From Liskeard at a point about one mile from Lostwithiel, turn right at school buildings and left past the school into the hostel drive. Cyclists from hostels in West Cornwall follow the main road A390 which by-passes the old town and at the top of the first hill, turn left towards Polscoe, immediately past the school building, and left again into the hostel drive.

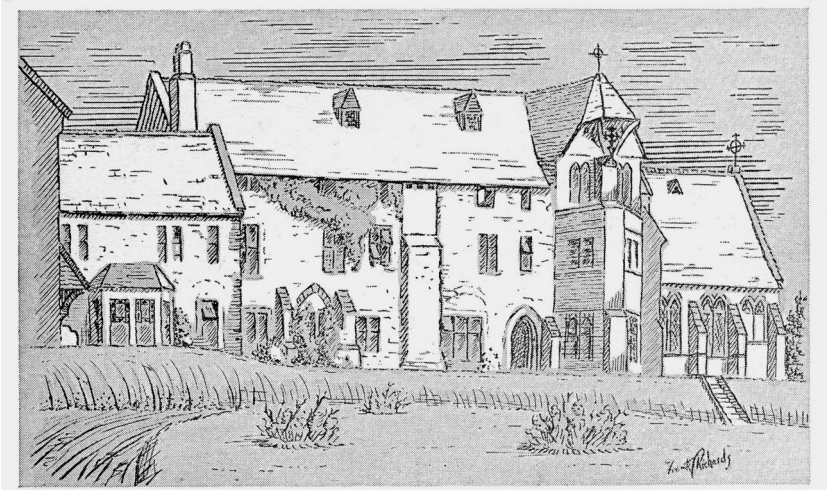
Lostwithiel hostel information from the Regional Guide of 1962

After twenty years YHA was looking for a replacement property. Penquite House, Golant, was seen as more suitable for a modern youth hostel, but the closure had to be postponed from 31st December 1969 because of delays. Lostwithiel hostel finally closed on 7th May 1970. The property was sold on 8th February 1971.

St Faith's is now a guest house. YHA is grateful to the owner, Derek Gwilliam, for extra information.



1 2



The Youth Hostel, Loshwithiel



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The Youth Hostel, St Faith's, Loshwithiel

BK 166

4 5



Loshwithiel youth hostel.

- 1: a secluded corner – photograph by RH; 2: postcard, one of an extended series of sketched cards provided by Frank Richards for the Devon and Cornwall Region in the early post-war years;
 3: the imposing nature of St Faith's, as photographed by D&S Errington, July 1961;
 4: elaborate architectural detail (1-4: YHA Archive); 5: Peregrine Hall in 2013 (author's photo)

Golant Youth Hostel 1970 to 2014

Penquite House, Golant, Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1LA

Historic County:
Cornwall

YHA Regions:
South-West, South

GR: SX 118556

Penquite House is a Grade-II listed dwelling, built in Georgian style about 1850 on the site of an older mansion by a Mr Graham and rented by Colonel John Whitehead Peard of Fowey, who led a company of 1,000 English mercenaries in the Italian civil war of the mid-1850s, whilst his residence at Trenyhton Manor was being built. The huge estate was sold off in lots in 1948. The house was bought freehold by YHA on 17th March 1970, passing immediately to the YHA Trust. It stands in 6½ acres of grounds.

The hostel opened on 21st May 1970, replacing Lostwithiel hostel some three miles further north on the River Fowey. Much of the work was done by Plymouth Sub-Regional Committee, and Field Study facilities were provided from the outset. An official opening was held considerably later, on 12th June 1971, at which the opening invitation literature described the additional ownership by YHA of 14 acres of woodland at the riverside and a boathouse and slipway. The boathouse was soon vandalised, however, and was disposed of about 1982.



Penquite House, Golant.

- 1: a fine portrait by Ken Tyler, Regional Secretary, of the portico entrance to Golant House in early hostel days (YHA Archive);
2: YHA postcard view of the rear of the property. It is elevated above lawns and grounds (author's collection)



As part of YHA's PDMP programme in the early 1990s facilities were upgraded internally (washrooms, kitchen etc) and the staff accommodation on the left hand side of the drive when approaching the hostel was built, creating more beds in the hostel. The field studies facilities were also renovated. About this time the conservatory was restored, though later it gave trouble, and was finally demolished in 2013 after storm damage. The reopening ceremony in 1991 was presented by yachtsman Chay Blythe.

YHA announced in 2013 that Golant hostel was to close. The last hosteller left on the morning of 30th May 2014, the hostel officially closing on the next day. Eden Project opened within four weeks of the closure.



1 2 Penquite House, Golant.

1: side entrance and bell-tower. YHA used this annexe for the self-catering kitchen and utilities – photograph by G Miller (author's collection); 2: this plaque is hung in the house and bears the inscription: 'Presented by the Italian army in the memory of Colonel Charles W Peard, valiant fighter in the glorious expedition of Garibaldi's Thousand, 1860'. Garibaldi was a feted visitor to Fowey and Golant House and treated with royal homage by the local populace (author's photograph, 2013)

Eden Project Youth Hostel 2014 to present

Eden Project, Bodelva, Cornwall, PL24 2SG, UK

Historic County:
Cornwall

GR: SX 04694 55149 (youth hostel)
SX 04540 54888 (old camp ground)
SX 04597 55251 (new camp ground)
SX 04615 54905 (staff, Vounder Farm)



Golant hostel had provided regular accommodation for groups and individuals attending the Eden Project five miles to the west since the attraction's opening in 2001, and YHA wasted no time in finding an imaginative replacement for the mansion hostel.

YHA Eden Project opened on 27th June 2014, initially as a camping ground on land near Vounder Farm, near the neck of the loop road that skirts the Project. A marquee service tent was set up on the Strawberry Car Park to provide reception, café and basic self-catering facilities. The provision of the onsite campsite by YHA was in itself a remarkable pioneering facility.

This provision led within four months to the establishment of a semi-permanent hostel, effectively a replacement for Golant hostel. The joint venture between the Eden Project, YHA and Snoozebox, set up on an initial three-year lease, led to the provision of 232 beds in 58 rooms formed from shipping containers. The hostel opened on 24th October 2014, ready for the school half-term holiday. The YHA core business would be school groups, but ordinary YHA guests are accommodated.

Eden Project is one of the most original youth hostel structures in the YHA's history. Snoozebox provided the buildings, twenty shipping containers recycled (doubly recycled – they had been used originally at Thorpe Park near the M25) and refitted to an advanced accommodation design using especially maritime engineering specifications such as suction pumps and marine timber.



1: the YHA reception marquee –

(upper left: reception entrance. Four of the front row of Snoozebox rooms are shown behind; the three visible on the right, Rooms 102-104, are of the smallest size, and that on the left, Room 105, one of the 54 regular family rooms; lower left: general seating and café / bar area in the marquee, self catering being to the left of the enclosed reception desk; right: children's play area. The floor throughout is of recycled timber, in keeping with the Eden philosophy);
 2: the interior of one of the standard family units (YHA images); 3: roadside aspect. The service bus calls here;
 4: one of the six bell tents pitched on the huge camping field. Views are breathtaking (author's photographs, June 2015)

The twenty containers at Eden are arranged in four rows of five. Each container is further divided into (usually) three family units, each arranged with a double bed, further flexible sleeping arrangements for two, a convertible sofa, a small wet room en suite, and ingenious use of space to create shelf and storage room. Modern needs are

provided in controlled electricity, fresh air and heating supplies, television and secure locking. One of the containers is more generously divided into two, and fitted out for disabled access, while a final example consists of four sets of bijou rooms with a double bed, a single over it, and all the expected facilities.

In June 2015 the facility was further enhanced by a new very large camping ground on higher ground adjacent to the west. This is supplied with six large fitted bell tents, and the field can accommodate up to a further 80 individuals in self-pitched tents. Toilet and shower facilities are laid on, and campers may use the central services marquee, drying room and cycle store. Public transport from St Austell serves the YHA and Eden Project and is an important feature.



Front and rear row of the Snoozeboxes at YHA Eden Project (author's photographs, June 2015)

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
<i>1949-1991: previous Oct to Sept; 1992: Oct 1991 to Feb 1993; 1993-present: Mar to following Feb</i>									
§: Lostwithiel Hostel; ¶: Golant Hostel; Δ: Eden Project Campsite / Hostel									
*: 17 month period; +: notional figure included for exclusive hire and/or camping									
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2764§
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
5702§	5622§	5521§	5279§	5163§	5078§	4770§	4752§	4570§	4975§
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
4036§	3370§	4574§	4279§	4224§	4438§	5179§	4416§	5473§	6090§
1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
912§	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4460¶	6237¶	6961¶	8086¶	7090¶	7894¶	open¶	7728¶	7393¶	8120¶
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
8612¶	7654¶	7078¶	8459¶	8571¶	8290¶	9174¶	10113¶	9638¶	8891¶
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
9321¶	9540¶	10574*¶	9879¶	10132¶	11452¶	11611¶	11638¶	11223¶	11618¶
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
10685¶	13887¶	15548¶	15070¶	14259¶	12668¶	13422¶	13384¶	11724¶	11444¶
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
10550¶	12370+¶	10505+¶	10598+¶	1659¶	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	5494Δ	35356Δ	38440Δ	38949Δ	38264Δ	40393Δ