



YHA (England and Wales) Youth Hostel Profile

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

York Youth Hostels

York [Trenfield] Youth Hostel 1934 to 1944

Trenfield, 167 Holgate Road, York

Historic County:
Yorkshire (West Riding)

YHA Region:
York, Scarborough & Hull

GR: SE 587513

As early as 1934 the YHA National Executive had determined to open youth hostels in historic cities. A grant was given to the fledgling York, Scarborough and Hull Regional Group for a hostel in York. A large brick-built double-fronted and bayed town house, Trenfield, was selected on Holgate Road and it duly opened on 23rd March, 1934, with an official ceremony held the next day. YHA were tenants on a rather insecure month-by-month basis of the London and North Eastern Railway, who owned and operated much of this part of York. There were beds for 40.

In 1938 YHA was given the opportunity to purchase the house for £1,000, but the idea was rejected by ballot.

The hostel continued to operate during the war. The 1939 YHA Annual Report recorded that the tenancy was due to expire in 1940, but it was extended to 1944. The YHA Regional Council was encouraging its use by lodgers and others to make up deficiencies; numbers staying had reduced to only half the pre-war figure. In 1944, on the next expiry (either during June or extended to the end of the year), the hostel closed and YHA business was transferred to a temporary hostel on the other side of York for a year or so; Mrs Schabacker, who had been warden throughout, resigned. Trenfield had been damaged by air raids, probably in 1942; it is not known how far this was a contributing factor towards YHA's leaving it.



The only known photographic image of Trenfield is this postcard, probably produced on a small scale locally, as it is uncaptioned and quite rare. Note the famed 'Headless Hikers' poster braving the elements, the delightful black and white YHA triangle and the tram equipment, redundant from 1935 (YHA Archive)

In 2008 the building housed a medical centre. Since then it has been converted into flats.

York [Heslington Road] Youth Hostel 1944 to 1945

97 Heslington Road, York

Historic County:
Yorkshire (West Riding)

YHA Region:
York, Scarborough & Hull

GR: SE 612510

Heslington Road youth hostel opened some time between June and November 1944 to replace Trenfield. York Corporation offered the property, a large imposing brick house on the south-west corner of Heslington Road and Belle Vue Terrace that was being used as a rest centre. There was accommodation for 50.

The facility was always regarded as short-term, available only to the end of the European War. It closed in May 1945, to be replaced immediately by Haverford hostel.



The former Heslington Road youth hostel (author's photographs, August 2002)

York [Haverford] Youth Hostel 1945 to present

Haverford, Water End, Clifton, York YO30 6LP

Historic County:
Yorkshire (West Riding)

YHA Region: York, Scarborough &
Hull, Yorkshire, North

GR: SE 589529

York's new post-war youth hostel was opened in May 1945, replacing the temporary hostel in Heslington Road. A notice in the Spring 1948 YHA Rucksack Magazine included a notice that the hostel had been running here in an emergency form since 1945 and indicates several improvements over that period, despite the severe limitations of early post-war supplies:

The new hostel at York is to be officially opened on Saturday afternoon, the 8th May [1948], at 4.30pm. The ceremony will be performed by Miss Sharman Douglas, the daughter of the American Ambassador; Lord Halifax, who was British Ambassador in Washington during the war, will also speak.

The Regional Group, and indeed the YHA as a whole, will be particularly glad to welcome them on this occasion. They represent, as few others could, the links between the United States and the United Kingdom as nations, and growing partnership between the associations of young people on both sides of the Atlantic. York Hostel itself is a practical example of joint enterprise, since it was established with the aid of a large grant from the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations.

It is well situated on the banks of the River Ouse, and is only a mile from the centre of the City. Although Haverford has been in use as a hostel for over two years, the alterations and war damage repairs were completed only recently. As the work progressed, accommodation was gradually increased to seventy beds. Some fifteen additional beds will be added as soon as the conversion of the former garage block becomes possible. York now possesses a hostel worthy of the historic capital of the north of England. It is hoped that the number of foreign hostellers visiting York will increase as the problems of travel become less onerous.

Haverford was the former home of the Rowntree family, built in 1842 for a draper named William Catton. It was originally known as Cliffe View or Cliffe Villa. 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. Of 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 Joseph Rowntree Village Trust purchased the Haverford Estate at Water End for YHA and gave immediate possession; the Trust was keen for ownership to pass to YHA, and made two generous loans to YHA on very easy terms to enable the acquisition of the new hostel. The Ministry of Education also contributed to the opening costs, while 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 (Llanrwst) and York. YHA took freehold possession in 1947 for £5,750, with a covenant stipulating that if YHA wants to change the use of the property it first must offer the property back to the Rowntrees for the price at which it was bought.



HAVERFORD YOUTH HOSTEL, CLIFTON, YORK



HAVERFORD YOUTH HOSTEL, CLIFTON, YORK

Two early postcards of Haverford hostel, York – the first shows the original entrance on the south side before expansion hid it from view, the second the spacious lawn area to the side and rear. This view is now much altered, the trapezoidal timber porch finally replaced by an extensive new glazed entrance, lounge, social and dining area (author's collection)

Earlier handbooks up to 1948 had perhaps been generous to claim that there were 80 beds (50 men, 30 women); this was revised to 70 (42, 28) in 1949. In 1951 another 20 beds were added by renovating war-damaged buildings, and capacity reached 100 in 1952. In 1957 a large wooden hut was purchased from a local aerodrome and re-erected in the grounds as a men's dorm to increase the accommodation to 140 by 1959, and in that year further considerable extensions were provided with new members' kitchen, dining room, dormitories and washroom. The hostel then settled to 25 years or so of intensive use, with overnights doubling during the period.

Peter Rowntree, son of (Benjamin) Seebohm Rowntree and a Director of the Rowntree Company, lived with his wife Eve at the Homestead until 1978. Both were long time supporters of the YHA; Peter Rowntree was the long-standing chairman of the York, Scarborough and Hull Region and Eve Rowntree became the first woman to be elected a National Officer of the YHA, serving as Vice Chair.



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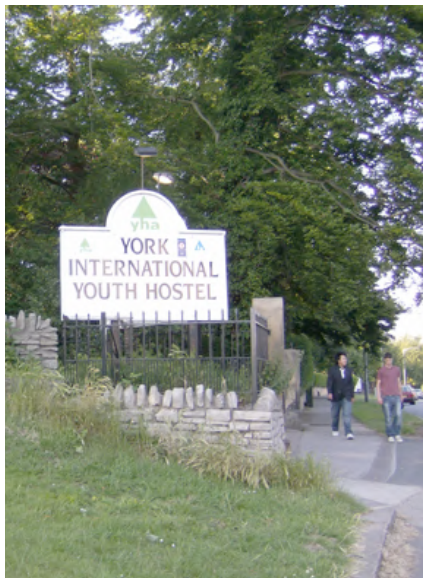


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- 1: a rare photograph showing the aerodrome hut that was used as men's sleeping accommodation (Dorm 8) before being swept away in the late 1980s' modernisation. It adjoined a small brick built building, on what is now the car park;
 2 the Minster displayed on the 1960s one-inch pin badge 3: a busy time for the warden in his den, 1981 (1&3 YHA Archive);
 4: Clifford's Tower on the York hostel stamp, 1960s style (2&4 author's collection)

A project was started over the winter of 1986-87 to build a new two-storey 80-bed annexe, joined by an elevated corridor to the south side of the hostel. It replaced the old wooden annexe and was fittingly named Trenfield after York's first youth hostel. Since then, Haverford hostel has consistently maintained between 30,000 and 40,000 overnights per year. Capacity rose to 158, before settling on 150 in 1998.

Wardens and managers of York's Haverford hostel have included Mr and Mrs Harold and Ivy Key, for a considerable settled period in the 1950s and 1960s, Geoff Sage, George and Betty Pearson, David Wood, David Meagher, Malcolm and Olga Earncliffe, and for much of the present century, Tim Butcher and Aukje Noorman. Victoria Pearson (2013) and Richard Robinson (2016) followed on. Paul Keegan was appointed manager in 2017.



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Haverford, June 2007

1: the hostel entrance on Water End;

2&3: rear and side views of the property – compare with the older postcards shown on page 3;

4: York is an ideal cyclists' city – a riverside ride extends from the city centre to the youth hostel, where bikes could be hired until recently; 5: the 1987 extension and 1950s YHA signage displaying 1930s philosophy sit very comfortably together;

6: a quiet corner – the international garden (author's photographs)

Haverford was closed for a major refurbishment programme on 2nd September 2012, reopening on 29th March 2013. This provides a conservatory extension, state-of-the-art seminar and education facilities available for private hire, new café bar and reception area and increased parking. All 45 rooms were refurbished, 32 with en suites, and now 200 beds are now provided. Since renewal, up to an extra 14,000 overnights have been recorded annually.



New in 2013: extensive glazed entrance, Rowntree-themed lounge / dining area, bar and reception at Haverford (YHA Archive)

York [Yearsley Bridge] Youth Hostel 1981 only

York University hall of residence, Yearsley Bridge, York.

Historic County:
Yorkshire (West Riding)

YHA Region:
Yorkshire

GR: SE 5951 approx

YHA operated a temporary overflow hostel at Yearsley Bridge, in one of the University halls, in the summer of 1981. This was a simple-grade arrangement offering 60 beds. No meals were provided, and cooking facilities were limited. Even though there were no advance booking arrangements and advertising was limited to supplementary notices, 1865 bednights were recorded during the three-month opening period.

In 2007 a YHA Enterprise facility to supplement Haverford hostel was planned and to some extent advertised, by arrangement with the authorities at York Racecourse. The scheme was based on the Stables Complex, Racecourse Centre, Tadcaster Road, York YO24 1QG (SE 587495), the jockeys' accommodation facility bordering on the Knavesmire racecourse. The agreement was soon curtailed by YHA, however, certainly by the end of 2007, and it is doubtful whether this site ever saw any true YHA usage.

Addendum: York [Naburn Hall] Youth Hostel 1947 only

Naburn Hall, Naburn, York.

Historic County:
Yorkshire (West Riding)

YHA Region:
York, Scarborough and Hull

GR: SE 596454

There are two references to YHA's use of Naburn Hall, 4 miles south of York on the Ouse, as an ad hoc unofficial but tolerated overflow for the main Haverford hostel in 1947. No bednights were registered separately. One was a reference in the York, Scarborough and Hull annual report of 1947, stating that members would be accommodated if they simply turned up; the owner would always be available. The other is a memory by member E Bartlett:

I first went to Naburn Hall in 1947; at that time it was an overflow hostel. I was cycling from London to Inverness at the age of 13. The hostel at York was full, so I was directed to Naburn Hall. When the 'Commander' (the owner of Naburn Hall) heard this not only would he not take any money from me but gave me ten shillings to help me on my way, also he invited me to stay with him as his guest on a number of occasions, which I did up to 1952 when I was called up for National Service.

Naburn Hall is a Georgian rebuild of a hall that can be traced back to 1345. In recent years it had fallen into disrepair, but in 2015 was being restored.

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods as follows</i>									
1934-1991: previous Oct to Sept; 1992: Oct 1991 to Feb 1993; 1993-present: Mar to following Feb									
¶: Trenfield Hostel; ¶†: Trenfield Hostel and probably Heslington Road Hostel combined;									
†Δ: Heslington Road and Haverford Hostels combined; Δ: Haverford Hostel; ¥: Yearsley Hostel									
• significant closure for refurbishment; *: 17 month period									
...	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
...	...	...	...	1633¶	3098¶	3609¶	4218¶	4753¶	4375¶
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
2142¶	2089¶	2610¶	3626¶	4504¶†	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	6255†Δ	7517Δ	9098Δ	9838Δ	10029Δ
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
9885Δ	12700Δ	13536Δ	12775Δ	12879Δ	13183Δ	13604Δ	12779Δ	12071Δ	13782Δ
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
15945Δ	14577Δ	16389Δ	15368Δ	14709Δ	16766Δ	18525Δ	17883Δ	18015Δ	19030Δ
1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
20217Δ	22169Δ	22697Δ	23624Δ	27987Δ	30468Δ	32001Δ	30235Δ	31058Δ	31200Δ
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
33188Δ	30766Δ	27383Δ	27287Δ	27998Δ	28500Δ	openΔ	34173Δ	31336Δ	38796Δ
...	1865¥	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
38704Δ	38403Δ	47995*Δ	39993Δ	38437Δ	36061Δ	40757Δ	36564Δ	34554Δ	31711Δ
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
34442Δ	33490Δ	34933Δ	35707Δ	34642Δ	35685Δ	36542Δ	36444Δ	38810Δ	35457Δ
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
32688Δ	34132Δ	20223•Δ	38821Δ	44923Δ	48066Δ	48520Δ	48497Δ	45841Δ	44806Δ