

Burley Youth Hostels

Burley (Forest Glen) Youth Hostel 1935 to 1954

Forest Glen, Burley, Ringwood, Hampshire

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Region: South Coast

GR: SU 208026

Burley's first youth hostel was a house called *Forest Glen*, south of the village centre on Pound Lane. It was a bayed double-fronted brick villa with central porch and dormer. The hostel opened in 1935, replacing the short-lived New Milton hostel.

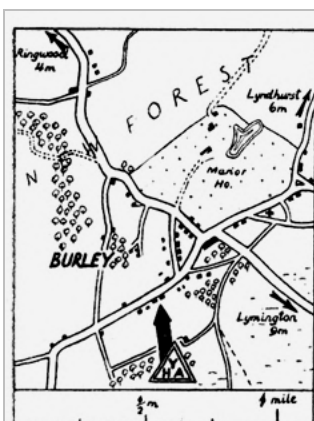


Though bednight figures were unrecorded and the operating pattern was uncertain for the war years, it seems that the hostel was closed for the duration of hostilities. A national YHA notice of 29th August 1940 was issued stating that it was unavailable. Reporting on the first three years of the war, at the end of 1942, the South Coast Region's annual report stated that it had been taken by evacuees, then requisitioned; it was still requisitioned in 1943.

Forest Glen hostel reopened at Easter (April) 1946, and was initially very busy, but had to close again briefly on 2nd October 1949 when the warden Sally Thomas left the district. It reappeared as a self-caterers' hostel, for men only, on the first day of 1950. From 1952 it would serve both sexes again, but the numbers never recovered. It was closed in 1954, by October, after the warden resigned.

The original villa had been demolished and replaced by a modern detached house, still called *Forest Glen*, by 2001 at the latest.

Left: a postcard of the original Burley hostel (YHA Archive)



BURLEY. *Forest Glen, Burley, nr. Ringwood, Hants. Miss F. S. Thomas.* This Hostel is half a mile along the Christchurch Road from the Cross in the centre of the village. Burley, on the South Western edge of the Forest, is a typical New Forest village, where some of the ancient Forest crafts still survive, and is close to some of its choicest scenery. Burley Mount affords fine views of the surrounding country, as does Burley Beacon, which lies just to the North, whilst the Oakley Inclosure road is an ideal route for walker or cyclist to the Wellow Hostel. Rhinefield, with its famous Rhododendron Drive, and Knightwood Oak, are each about five miles away and make pleasant walks. For those visiting Godshill, an interesting route

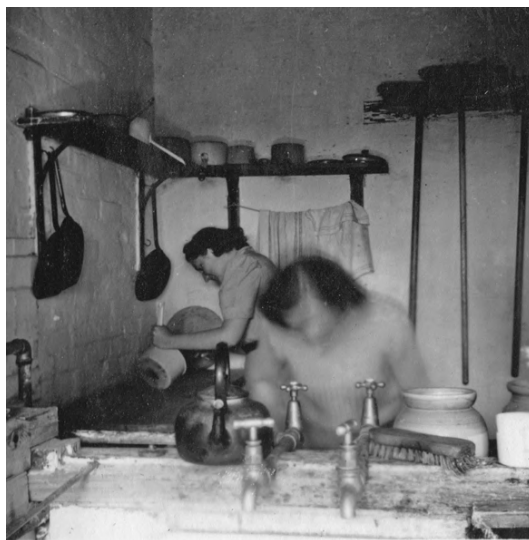
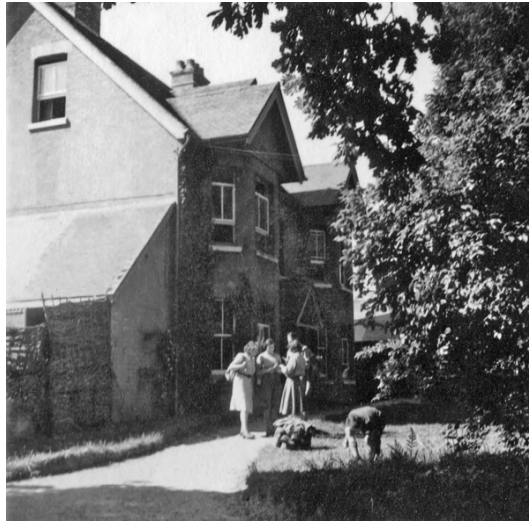
lies up the Avon Valley via Moyles Court and North Gorley.

NO M.P. M8, W8 : PROVISIONS Store *** : E.C.D. Thursday : STATION S.R. Holmsley 2m, Brockenhurst 6m : BUS Southampton—Ringwood 2½m, frequent : DISTANCES West Wellow 14m, Godshill 9m, Winchester 26m.

Extract from the local YHA Guide, 1937. Sally Thomas was warden for most the hostel's span of years

Len Clark knew the first Burley youth hostel, and recalled in 2007, with youthful glee:

I was beginning to appreciate that youth hostels were diverse but had the common factor of unpredictability. En route to Burley I learned that it had an exceedingly attractive young lady warden, which accounted for its flourishing number of visitors. The rumour was well founded.



Three images of Forest Glen hostel, Burley, taken from very small prints.

1: the hostel entrance; 2: an anonymous image of the hostel's façade, 1948; 3: hostel kitchen
(1 & 3: from the album of Will Rutter, who enterprisingly combined wardening at High Halden hostel in Kent with an ambitious YHA Farm Scheme there in the early post war years – all YHA Archive)

Burley (Cottesmore House) / New Forest Youth Hostel 1959 to present

Cottesmore House, Cott Lane, Burley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 4BB

Historic County: Hampshire

YHA Regions:

South Coast, Southern, South

GR: SU 220028

After a gap of four years the village of Burley had a new youth hostel when *Cottesmore House*, a former family home, opened on 21st March 1959. The new premises operated in the summer only in the first season, before adaptations could be carried out. An official opening ceremony followed on 2nd April 1960. The hostel was a freehold purchase, deposited with the YHA Trust as early as 18th December 1958. As with many larger hostels opened in the first 25 years or so after the war it received Ministry of Education grant-aid. The hostel was converted to take 36 guests.



The first warden was George Curran. He stayed until 1964, and was followed by Raymond Courtney until 1969. Postcard and photographic images show that the original hostel entrance was an unusual porch, splayed at an angle at the left-hand front corner of the building; at an early stage the covered space between the front bay windows was infilled to provide a new entrance via a central front door. In the mid-1970s the warden's accommodation was moved to the top floor while the assistant took over his old bed-sitting room. *WightWash* magazine of November 1975

advised that there were plans to reorganise the self-catering kitchen too, by making better use of the available space and providing new grills and sink units. In common with Salisbury, Bath and other southern hostels at the time Burley hostel was due to have a marquee in the grounds to supplement accommodation in the summer of 1977.



1: early postcard of the attractive Cottesmore House; 2: a small school party awaits instructions during the early days. The old hostel porch entrance on the left has seen various different uses over the years (YHA Archive)



1



2

1: by the time of this colour postcard, YHA had fitted the new front entrance and a dormer window. Guests at the hostel are never very far from horses and New Forest ponies; the grazing may have been part of provided hostel activities (YHA Archive);

2: Ron Sant of Cheshire was an enthusiastic hosteller and cyclist, keeping valuable photographic records of his many stays. He made it to Burley in May 1981 (author's collection)

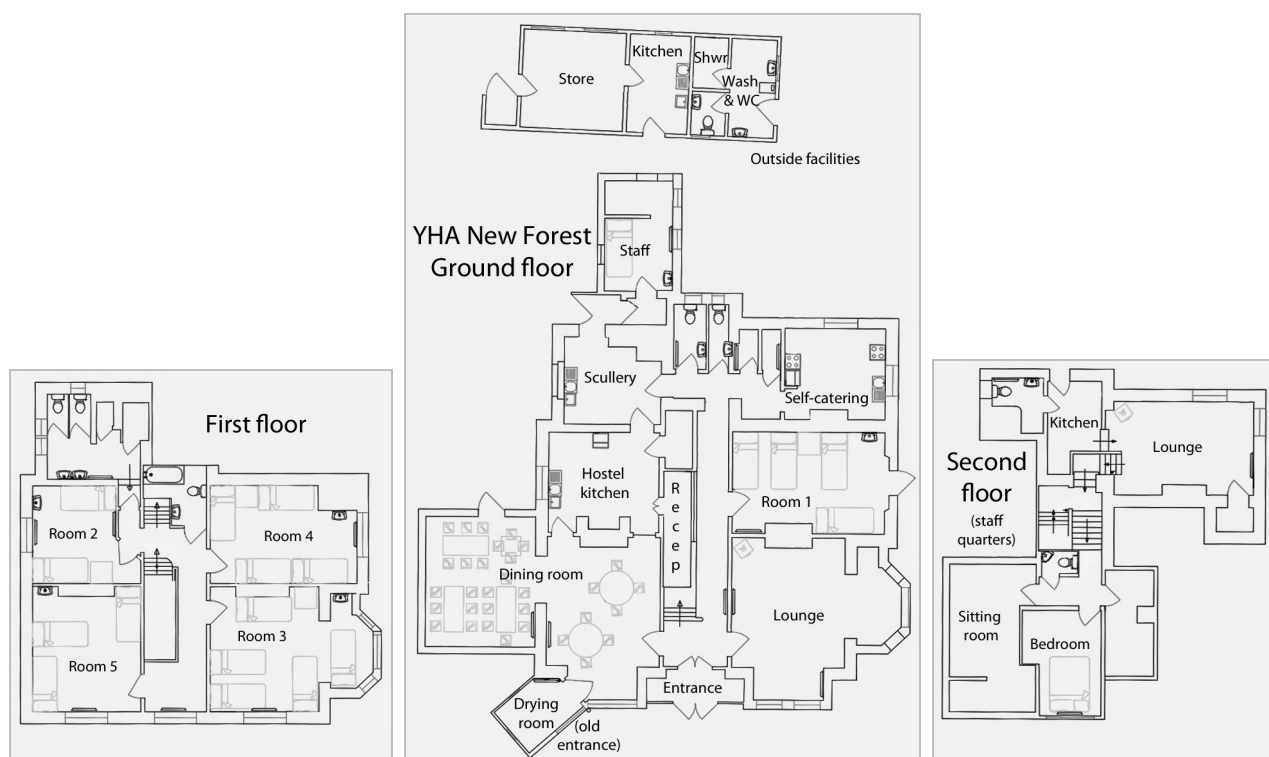


Intermittently, at various times in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, YHA added the title *New Forest* to its handbooks to indicate Burley hostel's wider appeal; it was formally renamed YHA New Forest in March 2013. In 1985 there was a modest scheme to improve washrooms, while a new reception desk was provided in 1988 at one side of the hall, a location used until recently.

John Faulkner and Brian Smith steered the hostel into the 1970s. Clifford Bellamy was the new warden in 1977 and stayed until 1985, when Hilary Davies took over. David Ward, then Brian Ward and Claire Redman jointly and David Gilbert served the hostel in the 1990s.

Though there is no record yet found, the late 1990s seem to have rewarded the hostel with significant expenditure, modernising facilities both outside and in. *YHA News* of Autumn 1999 announced that campers at Burley could use a WC, wash basin and shower installed in a single-storey outbuilding at the rear (a tin-roofed shed). A sink was available, and there were plans for an outside cooking point in addition to a barbecue. This eased the constant pressure on the facilities inside the hostel. In the house, refurbished WCs and an additional two showers made a difference. It is not yet clear exactly when the significant addition of the dining room extension was made, but it was by 1999 – this same *YHA News* referred to the conservatory adjacent to the dining room; it was certainly in the style of dining improvements at Cheddar, Exford and Helmsley in the 1990s.

Graham Wood and Ben Whitfield were the hostel managers in the period 1990-2010 and there may have been others. In the 1980s, and again in 2006, YHA was considering replacing New Forest hostel with a larger one in Romsey, but the original at Burley persisted and YHA had to adopt ingenious means to find enough bed spaces.



The New Forest hostel plan drawings shown above date from March 2003. The corrugated iron shed adapted to outside facilities was at the top of the plan, the north side of the house. The recently-added dining room was on the west side, hostel reception was in the hall and the old splayed porch entrance was by now the drying room. Behind the service shed was a caravan, used until about 2015 as quarters for an assistant member of staff.

On the 2003 plan's first floor, Room 2 is shown with four beds (though by 2014 this was a family room with a three-plus-two arrangement). Otherwise the internal structure shown was little changed in 2014. Room 3 had ten beds, Room 4 eight and Room 5 six. Staff accommodation then was on the whole of the second floor, at the rear of the ground floor, and in the caravan referred to.



1: Cottesmore House boasts this large flat lawned area east of the building. Before the latest changes in outdoor provision, two pre-erected tents boosted camping facilities; 2: the old campers' services shed in close-up (author's photographs, August 2014)

Andy Partridge arrived to manage YHA New Forest in 2010, James Wilkinson came in 2013 before going on to YHA South Downs, and Stephanie Henson, former deputy manager at YHA Treyarnon Bay, followed in 2018.

YHA undertook an extensive refurbishment in 2017, with improvements to bedrooms, bathrooms and communal spaces. Rooming and service arrangements changed considerably from the 2003 plans above. On the ground floor, the former self-catering kitchen in the north-east corner is now Room 2, an en suite 4-bedded facility. Room 1 is reduced to seven beds. The reception has moved from its narrow space in the hallway to a more prominent position using the old drying room (the curious original angled entrance) and takes in a small part of the dining room space too. This plan accords with many recent YHA refurbishments in putting a combined reception / servery / bar area

at the heart of the hostel. The former catered-meals kitchen and scullery now have to double as an extra self-catering space, though there is popular alternative provision in the brand new outside services hut. The old staff room at the rear now serves as a store.

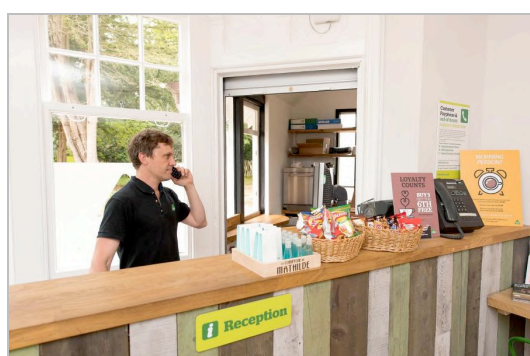
On the first floor, the 2017 refurbishment has necessitated the renumbering of rooms. The old Room 2 mentioned above is now Family Room 5. Room 5, the nominated female dorm, is now 6-bedded Room 6. Rooms 3 and 4 have retained their numbering; Room 3, the nominated male dorm, is reduced to 6 beds, while Room 4 is reduced from 8 beds to 4 to allow for new en suite provision. A few truckle beds are provided. The second floor remains in staff use.

Outside, YHA has applied its recent expertise in the design and management of alternative hostel provision. On the west side are three large heated timber camping pods and a landpod; to the east are two standard and four heated premium bell tents, family sized pre-erected tents are available for booking and there is an open grass field for pitching up to 15 tents. Campers use the new toilet and shower block and the well-equipped self-catering kitchen.

In the 1960s, the hostel's first full decade, about 3,000 overnights were registered each year. In 2019 a record 12,000 stayed at YHA New Forest.

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
1935-1991: previous Oct to Sept; 1992: Oct 1991 to Feb 1993; 1993-present: Mar to following Feb									
♣: Burley Forest Glen Hostel; Δ: Burley Cottesmore House Hostel; W: Wartime closure									
•: see text; *: 17 month period; +: notional figure included for exclusive hire									
...	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
...	...	...	...	...	open♣	1071♣	2068♣	2570♣	in use? ♣
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
W•	W•	W•	W•	W•	W•	1697♣	3423♣	4311♣	3929♣
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1269♣	976♣	1552♣	1607♣	1411♣	...	...	...	...	1630Δ
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
2376Δ	2781Δ	2732Δ	2600Δ	2558Δ	2970Δ	3292Δ	3562Δ	3634Δ	3436Δ
1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
4756Δ	4058Δ	4493Δ	5253Δ	5590Δ	6387Δ	6260Δ	5216Δ	5459Δ	5628Δ
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
5433Δ	5062Δ	4390Δ	4771Δ	4866Δ	5234Δ	5937Δ	6557Δ	6659Δ	6917Δ
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
7370Δ	7386Δ	8021*Δ	6101Δ	6336Δ	6703Δ	7083Δ	6776Δ	7703Δ	8172Δ
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
7037Δ	6657Δ	7311Δ	7898Δ	9079Δ	10046Δ	9938Δ	8487Δ	7514Δ	6566Δ
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
6175Δ	6682+Δ	6880+Δ	7027+Δ	8190+Δ	9001+Δ	9681+Δ	9717+Δ	11267+Δ	12206+Δ





YHA New Forest today. 1: the hostel's entrance and car park. A new cattle grid was installed here in 2016. YHA's alternative accommodation is located to the left, right and rear of the house (author's photograph, June 2019); 2&3: the reception and café / bar, newly situated at the front of the building. James Wilkinson in image 2 was manager at the time of the 2017 refurbishment; 4: the lounge; 5: Room 1, a modern bedroom; 6&7: all guests are invited to use the attractive modern dining and catering facilities, as here in the dining and outside self-catering rooms (2-7: YHA publicity images)



1



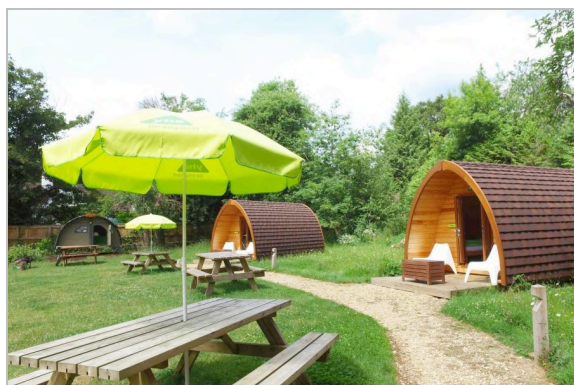
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YHA New Forest, external views after recent renovations.

- 1: the south-west corner and the neat dining extension; 2: YHA's modern cycle servicing post;
3: Pod Village sign; 4: the very well used camping ground, with facilities suiting every preference;
5: the popular camping pods; 6: the new design of elevated 'super-tent', the landpod;
7: the new services building (1-4: author's photographs, June 2019; 5-7: YHA publicity images)*

John Martin, 2020. YHA Profiles are intended to be adaptable in the light of new materials gained by YHA Archive