

Fort Newhaven Youth Hostel 1983 to 1985

The Guard Room, Fort Newhaven, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9DL

Historic County: East Sussex

YHA Region: Southern

GR: TQ 449002

After the war, YHA looked to establish a presence in the vicinity of Newhaven. There were several schemes put forward about the year 1950. *London Region News* of February 1950 announced that a large old building of considerable character had been acquired in the town; it was hoped to open the 50-bed hostel during 1951. The plan did not proceed due to a full and very unfavourable report on the property. Also at this time, there were plans for a new hostel in Peacehaven, and a far-fetched scheme to convert the ruined Belle Tout lighthouse near Birling Gap to a youth hostel. These too failed to materialise, and Alfriston hostel took their place in 1952. An unlikely venture was the planning of a floating hostel at Piddinghoe, a little way up the Ouse, in 1964-65. The 1965 Handbook advised that a hostel here would probably open on 1st March 1965. Piddinghoe was the proposed mooring site for an ex-naval motor launch (MV Queenleigh) purchased by London Region immediately after YHA Yorkshire Region's success with its converted barge hostel at Selby. The Sussex project was abandoned after opposition from the local parish council, however.

Newhaven hostel, when it finally came, was an extraordinary affair. It opened in the late summer of 1983 in the barrack room (and probably other associated casemates) of the Victorian Newhaven Fort, built into the cliffs to the west of the town in the 1860s. It had also been a key strategic post in both World Wars. The fort was handed over to the local council in 1962 and was eventually restored as a military history attraction. The 1983 hostel was of the accommodation type, owned privately but set up on behalf of the YHA.

Barely two years later, Fort Newhaven hostel had to close. On 1st July 1985, according to the annual report, the region reluctantly took closure action because the owners were not operating to the standards required by the Association and the public health authority.



A rare view of Newhaven youth hostel, taken by George Miller in 1984 (author's collection)

Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows									
1983-1985: previous Oct to Sept									
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
...	open	3390	929



HOSTELLING NEWS

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QUICK MARCH TO NEWHAVEN!

A HOSTEL with a special appeal to military enthusiasts is now open at Newhaven in East Sussex, about 1½ miles from the Dieppe/Newhaven ferry terminal. Its address is The Guard Room, Fort Newhaven and it offers military style barrack-room accommodation.

The authentic military atmosphere is because the 60-bed hostel has been opened in conjunction with Fort Newhaven Museum, in a Victorian fortress devoted to military history. It is open seven days a week, all year round.

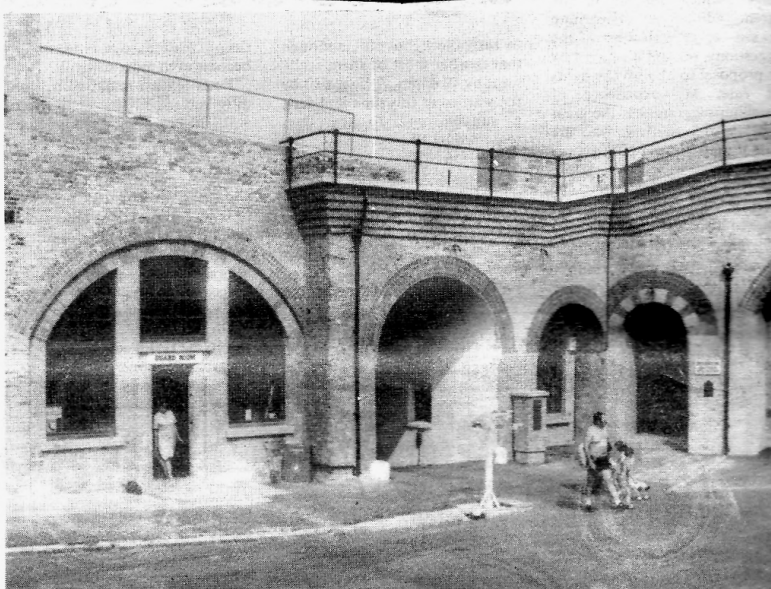
ATTRACTIONS

Among the attractions are guided tours of the fort, the museum, craft shops, an adventure playground and band concerts.

The Simple VAT hostel does not provide meals, but there is a restaurant and tea room in the fort. There is a small member's kitchen and a store on site.

Fort Newhaven is situated on the cliff top at the entrance to the port.

Hostelling Guard Room



Inside Fort Newhaven. The guard room is to the left of the archway entrance. From the ramparts of the fort can be seen the harbour where Sealink ferries dock.

Photo: E. Durrant



Introductory article, *Hostelling News*, Autumn 1983 and hostel stamp (YHA Archive)

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