

Hathersage Youth Hostel 1970 to present

The Hollies, Castleton Road, Hathersage, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 1EH

Historic County: Derbyshire

YHA Regions: Peak, Central

GR: SK 227814

The Derbyshire village of Hathersage entered the industrial revolution early, and left it early. A wire mill was established in 1750, and 50 years later there were several such mills in operation. Activities had spread to the manufacture of needles and pins, for which Hathersage became famous. Wire and needle making moved to Sheffield at the end of the 19th century and the last mill here closed in 1902, though several of the mills are still standing. As a result of its industrial growth several Victorian villas in Gothic style were built in the locality, the youth hostel at *the Hollies* on Castleton Road being one.

The hostel opened in March 1970. It is not clear why the YHA Trust's Property Book entry shown below shows a purchase date of August 1975; the hostel may have been leased or loaned before that. The property was bought freehold, the price being £9,750.

362 ✓	362 28th August 1975	The Hollies, Castleton Road, Hathersage, Derby	F. £9,750
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Early postcard of Hathersage youth hostel (author's collection)

At the beginning there were only 20 beds, but two years later this was expanded to 40 by developing the stables in the rear yard of *the Hollies*. A Peak Region memo of October 1970 described the options for expansion:

Hathersage has had a very good year and the warden was to be congratulated. The hostel had made a profit although this could be lost another year if the beds remained at 20, as there would be 12 months costs instead of 6 months this year, with almost the same income. To increase the beds to 40 it was necessary either to build a new dormitory, which would be expensive, and need planning consent, or to rebuild the front wall of the outbuildings and have the men out there, with no covered access from the main building. In addition to the extra dormitory accommodation, there would be needed extra dining space, not easily be found until the flat was vacated by the old couple.

It was decided that the outbuildings would give suitable dorms with toilets under, and this work could be done soon if found desirable, but that the accommodation should not be increased until the other rooms were available.

Mike Rosser was the first warden. He had been assistant at High Close (Langdale) hostel in the Lakes and was to have a long and influential spell at Hathersage of almost 30 years, right up to the millennium. YHA's *Triangle* magazine, issue 14, of May 1985 announced that Mike was taking the initiative and acting as Bookings Secretary in the promotion of the 'White Peak Way'; for an experiment during August customers were able to use this facility at Hathersage to make a block booking of hostels. The December issue stated that this scheme was to extend to all 1986 holidays, having proved a success. During his time with YHA Mike also organised, virtually single handed, the Peak Challenge every year, often with over 200 entrants. He died in 2010. Managers since the millennium have included Richard Hayes, and from 2018, Amy Holman.



Hathersage youth hostel ephemera dating from the hostel's earlier years. 1: hostel one-inch pin badge; 2: one of D Litchfield's sketches for all the Peak region hostels in the 1970s, showing the drive leading from Castleton Road; 3: felt badge; 4: Photo Precision postcard; 5: J Dixon postcard. This shows a little of the yard to the rear (author's collection)

In the 1990s YHA aimed to release capital by selling off subsidiary assets; *Hostelling News* of May 1993 announced that surplus land at Hathersage hostel had been sold. Such funding boosts would have been an indirect benefit when new showers and toilets were provided for the annexe in 1998.

A Hostel Standards inspector's report early in 2009 praised the very roomy and efficient drying room in the cellar. The stairwell and landing were attractively presented, the banister and stained glass window being appealing features. It reported however that the hostel was temporarily not providing meals, and the self-catering kitchen was therefore likely to need urgent attention for heavy use. Nevertheless, at the end of that year, Leeds YHA Walking Group were looking forward to good catering when they advertised in their winter programme for 2009-10:

Friday 20 November 2009 – A weekend away at Hathersage hostel. Small rooms, meals available or self catering. A place with lots of history, walks and shops. Only £11.95/night.

In January 2012, YHA staff's internal council bulletin announced:

16th-23rd March 2012. YHA Hathersage Working Party, some decorating/clearing of hostel grounds.

A month later, the same source had a more unorthodox message:

3rd February 2012. Youth Hostels welcome dogs. Up until the end of February, selected Youth Hostels are offering a warm welcome to customers with dogs. YHA is piloting the programme and it will be assessed to see whether we should continue the offer. There is a number of places and a £5 supplement will be paid for each dog.

Hostels accommodating dogs are: YHA Arundel, YHA Bellever, YHA Blaxhall, YHA Boggle Hole, YHA Broad Haven, YHA Castleton, YHA Crowdon, YHA Hathersage, YHA Hartington, YHA Ilam Hall, YHA Langdale, YHA Welsh Bicknor.

This scheme allowed dog owners to book selected private rooms, and the fee went towards cleaning. Though soon abandoned, a more measured approach to dogs allowed in camping areas was more widely adopted a few years later.

In 2016 YHA Hathersage was refurbished and refreshed under the Springboard programme. Special attention was paid to the reception, dining and self-catering areas and new beds were provided. Hathersage can sleep up to 42 guests, 17 in the main house, where there are two 6-bedded rooms, one 4-bedded and a single, and 25 within the coachhouse annexe with three 6-bedded rooms, a 4 bed en-suite room and a 2 or 3 bed en-suite room with disabled access and its own entrance. The staff flat behind reception has a living room, small kitchenette, bathroom and bedroom. There is a further double en-suite staff room in the attic. The rear courtyard, cobbled until recently, was resurfaced in preparation for the new bike store.

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
1970-1991: previous Oct to Sept; 1992: Oct 1991 to Feb 1993; 1993-present: Mar to following Feb									
E: estimate *: 17 month period; +: notional figure included for exclusive hire and/or camping									
1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
2308	2486	4292	4756	5466	5167	5764E	5334	5568	5456
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
5362	4685	4402	4813	4812	4590	4296	5131	6324	6247
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
5937	5489	6285*	4850	4663	4746	4978	4868	4758	4747
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
4740	4321	4703	5473	5870	5432	5833	3555	5405	5692
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
5782	6344+	6953+	7088+	7844+	7772+	7866+	7747+	8031+	8142+



1 2



3 4



5 6



7 8



YHA Hathersage – modern images.

1&2: pleasant frontage and picnic area; 3: reception and dining area; 4: newly-installed bicycle store;
5: lounge; 6: self-catering area; 7: standard 2-bedded room; 8: disabled bathroom in the annexe
(YHA Archive)

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