

## Whitemeadows Youth Hostel 1944 to 1953

Whitemeadows, Bradbourne, Ashbourne, Derbyshire

Historic County: Derbyshire

YHA Region: North Midlands

GR: SK 200533

Whitemeadows, a mile south-east of Parwich, was described as a *former guest house, a modern compact building* in the North Midlands Annual Report of 1944. It was purchased freehold by YHA and passed to the YHA Trust on 2nd October 1944 as *White Meadows*. A Carnegie Trust grant was secured to equip the hostel.

The youth hostel opened on 23rd December 1944, operating through the last months of the war. There were 72 beds at first, reducing in stages to 40. It lasted ten years. Mr and Mrs Russell were wardens from about 1945 to 1949, when they left to start up an accommodation hostel at Yoxall.



WHITE MEADOWS YOUTH HOSTEL, Derbyshire

Photo—G. Pagan

This Hostel (accommodation 60 beds) is in the pastoral limestone country, six miles north of Ashbourne, five miles from the stepping-stones of Dovedale, and just over a mile from the old-world village of Tissington, of well-dressing fame, where the five famous wells which yearly, on Holy Thursday are dressed with garlands. For climbers, Brassington Rocks are two miles distant and for walkers the whole of the Manifold and Dove Valleys are within easy reach.

**Ilam Hostel** is about six miles away through Dovedale, and **Hartington Hostel** is approximately six miles also, through Beresford Dale.

**North Midlands Series B.**

A YHA postcard from about the time of the hostel's opening (YHA Archive)



1



2



3

*Attractive hostel portraits from the YHA Archive.*

*1: a cheerful posed photograph, courtesy of Bryan Hallsworth, whose mother, Mrs Russell, was warden at Whitemeadows for the first few years. She is seated third from the left at the front;  
2: one from Laurie Landon's photographic collection; 3: from the garden (YHA Archive)*



The hostel closed on 30th December 1953, as it ran at a constant loss (for example, a £481 deficit in 1945) and was sold on 8th November 1954 *for considerably less than the purchase price*. In the mid-1970s the property entered into a short period of notoriety as the headquarters of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, a *cause célèbre* with Corin and Venessa Redgrave as figureheads.

Through Fenny Bentley we come to Tissington, a charming little village whose church with Norman tower overlooks the duckpond. Here, at Whitsuntide, the ancient ceremony of Dressing the Five Wells with flowers is still carried out. Next is Parwich, another interesting village, only a mile from Whitmeadows Youth Hostel, a modern red brick, red roofed villa set in a broad fertile valley, ringed round by hills. The Wardens, who transferred from Ilam, find this hostel less onerous as it has not yet gained full popularity.



Mr. and Mrs. RUSSELL,  
WHITEMEADOWS Y.H.  
Near ASHBOURNE.

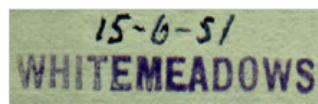
(Telephone : Parwich 27).

Closed on Tuesday. Meals provided.



Mr. and Mrs. ROBSON,  
KINGSHILL, BRASSINGTON,  
DERBYSHIRE.

Closed on Monday. No meals provided.



- 1: a page from the 1946 YHA Peak District Guide featuring close neighbours, Whitmeadows and Brassington;  
2: Clint Maitland was a stalwart worker for YHA in the North Midlands. Here is his 1951 membership card stamp (YHA Archive)

Overnights – inclusive periods as follows									
1945-1954: previous Oct to Sept									
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
...	...	...	...	...	3562	4211	4987	5813	open
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
4715	4948	3539	2394	371	...	...	...	...	...

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