



# YHA (England and Wales) Youth Hostel Profile

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

## Two old youth hostels in East Leicestershire, at Eastwell and Burton Lazars

### Eastwell Youth Hostel 1933 to 1938

The Lodge, Eastwell, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

Historic County:  
Leicestershire

YHA Region:  
North Midlands

GR: SK 767276

### The First Youth Hostels in Notts. and Leicestershire.

#### LORD TRENT'S GIFT.

THE first youth hostels on the shilling-a-night system organised by the Notts. Committee of the North Midlands Regional Council of the Y.H.A. are announced to-day.

The first is at Edwinstowe in North Notts., and the second at Eastwell, just over the Leicestershire border. Both will open up new areas to ramblers and cyclists and will form important links in the national chain.

Forest House, situated on the cross roads at Edwinstowe, will have accommodation for eight men and eight women, and being only 19 miles from Overton Hall, at Ashover, in Derbyshire, will be a valuable link in the east to west branch of the chain across England.

On the borders of Sherwood Forest it will throw open to ramblers the whole area of the Dukeries, not only for visitors from the immediate area of Notts. but from farther afield.

The Eastwell hostel is at Eastwell Lodge, a charming farmhouse six miles from Melton Mowbray, and 28 miles from Edwinstowe.

Within easy reach of Belvoir Castle and Croxton Park, the Lodge stands high on the Leicestershire Wolds on the south of the Vale of Belvoir.

This attractive ground is little known to ramblers in the Nottingham district, principally owing to the difficulties of reaching it on a one day's outing.

Accommodation will be as at Edwinstowe, eight men and eight women. This hostel should have a special appeal for cyclists.

#### Lord Trent's Gift.

Both hostels will open for Easter, and Lord Trent has provided the first beds for each hostel.

Each bed-place costs £3 to equip. The beds are of British manufacture throughout, and the donor's name appears on them. Other gifts are expected from influential county residents.

Considering that the Notts. Committee was only inaugurated three months ago this is wonderful progress.

Mr. P. A. Charles, secretary of the Notts. and Derbyshire Ramblers' Federation, who is also secretary of the Notts. Y.H.A. Committee stressed the necessity for an intermediate hostel between Edwinstowe and Eastwell, in an interview to-day.

Search is being made, he said, for suitable premises that will afford a convenient half-way stop, somewhere near a crossing over the Trent.

"It is hoped to have this third hostel open for Whitsuntide, but, of course, everything depends on the number of new members enrolled and the support we get from interested patrons," Mr. Charles concluded.

#### 20,000 Visitors.

The latest Derbyshire hostels, Tor Dale, Matlock, and Overton Hall, will open on 1 April.

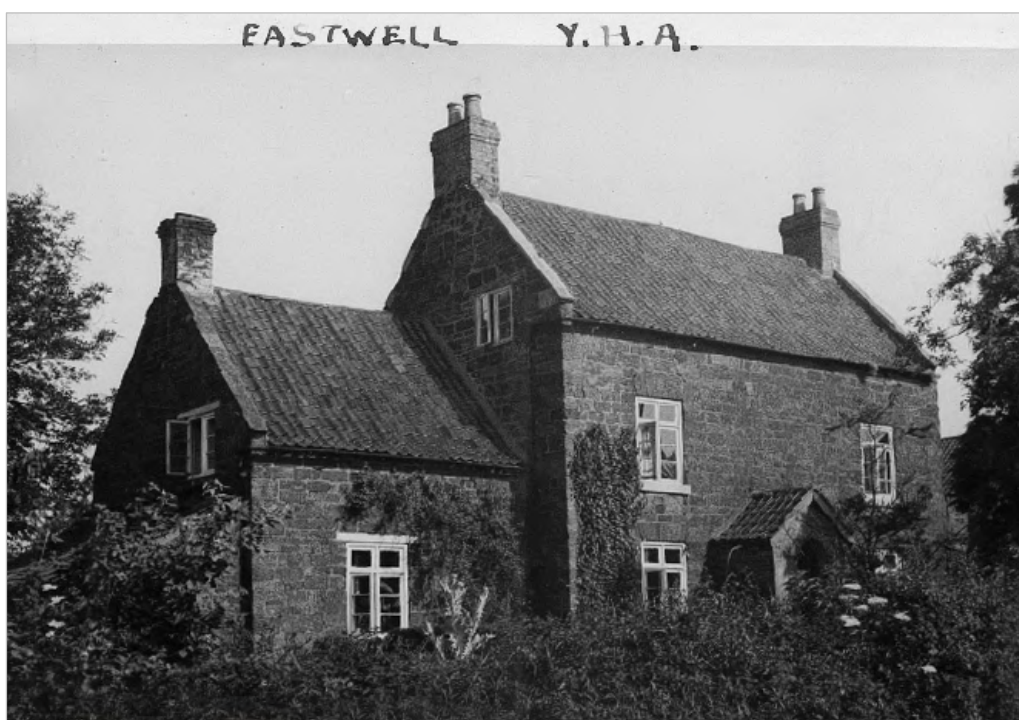
Last year, the first of the North Midlands Council, 8,000 visitors used their hostels and it is confidently expected that the number this year, with the opening of the new hostels, will easily reach 20,000.

Hostels in Staffordshire and Charnwood Forest, in Leicestershire, are also under consideration.

—F.S.

Early in 1933, in its third full year, YHA opened an accommodation hostel at Eastwell Lodge, an old honey-coloured stone farmhouse and barn close to the southern escarpment of the Vale of Belvoir. The anonymous local newspaper reproduced above announced the impending simultaneous opening of this hostel and one at Edwinstowe (that didn't

open) in time for Easter. Beds of British manufacture were to be provided at both by Lord Trent, at £3 per place, with the donor's name added to them. Other gifts were expected from influential county residents.



*Eastwell youth hostel –*

- 1: a unique photograph of Eastwell Lodge farmhouse that has survived in the YHA Archive (courtesy Trevor Key);*  
*2: very little has changed externally in this attractive view from October 2013 (author's photograph)*

The warden's grandson, Geoff Goodson, writes:

The youth hostel was opened and run by my Grandmother, Eliza Goodson, and my father ran the farm. His father had died in 1923 at an early age leaving Eliza with 3 daughters and 2 sons; my father was 14 at the time. Farming and life in general was very difficult in the late 20s and through to the late 30s due to the depression, and opening the youth hostel was an early example of diversification so popular in rural areas today.



The hostel used two upstairs rooms in the farmhouse to accommodate eight girls, and the warden provided meals, possibly to be taken in the farmhouse too. A long two-storey barn to the north-east of and at right angles to the farmhouse was used for farming at ground level, but two unconnected upper rooms were set up for use by the YHA.

That at the front was a wood-floored granary approached by outside stone steps (since removed) on the south east barn wall, and was used as a bedroom for eight men. The upper room to the rear, cement floored, but rather unusually provided with a fireplace, was almost certainly cleaned out and given a simple coat of paint to provide a common room and cooking space. Access was gained by an internal staircase approached through a door on the south-west side of the barn. An outside simple closet was a farm fixture, while water was drawn in the yard. There was of course no electricity.

The North Midlands Region annual report for 1933 gave the takings at Eastwell hostel as £5 for 6 months. While this sum seems modest, it was the highest for an accommodation hostel recorded regionally in that year. The following year, takings for 12 months were £9.5s.6d, easily the highest amount amongst local hostels. (It is never very clear in early YHA history what constituted takings, and what the proportional share was between the warden and YHA, as 554 overnights in 1934 would earn at least £25 from 'the Magic Shilling' overnight fee and other sales. Perhaps the sums involved were YHA's cut, twopence in the shilling being a common, if ad hoc, arrangement).

It is not known why Eastwell hostel closed in 1938, about June, though its regular success would suggest that it was for the warden's personal reasons rather than a YHA decision. A new hostel at Burton Lazars replaced it in the same year. Another local accommodation hostel had been opened slightly earlier, in May 1938, at Wymeswold, 12 miles further west, the story of which is told in another profile.



*Contemporary local (unnamed and undated) press accounts of the official opening of Eastwell hostel – 1: staged photograph of the official handing over ceremony, posed outside the porch of the farmhouse; 2: the steps to the men's dormitory in the barn granary. Early youth hostel openings were often given lavish coverage by the local press (images courtesy Geoff Goodson)*



All the Eastwell Lodge buildings are now private residences. YHA is indebted to Mr and Mrs Goodson for further historical information.



1: another anonymous press cutting from the time of the opening. The caption read:  
 'After opening the Eastwell Lodge youth hostel (near Melton Mowbray) on Saturday, the Lord Mayor of Nottingham gave a demonstration of the correct way to use a frying pan over the oil cooking range in the common room.  
 A party of Nottingham ramblers will spend Easter there' (image courtesy Geoff Goodson);  
 2-5: further modern images of Eastwell Lodge Farmhouse –  
 2&3: the rear and side of the farmhouse;  
 4&5: the south-west and north-east faces of the barn. The granary steps led up to the nearest window in picture 4  
 (author's photographs, October 2013)

## Burton Lazars Youth Hostel 1938 to 1939

Burton Lodge, Burton Lazars, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

Historic County: Leicestershire

YHA Region: North Midlands

GR: SK 794174

### Burton Lazars Y.H.A.

The new accommodation hostel at Burton Lazars, nine miles south of Eastwell, was cited as Eastwell's replacement, but it had a very short life. It opened about June 1938 and lasted barely a year before unforeseen circumstances forced its closure, before the season was fully completed, during 1939. Like its contemporary, Wymeswold, it was busy at weekends during this period, and was even described as a model hostel, but the North Midlands Region annual report for 1939 stated that the hostel had to close, for unspecified reasons. The warden during these two years was Joe Hill.



BURTON LAZARS HOSTEL.

### Rucksack Magazine, Autumn 1938

#### LEICESTER AND RUTLAND.

Wymeswold and Burton Lazars, though not included in the 1938 handbook, have been enjoying "full houses" almost every week-end. Burton Lazars is a former Keeper's Lodge, in the heart of the hunting "Shires." Coverts drawn by three of the most famous Hunts—Quorn, Belvoir and Cottesmore—are visible from its windows.

Not a little of the popularity of the new hostel is due to Joe, the able warden, who is seen "in action" in our photograph.



"JOE," THE WARDEN.

There are very few references to Burton Lazars youth hostel in YHA sources. This article in the Autumn 1938 edition of Rucksack Magazine happily provides us with two photographs. The exact location of the hostel has not been determined; old maps show a Burton Road Lodge farm on Sawgate Lane, Northeast of the village, with outbuildings resembling those in the lower picture, but the house shown in the upper picture has not been firmly located (YHA Archive)

### Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows

1933-1939: previous Oct to Sept

♣: Eastwell Hostel; Δ: Burton Lazars Hostel

...	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
...	...	...	open♣	554♣	755♣	956♣	982♣	347♣	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	565Δ	734Δ