



YHA (England and Wales)
Youth Hostel Profile

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

Wymeswold Youth Hostel 1938 to 1946

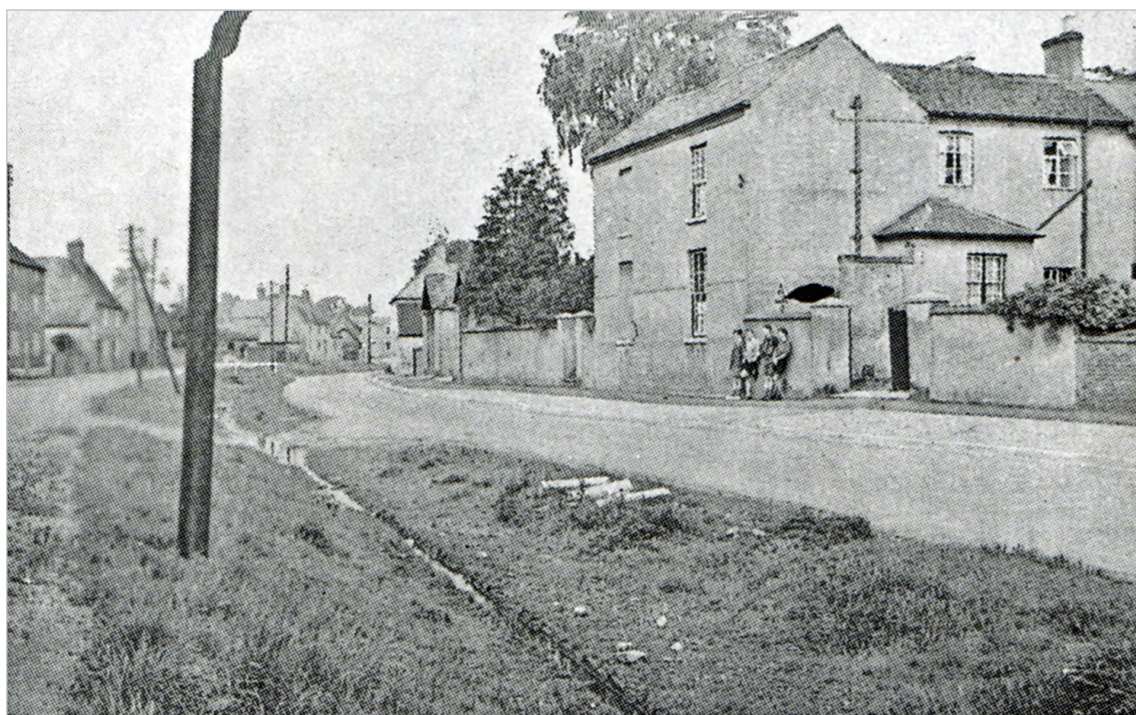
The Elms, Brook Street, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leicestershire

Historic County: Leicestershire

YHA Region: North Midlands

GR: SK 605233

The Dower House in Wymeswold is a large early 19th-century house of rendered brickwork, with substantial outbuildings. YHA's North Midland Region opened a new youth hostel here about May, in 1938. The warden throughout its nine years was Stan Brown; he may have owned the property and arranged for it to be used as an accommodation hostel. Such properties were the mainstay of the early YHA, privately owned and operating within the YHA network.



WYMESWOLD.

C 92

Mr. S. Brown, The Elms, Brook Street, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leics. T. Wymeswold 219.

Position and Map. In village street, facing brook. O.S. 63 or Leicester District. Bart. 13.

Hostel Details. M. 15. W. 15. Store: Hostel. P.O: Wymeswold. Camping. J. I.P.

Station. East Leake 3 m., Loughborough 5 m. **Bus.** Loughborough—Nottingham via Wymeswold.

Next Hostels. Kneeton 20 m. Mansfield Woodhouse 28 m. Charnwood Forest 14 m. Burton Lazars 13 m. Ilam Hall 35 m.

1: this undated illustration is one of only a few known of Wymeswold youth hostel. Four hostellers lounge underneath the YHA triangle, perhaps waiting for 5pm opening time; 2: Wymeswold's entry in the 1939 YHA Handbook (both YHA Archive)

The acquisition was rather too late for inclusion in the 1938 Handbook, with resulting disappointing overnights in its first year. Thereafter it was popular, and increasingly so during the war years, when 3,236 stayed in its peak year, 1943. The capacity was increased to 40 beds. Unlike many other youth hostels, it was able to operate for each year of the war. In 1945 it was one of only a few hostels in the North Midlands Region making a profit – £13.

An article in the *Nottingham Evening Post* of Friday 19th January 1940 is revealing in its description of wartime social patterns and hardship. It read:

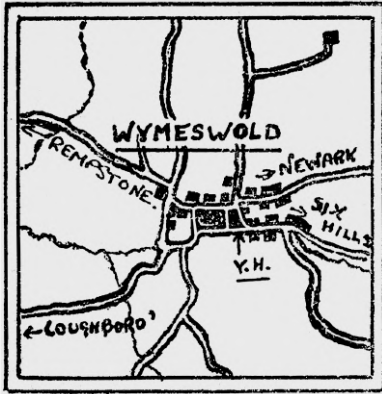
The Open Road - Weekend Gathering of Hostellers at Wymeswold

There are still a few beds left at Wymeswold hostel for this weekend, when the Notts Group are holding their monthly social. The wardens, Mr and Mrs Stan Brown, are organising another dance in the village hall on Saturday, February 10th. Tickets – 1s.6d. if purchased in advance – are obtainable from the hostel or club secretaries. Early booking for staying overnight at the hostel is advisable. Efforts are being made to surpass the record profit of £7 which was made at the September dance, and it is hoped that the funds raised will go a long way towards the provision of an electric pump for the water supply. This should meet with unanimous support from the strong-armed menfolk whose habit it has been to perform their ‘daily dozen’ (or more) upon the existing pump. Other dates to note in connection with this hostel are January 27th and February 24th, when the regular monthly parties will be held. These are to be featured on the last Saturday in each month in the future...

New amendments to the rationing regulations in regard to registered caterers now make it possible for the provision of all meals in youth hostels without the surrender of coupons. Only those with a very sweet tooth are likely to feel the pinch, for the sugar allowance is ample for the majority.

The reasons for the closure at the end of the 1946 season are unknown. By this time, as the advice in the 1946 YHA Guide below shows, the hostel was closed on Thursdays, in line with post-war improved working practices for wardens.

WYMESWOLD
Mr BROWN, THE ELMS, BROOK STREET, WYMESWOLD, LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICS.
(Telephone: Wymeswold 219). Closed on Thursday. Meals provided.



Leicester's other hostel [after Loddington] is Wymeswold, pleasantly situated in the village where a stream runs down the main street and not far from here is the Charnwood Forest with its Old John Tower in Bradgate Park. About a mile from Whitwick railway station, on the east side, is the modern Mount St Bernard's Abbey which is a Cistercian Order. The beautiful church, started in 1935 and completed in 1939, was built by the monks of stone quarried on the site. The monks in their robes look picturesque as they work in the fields. Here also are the ruins of the former home of Lady Jane Grey, Queen of England for eleven days, later beheaded by Bloody Mary.

Many hostels have been opened in Charnwood but have all been lost. Search is still being made there and we hope one day to obtain a building of our own.

from the Peak District Hostels Regional Guide, early 1946

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
<i>1938-1946: previous Oct to Sept</i>									
...	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	637	1274
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
1304	1690	2200	3236	3094	2398	2101	...	...	...