

Barnston in Wirral Youth Hostel 1954 to 1960

Dale House Farm (c/o Liverpool Union Girls' & Mixed Clubs Camp), Storeton Lane, Barnston, Cheshire
Historic County: Cheshire YHA Region: Merseyside GR: SJ 286839



1 2



3

1: early twentieth-century advertisement, offering accommodation; 2: extract from the YHA Merseyside Region handbook; 3: Barnston Dale Camp postcard advertising the youth hostel (YHA Archive)



Barnston Dale was a Victorian fruit farm in extensive grounds. By Edwardian times the business had developed into a considerable pleasure garden, with accommodation, tea-rooms, fun-fair rides and grounds laid out for pleasant country pastimes and picnics. At some stage in the early to mid twentieth-century, camp-style brick dormitory huts were erected alongside a large brick refectory and various timber buildings, to the rear of the farmhouse fronting Storeton Lane. These already made up the Liverpool Union Girls' and Mixed Clubs' Camp, in use in 1950 or earlier, by the time the YHA came to an agreement to use part of the premises in 1954.



Merseyside Youth Hostels Ltd opened Barnston in Wirral hostel in April of that year, according to monthly bednight figures. The YHA had the use of parts of the hatted camp and the large dining hall. The hostel led a quiet existence for the most part, but Max Kirby recalled how it was a popular first overnight stop for Canadians arriving at Liverpool on the monthly shipping service from North America.

Left: one-inch pin badge as sold at the youth hostel in the 1950s (author's collection)

The YHA establishment closed on 31st October 1960. In 2020, however, the Barnstondale Centre youth service camp was continuing here in a variety of original and new buildings.

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
<i>1954-1960: previous Oct to Sept</i>									
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
...	...	...	...	209	961	981	1070	1299	826
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
629	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...



*1: this view of Barnston hostel shows the accommodation huts (left) and the general facility buildings (right) (author's collection);
2: a more recent photograph of the Barnstondale Centre youth service facilities, including both updated and new buildings (author's photograph, December 2009, by permission of Barnstondale Centre)*

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