



YHA (England and Wales)
Youth Hostel Profile

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

Steyning Youth Hostel 1936 to 1939

Silvermead, Cripps Lane, Steyning, West Sussex.

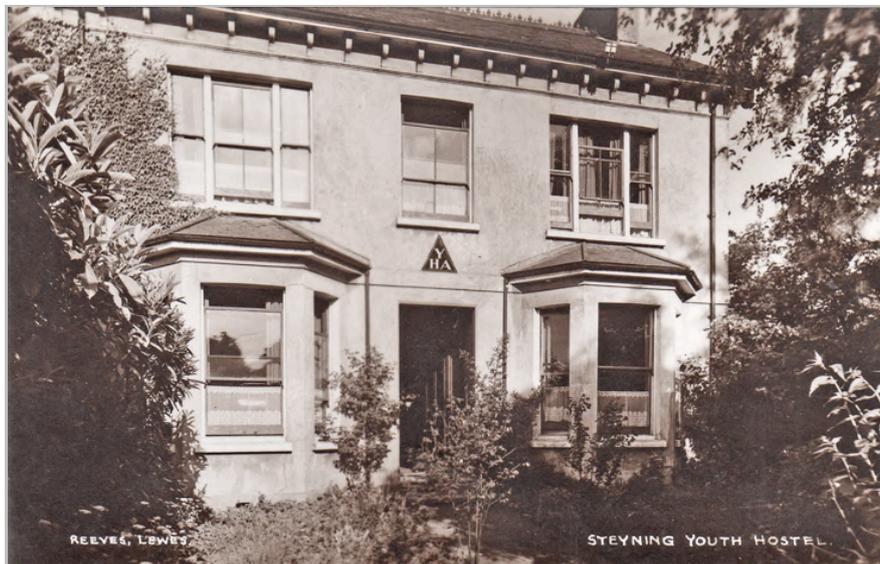
Historic County: Sussex

YHA Region: London

GR: TQ 180113

Steyning youth hostel opened at Easter 1936 in the right-hand house of a substantial twin terraced building with pronounced angular bays. The hostel would have benefited from the considerable outbuildings to the rear. It was a fully controlled establishment, that is, one staffed by YHA and owned outright or rented. In this case an agreement was made to rent and terms were agreed late in 1935, according to London Region minutes of 9th October and 20th November 1935. It was actually within YHA's South Coast region territory, but for practical reasons controlled by London Region. The warden in 1937 was Mrs McKown; accommodation was for 30, and it was popular. In all, almost 10,000 members stayed in its four short years, despite its relative isolation from other hostels in the network.

The hostel closed after the 1939 season, almost certainly for reasons connected with the war. The annual report for 1939 shows that it had ceased to be available by December of that year. The 1940 handbook advised that it might reopen, but this did not happen.



STEYNING. "Silvermead," Cripps Lane, Steyning, Sussex. Mrs. McKown. This Hostel is an initial stage in the difficult programme for the establishment of a complete chain of hostels along the South Downs. Steyning itself is a pleasant little Sussex town and from the Hostel there are walks across the Downs to Lewes and Jevington or through the gap of the Adur to the sea at Shoreham. Westwards the ridge of the Downs leads to Chanctonbury Ring and the gap through which the River Arun flows. Arundel Castle, the home of the Howards, Dukes of Norfolk, is an impressive pile, with a Norman keep. The church of St. Nicholas is XIVth century, with an old stone pulpit, frescoes and a good font. Boating is to be had on the Arun.

M18, W12 : PROVISIONS Hostel *** : MEALS 1/3 : STATION S.R. Steyning : BUS 22 Brighton-Petworth, via Shoreham : BATHING Sea 6m : DISTANCES Capel 22m, Chelwood 25m, Lewes 20m, Waggoners Wells 30m, Ewhurst 22m.

1: early postcard by Reeves of Lewes, reproduced by kind permission;
2: sketchmap from the 1937 YHA regional booklet (both author's collection)

YHA's chairman of many years, Len Clark CBE, remembers staying the night at Steyning hostel:

I had become a member of the Youth Hostels Association in 1937 and a year or so later set off on a solo trip to Sussex, starting at Steyning, staying the first night at the hostel in Cripps Lane. After a solitary supper which I prepared for myself I set out in the summer sunshine to climb up to Chanctonbury Ring. The view was breathtaking – it seemed to have biblical connotations, as when Jesus was taken by the Devil to behold the kingdoms of this world!

STEYNING LN		SOUTH DOWNS
SILVERMEAD, CRIPPS LANE, STEYNING, SUSSEX. THE WARDEN.	From High St, turn E to- wards stn. Hostel 50 yds. along first turning on rt. past church <i>Maps:</i> Brighton Tour. H.5-6. <i>Station:</i> Steyning 2 minutes. <i>Bus:</i> Brighton—Petworth via Shoreham (service 22). <i>Store:</i> 5 minutes. <i>E.C.D.:</i> Thursday.	B 1/3, S 1/3 S.B.H. Sea bathing 6 m. J. 6d, I.P. 6d. <i>Capel</i> 19 m. <i>Chelwood</i> 25 „ <i>Lewes</i> 16 „ <i>Bognor</i> 18 „
From Easter, 1936. All Year. M. 15 ; W. 15.		



<i>London Regional Group</i>	
STEYNING.	G 281
The Warden, Silvermead, Cripps Lane, Steyning, Sussex. T. 3241.	
Position and Map. From High Street turn E towards Stn. Hostel $\frac{1}{4}$ m. at corner of first turning on right just beyond Church. O.S. Brighton or 133. Bart. 32.	
Hostel Details. M. 18. W. 12. Store: Hostel. P.O: Steyning $\frac{1}{4}$ m. E.C.D: Thurs. Sea bathing 6 m. R. bathing 1 m. J. I.P. Hot baths 4d.	
Station. 2 min. Bus. Brighton—Petworth via Shoreham.	
Next Hostels. Capel 19 m. Chelwood 22 m. Lewes 18 m. Ewhurst 22 m. Waggoners Wells 30 m. Patcham 8 m. Nutborne 28 m.	
CROSS-IN-HAND.	G 282
The Warden, Youth Hostel, Cross-in-Hand, Sussex. T. Heathfield 325.	
Position and Map. On main road through village. House on hill near windmill. 2 m. W of Heathfield Stn. O.S. 134. Bart. 32.	
Hostel Details. M. 15. W. 15. Store: 100 yds. P.O: Cross-in-Hand 100 yds. S.B.H. 6d. Camping. J. I.P. Hot baths 4d.	
Station. Heathfield 2 m. Bus. Tonbridge—Hastings, Uckfield—Eastbourne, Brighton—Hawkhurst.	
Next Hostels. Chelwood Gate 14 m. Jevington 13 m. Lewes 12 m. Patcham 20 m. Ide Hill 27 m. Fairlight 20 m.	
CHELWOOD GATE.	G 283
The Wardens, Youth Hostel, Chelwood Gate, via Haywards Heath, Sussex. T. Chelwood Gate 36.	
Position and Map. 1 m. S of Wych Cross. 4 m. S of Forest Row on main Lewes road just N of "Red Lion" and Chelwood Gate village. O.S. 125. Bart. 33.	
Hostel Details. M. 28. W. 20. Store: Hostel. P.O: Chelwood Gate $\frac{1}{2}$ m. E.C.D: Wed. Swimming pool. Camping. J. I.P. Bring slippers. Hot baths 4d.	
Station. Forest Row 4 m. Bus. No. 92 East Grinstead—Eastbourne passes hostel, London—Seaford passes hostel, London—Eastbourne passes Wych Cross.	
Next Hostels. Cross-in-Hand 14 m. Lewes 16 m. Capel 22 m. Ide Hill 20 m. Jevington 21 m. Steyning 22 m. Chaldon 22 m.	

1: hostel entry, 1936 YHA handbook. Among the abbreviations are

B – Breakfast, S – Supper, SBH – Sleeping Bag Hire, J – Juveniles, IP – Introductory Permits;

2: Steyning's final year, 1939, coincided with the first year of hostel stamps on YHA members' cards. This must be a rarity;

3: hostel entry alongside two other local hostels, 1939 YHA Handbook. All three were curtailed by the war (YHA Archive)

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows</i>									
<i>1936-1939: previous Oct to Sept</i>									
...	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
...	1760	2686	3131	2479

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