



YHA (England and Wales)
Youth Hostel Profile

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

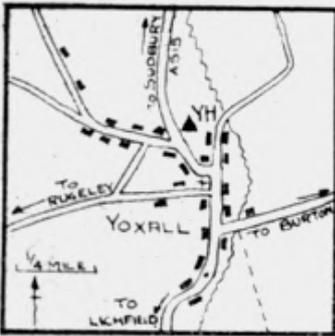
Yoxall Youth Hostel 1950 to 1953

Swarburn House [sic], Yoxall, Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire

Historic County: Staffordshire

YHA Region: North Midlands

GR: SK 142195



YOXALL
Youth Hostel,
Yoxall,
Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.
 Beds 20.
 Closed on Monday.
 Meals provided.

Swarbourne House is an old village house built in red brick, bordering the River Swarbourne and former watercress gardens on the east side of the Sudbury Road, ½ mile north of Main Street, Yoxall. Before YHA use the property was a small-holding, and may also have been used as a school.



The hostel was opened at Easter 1950 and 1213 bednights were registered by the end of September. Mrs Russell had run the fully-appointed Derwent Hall, Ilam Hall and Whitemeadows hostels beforehand, but here she had bought and set up an accommodation hostel.

The wardens' quarters were mainly in the higher-roofed section in the image below, while the common room and women's dorm were housed in the lower-roofed section. A further building in line with that (out of view) was a brick scullery and washhouse with a sloping roof; this was converted to members' kitchen use. A brick-built outbuilding (possibly a stable) nearer the river was used as the men's dorm.

Left: location map from the YHA Regional Guide 'Peak Hostels 1950-51'



The only known full image of Yoxall youth hostel, from a YHA postcard. Behind the tree, sleeping bags are hung out to dry (author's collection)

YOXALL (Closed Mon.)*

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The Warden (Mrs. A. C. Russell), Swarburn House, Yoxall, Nr. Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.
Position and Map. ½ m. N. of Yoxall on Sudbury Road. O.S. 120. G.R. 142195. Bart. 24.
Hostel Details. M. & W. 24. Store & P.O. : Yoxall ½ m. E.C.D. : Wed. K.F.S. Closed
 June 8th-22nd, 1952. Hostel fully open Easter-Sept. 30th ; Fri. and Sat. only, Oct. 1st-Easter.
Station. Lichfield. **Bus.** Lichfield—Uttoxeter. Burton-on-Trent—Kings Bromley.
Next Hostels. Lichfield 9 m. Wandon 9 m. Ilam 24 m. Dimmingsdale 24 m.

Extract from YHA Handbook, 1952

Cyclists Arthur Truby and Don Cox would ride long distances after work on Fridays from West Bromwich to reach hostels at all points of the compass.

This Friday night hostelling certainly kept us fit, but there was always a 'safety valve'. If wind or weather should turn against us, we always had a nearer hostel at which to stay if we found it impossible to reach our distant objective. Thus, if we were bound for Whitemeadows in the Peak District, there was Lichfield hostel en route if the weather turned really bad, and if we felt too tired as we continued, there was always Yoxall. The criterion in this case was: if we were passing Yoxall before 8pm, we could reach Whitemeadows or Ilam before 10pm. Otherwise we'd turn in at Yoxall for the night [Arthur Truby: Miles and Milestones, Recollections of Forty Years of Youth Hostelling].

A *YHA Bulletin* message of October 1953 advised that the hostel was closed by that month, due to Mrs Russell's ill-health and retirement. Swarbourne House is now a private residence.



The end gable of Swarbourne House, on the occasion of the marriage of Bryan and Margaret Hawksworth (photograph courtesy B & M Hawksworth)

<i>Overnights – inclusive periods as follows</i>									
<i>1950-1953: previous Oct to Sept</i>									
1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1213	1844	1342	1304

YHA is grateful for extra historical information to Bryan Hawksworth, son of the warden, who grew up here and at the other three hostels that she ran, Derwent Hall, Ilam Hall and Whitemeadows.

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