



Broughton Astley Youth Hostel 1939 to 1941

(The) Woodlands, Broughton Astley, Lutterworth

Historic County: Leicestershire

YHA Region: North Midlands

GR: SP 531924

Broughton Astley youth hostel opened very shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, on 1st July 1939. It was one of a series of short-lived attempts to establish premises at the southern extremity of the North Midlands Group around Leicester at this time, mainly to serve local hostellers; they were probably adopted hostels rather than fully controlled by YHA and included Bardon Stud Farm, Burton Lazars and Wymeswold.

YOUTH HOSTELS IN WAR-TIME.

THE following list indicates the number of Hostels which are OPEN and STILL AVAILABLE for members. Hostels not mentioned on this list are closed for the time being. It is difficult to be certain from day to day which Hostels are fully available, but the Association is trying to keep open as many Hostels as possible. Full particulars are also given of Hostels opened since the publication of the 1939 Handbook.

Meals. Members who wish to have meals provided by the Wardens, must order them in advance. Ration Books or Coupons are not required from members for the time being, but members are advised to carry extra BUTTER and SUGAR. Members should keep themselves informed of rationing regulations and any change that may be made. Meal prices quoted in the Handbook are subject to alteration in the event of conditions justifying an increase in prices. In view of the difficulty of buying certain foodstuffs locally, self-cookers are advised to carry such provisions as they can conveniently manage.

Equipment. Members visiting hostels in the area of the North Midlands Regional Group should take knife, fork and spoon with them.

BROUGHTON ASTLEY.

93(a)

The Warden, Woodlands, Broughton Astley, Lutterworth, Leics.

Position and Map. On Broughton Astley-Dunton Basset road, $\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.E. of Village. O.S. 73. Barts. 18.

Hostel Details. M. 10. W. 10. Store: At Hostel. P.O.: In Village. Regional Tariff. J. I.P.

Station. Broughton Astley $\frac{1}{4}$ m. **Bus.** Leicester-B. Astley. Lutterworth-B. Astley (infrequent).

Next Hostels. Wymeswold 27 m. Warwick 28 m.

1: despite a very uncertain start because of essential requisitions and evacuation plans for the national war effort, YHA soon established itself as a wartime essential in keeping up the spirits of the people. Members would have noted the rationing regulations, but were comforted to learn that any meals provided for them at hostels did not require the sacrifice of precious meal coupons (1940 handbook); 2: Broughton Astley hostel's entry in the 1941 YHA Handbook

Despite wholesale hostel requisitions in the early months of the war, this establishment was able to continue through 1940 and 1941. Usage was soon described as very light; after the initial 1939 season YHA's *Rucksack Magazine* for New Year 1940 announced that the sleeping accommodation had been moved into the house.

Usage in 1940 was modest, with little more than 300 overnights, but improved in 1941, with over 750. Despite much uncertainty for hostellers, a national notice of 8th October 1940 advised that the hostel was operating.

The 20 bednights registered for the statistical year labelled 1942 were over 10 days only; they were almost certainly confined to October 1941, after which the hostel closed permanently, for reasons unspecified.

The relevant handbooks stated that beds were provided for 10 men and 10 women.



The only contemporary photograph that has come to light is reproduced here by courtesy of Melvyn Hines

Woodlands is a large house on the northeast side of Station Road (formerly the main village street) between the village centre and the old Great Central Railway station, but now in a cul-de-sac formed by a more recent by-pass road.



Author's photograph, October 2004, of the Broughton Astley premises, Woodlands, more than 60 years after closure

Overnights – inclusive periods each year as follows
1940-1942: previous Oct to Sept
 •: the 20 bednights were for the tail-end of 1941

1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	
...	82	
1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
351	775	20•

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