

Winter adventures

From rugged coastlines to stunning National Parks, a YHA stay offers access to adventures in some of the most beautiful locations in England and Wales.

Dorm beds available from £15 per night and private rooms from £30 per night.

yha.org.uk/breaks/winter-holidays





Hello

...and welcome to the winter issue of The Journey. Firstly, we'd like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy New Year. May your 2025 be filled with exciting plans, new experiences and big adventures.

As the frost crunches underfoot and the calendar begins another cycle, this is a season for reflection, for resolution, and for making plans. With this in mind, the features in this issue aim to inspire you to fill the upcoming months with trips you'll remember for years to come.

We suggest 25 ideas for ways to make this happen – from pedalling across Eryri (Snowdonia) to visiting Liverpool during its art biennial – and also take a closer look at the growing trend in stargazing, spotlighting four hostels with the locations and equipment to provide a memorable dark skies experience.

Elsewhere we speak to one of the co-founders of Every Body Outdoors, which campaigns for more kit and representation for plus-size outdoor-lovers, and explain what happens on our winter working parties. Might a working holiday be something you'd enjoy in the future?

You'll also find a guide to cycle touring, the latest YHA news (including some exciting award nominations) and our usual pull-out section for young hostellers. Enjoy the read – and enjoy the year ahead!

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A global family

Did you know YHA membership automatically makes you a member of Hostelling International? The global organisation was founded way back in the 1930s and still offers a world of travel opportunities.

Altena Castle sits high on a hill in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. It's a dramatic hilltop fortress, parts of which date back to the 12th century. If you're wondering why we're talking about a German medieval castle, it's because it was home to the world's first youth hostel, opened by Richard Schirrmann in 1914. The concept soon spread, with the first British hostel opening in 1930 and the International Youth Hostel Federation being founded two years later. Pictured here are girls in a dorm at Goudhurst Youth Hostel in Kent, probably a publicity shot taken in 1943 when it first opened.

Today, under the Hostelling International banner, the group has more than 700 youth hostels in 600 cities, with more than 60 worldwide member organisations in countries from Chile and China to Austria and Australia - plus, of course, here in England and Wales. It's an international community that now numbers 3.3 million members.

Hostelling International's mission, defined in 1932, remains true to this day: "To promote the education of all young people of all nations, but especially young people of limited means."

While facilities have moved on from those early days, many elements are still recognisable. You'll find affordable dorm rooms, self-catering kitchens and a warm welcome. And as for Altena Castle, you can still stay there today, as well as peek into a room that's been preserved as it was when it first opened. Take your YHA membership card for members' rates and discounts.

For more inspiration visit [hihostels.com](https://www.hihostels.com)





Awards for YHA

The work YHA is doing with young people has been recognised at three recent award ceremonies.

Autism Award for Thameside hostel

We're delighted to share the news that YHA London Thameside, our riverside hostel in the capital, has been given an Autism Friendly Award. The award celebrates organisations that commit to offering an autism-friendly environment and inclusive customer service, with the hostel being championed for its initiatives in this area. These include providing quiet times twice a week in the TV lounge, offering familiarisation visits for groups and families before their visit, organising sensory bags for guests and café customers, and producing a hostel sensory map to help guests better understand what to expect during their stay.

British Youth Travel Awards

YHA joined other leading youth travel providers at the 2024 British Education Youth Travel Awards, held at the Warner Bros. Studio in Hertfordshire. The association organises the awards to celebrate the work of its members, who go above and beyond to provide outstanding services and experiences for young domestic and international travellers. We were thrilled to be Highly Commended for the Outstanding Achievement award for our work on the No child left behind campaign. This campaign has helped fund more than 14,000 children who might not have had the chance to experience the magic of travel and adventure.

School Travel Awards

YHA was also recognised at the 2024 School Travel Awards at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel. We were named finalists in the Best Residential Experience, alongside some of the biggest names in the sector. It was an honour to share the stage with other outstanding organisations like PGL, Kingswood, Conway Centres, The Bushcraft Company, JCA and The Outward Bound Trust.

In addition to being finalists, we were proud to sponsor the Best Provision for SEND Award. Providing accessible, enriching experiences for all students is core to our mission, so seeing the remarkable work in this area was heartwarming. Congratulations to the Science Museum for winning.

A year of YHA Breaks Programme

The YHA Breaks Programme supports charities and community groups that provide trips to young people in need. In 2024, YHA supported nearly 1,000 young people through this programme.

One trip this summer saw a group of young carers, many of whom had never been away from home before, stay at YHA Buttermere. The group experienced adventures from abseiling and ghyll scrambling to canoeing and exploring waterfalls, developing resilience and the confidence to try new things, as well as enjoying respite from their caring responsibilities at home.

Suzanne, the group leader, said: “The young people who are taking part in this residential are young carers who look after someone at home with either a terminal illness, substance misuse, mental health issues or a disability. Having these breaks away gives them a chance to be young people, try new things, challenge themselves, and not just be carers.”

“It makes a big difference to these young people’s lives, seeing them grow in confidence and building themselves up. It’s a pleasure to see.”

One young carer said: “It’s important to get young people out of their comfort zone because it allows them to try things that they never would have tried before, or never knew existed.”

Visit YHA’s YouTube channel to see the adventures and where your donations go.

If you are part of a group, charity or education network whose young people may benefit from a YHA Break, please visit the web page below for more info.

[yha.org.uk/support-programmes/
yha-breaks-programme](https://yha.org.uk/support-programmes/yha-breaks-programme)



Accessible path at Ilam Park

The National Trust has created a new one-kilometre (0.6 mile) circular loop path within the grounds of Ilam Park. This newly designed pathway has been widened, resurfaced and extended to make the Peak District more accessible for everyone, especially wheelchair users and buggies.

YHA Ilam Hall is set in a large Victorian Gothic manor house on the River Manifold, sitting within the National Trust Ilam Park Estate. The listed building has been designed to accommodate all visitors, and we have two large accessible rooms, each with an accessible en suite bathroom.

Craig Best, General Manager for the National Trust in the Peak District, said:

“We definitely aspire to make Ilam Park one of the most, if not the most, accessible place within the Peak District.”



Walk of the season: YHA Youlgreave circular

The vast limestone White Peak extends over the southern area of the Peak District. Most visitors head directly for the Hope Valley for access to the more popular High Peak – home to Kinder Scout, Win Hill, Mam Tor and Derwent Valley – but the White Peak offers a quieter and equally spectacular experience. A day spent walking in the White Peak can feel as though you have the place to yourself.

This Youlgreave circular route is the most challenging of three local self-guided walks created for YHA's Festival of Walking (all route descriptions and maps are available at yha.org.uk/festival-of-walking).

YHA Youlgreave, one of our much-valued partner hostels, is an atmospheric place to begin any walk. This former village Co-op store retains much of the original look of its past and is today home to an artisan bakery and café called the Fountain View Bakery. Load up on the bakery's moreish pesto and feta pinwheels before beginning the walk by heading north through the village.

The fountain in the bakery's name actually refers to a conduit that still supplies the village with clean water. It's directly in front of the youth hostel. The Youlgrave Waterworks (yes, it takes a different spelling!) is still one of the few private water supply companies left in the UK, founded in 1827 by Hannah Bowman and her Women's

Friendly Society of Youlgrave. Recognising that the low summer waters in the Lathkill and Bradford Dales – both of which you'll visit during this walk – was causing fevers, it prioritised clean water for the local population. The village has been supplied with the water ever since.

Once out of the village, you'll head towards the dramatically named River Lathkill (although the etymology, rather disappointingly, is thought to translate in old Norse as 'narrow valley with barn'). It's a pure and clear stretch of river known for its trout.

Back near Youlgreave, you'll follow part of the Limestone Way, a 46-mile waymarked route through the White Peak. As you head south, the aspect of the landscape begins to change. Out of the valley, you'll climb high onto moorland, Gratton Moor being the highest point along the walk and marked with two Bronze Age barrows. Although quiet now, this area saw plenty of drama in the English Civil War. As you rejoin the River Bradford at Middleton, you'll see the remains of Middleton Castle, owned at the time by staunch royalist Sir Christopher Fulwood. Attacked by the Roundheads, Fulwood hid in a cave in Bradford Dale, where you now walk. He was found and shot, and his castle was ruined and never rebuilt. After exploring the remains, you'll be ready for a coffee... and perhaps one of the cakes or flapjacks at the Fountain View Bakery.

Distance: 12 miles (19.3km)
Ascent: 424m (1,391ft)
Time: Allow 5h 45m to 9h 30m
Start/Finish: OS Explorer (OL24) Peak District

1 From the hostel, turn L and then R onto Moor Lane and R for the track to Back Lane. Turn R and immediately L to reach Meadow Place Grange. Keep to the path and mind the cows.

2 Follow the path into Lathkill Dale, turn L to cross the footbridge, then R along the river. Cross the river at Conksbury Bridge, follow it past Alport, and turn L at the bridge onto Mawstone Lane.

3 Take the path on the L to reach Cliff Lane. Turn R, follow the road around a L-hand bend and take the path on the R to Dale End.

4 Turn L onto the road and enter Gratton Dale on R. Muddy sections can be avoided by taking higher parallel paths. Turn R to reach Long Dale, then after the steep uphill section turn R to join the road at Hope Farm.

5 Go straight ahead and turn R onto a footpath which leads to Bradford Dale. Follow the footpath on R of the river to a bridge. Follow the road uphill and turn R back to the hostel.

To download this route and view the many other walking routes from YHA hostels visit yha.org.uk/festival-of-walking

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This route has been created by YHA to provide inspiration and to aid planning and preparation of your walk. It doesn't replace the need for an OS Map or the OS Maps App to navigate your walk safely. Digital maps are a guide and do not always reflect the conditions on the ground, ensure you are aware of your immediate surroundings.



Every Body Outdoors

Steph Wetherell is one of the co-founders of Every Body Outdoors, which fights for clothing, gear and representation for plus-size bodies in the outdoor movement. Here she talks exclusively to The Journey about how and why the organisation came about.

Q What motivated you to start Every Body Outdoors?

Five of us met about three years ago through social media. Each of us had separately been dealing with our frustrations around not being able to get access to outdoor clothing and kit in larger sizes. Between us we cover a load of different activities: hiking, climbing, swimming, mountain biking and so on. We were inspired by some of the stuff that was happening in America around similar issues, so decided to try to do some work within the industry to change things here in the UK. We set up an Instagram page at the end of January 2022 and hit a thousand followers within 48 hours. At that point, we realised that maybe it wasn't just us.



Q What were your goals?

We set up originally with the aim of working with brands and retailers to try to bring about more size-inclusive clothing. We still do that, but the second half of our work is about creating safe and inclusive spaces for plus-size people to get outdoors. As well as regional group walks, we also run hill skills and navigation courses with a qualified mountain leader, often basing ourselves in YHAs.

The courses have been hugely popular. A lot of our community have worries about going on regular courses or going walking in a group, so these are spaces where you don't have to worry about being too slow and being left behind, or getting out of breath going up a hill. We run everything at a very inclusive pace. The confidence and skills that people come out with can be really amazing.

Our community is predominantly female and non-binary. I think some of that is due to the fact that women often struggle with lower confidence, especially in outdoor spaces.

Q You're also pressing for more representation for plus-size people in the outdoor world. Why is this a key issue?

Firstly, it's important on a practical note. When trying to buy kit, it's so much easier if I can see it on someone's body that looks like mine. But it's also about seeing yourself represented in a space. If you see somebody who looks like you, you feel like you belong there. A lot of brands and media portray a certain type of person in the outdoors – ultra-fit people doing the harder, faster, stronger, more difficult things – but actually, when I go outdoors, what I see is a lot of people just going for a walk having a nice time. We need to see more representation of that experience.

It's also about how other people treat me. I get treated all the time as though I must be an outdoor beginner, I must not know what I'm doing. People have preconceptions and judgements because they never see plus-size people represented in the outdoors.

Q How about the kit itself? Have you seen much of a change in what's available?

Yes. We have a partnership with Cotswold Outdoor and they've been really actively working on expanding their extended size range. In 2024 they've worked with Rab to expand their sizing up to a size 24 for women and XXXL for men, and these are now available at 20 of their stores. Alpkit, Patagonia and Mountain Equipment also now have clothing that goes up to a size 20, and Osprey and Gregory Packs have produced extended fit rucksacks to fit larger bodies.

Three years ago, the only places I could buy a waterproof jacket in a size 20 were Regatta or Mountain Warehouse, so it's incredible to see the change. At the same time, I think there are still some brands that genuinely don't think that plus-size people can do these things.



Q You're a dedicated hill-walker. Do you have a favourite place to hike?

I walk a lot in the Black Mountains in South Wales. Aside from the Sugar Loaf, it's a really overlooked part of the country with some beautiful hills and some brilliant routes. For me, there's something really lovely about getting to know a group of hills like that.

Every Body Outdoors is a member of YHA's Outdoor Citizens community. It has two upcoming courses for the spring: a navigation course from 28th-30th March in the Yorkshire Dales and a hill skills course from 25th-27th April in the Brecon Beacons. See everybodyoutdoors.co.uk for more details.

25 ideas for 2025

A brand new year means brand new plans for the months ahead – which is why we've put together 25 ideas for different ways to make 2025 a year to remember, from outdoor thrills and notable anniversaries to mass events and new openings.

Try 'noctourism'

Nocturnal tourism – or 'noctourism' – is a rising trend. Try nighttime kayaking in Newcastle or the Dorset coast, sample an after-dark rockpool safari in Cornwall or go for a summer stargazing swim in the Lake District.

Be part of the Rugby World Cup

Scrum down! The Women's Rugby World Cup takes place in England from 22nd August to 27th September, with matches being held in the likes of Manchester, York, London and Bristol – all cities with YHA hostels.

Hike Coast to Coast

After considerable improvement works, this year is expected to see the official opening of the Coast to Coast Path Trail as a National Trail. Trek the full 192 miles (309km) from the Lake District to the North York Moors, or enjoy one of its many day walks.

Get scientific in Manchester

Manchester is used to being at the forefront of things, from music and fashion to design and (sometimes) football, but its most enduring influence has been in industry. This summer, the city's Museum of Science & Industry launches its new Power Hall. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-manchester

Go green in Bristol

Ten years ago Bristol became the UK's first city to be given European Green Capital status, and it's still blazing a trail with everything from hydrogen-powered cruises to vegan restaurants. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-bristol

Bag some Wainwrights in the Lakes

With some 18 hostels within the Lake District National Park, we're perfectly poised to look after you on your Lakeland wanderings.

Cycle the Traws Eryri

Two-wheeled adventures don't get much more epic than the new Traws Eryri (Trans Snowdonia) trail, an off-road adventure route covering 140 miles (225km). Take it on if you dare.

Visit the New Forest

It's now 20 years since the designation of the New Forest National Park, making it the perfect time to visit this adventure-rich swathe of southern woodland, which plays home to some of the oldest trees in the country. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-new-forest

Know your place in Greenwich

The Greenwich Royal Observatory marks its 350th anniversary this year, so if you're staying at one of our London hostels, head along to stand on the Prime Meridian Line or – in its famous planetarium – crane upwards at the stars.

Take in a World Heritage Site

UNESCO has its 80th birthday this year, which is motivation enough to visit one of the dozens of remarkable World Heritage sites across England and Wales, from Canterbury Cathedral to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal.

Visit a garden with a difference

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is 25 years old this year. The 500-acre site has a spectacular Great Glasshouse, home to some of Earth's most endangered plants. Our nearest hostel is YHA Brecon Beacons. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-brecon-beacons

Ride the rails to York

1825 marked the birth of modern rail travel, right here in the UK, and Railway 200 is a year-long celebration of this bicentenary. York is home to the excellent National Railway Museum, where the refurbished Station Hall reopens in the spring. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-york

Go for a family ride on the Monsal Trail

The 8.5-mile (13.5km) Monsal Trail, on the bed of an old railway track, remains a great family day out in the Peak District. Hire bikes (or bring your own) to get from end to end.



Step back in time at Ironbridge

The birthplace of the Industrial Revolution has a calendar packed with hands-on events, from blacksmith experience days to china painting.

yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-ironbridge-coalport

Get walking with YHA

After another successful year in 2024, this autumn will see the return of the YHA Festival of Walking. Join a social walk, opt for a self-guided route or simply spread the word among your friends.

yha.org.uk/festival-of-walking

Head to Hull

The port city of Hull has a long maritime heritage, and various sites and historical vessels are being refurbished for reopening later this year. Stay at nearby YHA Beverley Friary to be close to the city.

yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-beverley-friary

Skydive for YHA

The countryside looks pretty impressive from 13,000 feet in the air – and even more so when you're speeding earthwards at 120mph. Take on a skydive to fundraise money for YHA and chalk up an unforgettable experience at the same time. getinvolved.yha.org.uk/fundraising/challenge-events

Try your hand at volunteering

Volunteering with YHA is a chance to have fun, boost your CV, learn new skills and see more of the country. Might this be the year you give it a go? jobs.yha.org.uk/volunteering-with-yha

Get on the trail of Gromit

Charmed by the Wallace & Gromit Christmas special? Bristol will be unveiling a brand new Gromit sculpture trail in 2025 – the perfect excuse for a family trip.



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© AdobeStock/German Skydiver



© AdobeStock/EmilHilke



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Don your bonnet in Bath

This year marks the 250th birthday of Jane Austen. The big day itself doesn't roll around until 16th December, but related events are being held year-round. Head to Bath to unleash your inner Elizabeth Bennet or Mr Darcy. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-bath

Take some time with JMW Turner

It's 250 years since the birth of the legendary London-born painter. See his inimitable works up close at the National Gallery and Tate Britain.

Take an overnight train to Cornwall

Fancy falling asleep in London and waking up in Penzance? The Night Riviera runs six nights a week and is one of only two sleeper services in the UK.

Pay a visit to Portmeirion

Just outside Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park, the extraordinary waterside village of Portmeirion turns 100 this year, marking a century since architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis began designing and building this unique tourist attraction. YHA has six hostels in the park itself.

Enjoy the Liverpool Biennial

From 7th June to 14th September, Liverpool will be holding the UK's largest contemporary free art festival. Time your stay to make the most of it. yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-liverpool-albert-dock

Raise a glass to YHA

This year marks our 95th anniversary as an organisation – we'll be continuing to make a difference to the people who need it most as we prepare for our centenary in five years' time.

On your journey of a lifetime, what will you leave behind?

Pass the gift of adventure to future generations by leaving a gift in your will.

Thanks to YHA donors, we can create life-changing experiences for all, keep historic buildings open and maintained, deliver leading education and work experience programmes, and fund breaks for children and families with challenging lives.

Write your will for free

As a YHA supporter, you can now create a legally-binding will for free with our will writing partners. We have a limited number available.

To learn more

Please call our fundraising team on 01629 700 990 or visit getinvolved.yha.org.uk/donate/gifts-in-wills



Registered Charity No. 306122



Let's go!

Our pull out section for children.

The magic of mountain hares

In this issue we're taking a closer look at one of our rarest and most remarkable mammals – the mountain hare.

They've been here in the UK for a very long time. In Devon and the Thames Valley, experts have found mountain hare bones more than 110,000 years old!

They're our only native hare. The brown hare was introduced by the Romans and is now very common, while the mountain hare is originally from the Scottish Highlands. Mountain hares are smaller than brown hares and have shorter ears.

They're rare. The only place mountain hares are found in England is in the Peak District, where they live in the uplands, grazing on long grasses and tree bark. The most recent figures show there are only around 3,500 of them left in the area.

They have an incredible trick. Unlike brown hares, which stay reddish-brown all year, mountain hares turn white in the winter! This is to help them blend in with the snow and ice of the colder months. Some British stoats turn white in winter, too.

But they have to be very careful in spring. The coats of mountain hares usually stay white until March or April, which means hungry birds of prey find them very easy to spot if there's no snow.

They don't dig burrows. Mountain hares live above ground, resting and sheltering in small hollows in the grass called 'forms'.

They have very powerful hind legs. This helps them to run fast. They can often be seen bounding across the moors in a zigzag pattern.

Baby hares are called leverets. Female mountain hares mostly give birth between March and July, and can have up to four litters of one to three leverets in that time.



How did the seasons get their names?

We all know winter, spring, summer and autumn.
But where did their names come from?

Winter

The name 'winter' has its roots in an old Germanic word – wentruz – which means 'the time of water'. This is a reference to the snow and heavy rain that often come at this time of year.

Did you know? In some Anglo-Saxon cultures, years used to be counted in winters. A child could be described as being "ten winters old".



Spring

Many centuries ago spring used to be known as Lent, from the Old English word 'lengten', because it's the season when daylight hours start to lengthen. Today's name, 'spring', comes from plants and leaves rising up, or 'springing' to life, at this time of year.

Did you know? The Greek goddess Persephone was seen as the goddess of spring – but she was also the Queen of the Underworld!



Summer

The name 'summer' comes from the Old English word 'sumor', meaning 'the hot season of the year'. It's very similar to the Dutch word 'zomer', the German word 'Zommer' and the Sanskrit word 'samā'.

Did you know? The Eiffel Tower grows six inches in the summer, because its metal expands in the heat – then shrinks again in the winter!



Autumn

The name 'autumn' has its roots in the Latin word 'autumnus', and was first used in English as long ago as the 14th century. Americans call the season 'fall', from the falling of the leaves. Long ago this name used to be common in Britain too, before 'autumn' took over!

Did you know? There's an even earlier name for the season. Before 'fall' and 'autumn', this time of year was known simply as 'harvest'.





Did somebody say cakes?

You'll need: string, scissors, mixing bowl, a mould such as a yoghurt pot, lard (a great source of fat!), mixed seeds, hard cheese and raisins.

How to... Make bird food cakes!

By feeding garden birds in winter, we can help them get the fat and protein they need to stay warm and healthy. Here's an idea you can try at home.

- 1.** With the help of a grown-up, make a small hole in the bottom of your mould or yoghurt pot. Thread your string through the hole and tie a knot on the inside, so that the pot can dangle upside-down. Leave enough string so that you can tie the pot to a tree.
- 2.** If you're using lard, allow the fat to warm up to room temperature, but don't melt it. Then cut it into small pieces and put it in the mixing bowl.
- 3.** Add the other ingredients to the bowl and mix them together with your fingertips. Keep squidging the mixture until the fat holds it all together. You might get sticky!
- 4.** If you like, you can add extra ingredients such as raisins, nuts or even mealworms! Don't use nuts if you or anyone in your group has a nut allergy.
- 5.** Fill your mould or yoghurt pot with the mixture and put it in the fridge to set for an hour.
- 6.** Hang your bird cake from a tree! It can take a while for birds to appear, but robins, blackbirds, sparrows and tits might all come calling.

With thanks to the RSPB
rspb.org.uk

What do amphibians do in winter?



Toad hiding in damp leaves

Here in the UK, many of our animals slow down during the coldest months of the year. Hedgehogs, bats, dormice and adders all hibernate, while animals like badgers and water voles go into 'torpor', which is like a shorter version of hibernation.

But what about amphibians (frogs, toads and newts)? Well, they also go into a kind of hibernation! Amphibians are all cold-blooded, which means they have

to become less active when the weather gets very chilly. They spend their winters in dark, damp, sheltered places and go into a deep sleep, sometimes waking up on warmer days to eat and drink.

The word for this kind of activity in amphibians is 'brumation'. British amphibians usually go into brumation from around November to February.

Wordsearch

Amphibians might slow down in winter, but we don't have to! Can you find the names of these popular activities in the grid?

- Walking
- Running
- Reading
- Drawing
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Climbing
- Dancing



s	g	w	g	n	i	w	a	r	d	l	s	w	n	i	g	c	n
g	n	n	w	a	a	l	g	n	i	m	m	i	w	s	o	y	i
n	i	i	i	n	s	b	e	n	o	a	k	c	d	f	p	c	e
i	n	m	l	d	t	g	n	i	k	l	a	w	s	l	e	l	h
d	n	o	e	r	a	c	m	c	l	i	m	b	i	n	g	i	a
a	u	i	d	a	g	e	i	r	e	h	o	p	a	o	c	n	
c	r	n	g	l	i	n	r	d	f	d	a	n	c	i	n	g	



Help YHA make a difference



Our winter working parties are an amazing way to learn fresh skills, meet new friends and support our charitable work, all while discovering a new location. We also have volunteering opportunities year-round, so why not make 2025 the year you give it a go?

What does the perfect weekend look like to you? A potter around in the garden? A cooked breakfast followed by some brisk outdoor activity? Maybe a dab of DIY, or time spent with friends new and old? Perhaps learning a new skill or visiting a different part of the country, all followed by a relaxed evening in front of the fire, playing games and chatting the day through?

Given that you've read the intro to this article already, you'll know where the paragraph above is leading. YHA's winter working parties, and our other volunteering opportunities, offer a brilliant chance to spend time with like-minded people doing things that bring genuine benefit to our charitable aims. In 2024 alone, more than

1,000 volunteers donated their time to YHA, accruing almost 76,000 hours between them.

Throughout the winter and early spring, when a number of our properties are quiet or closed, many hostel managers organise working parties to help spruce up the hostel for the next season. Accommodation is provided free of charge and volunteers are given a budget for travel expenses, as well as a thank you meal. There's also time to explore the surroundings or just unwind by the fire at the end of the day.

Depending on the individual needs of each hostel, there's always a wide variety of tasks to help with. This could be anything from groundwork in the gardens and



grounds, such as weeding, trimming hedges and mending fences, to a bit of painting and decorating in places that need a bit of TLC or some light refurbishment.

In March last year, YHA Wilderhope Manor – a 16th-century manor house in the Shropshire countryside – welcomed a volunteer working party to help transform the hostel grounds for the approaching spring season. Seven volunteers helped weed, prune, and plant flowers in the beautiful walled garden, re-lay the main path, paint outdoor furniture and clear and tidy the orchard.

Hostel manager Laura was delighted with the outcome. “The hostel greatly benefitted from their hard work,” she says, “and it was clear that the working party also had tremendous benefits for the volunteers themselves.”

Colette, one of the volunteers, adds: “The other volunteers and YHA staff were all lovely to work with over the four days. It was great to see how much we could accomplish together, and we rounded the time off with a good meal at a local hostelry. I will definitely be volunteering again!”

The YHA website offers many opportunities for anyone interested in volunteering. For example, in March 2025, YHA Coniston Holly How and YHA Hawkshead in the Lake District require a helping hand, as do YHA St Davids, YHA Street, YHA Dartmoor, and YHA Medway. These working parties will take place every week until the end of March, with plenty more opportunities going forward.

Pam, a volunteer at YHA Hartington Hall last winter, is clear about the benefits.

“It’s great to get out of the house, visit this lovely hostel in the Peaks and have the chance to meet new people,” she says. “But most of all, taking part in this working party seems like a good way to give back. I’ve enjoyed all that YHA has to offer over the years, so what better way to say thank you than by helping get the hostel tidied up?”

If you want to volunteer, head to the YHA website jobs.yha.org.uk/volunteering-with-yha



More ways to get involved

Hostel placements

Our volunteer hostel placements help staff with tasks including serving meals, housekeeping and reception duties. It's also popular with students who want to gain hospitality experience, or complete a work placement as part of a course. Placements are for two to eight weeks, accommodation is provided and travel expenses are provided up to £105. As of early 2025, there are more than a dozen hostel placements open across England and Wales, including at YHA London Earl's Court, YHA Conwy, YHA Ilam Hall, and YHA Manorbier in beautiful Pembrokeshire.

Volunteer gardeners

Fancy spending a bit of time tinkering in the remarkable grounds of YHA Whitby overlooking the dramatic Abbey, or perhaps in the New Forest? Both are looking for volunteer gardeners. Some hostels are also looking for regular gardeners, such as in YHA Wye Valley and YHA Manorbier.

Community support

We're also often on the look out for people to help with events at hostels around the country and even places at our head office in Matlock. Roles include acting as volunteer youth workers, helping deliver outdoor sports events, or even performing in our hostels as a musician, actor, or artist.

If you have a creative volunteering idea that you cannot see advertised here, or you have a special set of skills that YHA might benefit from, then email communitysupport@yha.org.uk.

Volunteer hostel manager

Volunteer managers provide a warm welcome to guests in several of our small self-catering hostels. These are often hostels in some of Britain's most beautiful locations and offer the chance to explore the area in free time. The role involves customer care, daily housekeeping, administration, answering telephone queries and looking after the security of the hostel.

Group volunteering

YHA partners with many organisations to offer corporate or group volunteering opportunities, which are ideal for team building. These are organised on an individual basis, so please contact the YHA Volunteering team at volunteers@yha.org.uk

For more information about all of our volunteering opportunities, contact volunteer.yha.org.uk.

Four great hostels for stargazing

Parts of the UK offer superb stargazing potential on clear nights, and several of our hostels – including the four listed here – have Dark Skies kits for guest hire. The kits include monoculars, red-light torches, night sky guides, tarps to lie on, and more.





YHA Grinton Lodge

First built as a hunting lodge back in 1817, this Yorkshire Dales property enjoys the kind of plum countryside location that traditional hostelling is all about. The southern slopes of Swaledale spread out in all directions, while the picturesque village of Grinton is just a 10-minute wander away. Hillwalking guests will be in their element, with plenty of bracing day walks beginning direct from the hostel door (don't miss the moorland views on the 10-mile Whitaside Moor Loop), and this is also famed territory for both road cyclists and mountain bikers.

And when the sun goes down? Make the most of the Dales setting by wrapping up warm and heading outside. When there's little cloud cover, the relative lack of artificial light serves up a galactic overhead treat. Some 30% of the Yorkshire Dales National Park has gained official recognition as an International Dark Sky Reserve – the largest in the UK, no less – and the hostel's Swaledale location is among the best.

The 50-bed property is available on Exclusive Hire over the winter months, with individual bookings welcomed from late February onwards. Camping pods and camping pitches are also on offer in spring, summer and early autumn.

yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-grinton-lodge

YHA Dartmoor

This moorland hostel's selling points come as thick and fast as a meteor shower. There's the location, for one – tucked away down a singletrack road on the fringes of Bellever Forest in the heart of Dartmoor National Park – then there's the hostel itself, which occupies a characterful barn complex dating back to the 1930s. Expect exposed stone walls, a woodburner, and a general sense of being far from the hustle and bustle of the 9-to-5. For ramblers, climbers and cyclists, it's a glorious setting. It's also well placed for visiting the South Devon Railway, an award-winning vintage steam train service.

After sundown, the low-slung moorland translates into the most atmospheric of stages for stargazing, with the calls of nightjars and the hoots of tawny owls often providing a soundtrack in the darkness. As with many of our hostels, the property can be booked on Exclusive Hire until mid-March, when individual guests can then take their pick from a selection of private rooms. Camping is also available, and with this being a dog-friendly option here at YHA Dartmoor, you can even stargaze with your four-legged friends.

yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-dartmoor



YHA Brecon Beacons Danywenallt

The Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park is a special place at any time of the year, covering 520 square miles of peaks, ridges, waterfalls and woodlands. Tucked into the folds of the park on the banks of the Talybont Reservoir you'll find this ever-popular hostel with its farmhouse stonework, old fireplace and sturdy wooden beams. From here, the delights of the Brecon Beacons – from show caves to stand-up paddleboarding – are readily explored, with hiking and biking routes stretching off to all corners.

The Brecon Beacons National Park has been an International Dark Sky Reserve since 2012, a designation which means not only does it offer exceptional starry nights but it also has specific protection for minimising light pollution. The hostel itself is available on Exclusive Hire year-round, with a total of 39 beds and perks that include a log-burning stove and a ready welcome for dogs. And if the weather's not playing ball, the award-winning Llangorse Multi Activity Centre is just a couple of miles away, offering indoor rock climbing and bouldering, high-level cargo nets and even a huge indoor zip line.


yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-brecon-beacons-danywenallt

YHA South Downs

It's now been almost 12 years since YHA South Downs opened its doors in East Sussex, and this farmhouse hostel still sets the standard when it comes to location. Sitting right on the famous South Downs Way – the 100-mile-long National Trail that snakes along the chalk escarpments of the South Downs – it also has substantial grounds of its own. Climbing, biking and rambling are all big draws, and if you need a bit of urban buzz to complement the outdoor scenery, Brighton is just 25 minutes away by rail.

But while the seaside city provides a definite sparkle of its own, nothing compares to the twinkling eternity of the night sky, and the South Downs National Park is another to be designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve. It even holds its own annual Dark Skies Festival – the 25th edition in 2025 will take place between 13th and 23rd February – and guests at the hostel can, as elsewhere, hire out a Dark Skies kit. Shared rooms, private rooms, camping pods and a premium bell tent are all on offer, as is the chance to hire the whole 27-bed farmhouse.

yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-south-downs



YHA Brecon Beacons Danywemallt

Your adventure, your hostel, your way

Enjoy the space, privacy, and freedom to create unforgettable memories in a YHA hostel just like this one.

From castles to cottages and lodges to mansions, find out more at yha.org.uk/exclusive-hire.



How to go cycle touring

Jenny Tough is an endurance athlete who's best known for running and cycling in some of world's most challenging events, including ultra bikepacking races. She's also an editor at Sidetracked magazine. Here she offers her guide to bikepacking.



Ever since the proliferation of the best machine for travel, intrepid souls have moved from one place to another by bicycle. Whenever I've travelled to a supposedly hidden corner of the world, I always discover that the bike tourers have been there already. Slowly and quietly, not making an impact on the environment or buying a ticket for travel, the bike tourers have discovered the beauty of being able to go anywhere under their own steam.

Picture yourself living in the great wide open, swooping down trails and challenging yourself up hills. Visiting a new locale for a brief meal, then moving onwards to the next valley. Picture yourself cycling at an easy pace, carrying everything you need to live and nothing more. If you combine your touring with staying at youth hostels, you'll be able to travel even lighter. Many youth hostels also have cycle storage and maintenance facilities.

Equipment

Bikes

It starts with a bike. The beauty of bikepacking is that the equipment embraces any type of steed. From slick roadies to capable e-bikes to burly full-suss – literally any bike will do. But, if pushed for an answer, I would lean towards a gravel bike as the best all-rounder for bikepacking.

Luggage

Bikepacking luggage is designed to cling to and around the bike frame without encumbering natural riding. Front roll bags and saddle bags tend to be universal, but frame bags will need to be fitted to your exact bike style and dimensions. There are also oodles of accessories, such as food pouches, top tube bags, down tube bags, and fork cages.

Clothing

While the mainstream cycling industry is full of rules and dress codes, bikepacking and gravel riding are marvellously unsanctioned. I've seen bikepackers in everything from the nicest team kit bib-shorts and jerseys to sundresses and denim cut-offs. Comfortable bib shorts are something of a revelation that I came to quite late in my long-distance cycling life, as are padded gloves. Why suffer? Use padding. Of course, a good waterproof and an insulated jacket remain the most essential clothing investments needed for any time outside, and luckily, these don't have to be cycling-specific.

What to carry and how is a highly personal choice, but as an example, this is how I typically pack my bikes:

Front roll bag: Sleeping gear and an extra pair of bibs/socks.

Frame bag: Bike tools and snacks.

Saddle bag: Jackets and layers, toiletries, mini stove and mug.

Top tube bag or accessory pouches: Phone, wallet, glasses, headphones, more snacks... anything that I want access to while riding.



Planning

Linking up youth hostels is a great way to plan a route. Set the target, then explore the map for options in between. Will you take the fast, smooth route? Or the gnarly, uncertain path? How far to ride in a day is an entirely personal choice. Judge the number of hours your route will take based on elevation gain and trail surface, as well as purely distance. Be sure to look for good resupply options along the way so you have some idea of how much distance you'll need to cover between bottle refills and cake stops.

Cycle essentials

Did you know?

All YHA members receive discounts at gear stores including Cotswold Outdoor, GO Outdoors, Snow+Rock, Runners Need and Cycle Surgery.

[yha.org.uk/membership/
member-benefits](https://yha.org.uk/membership/member-benefits)

Fortunately, a lot of outdoor gear can be used on a bike, but there are certain bits of specialist cycling kit that are non-negotiable. Here are three essentials.



Ortlieb Back-Roller Core Panniers

[ortlieb.com](https://www.ortlieb.com)

Ortlieb are well-versed in waterproof bags. It's been their raison d'être since 1982, when Hartmut Ortlieb founded Ortlieb Sportartikel in Nuremberg, Germany. They produce some of the best waterproof equipment out there and have dozens of bike panniers to choose from. Each is made from a robust polyester fabric. The Back-Roller Core is a great entry-level version.



Rab Men's Cinder Cargo Bib Shorts

[rab.equipment](https://www.rab.equipment)

Rab's foray into cycling gear has been very successful with its limited but (as you'd expect) well-made range. As Jenny Tough outlines in her article on page 30, bib shorts – nice and padded – are essential. The Rab Cargo Bib Shorts' breathable body-mapped construction and cushioning chamois mean comfort long into a ride. They're great for long-distance and gravel rides.

Osprey Escapist Frame Bag Small

[osprey.com](https://www.osprey.com)

Frame bags are a key addition for any journey longer than a couple of hours on a bike. We always carry one, whether cycle touring or on a blast around the woods. Osprey's modular range allows you to build a comprehensive bikepacking kit to fit your ride, and this frame bag has double-ended waterproof zips for easy access as well as a panel for smaller items.



Four books to inspire you in 2025

We might live in a digital world these days, but there's still nothing like losing yourself in a book. Here are four new titles with the power to get you outdoors.

Slow Ways Pocket Atlas

Urban Good

Formed in 2020, Slow Ways is a citizen-made, peer-reviewed network of walking routes linking together all our towns, cities and national parks. This brightly coloured pocket atlas is intended as a way of planning your on-foot journeys – and colouring in those you've already done. Collectively, the network covers some 9,000 walking routes across Great Britain.



Voyages – Sidetracked Beyond gestalten

Voyages – Sidetracked Beyond is the first book from the adventure magazine Sidetracked. This beautifully photographed, large-format book celebrates the joys of adventure in places of breathtaking and pristine natural beauty worldwide. It's divided into 21 inspiring stories, and the foreword is written by adventurer Jenny Tough, who discusses cycle touring on page 30.



England: A Natural History

John Lewis-Stempel

Doubleday

Described as 'Britain's finest living nature writer', John Lewis-Stempel here turns his considerable gifts to the landscapes of rural England, voyaging from downland to beechwood, village to moor and fen to coast. Over the course of more than 400 immersive pages, he interweaves history, travelogue and vivid descriptions of the countryside. Destined to become a classic.



Dog Days Out: 365 things to do with your dog in the UK and Ireland

Lottie Gross

Conway

This is Lottie Gross's second dog-friendly book. In Dog Days Out, she explores a wide range of places in Britain and Ireland that are friendly to dogs (and dog owners). She picks out the best beaches, countryside trails, castles and country houses that are open to canine friends. Remember, dogs are allowed in most YHA Camping & Cabin products.



Hostel guide



Book now

Visit yha.org.uk

YHA All Stretton	Meadow Green, Batch Valley, All Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6JW
YHA Alnwick	34 to 38 Green Batt, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1TU
YHA Alston	The Firs, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3RW
YHA Alstonefield	Gypsy Lane, Alstonefield, nr Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2FZ
YHA Ambleside	Waterhead, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0EU
YHA Bath	Bathwick Hill, Bath, BA2 6JZ
YHA Beer	Bovey Combe, Beer, Seaton, Devon, EX12 3LL
YHA Berwick	Dewars Lane, Berwick Upon Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1HJ
YHA Beverley Friary	Friar's Lane, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 0DF
YHA Black Sail	Black Sail Hut, Ennerdale, Cleator, Cumbria, CA23 3AX
YHA Boggle Hole	Mill Beck, Fylingthorpe, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO22 4UQ
YHA Borrowdale	Longthwaite, Borrowdale, Keswick, Cumbria, Lakes, CA12 5XE
YHA Borth	Morlais, Borth, Ceredigion, SY24 5JS
YHA Boscastle	Palace Stables, Boscastle, Cornwall, PL35 0HD
YHA Boswinger	Boswinger, Gorran, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6LL
YHA Brecon Beacons	Libanus, Brecon, Powys, LD3 8NH
YHA Brecon Beacons Danywenallt	National Park Study Centre, Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, LD3 7YS
YHA Bridges	Ratlinghope, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 OSP
YHA Bristol	14 Narrow Quay, Bristol, BS1 4QA
YHA Broad Haven	Broad Haven, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 3JH
YHA Buttermere	Buttermere, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9XA
YHA Cambridge	97 Tenison Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 2DN
YHA Canterbury	54 New Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3DT
YHA Castleton Losehill Hall	Castleton, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 8WB
YHA Cheddar	Hillfield, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3HN
YHA Chester Trafford Hall	Ince Lane, Wimbolds Trafford, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4JP
YHA Cholderton Stonehenge	Beacon House, Amesbury Road, Cholderton, Wiltshire, SP4 0EW
YHA Clun Mill	The Mill, Clun, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8NY
YHA Coniston Coppermines	Coppermines House, Coniston, Cumbria, LA21 8HP
YHA Coniston Holly How	Holly How, Far End, Coniston, Cumbria, LA21 8DD
YHA Conwy	Larkhill, Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy, LL32 8AJ
YHA Cotswolds	New Brewery Arts, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1JH
YHA Dalby Forest	Old School, Lockton, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7PY
YHA Dartmoor	Believer, Postbridge, Devon, PL20 6TU
YHA Eastbourne	1 East Dean Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 8ES
YHA Edale	Rowland Cote, Nether Booth, Edale, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 7ZH
YHA Eden Project	Eden Project, Bodelva, Cornwall, PL24 2SG
YHA Edmundbyers	Low House, Edmundbyers, Consett, Co Durham, DH8 9NL
YHA Elmscott	Elmscott, Hartland, Bideford, Devon, EX39 6ES
YHA Ennerdale	Cat Crag, Ennerdale, Cleator, Cumbria, Lakes, CA23 3AX
YHA Eskdale	Boot, Holmrook, Cumbria, CA19 1TH
YHA Exford	Exe Mead, Exford, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7PU
YHA Eyam	Hawkhill Road, Eyam, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 5QP
YHA Gower	Port Eynon, Swansea, SA3 1NN
YHA Grasmere Butharlyp Howe	Easedale Road, Grasmere, Cumbria, LA22 9QG

YHA Grinton Lodge	Grinton, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL11 6HS
YHA Hartington Hall	Hall Bank, Hartington, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 OAT
YHA Hathersage	Castleton Road, Hathersage, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 1EH
YHA Hawes	Lancaster Terrace, Hawes, North Yorkshire, DL8 3LQ
YHA Hawkshead	Hawkshead, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0QD
YHA Haworth	Longlands Drive, Haworth, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD22 8RT
YHA Hawse End	Hawse End Cottage, Portinscale, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5UE
YHA Helmsley	Carlton Lane, Helmsley, North Yorkshire, YO62 5HB
YHA Helvellyn	Greenside, Glenridding, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0QR
YHA Holmbury	Radnor Lane, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6NW
YHA Honister Hause	Seatoller, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5XN
YHA Idwal Cottage	Nant Ffrancon, Bethesda, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 3LZ
YHA Ilam Hall	Ilam Hall, Ilam, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2AZ
YHA Ingleton	Greta Tower, Sammy Lane, Ingleton, North Yorkshire, LA6 3EG
YHA Ironbridge Coalbrookdale	1 Paradise, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7NR
YHA Ironbridge Coalport	John Rose Building, High Street, Coalport, Shropshire, TF8 7HT
YHA Jordans	Welders Lane, Jordans, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 2SN
YHA Keswick	Station Road, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5LH
YHA Kettlewell	Kettlewell, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 5QU
YHA Kings	Kings, Penmaenpool, Dolgellau Gwynedd, Wales, LL40 1TB
YHA Lands End	Letcha Vean, St Just-in-Penwith, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7NT
YHA Langdale	High Close, Loughrigg, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 9HJ
YHA Langdon Beck	Forest-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle, Co Durham, DL12 0XN
YHA Leominster	The Old Priory, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8EQ
YHA Littlehampton	63 Surrey Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5AW
YHA Liverpool Albert Dock	25 Tabley Street, off Wapping, Liverpool, Merseyside, L1 8EE
YHA Lizard	The Polbreen, Lizard Point, Cornwall, TR12 7NT
YHA Llangattock	Wern Watkin, Hillside, Llangattock, Crickhowell, NP8 1LG
YHA London Central	104 Bolsover Street, London, W1W 5NU
YHA London Earls Court	38 Bolton Gardens, Earl's Court, London, SW5 0AQ
YHA London Lee Valley	Windmill Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, EN8 9AJ
YHA London Oxford Street	14 Noel Street, London, W1F 8GJ
YHA London St Pauls	36 Carter Lane, London, EC4V 5AB
YHA London Thameside	20 Salter Road, Rotherhithe, London, SE16 5PR
YHA Lulworth Cove	School Lane, West Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5SA
YHA Malham	Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DB
YHA Manchester	Potato Wharf, Castlefield, Manchester, M3 4NB
YHA Mankinholes	Mankinholes, Todmorden, Lancashire, OL14 6HR
YHA Manorbier	Manorbier, nr Tenby, Pembrokeshire, SA70 7TT
YHA Medway	351 Capstone Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 3JE
YHA Minehead	Alcombe Combe, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 6EW
YHA National Forest	48 Bath Lane, Moira, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 6BD
YHA New Forest	Cott Lane, Burley Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 4BB

YHA Ninebanks	Orchard House, Mohope, Ninebanks, Hexham, NE47 8DQ
YHA Okehampton	Klondyke Road, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1EW
YHA Okehampton Bracken Tor	Bracken Tor, Saxongate, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1QW
YHA Osmotherley	Cote Ghyll, Osmotherley, Notherallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 3AH
YHA Penzance	Castle Horneck, Penzance, Cornwall, TR20 8TF
YHA Perranporth	Droskyn Point, Perranporth, Cornwall, TR6 OGS
YHA Port Eynon	Old Lifeboat House, Port Eynon, Swansea, SA3 1NN
YHA Portreath	Nance Farm, Illogan, Redruth, Cornwall, TR16 4QX
YHA Pwll Deri	Castell Mawr, Trefasser, Goodwick, Pembrokeshire, SA64 OLR
YHA Ravenstor	Millers Dale, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8SS
YHA Rowen	Rhiw Farm, Rowen, Conwy, LL32 8YW
YHA Scarborough	Burniston Rd, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO13 ODA
YHA Sheen Bunkhouse	Peakstones, Sheen, Derbyshire, SK17 OES
YHA Sheringham	1 Cremer's Drift, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8HX
YHA Sherwood Forest	Forest Corner, Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire, NG21 9RN
YHA Skiddaw House	Bassenthwaite, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 4QX
YHA Slaidburn	King's House, Slaidburn, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 3ER
YHA Snowdon Bryn Gwynant	Nantgwynant, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 4NP
YHA Snowdon Llanberis	Llwyn Celyn, Llanberis, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 4SR
YHA Snowdon Pen-y-Pass	Pen-y-Pass, Nantgwynant, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 4NY
YHA Snowdon Ranger	Rhyd Ddu, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 7YS
YHA South Downs	Itford Farm, Beddingham, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6JS
YHA St Briavels Castle	St Briavels, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 6RG
YHA St Davids	Llaethdy, Whitesands, St David's, Pembrokeshire, SA62 6PR
YHA Stratford	Hemmingford House, Alveston, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7RG
YHA Streatley	Reading Road, Streatley, Berkshire, RG8 9JJ
YHA Street	The Chalet, Ivythorn Hill, Street, Somerset, BA16 0TZ
YHA Swanage	Cluny, Cluny Crescent, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2BS
YHA The Sill at Hadrian's Wall	Military Road, Bardon Mill, Northumberland, NE47 7AN
YHA Tanners Hatch	Off Ranmore Common Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6BE
YHA Tintagel	Dunderhole Point, Tintagel, Cornwall, PL34 ODW
YHA Totland Bay	Hurst Hill, Totland Bay, Isle Of Wight, PO39 OHD
YHA Treyarnon Bay	Tregonnan, Treyarnon, Padstow, Cornwall, PL28 8JR
YHA Truleigh Hill	Tottington Barn, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5FB
YHA Wasdale Hall	Wasdale Hall, Wasdale, Seascale, Cumbria, CA20 1ET
YHA Whitby	Abbey House, East Cliff, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO22 4JT
YHA Wilderhope Manor	Manor, Longville in the Dale, Shropshire, TF13 6EG
YHA Windermere	Bridge Lane, Troutbeck, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 1LA
YHA Wooler	30 Cheviot Street, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6LW
YHA York	Water End, Clifton, York, North Yorkshire, YO30 6LP
YHA Youlgreave	Fountain Square, Youlgreave, nr Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1UR

Readers' pics

✕ @ Don't forget the hashtags
#YHANatureChallenge
#LiveMoreYHA



Restoring Hardknott Forest @HardknottForest

We had a couple of wildflower planting days last week. Our volunteer Growing Group planted what they've grown for us this year. And we were joined by @YHA_Lakes staff for a second day of planting. More to come. @wildflower_hour



@yhaborrowdale

WOW! We had some amazing snowy conditions for King of the Castle 2025! Well done to everyone who took part and made the event possible, it wouldn't have been the same without you! Well done especially to our King and Queen of the Castle... Richard Keefe with a time of 12:33 and Catherine Spurden with a time of 16:15!



First YHA visit to YHA Hartington. 25/10/24

Naomi (Nome) Jenks

Theo has had such a great time this weekend staying at his first YHA ❤️ 7 weeks old and the adventures have begun! @YHAOfficial @YHAHartington

WIN! An Osprey Hikelite 18-litre daypack worth £100

Can you unscramble the names of these UK wildflowers, which bloom in either winter or spring?

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1 NOWPRODS | 3 ALDODIFF |
| 2 ELBULBEL | 4 ISROMPER |

To enter, email your answer to magazine@yha.org.uk by 30th March 2025. Feel free to leave your thoughts on this magazine at the same time.

About the prize

Whether you're a casual or experienced hiker, the lightweight and streamlined Hikelite 18-litre daypack combines essential features and quality construction with the impeccable ventilation that AirSpeed has to offer. Its minimalist panel-loading approach keeps its silhouette clean and uncluttered for simplified use on any trail. Now featuring a wider and taller frame for improved fit.



We are YHA.

We transform young lives forever through travel and real adventure.

Because where you go changes who you become.

stay | join | give | volunteer yha.org.uk