



Volunteering &

Fundraising Newsletter

May 2016

Dear supporter

Welcome to the summer edition of our supporters news. If you are looking to make the most of the long sunny days ahead then you are in the right place as we have a lot going on that you can get involved with.

We are excited to bring you news of two new initiatives that YOU can get involved with. The first is our inaugural Breaks for Kids Fundraising month taking place in August. The Breaks for Kids fund helps less advantaged young people to join their classmates take part in the fantastic experiences a residential stay with YHA can give. We would welcome your support through organising your own fundraising activity or by taking part in the events at hostels.

If you are a 'people person' and would enjoy organising volunteers then our Supporter Group Leader role could be just the thing for you! Leaders will work with Hostel Managers to bring together groups of volunteers to enhance their local hostel. This will be a great way to meet new people with shared interests in your local area. Further details are on page two of the newsletter.

We also have news for young people looking for boredom buster activities this summer. We are looking for friendly and outgoing volunteers to help host our AGM in Cardiff on 9 July. This is a unique opportunity to take part in our historic AGM which is open to all members for the first time. If you have experience of volunteering with young people there is still time to apply to become a Summer Camp Volunteer Team Leader and help young people make some happy memories this summer.

So please do read on and don't hesitate to get in touch with our friendly teams if we can help at all.

The Volunteering & Fundraising Team



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01629 592 562
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New Supporter Group Leaders



In a new volunteering initiative for 2016, we are launching Supporter Groups. The groups will bring together volunteers who can offer their support on a regular basis to a hostel or group of hostels, in their local area. Working with the hostel manager, they will be involved in a number of different things including practical tasks such as painting and gardening, supporting fundraising and local community engagement.

The areas where Supporter Groups will be piloted this year are Sheringham and Wells-next-the-Sea, Cambridge, Whitby, Street, London Thameside and the High Peak hostels (to include Edale, Castleton, Hathersage, Ravenstor and Eyam). A Group has already been set up in Snowdonia, North Wales. If you are interested in joining this please email Helen Maurice-Jones for further information.

helenmauricejones@yha.org.uk

To coordinate each group we are looking for volunteers to take on the role of Supporter Group Leader. This role will include the following tasks:

- **Developing a programme of events with the hostel manager**
- **Advertising the group's activities to engage new volunteers**

- **Supporting volunteers to make the most of their participation in the group**
- **Liaising with YHA's Volunteering and Marketing Teams**

If you are interested in the leader role and possess the following attributes then do please get in touch to find out more! To enjoy this role you should:

- **be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing**
- **have experience of organising and leading volunteers**
- **have a positive attitude and be able to work well with a wide range of people**

An internet connection at home is desirable and you should live in, or very near to, one of the pilot areas. You can email volunteers@yha.org.uk us for further details or call **01629 592562**.



YHA's first Fundraising Month

August 2016 will see the very first YHA Fundraising Month! This is a new addition to the fundraising calendar and we would like to invite you to take part.

The aim is to raise money for our Breaks for Kids fund which ensures that no child is left behind and misses out on the marvellous life-enhancing experiences we offer them on a school trip.

This year we aim to support 13,000 young people, an increase of 3,000 on last year. To achieve this we need to raise an extra £120,000 of funding. We would certainly appreciate your help!

You can help us to raise funds by:

- **joining us at one of the events taking place at hostels during Fundraising Month - details will be released about these in early summer on our website <http://www.yha.org.uk/events>**
- **holding a fundraising event - we are currently developing a fundraising pack to support you with this to include sponsor forms, price tickets etc. More details will be available soon! A simple web search of 'fundraising ideas' will show you how endless (and fun!) the options are!**

Help, support, ideas and practical advice are also available from our friendly team at fundraising@yha.org.uk



Make your summer one to remember!



Are you looking for a unique volunteering experience this summer?

YHA run residential camps during the summer holidays offering exciting outdoor activities for young people aged 10 - 19. We are looking for 100 volunteers to support the pastoral care of the young people at camp.

This is a very special volunteering opportunity to make a huge difference to the life of a young person as you encourage them to make the most of the activities on offer and their time away from home.

Whether you're training for a career working with young people, or you are currently in a job supporting young people, this role allows you to develop your skills, put your knowledge into action and get some great CV boosting experience!

We provide volunteers with specialist training and can help with travel expenses. Free accommodation and meals are provided when you are on camp.

We are looking for people who

- ***are aged 18 years or over***
- ***have experience of supporting young people either through volunteering or work***
- ***are willing to undertake a DBS (criminal background) check***
- ***are available to attend a training course on 15 - 17 July.***

Apply now as spaces are limited!

[Click here to find out more](#)



Be part of our historic AGM

The YHA Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 9 July at the Motorpoint Arena in Cardiff. It's a historic event as this the first time it's open to our entire membership and we'd love for you to join us!

We're looking for volunteers aged 16-26 to help with tasks including welcoming people and directing them to where they need to go, taking care of our members and more! It's a fantastic opportunity to meet everyone who makes YHA great - members, supporters, volunteers, trustees and staff.

You don't need any prior experience to volunteer. All we ask is that you have lots of enthusiasm, are happy talking to lots of different and new people, and you're able to be active throughout a long day. Volunteers will be provided with accommodation at YHA Cardiff the night before the AGM (Friday 8 July) and will have access to travel expenses.

For more information on this volunteering role, please contact Kate Lansley on katelansley@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592 562**.

On Wednesday 15 June we have a Supporters Day at YHA Oxford. This a thank you to donors and friends and the day will include an update on what is currently happening at YHA, we will be sharing our successes and also our challenges for the future. As well as being informative it's a relaxed and fun day and also includes lunch and refreshments. For further details please email fundraising@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592720**.





Party for the Queen

On Sunday 12 June 2016, The Mall in St James's Park will be transformed for its largest ever street party to celebrate the Queen's patronage of over 600 charities and organisations on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday.

As a Patron Organisation, YHA has pledged to support the event. We're looking for 10 volunteers to give their time as 'volunteer performers', and be part of this huge street party! The volunteer performers will participate in the carnival parade that is happening on the Mall and James's Park, along with 1,500 other volunteers! You could be shaking maracas, doing a little jig, waving a sign... basically having a ball!

You don't need any prior experience to volunteer - you just need buckets of enthusiasm and energy and a willingness to be part of the broadcast (a live audience of 10,000; broadcast on the BBC; shown on big screens in Green Park and St James Park!). The route for the parade is 1.2 miles, and this loop will be done twice, so it's essential that you're happy to be active and mobile for a long day.

We welcome volunteers aged 10 and over who have volunteered for YHA in the past. (Please note that volunteers aged 10-16 must be chaperoned and their chaperones must take part in the parade too). You should be happy with an early start on the day and be able to stay until the end of the event at 5.30pm.

Accommodation for volunteers will be available free of charge on the evening before the event (Saturday 11 June) at YHA London Thameside. Volunteers will be able to claim up to £15 towards travel expenses and food and drink will be provided during the event.

If you would like to find out more please contact Kate Lansley at katelansley@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592646**.



Volunteer in the sun!



YHA is currently working with our Hostelling International Partners at REAJ (Spain) and the Spanish kids activity company Ribals to provide volunteering opportunities for our staff and volunteers. Volunteering for the exchange programme is a great opportunity to travel, develop your CV, and have fun whilst making a difference!

We currently have two opportunities available:

Ribals Summer Camps

We're looking for four volunteers for science - themed kids' summer camps! These two camps for budding scientists will be held in the Pyrenees. The first camp will be run from 20 June to 18 July the second camp from 27 June to 24 July. Each camp will consist of 20 days on duty, with 4 days off duty in Barcelona and 4 days off duty in the Pyrenees.

We're looking for enthusiastic and reliable volunteers who enjoy working with young people. This opportunity will be perfect for volunteers with an interest in science, robotics and adventure!

To apply for this role, you must have experience of working with children and young people, preferably in a residential or camping setting, and be happy to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

REAJ Exchange Programme

REAJ hostels across Spain are offering hostel exchange placements for volunteers. From Cantabria, to Vigo, to Guadalajara - we have an opportunity to suit everyone! As a volunteer, you'll be involved in all aspects of hostel life - reception, housekeeping, kitchen etc. You'll also have time off to explore the local area!

Some REAJ opportunities do require a good level of Spanish, so please be sure to check the requirements before applying.

To volunteer for either of these opportunities, you must:

- ***be aged 18+***
- ***have volunteered with YHA in the past 12 months***
- ***have a passport that will be valid at the time of your trip***
- ***be able to write a blog for the YHA website and post on social media about your experience***
- ***be able to fund your travel to Spain; your food and accommodation will be provided***
- ***have good communication skills, but you do not need to be able to speak Spanish***
- ***to find out more please get in touch on exchanges@yha.org.uk.***

YHA Day 2016 sneak peek!



Last year nearly 5,000 people attended one of our YHA Day events, and we hope this year will be even better! This year YHA Day will be held on 3 and 4 September.

Why not visit one of our experiences for a fun family day out? You can bag a pre-loved bargain from one of our selling donated items, relax with friends (and a beer!) whilst listening to live music, sample local delicacies at a farmers market, or try your hand at a new activity - YHA Day will have lots on offer!!

Below are further details of the YHA Day locations, dates and times. More information will follow - so stay tuned to your email to find out more.

Hostel	Date	Opening Times	Experience
YHA Brighton	Saturday 3	12 noon - 7.30pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Bristol	Sunday 4	11am - 5pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Broad Haven	Saturday 3	1pm - 8pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA Cambridge	Saturday 3	12 noon - 7.30pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Cardiff Central	Saturday 3	12 noon - 4pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Castleton	Sunday 4	12 noon - 4pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA Conwy	Saturday 3	12 noon - 4.30pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day with Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Coverack	Sunday 4	11am - 3pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA Eden Project	Saturday 3 & Sunday 4	11am - 11pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA Keswick	Sunday 4	11am - 5pm	Garden Party with Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA London Lee Valley	Saturday 3	12 noon - 4pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA London St Pauls	Sunday 4	12 noon - 4pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA Manchester	Saturday 3	11am - 5pm	Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA South Downs	Sunday 4	10am - 4pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day
YHA Whitby	Saturday 3	12 noon - 5pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day with Pre-loved pop up shops with extras
YHA York	Sunday 4	11am - 4pm	Family 'Fun Filled' Activity Day

For public transport options to reach any of these events

[Click here to find out more](#)

YHA Day - get involved!

If you want to be 'at the heart of the party' why not volunteer at an event? There will be a variety of roles on offer including sharing your face painting skills, helping to run activity sessions and serving drinks on the bar.

The hostels listed below are seeking help with welcoming visitors and helping them navigate the hostel and grounds and also with serving refreshments. These roles would be suited to volunteers who are aged 16 and over who enjoy meeting new people. To offer your help at any of these hostels please email

volunteers@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592562**.

Saturday 3 September

YHA Whitby (North Yorkshire)

YHA Brighton (East Sussex)

Sunday 4 September

YHA Castleton Losehill Hall (Derbyshire)

YHA Coverack (Cornwall)

(Accommodation is available at YHA Coverack on a shared room basis).



Thanks for your donations!

As winter turns into spring (or at least tries to!) the Fundraising Team would like to bring you some rays of sunshine by updating you on the progress of our recent appeals.

- **Breaks for Kids 2015 Appeal** - this raised an amazing **£32,813.73!**
- **Emergency Flood Appeal 2016** - this has raised **£3,097.47** to provide valuable help towards the cost of the repairs at the Lakes hostels especially **YHA Keswick** which sustained major damage during Storm Desmond.

- **Tintagel Appeal** - this raised an incredible **£29,944.41** for the refurbishment of this cliff top hostel. The work is now complete and customers are enjoying the new facilities including a log burning stove and a window seat to make the most of the stunning views.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who has donated to our great causes - every penny you give makes a difference. The Emergency Flood and Breaks for Kids appeals are still open. If you would like to donate please contact fundraising@yha.org.uk for more details.



Run your own photography shoot

Volunteer photographers are incredibly important in showing the fantastic experiences YHA has to offer. We are looking for good amateur or professional photographers, to take striking images of our events, volunteers and hostels this summer.

This is an exciting and challenging opportunity to run your own shoot and build up your portfolio. You will be contributing to expanding and updating our current image library and images will be used in PR, publicity material and on the website.

You need to be aged 18 or over to apply for this volunteering role and have your own photography equipment including a good digital SLR camera, tripod and some lighting equipment. We produce a list of available shoots and you can choose which you would like to carry out. Most shoots are a day in duration and we can help with travel expenses of up to £60 per shoot.

If you can help us photograph the fun at our hostels on YHA Day on 3 and 4 September we would love to hear from you. We have 16 hostels with exciting events that would welcome a photographer to capture the fun on the day.

If you are interested in taking part please email volunteers@yha.org.uk our team for further information. We ask that all applicants submit some examples of their work with their application, ideally through a website link.





Breaks for Kids Marathon champions!

We were really pleased that the forecast of snow and plummeting temperatures didn't materialise for our runners in the Virgin London Marathon on Sunday 24 April! It was 'parky' to say the least as we bid farewell to the 11 Breaks for Kids runners at Canada Water underground station. There was a heightened level of excitement, or was it trepidation, as they descended the escalators but each and every one of the runners had trained well and was physically prepared.

Every member of YHA's team of runners, committed to raise a minimum of £1000 for Breaks for Kids. All of our runners completed the course weary but triumphant, which is an amazing achievement for everyone. The best time on the day was achieved by YHA staff member Dave Martin, who completed the run in a fantastic 3 hours 5 minutes and 32 seconds, knocking over 20 minutes off his personal best!

To date the runners have raised the amazing total of £13000 and there is still more to come!

So thank you to Rebecca Brennan, Matt Brennan and Richard Malcolm (The Bobby Dazzlers), to Jason Armshaw and Dan Maskery from Matlock, Gail Holloway, Lee McMahon, Sarah Huskinson, Georgie Nash, Sakis Kilotsida and Dave Martin - all stars in our eyes.





Summer Fair at Abbey House

Ahoy there you arty and crafty seaside lovers, seeking Saturday shenanigans of a summer variety! The darn fabulous team at YHA Whitby are looking for help with their Grand Summer Fair on Saturday 23 July.

Help with the arts and crafts activities, and general event-based tasks would be appreciated.

£15 to help with travel expenses and free overnight accommodation is available.

Please email katiesmith@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592 562** for further details.

YHA Whitby is also looking for new volunteers to join their local Supporter Group. Please email whitbymanager@yha.org.uk the hostel manager or call **01947 602878**



Time to tee -off!

The annual Breaks for Kids Golf Event will be held on Friday 9 September 2016 at Matlock Golf Club. Those of you familiar with the area know that it sits high above the town at the eastern gateway to the Peak District National Park.

The Club offers a challenging 18 -hole par 70 course of just over 5,800 yards (yellow tees) with spectacular views across the Derwent Valley and unrivalled practice facilities, including a 10 bay roofed and floodlit driving range.

We are looking for teams to take part in this year's event so if you and your family, friends or work

colleagues would like to join us please do get in touch. Teams should be made up of four people and the cost of participating will be £200 per team of four players or two teams for £375. All players should have a golfing handicap limit of 28 (men)/ 36 (women).

Alternatively, if you would like to support the event in some other way, such as providing a raffle prize or sponsorship do please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

To register your interest or request an application form please call **01629 592723/720** or email fundraising@yha.org.uk

DofE Bronze award volunteering now available



YHA Volunteering now offer great opportunities for young people aged 14 and over who are completing their DofE Bronze award. From gardening to customer service, housekeeping to showcasing musical or poetic talent - there's something for everyone!

We have hostels in every region of England and Wales who can offer DofE Bronze volunteering - to find out how to get signed up for this opportunity, please email or give us a call on **01629 592562**.

Amey apprentices - welcome back!



In March, for the second year running, we were delighted to welcome back a team of over 90 apprentices from Amey PLC at YHA's Bath, Castleton, Coalbrookdale, Grinton, Lee Valley and Wye Valley.

The apprentices were all taking part in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award as part of their training and we are delighted to offer them an opportunity to come to the hostels and volunteer while they achieve their Awards.

Some great work was completed at the hostels including rebuilding walls and installing a fence at YHA Grinton, painting bedrooms at YHA Bath and giving the driveway much needed repairs at YHA Wye Valley.

This is a partnership made possible by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award with Amey PLC and SYHA. Apprentices in Scotland took part in events at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling to coincide with Scottish Apprenticeships Week.

Crewenna Dymond, Head of Volunteering and Fundraising.





YHA Youth Conference

On Saturday 5 March, young people from all over the country made their way to Manchester for the YHA Youth Conference.

Eighteen young people attended (some new to YHA and some familiar faces), and really threw themselves into all of the workshops delivered by wonderful YHA staff and volunteers.

The attendees enjoyed the chance to hear from Caroline White CEO, who spoke about the history of our organisation and our aims moving forward. They had a lot of fun with Lee and Holly (YHA's Recruitment Team) who delivered an engaging session about employability and succeeding at group interviews. We finished the day off with a fun challenge for inventive hostelling hacks from Sam and Jon of the Digital Team.

Our wonderful volunteers Cerys Hudson, Laurence Perks and Theodore Guye talked to the group about the different experiences they've had with YHA, and why they would recommend volunteering with us to others. Between the three of them, they've completed five different volunteering roles including summer camp team leaders and travelling abroad to represent

YHA at the International Youth Conference in 2015. For me, this was the cherry on the cake - to hear from young volunteers who spoke so passionately and enthusiastically about YHA and the difference the organisation has made to their lives. These are the kinds of opportunities that make YHA so wonderful for young people!

Two participants, Emily and Caroline, have written wonderful blogs about the event. You can see their articles

<https://jobs.yha.org.uk/life-at-yha/share-your-story/>

To see more content from the conference, please head to Twitter and search for **#YHAYouthConf**. There you'll see our Tweets, some photos and even some of our **#hostelhacks!**

Kate Lansley, Youth Engagement Coordinator.

SPIRIT Awards

Here is our quarterly round up of volunteers who have been nominated for a SPIRIT award for their outstanding commitment.



Selina Heyn (Nominated for a **Responsibility Award**)

Selina Heyn is an absolute delight to have as part of the team at YHA Cambridge. Selina was an amazing help supporting a recent music gig - she made sure that guests were looked after with food and drink in between dancing along to the songs. Selina also supported the new YHA Cambridge housekeeping team by stepping in and helping. All of this on her days off! She tells guests how amazing YHA is and how much fun she is having.



Clare Steel (Nominated for a **Passion Award**)

Clare did some Summer Weeks volunteering at YHA Dartmoor in March. She was an absolute star completing all the tasks with her best effort. She is very passionate about YHA and this was definitely reflected in her efforts as a volunteer.



Peter Lewis (Nominated for a **Responsibility Award**)

Peter has made a huge impact at YHA Brecon Beacons tidying the grounds and painting the inside of the hostel. He has carried out all of this with a professional attitude, dedication and pride. Peter has also helped other hostels in Wales turning unkempt areas into neat and tidy ones. We'd love to thank Peter for his work and dedication.



David Manley (Nominated for a **Innovation Award**)

We'd like to thank David Manley, an artist from London, who recently donated two pieces of his artwork to YHA London Lee Valley. We really appreciate your donation, and the hostel is looking forward to getting the pictures hung! To find out more about David, you can see some of his pieces on this video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_Fcl2t51_Q&nohtml5=False



Jennifer Mosley (Nominated for a **Trust Award**)

Jennifer is one of our local volunteers who has loyally helped out at YHA Berwick for the last two and a half years. She is a positive and motivated volunteer who always wears a smile! Thanks so much for all of your support, we are really grateful!



Susan Sims (Nominated for a **Passion Award**)

Sue started helping the Volunteering Team as an 'Office Hero' in February, and she really is a hero! She's such a positive volunteer who is always willing to help out with - from processing applications and logging hours to file auditing and collating training packs. We really look forward to her arriving at the office on a Thursday morning! She's a fab addition to the team and already a part of the family!

We would also like to say a huge thank you to:

All of the young people who completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Residential with us over the Easter holidays!

For their outstanding contribution of support to our hostels. They were all so enthusiastic, professional, and friendly and we've had some amazing feedback about them. Thank you for giving our hostels your time, support and TLC!

Ajar Mohd

A Volunteer Manager Ajar recently demonstrated excellent customer service during her week at YHA St David's and we are super grateful to her.

Jo Joy

For her continued local support at YHA Leominster.

Our Lake District Winter Volo-tour volunteers!

A massive thankyou to the fantastic volunteers who helped out in the Lake District this winter. There are too many of you to mention by name but your support and help are so warmly appreciated and you've made such a positive impact at the hostels. A huge thank you to each and every one of you.

Stephen James and Nick Freeman

Stephen and James recently completed a week of volunteer managing at YHA Tintagel. The feedback was that every element of their work was absolutely fantastic! Thanks so much for your hard work, you are total stars!

Celebrate volunteering



Volunteers' Week is a national campaign taking place on 1-12 June 2016 to celebrate all of the wonderful things volunteers get involved with across the UK. Last year YHA received help from over 3,000 volunteers and Volunteers Weeks offers a valuable opportunity to celebrate their achievements and thank them for everything they have done for us.

During the week YHA's social media channels will showcase and thank our volunteers for the time they give to us. You can find us at [#yhavalunteers](https://twitter.com/yhavalunteers) and

FB [YHA Volunteering](https://www.facebook.com/yhavalunteering). We would love to hear your stories about volunteering with us so please do email them along with a photo or simply post them on our Facebook page - [YHA Volunteering](https://www.facebook.com/yhavalunteering) There is even a chance to win a prize.

*Jasmin Nicholson and Kate Lansley,
YHA Volunteering Team.*

Making Pembrokeshire sparkle

You know it's spring when you see people working in their gardens, building sheds, cleaning the external areas of their home and generally painting and polishing everything in sight.

This is what happened at YHA Broad Haven and YHA St David's in April. We had a team of volunteers (13) - the usual supporters of Sue MacKinnon, Helen Maurice-Jones and Marjorie Ide as well as some new recruits.

YHA Broad Haven recently had all the bedroom doors upgraded but it made the bedroom corridor look shabby. The volunteers painted the corridor as well as fixing the roof on the shed, tidying up the garden, washing down the exterior of the hostel and cleaning the windows. All the new volunteers had a great time and made some new friends as well as starting a new hobby - helping YHA!

Many thanks to you all.
Sue Mackinnon and the team.

Volunteer expenses policy changes

At YHA we are keen to embrace a diverse volunteer community and believe in breaking down any barriers that may prevent people from volunteering with us. To help us to achieve this we recently reviewed our Volunteer Expenses Policy resulting in an increase in most of the allowances available to you.

The changes came into effect on 1 March 2016 and any expenses claims for volunteering after this date will automatically have been reimbursed at the new rates.

The daily rate for local programmes (these include Volunteer Events and hostel support) has been raised from £12.50 to £15 with the cap rising incrementally, depending on the number of consecutive days of

volunteering to a maximum of £60. Please check before you volunteer if you are unsure what expenses you can claim.

The mileage rates remain at 30p per mile for cars, 29p per mile for motorcycles and 25p per mile for bicycles.

Expenses claim forms are available from the documents library on <https://jobs.yha.org.uk/volunteer/volunteering-document-library/>. You can now submit your claims by email. Simply download a copy, save it to your computer and send the completed version, along with a scan of your receipts, to volunteers@yha.org.uk You can continue to submit expenses by post if you would prefer to.





Record breaking volunteering!

During February half-term we went for a volunteering record at YHA Truleigh Hill. We welcomed a 10 person strong volunteering team on the Friday - and this hardy bunch clocked up an amazing 200 volunteering hours by redecorating the self-catering kitchen, up-cycling old stools and tidying the gardens in preparation for the installation of bell tents. A big thank you to Dave and Romaine Byers, who organised the event and volunteers Dave, Eleanor, Ian, John, Margaret, Jasen, Bee and Colin.

On Saturday 13 February we then welcomed a 'Winter Week' volunteer called Odette to the team. She was a very valuable help in the kitchen and with housekeeping tasks as we had the busiest half term Truleigh has ever seen!

On Monday 15 February we saw the arrival of nine more volunteers, this time budding DofE Gold Award participants. Their main challenge was to build a composting area out of old bunk beds. They also redecorated the staff lounge and pot-wash area and built (and tested!) a fire pit. After all that hard work they enjoyed an archery session. Another 200 volunteering hours and big thanks to volunteers Olivia, Ian, James, Jamie, Faye, Matthew, Ed, Harry and Adam.

Last but certainly not least was our regular DofE volunteer Elowen who pops in for an hour or so each week to help us out when we really need it!

In just seven days we received more than 450 hours of help from our amazing volunteers and it has made a HUGE difference to the hostel. I'm busy planning the next events - roll on May half-term!

Michelle Clarke,
YHA Truleigh Hill manager.



Best ever at Borrowdale!



I have just finished my work experience at YHA Borrowdale and it has been the best work experience I have ever done, as well as the best week I've ever had in the Lakes.

The staff were so welcoming and helpful, they were brilliant to work with and the best of people. They make the YHA what it is and without them I doubt I would have enjoyed the week as much as I have.

In my spare time I have also done a lot of walking including Honister, Castle Crag and Grange. There is such a good choice of walks round here, the hostel could not be in a better place.

All in all it has been a fantastic week that I wouldn't change for anything. Thank you to everyone at YHA Borrowdale.

by Steph Crooks

Volunteer magic in Coniston!



In February we enjoyed an amazing week of volunteering at YHA's Coniston Holly How and Coniston Coppermines. We welcomed 22 DoFE Gold volunteers, many of whom had travelled from all over the country to join the event and their enthusiasm and energy were excellent.

The jobs included the not insubstantial task of deep cleaning all our rooms! Not the most interesting job but it makes a huge difference to the experience of our guests when we can show the hostels at their very best.

The volunteer team also redecorated the dining room and shower ceilings and corridors and tidied up the grounds and campsite. No task was too much and they enjoyed doing everything we set them.

All this has made a huge difference in preparing the hostel for the start of our new season. A big thank you to all.

Glenn Duclos, YHA Coniston Holly How and Coniston Coppermines Manager.

Taking care of YHA Rowen



In April, Katie and Ros from the Volunteering Team spent a week volunteering at YHA Rowen. The hostel is in a superb mountainside location with stunning views across the Conwy valley.

Our tasks for the week included preparing the hostel for the incoming Exclusive Hire group and a list of deep cleaning tasks to help get the hostel looking its very best. Never a pair to do things by halves we donned our best rubber gloves and scrubbed the hostel from top to bottom. Well we had to justify the fish and chips and cream teas we ate somehow!

We would certainly recommend you visit or volunteer at this hostel, our highlights of the week were the quiet location (the sound of birdsong instead of traffic!), the herd of wild ponies just a few minutes' walk from the hostel and the lovely nearby town of Conwy - a little gem for history lovers!

Watch out for further details about how you can get involved in the Volunteer Caretaker role in future editions of the newsletter.



A friendly bunch



I was very fortunate to carry out my work experience placement at the welcoming YHA National Office - and what an experience it was! I had no idea what to expect but from the moment I walked through the doors I felt at home. I was given a tour of the building and offered at least three hospitable cups of tea by the happy employees.

What really struck me is how friendly everyone at YHA is. I volunteered in 10 different departments, including a day away from the office to visit some Peak District hostels. Every single one of them had cheerful and polite people who didn't mind when I asked questions that should probably be obvious and even laughed when I just simply had to spin around on the desk chair!

Not only is there a professional atmosphere that means the job gets done, there is also a lot of friendly banter that means I barely stopped smiling throughout the whole day - especially in the Contact Centre! The job is so diverse and there are so many different roles that I never really thought about before.

I'm sure you're all begging me to pick a favourite, but I'm going to have to take a professional attitude and say "But really, I loved you all the same". I loved everything I got involved with - most of all, the great pancake making Breaks for Kids fundraiser, what a great day!

I would like to thank everyone who made my work experience great. YHA seems to find amazing people and you should all be really proud to volunteer with, or work for YHA. A ginormous thankyou to everyone at YHA for making my work experience week so brilliant

Ruby Tomlinson

YHA offers work experience placements at most of our hostels and at our National Office. Please email volunteers@yha.org.uk or call **01629 592562** for further information.

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