



FACTsheet 21

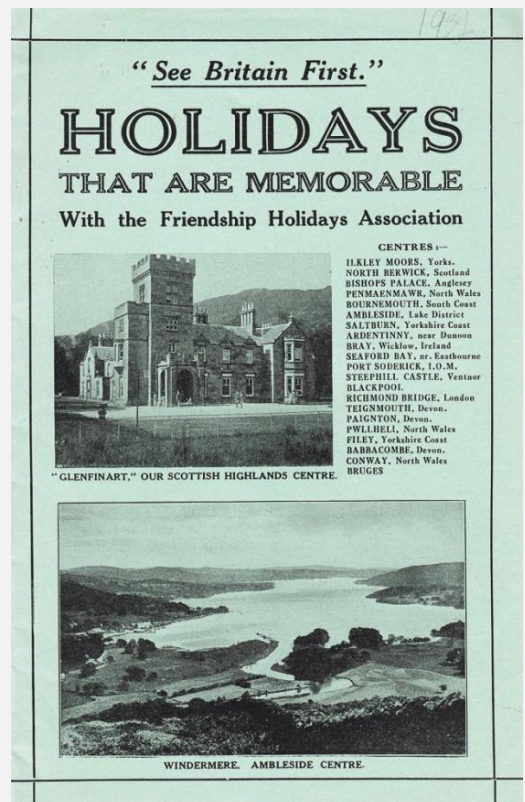
Friendship Holidays Association

The Friendship Holidays Association (FHA) was established in 1922 by Henry C White, a Methodist who moved to Prestatyn after the First World War. His dream was to offer holiday experiences that: "are opportunities to enrich the mind and develop the personality, and above all expand happiness through friendship".

Henry's residential holiday centres provided visitors with a weekly programme of guided walks to 'foster the love of the open air and countryside', excursions and evening entertainment.

Henry was inspired by the work of T.A. Leonard, who lived at the Holiday Fellowship's Centre in Conwy. To try out his new venture, Henry rented the boarding school in Penmaenmawr, which could accommodate 40 people, and advertised it as holiday accommodation during the summer of 1922. The holidays provided basic accommodation at a cost of £3/10s, the equivalent to around £150 today.

The business model seemed to be a success, and by the mid-1930s Henry's Friendship Holidays Association had established more than twenty centres throughout the UK, welcoming over 10,000 guests every year.



Friendship Holidays Association



After World War II, the focus of FHA's business shifted more towards excursions to local attractions and European holidays. However, the company's philosophy of 'friendship' was still important, as can be seen from the wording in their marketing materials from that time:

"At all our centres, guests are asked to assist in maintaining the atmosphere of friendliness, which is on the principal features of our guest houses. Games, dancing and impromptu concerts are arranged in the evenings and the Host and Hostess will welcome volunteers to play and sing. Bring your music with you. Whist drives also arranged."



The dawn of the 1960s saw a period of dramatic change. Transport links had improved, and people were exercising more cultural and social freedom. They were also going on holidays abroad and in comparison, the traditional seaside holidays were rapidly seen as something from a bye-gone era.

A decline in visitors and revenue likely contributed to Henry's family deciding not to carry on the business after his death in 1961. The FHA centres were sold to hotels and developers.

By the time of its closure, the Friendship Holiday Association had, over a period of forty years, provided thousands of ordinary 'working class' people with the opportunity to experience the countryside and foster a love of being outdoors and local cultural history.

The company played a major role in the development of the outdoor tourism industry in the UK, and it began here, in Penmaenmawr.

