

Holidays & Pay



The notion of annual paid holidays is a recent development. Traditionally, workers in the print and allied trades were given few days off. For example, in Scotland it was traditional until the 1960s to work Christmas Day but have New Year's Day or Ne'er Day as a holiday.

By the 1880s, print and publishing employees were allowed an unpaid holiday week during the annual shut of the mills and print works. This was the norm until the late 1940s, when paid holidays were universally implemented by British industry.



One paper mill employee recalls starting mill work during this change:

When I started in the mill it was the first year you got holidays. Before I started the mill used to shut for a week for maintenance, for overhauling of the machines and that. It would just shut. And people then went away home; that was it.

One exception to this general lack of holidays was the provision of an annual trip by print and paper employers. The first record of such an outing dates back to the 1880s. The annual trip was like Hogmanay, a time for celebration, a highlight of the working year and a chance to socialise outside the work space. It was also an opportunity to visit parts of Scotland outside the ken of most employees.

