

## Famous Guests

For over a century the hotel has witnessed a massive ensemble of VIPs and Celebrities who have enjoyed the chic style and hospitality of 'The Slieve'.

Former guests at the hotel include: Percy French: Charlie Chaplin: King Leopold (of Belgium): Alan Whicker: Judith Chalmers: Dame Judi Dench: Angela Rippon: Sir Alf Ramsey: Jack Charlton: Frank Bough: Daniel O'Donnell to name but a few.

In more recent times they've also had visits from Eamonn Holmes: Archbishop Tutu: Michael Jordan: Tiger Woods: Michael Douglas: Catherine Zeta Jones: Lee Janzen: Jack Nicklaus: Gary Player: Arnold Palmer and The Miami Dolphins.

A little known fact is that even before the hotel was built it generated interest. In 1897 the Duke and Duchess of York, during a royal visit to Newcastle, inspected the construction site as part of their tour.

## The Present Day

Over the past one hundred years the Slieve Donard has proved to be one of the finest and most luxurious hotels in Ireland, attracting guests from all over the world. The hotel celebrated its Centenary in 1997, and also achieved its 4 star status in that year. Over the years many additions and developments have been undertaken at the hotel; the addition of new Resort bedrooms and a magnificent new Spa in 2006 being the most significant in its history.



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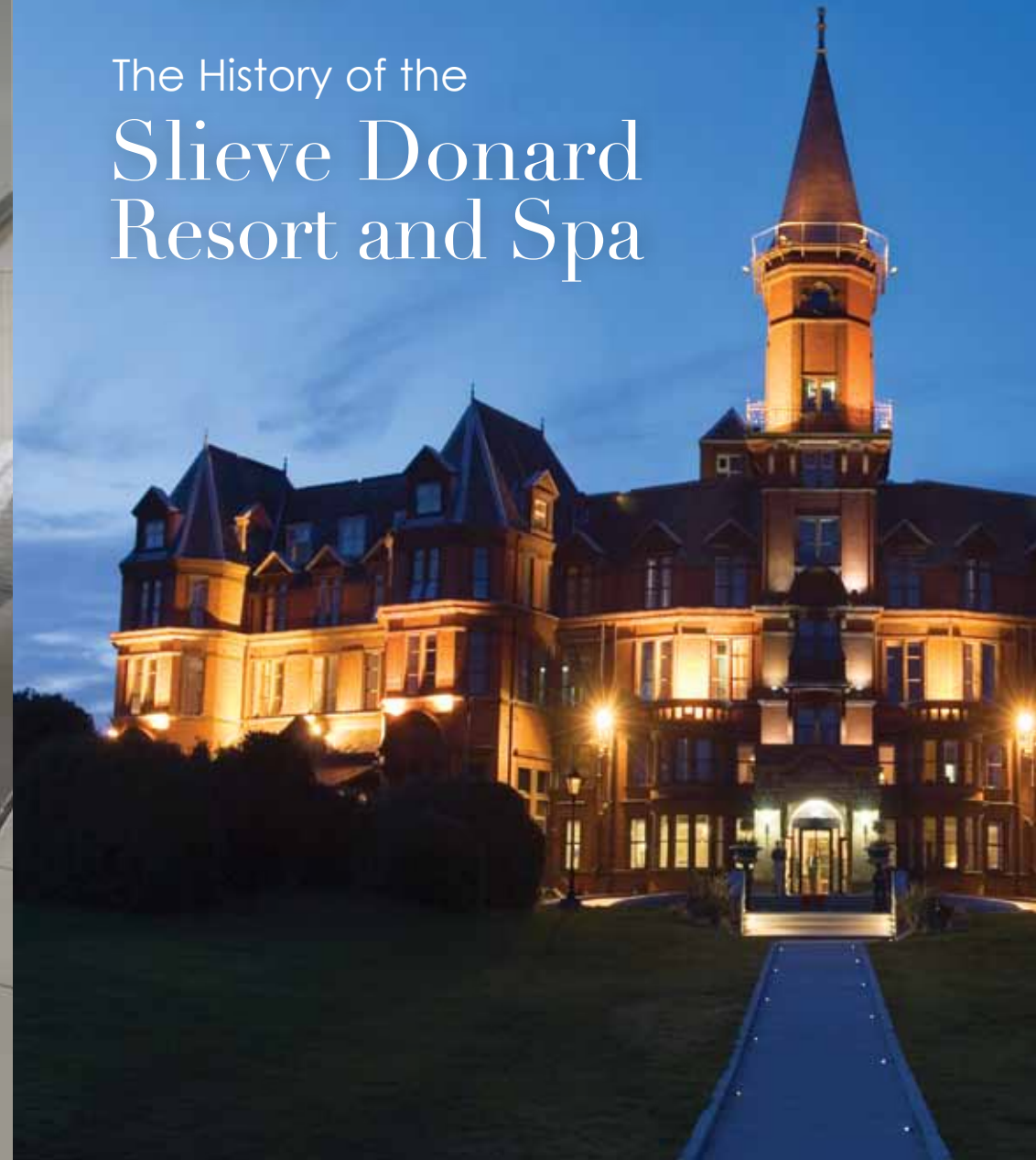


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SLIEVE DONARD  
RESORT AND SPA

## The History of the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa







## Introduction

**Hastings Hotels purchased the Slieve Donard Hotel in 1972 together with five other Railway hotels, including the Midland in Belfast, the Great Northern in Rostrevor, the Laharna in Larne, the Northern Counties in Portrush and the City Hotel in Derry. At that time £1million was paid for all six hotels! The Slieve Donard is the only one still operating as a hotel today, and after many multi-million pound developments over the last thirty years, it is surely a very bright jewel in the Hastings Crown. Over the years it has earned a reputation as a very fine place to stay, and today the group like to think of the Slieve Donard as the "Gleneagles" of Northern Ireland.**

The Slieve Donard Hotel was originally built by the Belfast and County Down Railway, as an 'end of line' luxury holiday destination. Construction started in 1896 and was completed and officially opened on 24th June 1898 at a cost of £44,000. It was one of the most majestic hotels of its time and it was almost self-sufficient with its own bakery, vegetable gardens, pigs, laundry and innovatively a power plant, which also provided electricity for the railway station. To meet this demand a spur was added to the railway line to allow the coal trucks to deliver directly to 'the back door', and each bedroom had a real coal fire.

**Sir William Hastings C.B.E.  
Chairman - Hastings Hotels**



## The Decor

The Slieve Donard typified the ideas of Victorian grandeur and luxury with its Drawing Room, Grand Coffee Room, Reading and Writing Room, Smoking Room, Billiard Room and Hairdressing Salons - you can't help but conjure up scenes of great style and decadence. Of course the grandeur didn't stop in the 'public' rooms. Each of the 120 bedrooms was beautifully appointed with Chippendale furniture, Persian carpets and of course its own fireplace.

The pre-occupation with the health-giving properties of the sea was typical of the period and the hotel of course boasted suites of remedial and sea baths. 'One' could partake of fresh or sea water baths, douche, spray, needle and Turkish baths in all the comfort of the hotel and all provided by electric pump straight from the sea.

Attention to detail was such that the brass carpet rods on the stairs were polished twice a day!



## The Style

From the very beginning the Slieve was intended to be a place to relax, be entertained and pursue leisurely activities.

The positioning of the hotel contributed greatly to this with the Royal County Down Golf Course only yards away, the sand and sea at the door and the amazing Mourne Mountains towering next door. To this natural aspect the hotel offered health promoting spas and famously a wealth of entertainment, which included daily recitals during teatime and after dinner and of course the weekly dances. Soon dance bands, violinists, cellists, pianists, singers and entertainers of every sort added the Slieve to their tours.

With so much on offer it's easy to see why the Slieve Donard soon became a focal point for a wide range of guests with a massive diversity of interests. At this time Percy French was one of the many performers to give recitals at the Slieve!