



CULLODEN
ESTATE AND SPA

Built for a bishop *fit for a king*

The story of
Culloden Estate
and Spa



In 1996 the Culloden Estate and Spa became the first hotel in Northern Ireland to be granted five star-status.



HOW IT ALL STARTED

The origins of Northern Ireland's longest established five-star hotel go back to 1876 when leading Belfast stockbroker William Auchinleck Robinson JP had a beautiful stone villa built on a magnificent wooded site at Craigavad, Cultra.

Named for his wife, Elizabeth Jane Culloden, it was designed in the Scottish Baronial style by *Young and Mackenzie Ltd*. Among the leading architects of their day, the firm was responsible for many of Belfast's most prominent buildings.

Much of the stone was brought from Scotland by boat, landed at Portaferry, and conveyed by horse and cart to the site.

BISHOP'S PALACE

At the end of the 19th century, Culloden House became the official residence of the Lord Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, and was known as The Bishop's Palace. Four bishops lived here including Bishop Crozier who later became Archbishop of Armagh.

Bishop Crozier was a close friend of the celebrated Irish songwriter and entertainer Percy French and godfather to his daughter. French, who wrote the famous song *The Mountains of Mourne*, was a frequent visitor.

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Culloden House changed hands several times during the 20th century. In the early sixties it was converted into a boutique hotel by the owner of *White's Home Bakery*, Rutledge White. It became widely known for its elegant ambience, French furnishings, beautiful paintings and excellent food.

THE HASTINGS ERA

The hotel was bought by Sir William Hastings in 1967. Since then it has been expanded and has become internationally renowned for its luxury.

In 1996 the Culloden Estate and Spa became the first hotel in Northern Ireland to be granted five star-status. The hotel now boasts 105 deluxe bedroom suites, 11 luxurious self-catering apartments, six private banqueting suites and a fabulous Health Club and Spa.

The impressive fireplace at the Culloden.

Courtesy of Hastings Hotels



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ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT

Mr William Robinsons crest depicted on the fireplace in the lounge
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

The Culloden's Glasslough sandstone was brought across from Scotland.
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

Morning Stag by Con Campbell, a recurring motif here at the Culloden
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

The stained glass of the Culloden brings Victorian style and colour to the hotel's interior.
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

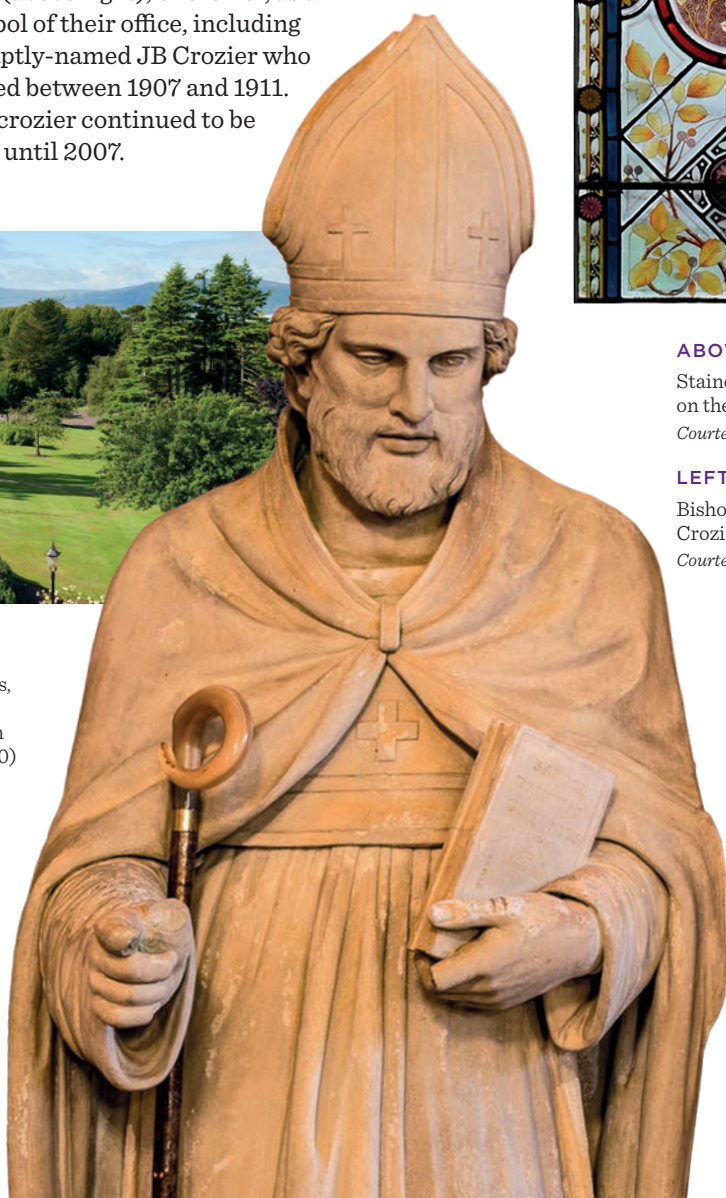
BISHOPS CROZIER

Culloden House was the official residence of the Bishops of Down, Connor and Dromore from 1898 until about 1920. All the bishops bore this staff (above right), or crozier, as a symbol of their office, including the aptly-named JB Crozier who served between 1907 and 1911. The crozier continued to be used until 2007.



ABOVE

Home to numerous sculptures, the 12 acres of exquisitely manicured gardens lead down to the Cultra Inn (built in 1980) and towards the shores of Belfast Lough.
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels



LEFT

Johnny the Jig, Watercolour by Catherine Thompson
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

BELOW

A drawing of the Culloden villa for Scottish stockbroker W.A. Robinson, 1877, for whom the villa was originally built
Courtesy of PRONI



A sketch of the Culloden from 'The Architect' 8 December 1877
Courtesy of PRONI, ref D2194/UNL



ABOVE

Stained glass windows on the grand staircase
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

LEFT

Bishop Crozier in the Crozier bar of the hotel
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels



Still Life by Markey Robinson
Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS

Some of the hotel's art on display was acquired by Sir William Hastings; paintings he liked and which he thought were in keeping with the Bishop's Palace setting. More recently the Hastings family have concentrated on supporting local artists, many of whom have international reputations, yet still live and work in Northern Ireland.

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HOME TO THE STARS

Over the years the Culloden has hosted countless stars of film, music and sport, as well as world leaders.

Rock giant Van Morrison, who has played unforgettable concerts at the hotel, is a regular visitor. Ed Sheeran recalls his breakfast here with 'Van the Man' as one of the highlights of his life.

Other famous music acts have graced the hotel, including U2, One Direction, Westlife, Ronan Keating, Chris Rea, Lionel Ritchie, Sir James Galway, Robbie Williams, Tom Jones, Kylie Minogue, Sir Cliff Richard and Dolly Parton.

Katie Perry was a regular at the Culloden's state-of-the-art gym during her extended stay in 2014.

Film stars Sir Richard Attenborough, Shirley McClaine and Sir Christopher Plummer have also been welcomed here.

Politicians, John Major, Tony Blair, Presidents of Ireland and members of President Bill Clinton's cabinet all stayed on visits to Northern Ireland.

In 2008 tennis players Bjorn Borg, Pat Cash, Henri Leconte and John McEnroe all visited the Culloden while playing at the Belfast Legends tournament.

Pointing the way, former US president Bill Clinton on his visit to the Culloden

Courtesy of Hastings Hotels

Legendary musician Van Morrison

Courtesy of Hastings Hotels



BECKHAM, ROONEY AND SNOW PATROL

The England team – including David Beckham and Wayne Rooney – took over the hotel when in Belfast to play Northern Ireland in the 2005 World Cup Qualifiers (which they famously lost 1-0).

Snow Patrol's Gary Lightbody joined the Northern Ireland team when they were staying at the hotel in 2015, and played an impromptu gig for them before their crucial European qualifying clash with Romania.



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