

PORTRAIT OF MOURNE

Simon Watterson

It is hard to surpass the elegance of the words of Percy French when he described how 'the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'. Mourne is situated in the south of County Down and is dominated by the mountains that take their name from the area. The Mountains of Mourne are a relatively small range, both in terms of the area covered and the heights of the peaks, but this modesty is deceptive and belies their extraordinary importance for thousands of years in shaping the northeast corner of the island. The mountains were an important natural defence for the Kingdom of Mourne where the Mughdhorna settled in the twelfth century and they became of key importance in the development of Belfast as a population centre in the 1900s. Granted city status in 1888, the Water Commissioners of Belfast turned to the Mournes to provide the water needed for the rapidly growing city. The construction of the Silent Valley Dam and the 22-mile Mourne Wall changed not only the mountains but also the economic outlook for the whole of the country.

This beautifully illustrated book with more than 140 colour photographs explores not only the mountains themselves, but also the area from which they take their name and the people who live and work there.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Simon Watterson's fascination with the natural world initially led to a career in science. However, photography allowed him to explore nature in a different way and in 2007 he broke away from science to concentrate on photography. A finalist in several major photographic competitions, he has also had work published in the national press and various magazines. *Portrait of Mourne* follows on from his successful first book, *Portrait of the Northern Ireland Coast*.

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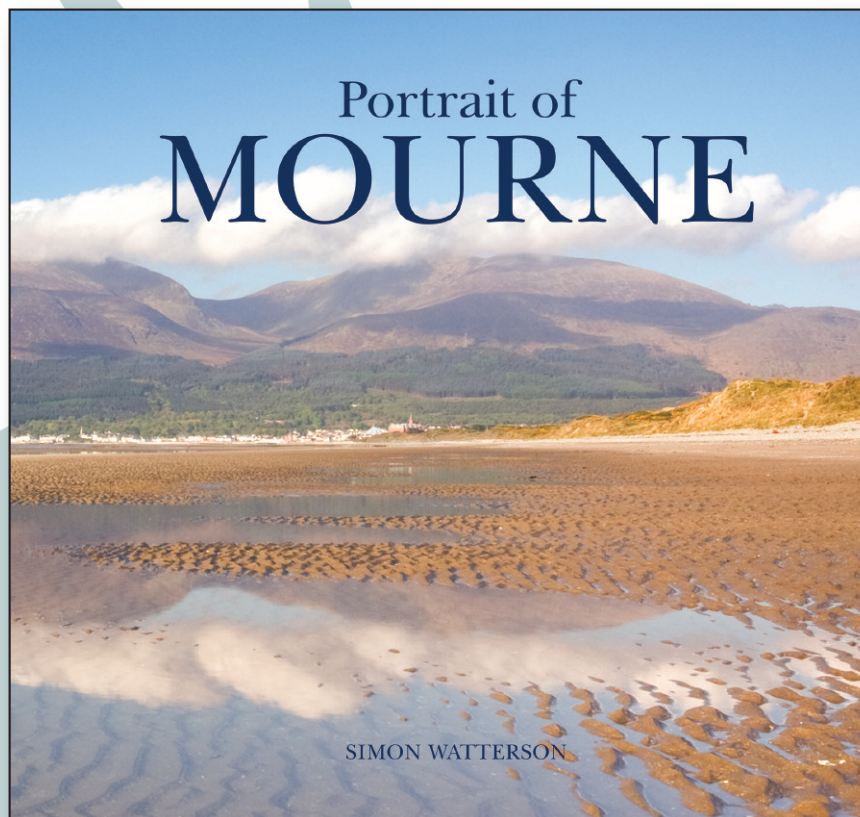
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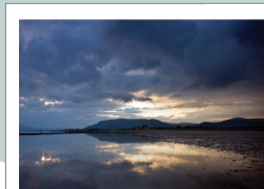
The Kilkeel plain is covered in a neat patchwork of fields.



Carrigs River flows into Dundrum Inner Bay, but despite appearing to come from the direction of the Mourne Mountains, its waters come from Slieve Croob and Cratieve to the northwest.



Right: There has been a keep on the site of Narrow Water Castle since 1212. It was built to prevent attacks on Newry via the river. The current keep is a fine example of a sixteenth-century Irish tower house.



The Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea at Carlingford Lough.

Right: Looking across Mill Bay to the most southerly of the Western Mourne.



Example of a double-page spread.



Cloughmore (An Chloch Mhór, the big stone) is a huge granite erratic that was carried along and deposited by ice during the last period of glaciation. It sits high above Rostrevor and looks out over Carlingford Lough.



Dawn on Slieve Bearnagh viewed from the North Tor.