



100 YEARS OF AA HOTEL STAR RATINGS

As people start to think about next year's holiday, one of the most exciting but stressful things is choosing the right hotel. The simplest way of gauging what a hotel is like and the type of hotel it is, is by looking at the star rating. It is common knowledge that a one star hotel will provide an informal, basic standard of accommodation while at a five star hotel guests will benefit from more luxurious accommodation and a range of extra facilities during their stay. However, very few of us stop to think how this system of rating hotels came about or how long it has been used. As 2012 marks the centenary of the AA Hotel Ratings scheme, it's at least 100 years!

Good quality hotels have been recommended by the AA almost since its inception in 1905. In 1908 about 1,000 of the leading hotels in the UK worked with AA scouts to provide information for motorists on places to stay, which was then listed in the 1909 handbook. By 1912 it was felt that a more critical approach was necessary to indicate the kind of hotel that was listed. The then AA

Secretary, Stenson Cooke, had once been a wine and spirit salesman and felt that the star rating of brandy would be a familiar yardstick to apply to hotels. In his words, "a really decent, average, middle-class hotel" would merit the standard three stars. The 1912 AA Handbook carried details of the new ratings and by the 1913 AA Handbook the hotels listed carried the star ratings.



More recently, in collaboration with VisitBritain, VisitScotland and VisitWales, the AA developed Common Quality Standards for inspecting and rating accommodation on a rising scale of one to five Stars. These standards and rating categories are now applied throughout the British Isles.

The latest version of the AA Hotel Guide has details of over 3,500 establishments ranging from intimate, personally-run establishments to elegant country houses, fashionable boutique hotels, five Star rated hotels and over 500 budget hotels.

In the 1913 AA Handbook there were around 1,375 hotels listed. Twenty of these hotels were rated as five star, five of which still appear in the current AA Hotel Guide – The Grand Hotel, Brighton, The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate, The Midland Hotel, Manchester, The Spa Hotel, Tunbridge Wells and The Royal, York. Sixteen of the five star hotels were in England and four were in Scotland. The guide did not feature any of the London hotels.

Simon Numphud, Manager AA Hotel Services said, “The AA hotel rating scheme has provided the industry with a common quality standard that has now been used world wide. Over the past 100 years the hotel industry has seen many changes with the advent of budget hotel chains and trendy boutique hotels. It is lovely to see that there are still some favourites that remain in the guide after all these years. The rating scheme is one of several important filters that customers use to help guide them through the wealth of hotels they now have to choose from. Our team of inspectors continue to inspect and rate hotels throughout the length and breadth of the country.”

The AA Hotel Guide 2013 is available from all good bookstores as well as [The AA Shop](#) priced £14.99 as well as an app from the iTunes and Android Stores.

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For information please contact the AA Press Office on 01256 492895 or press.office@theaa.com.

NOTES TO EDITORS

To discover which hotels in your area were in the 1913 guide simply email Katie.stephens@theaa.com with the name of your town.