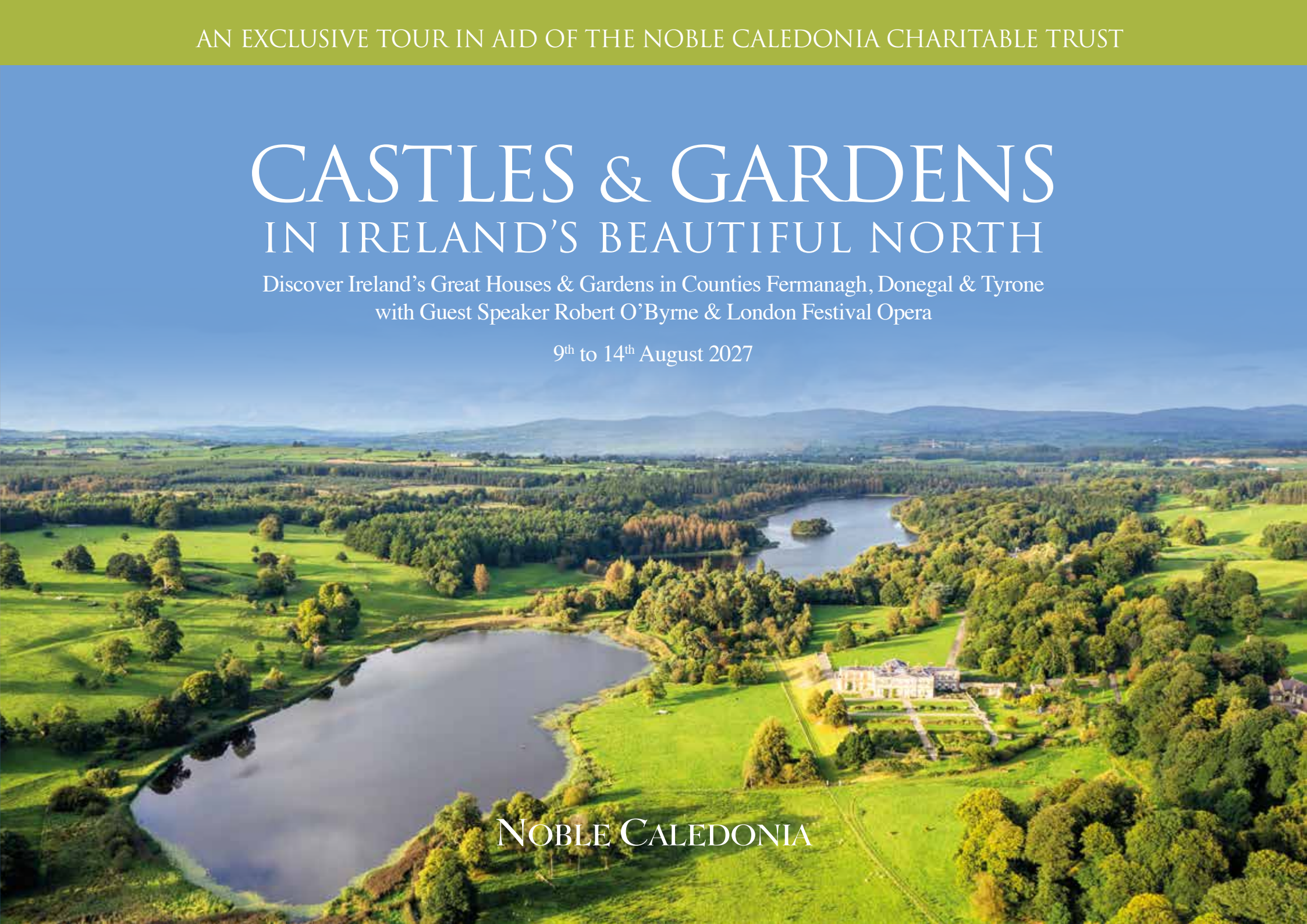


AN EXCLUSIVE TOUR IN AID OF THE NOBLE CALEDONIA CHARITABLE TRUST

# CASTLES & GARDENS IN IRELAND'S BEAUTIFUL NORTH

Discover Ireland's Great Houses & Gardens in Counties Fermanagh, Donegal & Tyrone  
with Guest Speaker Robert O'Byrne & London Festival Opera

9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2027

An aerial photograph of a vast, lush green landscape. In the foreground, a large, dark lake reflects the sky. To the right of the lake, a large, light-colored stone house with multiple wings and a central tower is visible, surrounded by manicured lawns and gardens. The background features rolling green hills and distant mountains under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and grand architecture.

NOBLE CALEDONIA

In Ireland's North Country we find some of the greatest gardens, castles and historic houses. An area less well known and trodden than the west, it is full of uniquely special and enchanting places. On a recent visit to Ulster I was captivated not only by the beautiful landscapes of lakes and mountains but by its many enchanting gardens and great houses, many still in the hands of the same families from centuries past. Many of the places I visited were new to me, but I was instantly smitten and began planning an itinerary which I knew would appeal to our garden loving followers. However, what makes this itinerary particularly special is where we will stay.

I visited two marvellous castles and could not decide which one to use as our base so my solution was to offer both. We will have exclusive hire of both Crom Castle which accommodates just 22 guests and Belle Isle Castle which accommodates 26 guests. Both properties are in the same area on the shores of Lough Erne and both wonderful places to stay and with their own unique character and atmosphere.

**Andrew Cochrane,**  
**Noble Caledonia Founder & Director**

## TRAVELLING WITH YOU



### Guest Speaker – Robert O'Byrne

A former Vice-President of the Irish Georgian Society, Robert O'Byrne is today one of Ireland's best-known writers and lecturers specialising in the country's historic houses and gardens. He is the author of more than a dozen books, among them *Luggala: The Story of a Guinness House*; *Romantic Irish Homes* and *The Irish Country House: A New Vision*. For many years a contributor to *Apollo Magazine*, *The Burlington Magazine* and the *Irish Arts Review*, during 2021/22 Robert curated a number of events, including exhibitions, lectures and a conference, all on the theme of Ireland's country house gardens for the Irish Georgian Society. In Autumn 2021, his series on the same subject 'Ireland's Historic Gardens' was shown on Irish television.

Since 2012 Robert has written an award-winning blog called *The Irish Aesthete* chronicling Ireland's architectural heritage. An exhibition of his photographs was held in the Irish Architectural Archive in December 2022 and in May 2024 a book – *The Irish Aesthete: Buildings of Ireland, Lost and Found* – was published by Lilliput Press.



### Tour Leader – Chantal Cookson

Chantal was born in Suffolk very near the sea and now lives in Northumberland where her husband farms. Chantal has been associated with Noble Caledonia since the company was founded in 1991 and has led tours, be it cruising or land, all over the world. Chantal's initial experience of cruising in British waters was in 1991 when Noble Caledonia undertook its first cruise around the British Isles, which was a groundbreaking voyage and led to a very successful and popular concept. Though her main job for over 25 years was working for Sotheby's, she is now a Travel and Fine Art Consultant intertwining in her busy life still working periodically as part of the Noble Caledonia field staff team. Chantal is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society

and a Trustee of the Noble Caledonia Charitable Trust.



### Tour Manager – Elaine Weddick

Elaine was born and brought up in Newcastle upon Tyne and still maintains a strong connection with the area, although she has now lived in the South of England for many years. Her love of travel started with a 'road trip' from Newcastle to Northern Spain in a Ford Prefect at the age of 10 and has continued throughout a career spanning over 40 years and encompassing many aspects of the travel industry. A husband with a career in an oil-related industry involved several years of interesting overseas postings. After a varied career, including working as Tour Manager on long haul land tours, Elaine joined Noble Caledonia and a whole new world, that included river and sea cruises, opened up. Elaine has travelled the world with us,

accompanying a diverse range of tours and cruises. Joining the tours that are accompanied by London Festival Opera has created a renewed interest in classical music for Elaine whilst playing Bridge is what Elaine enjoys most when not working, and if travelling and Bridge can be combined, then so much the better.



NOBLE CALEDONIA  
CHARITABLE TRUST

## NOBLE CALEDONIA CHARITABLE TRUST

We have arranged this exclusive tour in aid of the Noble Caledonia Charitable Trust (NCCT), to which all profit from the tour will be donated. The NCCT was established in 2013 by the owners and founder of Noble Caledonia. During our worldwide explorations over the years we have come across many situations where help is desperately needed, be it following a natural disaster, civil unrest, abject poverty or to save an endangered species. So, we made it our vision to use the Noble Caledonia framework to help improve economic, social and environmental conditions in the areas

we work and visit. The Trustees of the NCCT seek to select smaller projects in the places we travel to, and beneficiaries are often suggested by our staff in the field, local agents and onboard teams who are uniquely positioned to identify projects and lead fundraising initiatives. Noble Caledonia Ltd cover the costs of administering the NCCT so that 100% of all donations go directly to the beneficiaries. Money is raised from a percentage of Noble Caledonia's profits each year and through fundraising by staff and donations from our travellers. Examples of projects we have worked with in the past and are currently fundraising for can be viewed on the Noble Caledonia website, and Chantal Cookson who is one of the Trustees of the NCCT will be leading this tour.

## LONDON FESTIVAL OPERA

We are delighted that London Festival Opera will be joining us for this exclusive tour and will be presenting two concerts – performing a selection of celebrated arias and ensembles from the operas of Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet and Puccini as well as some lighter pieces from the world of operetta and musicals. We have long been associated with London Festival Opera and each year our music themed tours grow in popularity. London Festival Opera has achieved a considerable reputation for presenting opera in the UK and overseas and has performed for Presidents, Prime Ministers and senior members of the British and European Royal Families. The company has performed at 10 Downing Street, the British Embassy in Paris, the President's Palace in Malta and as a guest company in one of Italy's greatest opera houses, La Fenice in Venice. Bringing together artists from the major British opera companies including the Royal Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne the programmes presented include a wide and varied range of repertoire, performed in formal evening dress and authentic period costume for an added visual impact.



Philip Blake Jones



Drawing Room



Maple Room



Dining Room



# CROM CASTLE

Crom Castle is the home of the Earl and Countess of Erne located on the shores of the serene Upper Lough Erne in some splendour. Located in County Fermanagh it has been the historic home of the Earls of Erne for more than 350 years. Nestled in almost 2000 gently rolling acres which are managed by the National Trust, Crom Castle is surrounded by the glistening waters of Lough Erne, one of the longest inland waterways in Europe. Accommodating just 22 guests the castle offers beautifully decorated bedrooms offering four-poster, superking and twin beds, all with marvellous views of the estate. As you enter the grand Entrance Hall with its floating staircase you cannot help but be impressed. Likewise, the public areas which include a Drawing Room, Dining Room, Conservatory and outside Terrace are welcoming areas furnished with style and offering great comfort. The charm of staying at Crom Castle is that it is a living family home with staff who provide a warm and very special service. It is a property that has played host to members of the Royal Family, aristocrats, diplomats and all manner of dignitaries since the 17th century. One of the performances by London Festival Opera will take place here in the stunning Conservatory.



# BELLE ISLE CASTLE

Belle Isle is 470-acre estate spread over eight picturesque islands. A building has stood on the site since the 12th century and the present building dates back to the 17th century. Past owners have included the Earl of Ross and more recently the Duke of Abercorn. Recently it was purchased by a local businessman who has refurbished the castle to a very high standard. It is in a charming and idyllic spot which feels miles from anywhere, yet it is just a few miles from Enniskillen. The castle can accommodate up to 26 guests, divided between two wings. All the rooms are splendidly decorated and furnished and offer sublime views of the estate. Entering via a double vaulted entrance hall sets the scene for the other public rooms, all of which are beautifully furnished. An outside terrace with delightful views is a splendid place to relax and enjoy a pre-dinner drink. The dining room with its Minstrel Gallery and the Morning Room with its floor to ceiling windows offer amazing views of the estate. Unlike Crom Castle, Belle Isle is not a private home but has been designed for all the comforts you could possibly need.



Mary Isabelle Room



Grand Hall



Abercorn Drawing Room

Lough Eske Castle



Benaughlin Mountain viewed from Florence Court



Crom Castle



## THE ITINERARY

**Day 1 London to Belfast, Northern Ireland.** Fly by scheduled flight to Belfast and on arrival transfer to your chosen castle. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner at your castle this evening. (D)

**Day 2 Belle Isle & Crom Castle.** Enjoy a leisurely day today. This morning will be free to enjoy the grounds of your chosen castle. After lunch, those staying at Belle Isle will drive to Crom Castle for an afternoon visit and tea and then stay for dinner. Those staying at Crom Castle will drive to Belle Isle after lunch for a tour and tea and return to Crom Castle for drinks and a performance by London Festival Opera before everyone enjoys dinner at Crom Castle together. (B, L, D)

**Day 3 Salthill Gardens & Lough Eske Castle.** After breakfast drive across the border to county Donegal for a morning visit to Salthill Gardens which are located close to the sea and the town of Mountcharles. This contemporary garden was designed by and gradually adapted by Elizabeth Temple since 1985. Originally a kitchen walled garden it has been transformed into an idyllic and thoughtful place with a sense of formality, yet everything is allowed to ramble. We will drive to nearby Lough Eske Castle Hotel which is situated in a scenic spot on Lough Eske, and we will enjoy lunch at the hotel. After lunch you can choose to either return to your castle or drive into nearby Donegal Town to visit the castle or shop in the famous 'Magee's' renowned for their handwoven Donegal Tweed clothes. This evening we will all meet at Belle Isle for dinner and enjoy a talk from our Guest Speaker. (B, L, D)

**Day 4 Castle Coole & Florence Court.** Today we stay local in County Fermanagh, visiting the imposing Castle Coole, a stunning 18th century mansion set amidst a wooded landscape. It is one of Ireland's finest Neo-classical properties and houses a fine collection of art and furniture. After a light lunch at a local restaurant we will drive to nearby Florence Court for a guided tour of the 18th century house which is set in parkland and thick woodland with the Benaughlin Mountains rising on the horizon. The property was home to the Cole family for over 250 years. We will visit the walled garden currently being restored to its 18th century splendour and enjoy some refreshments in the café. Return to your castle for dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 5 Baronscourt.** Enjoy a relaxing morning in your castle or join a visit to nearby Enniskillen, a picturesque island town where you can see the 16th century castle and the Military Museum. In the late morning depart for County Tyrone and the Baronscourt Estate. Situated in a sheltered valley in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, Baronscourt has been the home of the Duke of Abercorn since 1612. After lunch there will be a guided tour of the magnificent house and garden, followed by a performance by London Festival Opera. Return to your castle for a farewell dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 6 Belfast to London.** Check out this morning and transfer to Belfast for our return scheduled flight to London. (B)

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

| Belle Isle Estate Room Category        | Price |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Hamilton Wing</b>                   |       |
| Garden                                 | £3995 |
| Landseer, Russian                      | £4495 |
| Ivy, Red                               | £4795 |
| Lavinia, Indian, Adelaide for sole use | £4995 |

### Abercorn Wing

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Sweet Pea, Mary Isobel | £4995 |
| Tower, Yellow          | £5295 |
| Bridal Suite           | £5495 |

| Crom Castle Room Category              | Price |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Apple & Pear                           | £4995 |
| Print, Crichton, Rose, Blue Twin, West | £5295 |
| Studio, Maple, Buff                    | £5795 |
| Blue State                             | £5995 |
| Tower for sole use                     | £6495 |

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Five nights accommodation at Crom Castle or Belle Isle Estate • Meals as indicated (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner) • Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunches and dinners • Noble Caledonia team including Guest Speaker • Two performances by London Festival Opera • Excursions as described • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport Taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

**Please note:** Due to the historic nature of both properties, there will be variation in the size and configuration of each room. When making a reservation, please refer to our website for full details pertaining to the accommodation including bed configurations, or discuss with one of our Travel Consultants.

Belle Isle House and Grounds



Library, Crom Castle



Indian Room, Belle Isle Castle



Castle Coole



Conservatory, Crom Castle



Entrance Hall, Belle Isle Castle



Countess's Sitting Room, Crom Castle





# NOBLE CALEDONIA

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: The Baronscourt Estate; Back cover image: Donegal Castle.

