

THE IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE & GARDEN

An exclusive tour to some of Ireland's finest houses & gardens staying at the wonderful Glin Castle
with Guest Speaker Robert O'Byrne

12th to 18th May 2027

NOBLE CALEDONIA

“There is no better time than May, with its long days to witness the bountiful change from spring into early summer with its myriad of blooming flowers and shades of green.”



TRAVELLING WITH YOU

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 over the last 25 years has been 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.

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.

"This is a very special tour as we will not only visit some extraordinary houses and gardens but also stay in one. For many years I have enjoyed developing trips to every corner of Ireland, often staying in some of the best hotels Ireland has to offer. For this exclusive tour we will be guests at Glin Castle, home to the Knights of Glin for over 800 years. Overlooking the River Shannon, the site has been the family home of the Fitzgeralds since the 13th century and through the centuries their tale of tenacity through rebellions, wars, famine and all manner of struggles is legendary.

From this wonderfully historic base in County Limerick our travels will take us to many great houses and gardens including Tarbert House, owned by the Leslie family since its construction in 1690 and known for its well-preserved 18th century interiors. Venturing further into County Kerry we visit Kells Bay Gardens. Here in this extraordinarily beautiful setting on the Ring of Kerry and overlooking Dingle Bay is a 20 hectare, dramatically positioned garden, a combination of a Robinsonian style enhanced by exotic plants and a tree-fern forest.

There will be many other highlights including the Vandeleur Walled Garden and historic town of Ennis in County Clare, and in County Cork the stunning Doneraile House is the centrepiece of one of Ireland's most captivating estates, and nearby the romantic garden at Annes Grove on the River Awbeg with its walled garden, woodland and glen.

On a more relaxing day we will drive the circular route around the dramatic Dingle Peninsula, possibly the most picturesque of all the 'Wild Atlantic Way' including the dramatic scenery of Sleat Head and the view of the Blaskets. We will break the journey with lunch at The Boatyard restaurant, overlooking the marina in the colourful fishing town of Dingle.

Our itinerary promises some extraordinarily picturesque land and seascapes together with visits to some of Ireland's most splendid houses and gardens. There will of course also be time to enjoy Glin Castle which we will have exclusive use of for our stay, and the castle's enchanting gardens. There is no better time than May, with its long days to witness the bountiful change from spring into early summer with its myriad of blooming flowers and shades of green."

Andrew Cochrane,
Noble Caledonia Founder & Director

First Floor Room (Green Room)



Second Floor Room (Bow Room)



First Floor Room (Blue Four Poster Room)



GLIN CASTLE

Sitting proudly overlooking the River Shannon is the home of Catherine Fitzgerald and her husband, actor Dominic West. The original castle was abandoned in the 17th century but in the 1780s the 23rd Knight of Glin, John Bateman Fitzgerald, built the present castle. This impressive Neo-classical building with the original long house forming the west wing saw its golden age in the late 18th century. It is famous for its plaster work ceilings, Corinthian columns and an elegant flying staircase lit by a stunning Venetian-style window. We have exclusive hire of the castle for six nights to enjoy its exquisite five reception rooms filled with a unique collection of Irish furniture and decorative objects. The fifteen luxury en-suite bedrooms are beautifully furnished with romantic views either over the Shannon or the formal gardens and parkland.

Dining here is a delight, and the view over the Shannon to the hills of County Clare is a marvellous backdrop to the fine food from the castle's talented chef Eoin Ruane and his team. Much of the estate's own produce will grace the dining room table, much of it organically grown in the walled garden.

The gardens here are a marvel, generations of the family have over the centuries moulded the land that benefits from a Gulf Stream micro climate. The women of the Fitzgerald family have over the years had the greatest impact on the gardens and today Catherine Fitzgerald, a practising landscape designer, keeps the tradition alive, developing a fresh and vibrant look each year.

The Fitzgerald history is evident in every corner of the castle, some joyous, some melancholy, some celebrated heroes and some not so, but all fascinating, enhancing our stay with endless interest.

Your Room

For our stay we have taken over all the accommodation at Glin Castle. Each of the 15 guest bedrooms is individually decorated and features original architectural details, period furniture, colourful rugs and comfortable, plump king-sized beds (some of which can be converted to twin beds). Traditional pictures and porcelain adorn the walls. The five first floor rooms are slightly larger and enjoy panoramic views over the Shannon Estuary or the formal gardens and parkland, whilst the slightly smaller second floor rooms boast an elevated view across the surrounding landscape. A further three rooms are located in the first floor wing with views of the garden. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms stocked with bathrobes and luxurious Ortigia toiletries, and the majority have a separate bath and walk-in shower.

Your Dining

Dinner at the Castle will be served in the gracefully appointed Dining Room, the claret-red walls decorated with a gallery of former Knights and furnished with baronial oak furniture. Menus are carefully planned by the castle's talented chef, Eoin Ruane, with vegetables, herbs and fruit organically grown in the castle's walled garden and served with accompanying wines. On one evening we will enjoy dinner at a Glin village pub, with dinner provided by the castle. Breakfast will include a buffet selection of cereals, fruit, bread and pastries, as well as hot dishes. Tea and coffee are available throughout the day in the Grand Hall.



The Sitting Room

Entrance Hall

The Library

The Dining Room



Vandeleur Walled Garden



Glin Castle gardens



Doneraile Court

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Shannon, Ireland. Fly by scheduled flight to Shannon Airport and on arrival transfer to Glin Castle in County Limerick. Meet this evening for welcome drinks and dinner. (D)

Day 2 Tarbert House. We will start the day with a relaxing breakfast and free time to explore the house and garden. After a light lunch drive to Tarbert House, a fine Georgian Queen Anne building, well preserved in its original form with furniture and pictures from the 18th century. Notable visitors have included Benjamin Franklin, Lord Kitchener, Winston Churchill, Charlotte Bronte and Jonathan Swift. Nearby is the Foynes Flying Boat Museum and a visit can be arranged for those interested. Enjoy dinner this evening at Glin Castle. (B, L, D)

Day 3 Kells Bay Gardens & Ard na Sidhe. Today will be a full day as we head south into County Kerry to the splendid Kells Bay Gardens overlooking Dingle Bay. Enjoy a guided walk in this sub-tropical paradise of river walks, waterfalls and the Ladies Walled Garden set over three levels. Here paths lead off in all directions under a canopy of tree ferns with stunning views. After a light lunch at Kells Bay, drive to the Hill of Fairies (Ard na Sidhe), a captivating Arts and Crafts hotel overlooking Caragh Lake with lovely gardens. A wonderful spot for our afternoon tea before we return to Glin Castle, where we will have dinner this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Doneraile Court & Annes Grove. Heading east into County Cork we drive to Doneraile Court, built in the mid 1600s by the St Leger family and an outstanding example of Irish Georgian

architecture. Thirteen generations of the St Leger family resided here including some notable family members among them Elizabeth St Leger who made history when she became the first woman Freemason in the world in 1712. The house sits in fine naturalistic parkland in the style of Capability Brown. After lunch, drive to nearby Annes Grove Gardens home to the Annesley family from the 1600s. In the late Victorian period the gardens were developed in the Robinsonian style supported by plant hunting expeditions to Tibet and across Asia and many of the exotics still survive. This evening we will be hosted in a pub in Glin village with dinner and music. (B, L, D)

Day 5 The Dingle Peninsula. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast and morning at the castle. Depart in the late morning for a scenic drive to the Dingle Peninsula, a rugged stretch of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way with a coastline of dramatic headlands, sandy beaches and craggy cliffs. We will stop for lunch at the bustling fishing town of Dingle, then continue on to Sleah Head with its magnificent Atlantic views out to the uninhabited Blasket Islands and the MacGillycuddy's Reeks on the Iveragh Peninsula. On our return drive, we stop for tea in Caherbreaigh, Tralee. Dinner will be at the castle this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 6 Vandeleur Walled Garden & Ennis. Drive to nearby Tarbert for the ferry journey across the Shannon Estuary to Killimer in County Clare for a morning visit to the Vandeleur Walled Garden. Once forgotten, the garden was restored from the 1990s and is famous for its tree collection and unusual water features. After coffee in the Woodland Cafe continue on to the historic Clare county town of

Ennis. Culturally rich, the town is famous for its music and food and we will enjoy lunch at one of Ireland's most famous hotels, the Old Ground. After lunch there will be some free time to explore the town. This evening enjoy farewell drinks and dinner at the castle. (B, L, D)

Day 7 Shannon to London. Check out after breakfast and transfer to Shannon Airport for your return scheduled flight to London. (B)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Category	Price
First Floor Wing Room	£4195
First/Second Floor Room	£4395
First/Second Floor Room for sole use	£5595

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Six nights accommodation at Glin Castle • Meals as indicated (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner) • Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Tour Leader • Guest Speaker • Excursions as described • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport Taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Please note: Glin Castle does not have a lift. All bedrooms are located on the first and second floors and are only accessible by climbing a number of steps. We therefore do not recommend this holiday for those with walking difficulties. Due to the historic nature of this property, there will be some variation in size and configuration of rooms.



Kells Bay



St Columba's Church Ennis



Annes Grove House and Gardens



Dingle



Dingle Peninsula



Kells Bay Garden



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Glin Castle; Back cover image: Glin Castle gardens.

