



castle leslie estate - 1000 years  
of leslie family history and  
american irish family history

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*Our family's ethos has always been one of  
creativity and curiosity, openness and  
sharing, of innovation and  
entrepreneurship, of sensitivity and working  
with, of involvement and teamwork.*

*With 1000 years of Leslie family history  
recorded, it is my great honour to be the  
one tasked with bringing a unique and  
important part of Ireland's living heritage  
through to the future.*

*Following on from our distant Troquois  
descendent, we strongly believe that we  
inherit nothing from our parents, we just  
borrow it from future generations.*

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Owen Leslie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

February 2012



Anne Cockran





## 1000 years of history - an abridged version

- 1060's Bartholomew Leslie, rescues Margaret, future Queen of Scotland. Marries Beatrice, King Malcolm's sister. Founds Leslie family
- 1664 Bishop John Leslie, detester of Cromwell (1) falls in love with the magical green lake of Glaslough and buys the Castle and Estate from Thomas Ridgeway. He died there in 1671 at 100 years of age
- 1740's Dean Swift writes...  
"Here I am in Castle Leslie, With rows and rows of books upon the shelves  
Written by The Leslies, All about themselves."  
(Some 200 books have been written since and counting!)
- 1799 Charles Powell Leslie refuses to work for the Act of Union, turns down Castlereagh bribes of £10,000 and Earldom
- 1840's Christina Leslie runs the Estate and relief projects during the famine. Monument built in Glaslough Village as mark of gratitude
- 1878 Castle is rebuilt for the third time to capture views of the lake and house new collections by Constance and John Leslie
- 1910 Shane Leslie (2) become Catholic in Oxford movement. Stands as National for seat in Derry and loses by just 49 votes
- 1912 Titanic – Archie Butt, aide to Roosevelt goes down with the Titanic on his way to the USA to ask for Marjorie Clay Ide's hand in marriage. Later, Marjorie marries Shane Leslie
- 1914 Norman Leslie shot in WW1. In time the Duke of Connaught, Queen Victoria's favourite son returns Norman's sword to the family
- 1920's Treaty negotiations, Churchill asks Collins to make sure his Aunts house (Castle Leslie) is safe



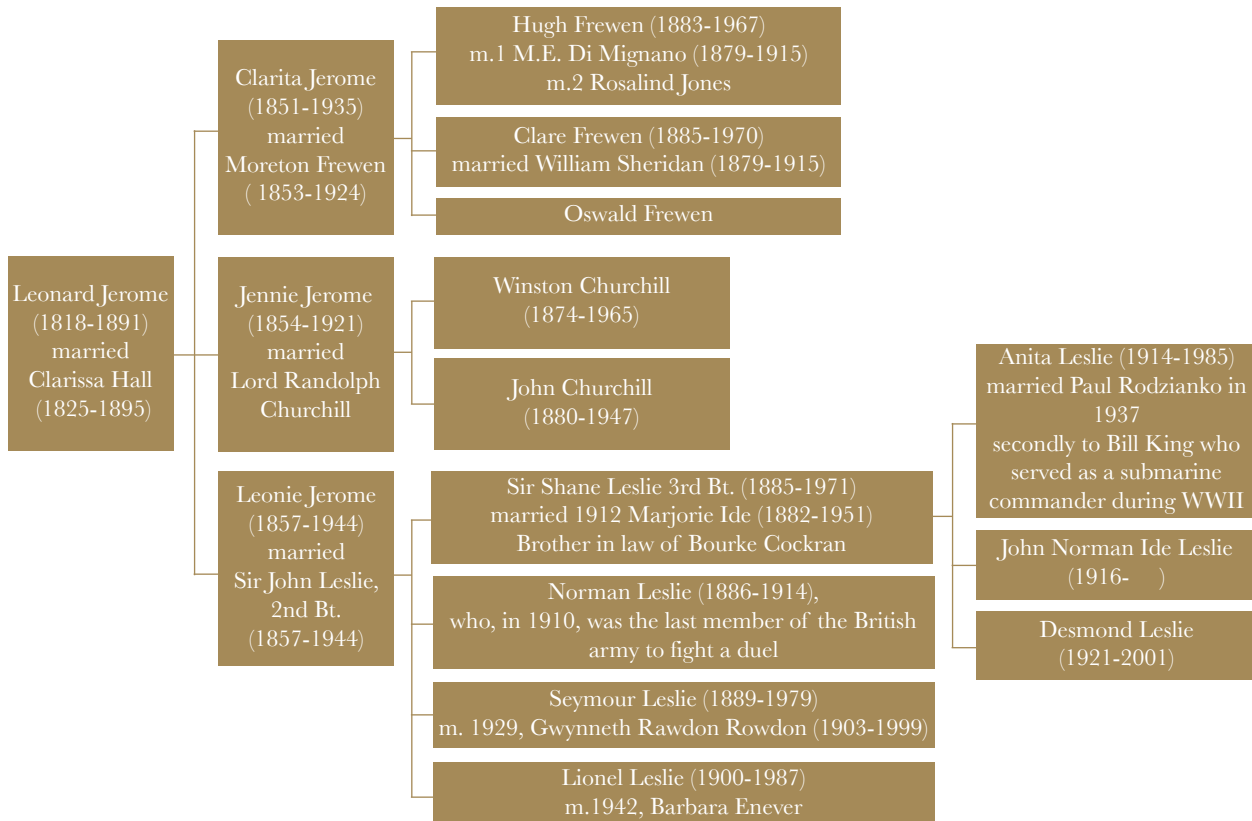
## 1000 years of history - an abridged version

- 1940 WWII Jack captured. POW 1940 -1945. Desmond Spit Fire Pilot (3)/Anita becomes amazing war hero (4)/Agnes presented Black Ops Radio programme at Bletchley Park (5)/Bill King commands submarines for 5 years. He is now 101 (6)
- 1950's Desmond Leslies USA Book tour for best seller - Flying Saucers have Landed (7)
- 1966 Desmond takes over the Estate and opens Ireland's first nightclub and plans hotel and starts building a golf course with Robert Trench Jones. Mick Jagger stays (8)
- 1968 Troubles flare up in next door village, and all major plans are on hold for next 30 years
- 1974 Desmond opens Lodge as riding holiday destination (9)
- 1984 Lodge sold to keep Castle within family (10)
- 1991 Sammy returns home and starts Tea Rooms, Tours, Dinner with Ghost Stories, (11)
- 1995 December, first 6 bedrooms opened. Spring 1995, timber sold and roof repairs started (12). August - Peace Process signed
- 2001 Paul McCartney & Heather Mills choose Castle Leslie for wedding (13)
- 2004 Lodge repurchased and planning begins
- 2006 Massive restoration and regeneration project started – 36 months, 250 builders, 5 projects
- 2006/7 June - Lodge, Castle, Equestrian, Old Stable Mews, Victorian Spa, Village Houses are opened as they are completed (14). Sammy is Finalist in Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year
- 2011 October - Awarded Fáilte Ireland's Gold Medal for Best Customer Experience in Ireland
- 2011 December - onwards – time to explore new opportunities



## US Family History

The Jerome connection showing the relationship between the Leslie, Churchill, Frewen, Clay Ide and Cockran families.







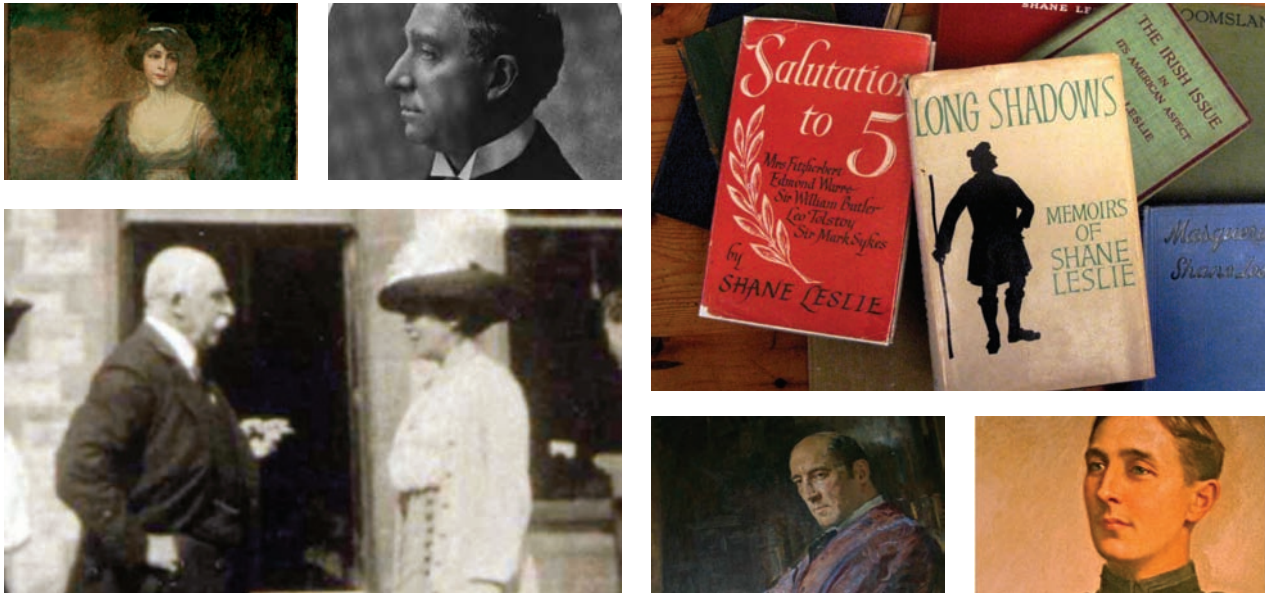
## US Family History

### The Jerome Connections

#### Leonard Jerome – Speculator and Race Horse Lover

Leonard Jerome, a flamboyant New York stockbroker, who became known as the King of Wall Street due to the vast fortune he amassed. He helped found the American Jockey Club with the Vanderbilts and built the Jerome Park racetrack which hosted the first Belmont Stakes in 1887. He married Clarissa Hall who shared her husband's flamboyant tastes. He lived and entertained in a massive mansion on the corner of 26th Street and Madison that he built. Their three daughters, Clara, Leonie, and Jennie, became known, respectively, as 'the good, the witty, and the beautiful' as they took British high society by storm. They all married into old landowning families, Clara, 'the good', married Moreton Frewen who earned the unenviable title of 'Mortal Ruin' due to his disastrous business acumen. He established a huge cattle ranch (1 million acres) in Wyoming running a herd of 45,000 head and knew everyone from Buffalo Bill to Sitting Bull. This business venture, in familiar fashion, floundered. The most well known of Moreton and Clara's children was Clare, whose married name became Sheridan, following a marriage to a descendent of Richard Brinsley-Sheridan. She devoted her life to sculpting and produced busts of many icons of the twentieth-century including Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Benito Mussolini, and Charlie Chaplin. The British government suspected that she was a spy as it was considered that her interest in her sitters was somewhat more than professional which caused great embarrassment to her cousin Winston Churchill.

Leonie, 'the witty', was to marry John Leslie, heir to one of the largest landed estates in Ireland, as well as the baronetcy of Glaslough and Castle Leslie became her home. While the three sisters were all accomplished musicians and socialites it was Jenny, 'the beautiful', whose star was to shine the brightest. She married into the Spencer-Churchill family and was to become the mother of Winston Churchill. A fiercely independent



and ambitious woman she had many extramarital affairs which were advantageous to the careers of her husband, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Winston, her son.

Leonie's eldest son was christened John Randolph but he changed his name to Shane and converted to Roman Catholicism. This, with his wish to become a priest made it unsuitable to inherit the family's estates. He carved out a career as a writer publishing more than 45 books as well as numerous contributions to periodicals and magazines. Included in his works were memoirs of American lecture tours in the 1930s as well as the Irish dimension to Anglo-American relations during and after World War I. His wife, Marjorie Ide, was American and it was her brother in law, Bourke Cockran, a noted orator, that tutored Winston Churchill in public speaking.

The Leslie family are well known for their colourful cast of characters and two of Shane's brothers, Norman, who was the last British army officer to fight a duel, and Lionel, who devoted much of his spare time to hunting lake monsters, were certainly struck from this mould. Shane's younger brother, Seymour, was somewhat more reserved. He resided in New York before the outbreak of World War I and he was the first author to write a book about the 3 Jerome sisters entitled *The Jerome Connexion*.

The following generation, Shane and Marjorie's children, are no less colourful, Sir Jack, the present holder of the title, is a well known nonagenarian night-clubber. His younger brother Desmond trained as a World War II fighter pilot in America during the early 1940s. He travelled there again the following decade to promote his book *Flying Saucers have Landed* in a lecture tour. When the family were described as 'mildly eccentric' by one guide book, Desmond took great offence adding that the family were, in fact, 'very eccentric'. Anita, the eldest of the children, became a well known author of the Edwardian period, writing biographies of various family members including Leonard Jerome, Jenny Churchill, and Clare Sheridan.



### **The Clay Ide Connections**

#### **Henry Clay Ide - States Attorney, Senator, and Presidential Commissioner to Samoa, Chief Justice in Samoa and Ambassador to Spain**

Henry Clay Ide was born in Vermont, and was the father of Marjorie and Anne Ide. He studied law and set up practice in St. Johnsbury, Vermont as State Attorney. His poor wife died young and President Benjamin Harris appointed him to President Commissioner in Samoa. His young daughters went with him and had an army childhood in the south Pacific. Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived there at the time, became a great friend. When Robert learned that Henry's daughter Anne was born on Christmas Day he said that she could share his birthday and he indeed left it to her in his Will. He later became Presidential Commissioner to the Phillipines under Taft and then Governor General. In 1909 he was appointed American Ambassador to Spain, before retiring to Long Island in 1913. Henry's youngest daughter, Marjorie, went on to marry Shane Leslie and Anne would go on to marry Bourke Cockran.

### **The Bourke Cockran Connections**

#### **William Bourke Cockran - Congressman and Great Orator**

William Bourke Cockran, born in 1854 in Sligo, left Ireland for the USA at the age of 17. He studied law and set up practice in New York City. He married Anne Clay Ide and became brother in law to Sir Shane Leslie. He also had a distinguished political career as a Democrat spanning from 1887 – 1923 and was a Congressman when he passed away in 1923. He was known as the “silver tongued orator with the golden heart” and put forward many Bills to Congress campaigning for equal rights for Irish American children.

It was his speaking skills that had impressed Jennie Churchill and in the late 1890's, she sent her son, Winston, who spoke poorly, to the US to stay with him. Churchill has always credited Bourke for teaching him his manner of public speaking that became such a trademark. It was during WWII when radio was the only means of mass communication that his power speaking played such a vital part in the ultimate victory.





## Life as it should be

**“At Castle Leslie, you will get a unique perception of time; its links with reality are tenuous indeed and thereby lies its enchantment.”**

Irish Tourist Board

Castle Leslie Estate in County Monaghan, one of the last great Irish Castle and Estates still in the hands of its founding family, is nestled on 1,000 acres of undulating Irish countryside, dotted with ancient woodland and glittering lakes. Since the 1660s, the distinguished and somewhat individual Leslie family have lived on the Estate, welcoming everyone from poets to politicians, ambassadors to ufologists; all the time making their home into one of the finest luxury Castle Hotels Ireland has to offer. Following significant investment and a major restoration programme over the last decade it is now truly one of the finest luxury hotels in Ireland. The Castle is the ultimate Irish rural escape, full of character and personality, and boasts a variety of accommodation and activities to suit all tastes. A truly private and stunningly beautiful estate, it is a magical setting for a getaway, special events or a big celebration.

The Castle, at the heart of the Estate, offering authentic original interiors and old-style hospitality, is a complete respite from the world. The Lodge is the social hub of the Estate and brings locals and guests together in an atmosphere of conviviality and comfort. Old Stable Mews or Village Cottages are the perfect spot for groups that want the convenience of hotel living combined with the privacy of self catering, all adding to create one of the most renowned luxury hotels Ireland has to offer.

The Estate offers an idyllic setting for outdoor activity and adventure that few others can offer. It's the perfect place to discover the thrill of exploring the countryside on horseback, in a carriage or on foot. You can while away the hours fishing on one of Ireland's best-preserved lakes, or for the adventurous go hot air ballooning or kayaking. Alternatively, you might prefer to enjoy a massage in the Victorian Treatment Rooms at the end of an activity packed day or relax with a book by a log fire in one of our many beautiful rooms. To dine, you can choose to take afternoon tea or dine at the Castle, enjoy a pint at Conors Bar or dinner in Snaffles. We can also cater for events for up to 250 guests at our Pavilion.





## One of Europe's Finest Equestrian Playgrounds

The Leslie family's connection with horses goes back to the tenth century when a Hungarian Nobleman became minder for a young woman who would go on to become Mary Queens of Scots and the equestrian connections have been strong ever since.

Over the 100's of years, horses have always been an important part of the Leslie family history and they even built 3 stable yards on the Estate for all of their various charges from plough horses to cheeky ponies, from fearless hunters to flying armchairs, from carriage horses to war heros, Arab stallions to our virtual horse, Prince!

In the 1940's, Anita Leslie married Paul Rodzianko a Russian cavalry officer who was sent by Tsar Nicholas II to be trained with Caprille. He was the father of modern riding and thankfully developed the forward seat.

Desmond Leslie and his wife Helen, Sammy's parents, set up an equestrian holiday venture in 1974 in the then empty Lodge which drew guests from all over Europe and the USA for riding holidays. In 1984 they had to sell the building and business to help keep the Castle afloat during the tough times of the Troubles.

In 2004, Sammy was thankfully able to buy back the Lodge and with thanks to the generous support from Fáilte Ireland, she was then able to fulfill her dream of building one of Europe's finest Equestrian playgrounds.

Now, just behind the Lodge, there are 56 new stables, 4 tack rooms, 30m x 50m indoor area with an outdoor arena, viewing gallery for 200, lecture rooms and a virtual horse called Prince. Out and about on the Estate we have sand gallops, 25 miles of bridle path and over 200 cross country fences from knee high to knee tremblers spread across the parklands.



## The Hard Graft

Bringing the buildings back to life, one by one, over the last 20 years...

### The Castle

From leaking Tea Rooms to glorious Conservatory  
From rotting Long Gallery to elegant Library and dapper Billiard Room  
From freezing Castle to 20 luxurious bedrooms  
From scruffy Foot-mens bedroom quarters to private Cinema  
From crumbling Kitchen wing to state of the art Cookery School  
From old store rooms to family archive research facilities  
From empty space to stunning glass fronted Pavilion

### Lodge

From basic Land Agents Lodge to 30 bedroom charming Lodge with Conors Bar,  
Snaffles Brasserie and Victorian Treatment Rooms  
From shabby tin roofed stables to an amazing Equestrian Playground

### Old Stable Mews

From an 18th century stable block building at risk, to 12 fabulous Old Stable Mews Cottages

### Village Houses

From a few acres of grazing land to 62 new homes, 2 shops, 4 offices and 12 cottages for guests







## Environment, Local Community & Voluntary

As a family we have always been very aware of protecting our environment and the importance of community. It has been ingrained as part of our ethos to support both, as members of the community and also in our ability to support local communities where and when we can.

Our family is well remembered for all of the work that they did during the great hunger of the Irish Famine. Christina Leslie ran the Estate in the 1840's until her son came of age at 18, after the death of her husband, Charles Powell Leslie II in 1831. She reduced and cancelled farm rents, built soup kitchens to feed many, organized voluntary passage to the USA and Canada and built the 4 mile famine wall around the Estate as a relief project. The monument in Glaslough Village was actually built by the local people as a mark of her work during this desperately terrible time in Ireland.

Over the years, my father gave land so the people of Glaslough Village could build a local community centre, one of the first in the country, and a playground in the Village. He also worked with the County Council on the social housing project on Castle Leslie lands.

### Village Framework

Following in his footsteps when it came to extend the Village in 2004, I brought in Colin Buchanan to develop a framework document with the local community to ensure that all future development was done in keeping with the historic nature of the Estate and village and the local community wants and needs. This was then formally adopted as part of Monaghan County Councils County Development Plan.



### **Wetlands - “Natures answer to natures issues”**

Dealing with waste is an ongoing issue and concern for all. I worked on a PPP with Monaghan County Council and the result was a 14 acre constructed integrated wetland on the Estate near the old Pinetum. It looks like a fabulous water garden with 5 ponds and a river flowing through what is actually treating sewage for up to 2000PE. It blends in seamlessly and has become an amenity with walks, rides and bird watchers. Engineers and environmentalists from all over Ireland, UK and Europe have visited to see how a joined up thinking and cooperative approach to a problem such as sewage can be turned into an asset for all.

### **New Village Houses, Glaslough Village Expansion**

I used 7 acres on the edge of the Estate to build homes, and was determined that the new project should blend in with and enhance the existing village and surrounding community. To this end, I worked with the top conservation company, CONSARC and we used traditional material and methods significantly with new technologies to create the new Village Square and Village Green.

### **Building Homes in Glaslough Village**

We were at the rise of the Celtic Tiger during the construction and finishing period for the Village Houses. I was keen that the estate team, local residents and their children would have an opportunity to purchase their homes at the launch prices rather than Dublin based speculators. We invited them all to a launch 2 weeks prior to the official date to allow them the opportunity to purchase a property near to the area where they and their families had grown up. As a result, all of the properties in phase 1 were purchased at this time. I was delighted to see that the uptake on this initiative was a resounding success which has allowed the village to grow and expand. This is evident in the fact that we now have over 15 thriving small local businesses, 4 of which have opened since the economic downturn.



## Sammy's story so far...

I grew up in the 60's and 70's in the wilds of the Irish border in the wonderful crumbling castle.

It was freezing cold in the winter, and the top floor of the Castle was covered with buckets catching drips. The warmth and the smell of good food drew us to the kitchen which became the centre of our family life. And what an interesting family it is...

The recent generations of the Leslie Family include war heroes and artists, politicians and writers, whose interests stretch from UFOs and hippy communes to Irish ghost stories, music and the movies. And in saying all that, they are very grounded and down to earth, more at home on the land than anywhere else.

I love adventure and I push my limits whenever possible. I walked on hot coals and bungee jumped. I have done aerobatics in the open cockpit of a Tiger Moth and got a job as a mud wrestler. I love driving and have driven all sorts of vehicles including earth movers, rally cars and the London underground to Heathrow, very early one morning. I also received my license to drive 40ft trucks although I am not fond of Yorkie bars!

Throughout my life, I have done whatever jobs I needed to do to get where I wanted to be. On my world travels I washed pots, worked as a prep chef, ran 'Grace Brothers' staff canteen, waited tables, pickled eggs and pruned kiwis. Even so, I was turned down for a job in McDonalds.

I now live on the Estate with my delightful Uncle Jack (95) who hops on the bus of a Saturday night and heads for the local night club where he dances until the early hours. He loves the boom boom music and celebrated his 85th birthday in Manumission, Ibiza. Each summer he pops over to our 12th century Italian Monastery where he is joined by family and friends and we all feast our-selves silly on home-grown olive oil,



farm produce and local fare. My mother grew up on the Mediterranean and loved everything about food. When she moved into the Castle, she set about restoring the 4 acre Victorian walled gardens to grow vegetables to feed the family and friends. As kids we played hide and seek in the artichoke jungles, feasted on wild strawberries and nectarines, picked the ancient vines, stuffed courgette flowers, dug for all sorts of root vegetables and gorged ourselves on the old varieties of apples and pears until we got collywobbles. The spoils from the walled garden were taken home and I was often allowed to help prepare for dinner parties and join the table for dinner. My mother's love of the Mediterranean was renewed when she was left a wonderful little fruit farm in the south of France, complete with Mr and Mrs Ufarty, the charming, Arabic couple who farmed it.

School itself was a different matter. As a kid with dyslexia, which was not yet recognised in rural Ireland, and coming from a very different background to my peers, it was not a fun time for me. At the age of 15 having tried 9 different schools, I decided to leave school to ride horses for a living. It's one of my real passions in life. In 1984, following intensive training, I became one of the youngest ever students, at the age of 18, to gain my British Horse Society II qualifications in the UK. My dyslexia has generated a huge personal fascination about how we think and learn. Teaching has always intrigued me - how our minds work and how we learn. I am interested in the way we break tasks down into easy chunks, which can be built one on top of another, to learn effortlessly.

I started my first business at 18. I set up the old farm stables at Castle Leslie Estate as a yard to break horses and re-school the ones that had been mucked up. It was fascinating to see how the horses behaved and how people and animals can communicate so well using an unspoken language.

Even as a child, the fifth of Dad's diverse brood of 6 kids, I always knew I wanted to restore and run the Castle Leslie Estate. I just needed to figure out how. I knew I could never make the kind of money I needed from horses alone. I also wanted to see more of the world before settling down so I donned my back pack and proceeded to eat my way



around the world, riding horses and working in restaurants to pay my way. Following 2 years on the road, with a back pack, especially in South East Asia and India, it was a bit of a shock to land in Switzerland at École Les Roches, the famous hotel management school. However, the 3 year course provided me with a fantastic grounding in hotel management and food.

I arrived home at the tender age of 24 and undertook the full running of the Castle Leslie Estate. At that stage my Dad had moved to France. There was literally not a penny in the bank and the Castle and grounds were in serious disrepair. With only a tiny farm income to run the 100-roomed Castle and 1000-acre Estate, I had to find a way to make major changes before the house literally crumbled. I successfully applied to the County Enterprise Board for a grant of IR£5,000 and without his knowledge, I sold my Dad's car to get the matching funds. I patched up the old conservatory and started the Victorian Tea Rooms using many of Mrs Beeton's recipes. The waiting staff were kitted out in Victorian dress and I carried out tours of the house.

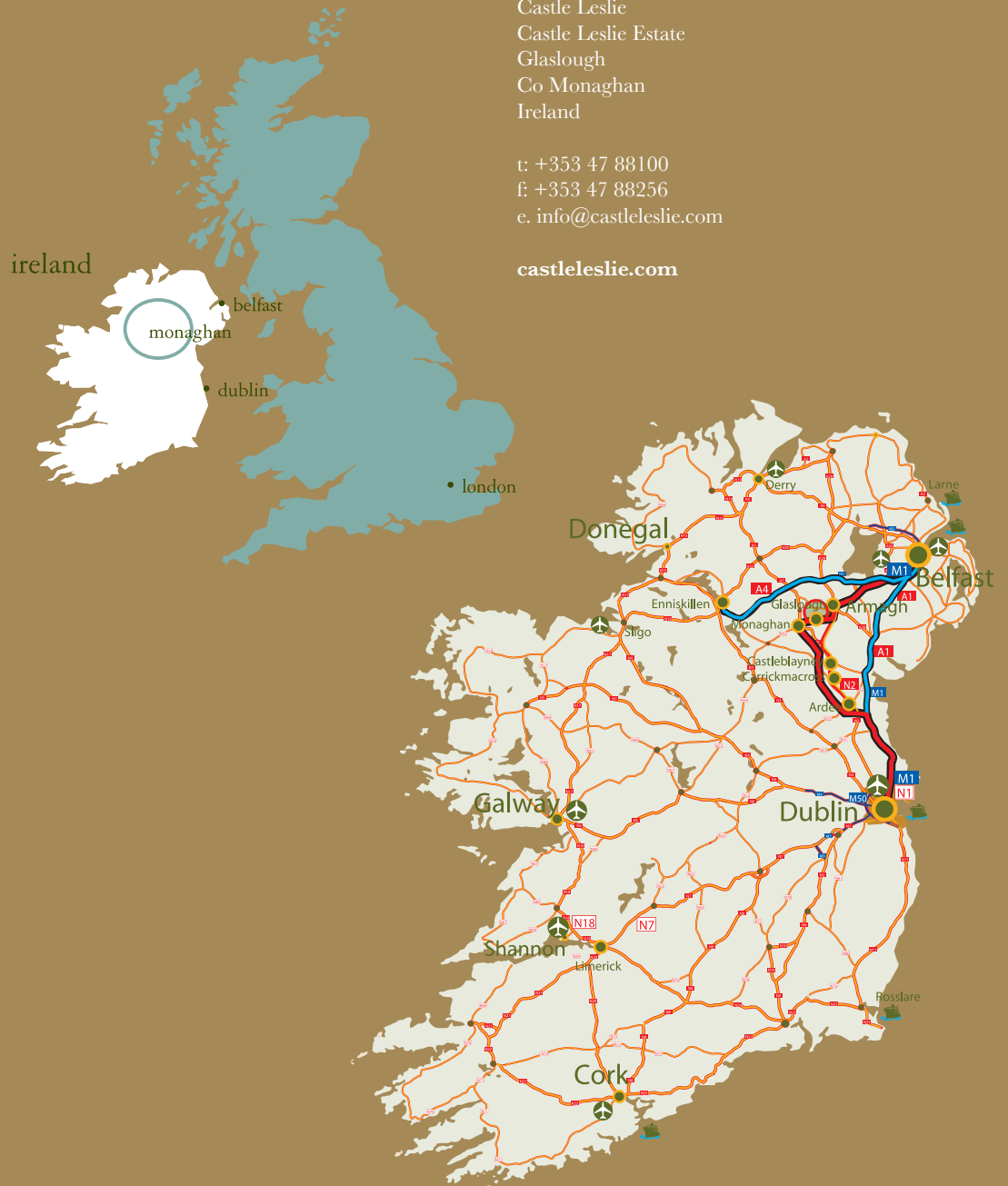
When we first started evening dining and opened the Castle up to paying guests, I spent the first 7 years in the kitchens, doing everything at the beginning and then building up and managing a good team of chefs. Now 20 years on, we have a team of over 140 loyal and dedicated staff on the Estate who take care of up to 250 people on the Estate at any one time. Over the years, we did everything we had to bring the Estate back to its former glory – we sold timber and antiques, secured substantial grants and bank support. Over the years, I have managed to fully restore the Castle, buy back and develop the Lodge, restore the 18th Century coach yard, build new stables and restore the kitchens in the Castle as a state-of-the-art cookery school.

## Contact us

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