

Continuing our series “People Behind the Business” I interview Sean Daly of Dingle Crystal in Dingle town.

Why do you do what you do?

I started working in Waterford Crystal when I was 15 years old. My uncle worked there as a master craftsman and he always loved working there. So I applied and got my interview, which was basically shadowing the craftsmen for a day, and at the end of that day, you had to cut six stars in the base a glass. If you were good enough, you were in!

I had an artistic flair and from the beginning I knew it was the correct career path for me. 45 years later I am still cutting crystal, and love it more with each passing day. It is such an amazing feeling to know that someone loves something you created, so much, that they are willing to pay for it. In our factory in Dingle we get to meet and chat with people from all over the world, and I honestly feel that if I had stayed in Waterford I would not have that one to one interaction with people. It really opens your eyes and your horizons when you get to chat with people from different places and different cultures.



Why Dingle?

My wife Liz and I used to come to Dingle on holidays over the years when the kids were small, and we loved it. In the mid 1990's tourism started to really take off in Dingle and Liz decided that we should relocate to Dingle. She gave me the belief in myself to have the confidence to start our business from the ground up, here in Dingle. We started small in Orchard Lane, and our first commission was making chandeliers for Benner's Hotel. The referrals from this really set us on our path to grow the business to today's factory, which

now employs 10 people. My five children work in the business with me, and I am so lucky to be able to pass my skills to the next generation and make a living from it. When we started in Dingle there was really only one brand that people recognised which was Waterford Crystal, but now Dingle Crystal has become a recognised brand in its own right. Over the years I have seen people's tastes evolve and we have evolved with them. We have introduced more modern designs, and our glassware is now larger to meet modern demand. Our customers are in their 40's and 50's and crystal is now viewed as an aspirational product. They are buying a piece of family history, family tradition and are using their crystal every day. A nice wine deserves a nice heavy glass!

Who is your greatest influence?

My wife Liz. She was my life. She was the drive behind everything we did and was always there to support and guide me.

What one thing inspires you every day?

My family, my sons, daughters, and grandchildren. We are a close family, and it is wonderful to have them all around me, and even better still to have them involved in the business. I feel young and fit enough to keep doing what I'm doing, and knowing that I am passing on my skills to my sons is very fulfilling. It is no effort to come to work every day. in fact, it recharges my batteries.

What is your favourite place on the Dingle Peninsula?

Garfinny Bridge, on the old Dingle to Lispole Road, which is close to my house. To go there



and listen to the water. It is very calming. The bridge is one of the few stone medieval bridges standing in Ireland.

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the Lottery?

It would have to be to treat myself to a new Harley, I have two already. And then with my business hat on, I would upgrade the equipment in our factory.

In conversation with Sean Daly of Dingle Crystal – June 2020

You can book a tour of The Dingle Crystal factory whilst staying at [Castlewood House](#).