

Continuing our series “People Behind the Business” I interview Ann Curran of Hidden Ireland Tours based in Dingle.

We are so lucky to have such diversity of business’s in Dingle. Restaurants, pubs, shops and activity providers, all combine to create the most wonderful experiences and memories for our visitors. We have decided to showcase some of the businesses we work with on the Dingle Peninsula.

Why did you set up your business?

I had been working in the TSB bank for a few years, and I knew Con Moriarty, and one day I was asked to do a walk for a few of his tour guests. I had always loved walking, and, like most people in Dingle I had an interest in local history. I then did an online archaeology course, and went about setting up Hidden Ireland Tours where I have been working as a freelance tour guide for 25 years. I lived in New Hampshire for a while, but Dingle was always home, so I decide to make my home back at home! I work all over the world but home is Dingle.

What do you love about your business?

Well where to start? For me it’s not a job, I love what I do, and I am passionate about my place and what it has to offer. Every trip is unique. I have learned that people travel for a variety of reasons: be it for work; running away from life for a while/time out; or just to have fun. There is always a connection made. Ireland gets under the skin of people. Part of my job is to enhance a person’s experience. As Seamus Heaney says in his poem ‘Postscripts’ –

*“You are neither here nor there,
A hurry through which known and strange things pass
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.”*

That’s the magic of what I do! The biggest and greatest compliment that anyone can pay me, is that they choose to spend part of their valuable holiday time with me, that they choose me, from all the hundreds of other guides.



Tell me about a typical day.

Most of my tours are based in Ireland and weather doesn't bother me. I collect my guests in the morning and we plan our day together. The biggest challenge for me is to ensure my guests get into the real 'Spirit of Ireland'. I love to impart my knowledge of the area, and I hope that my passion comes through. I normally spend the full day with my guests, before I leave them back at their accommodation. Many people will become friends, and tour with me several times.

What is your favourite place on the peninsula, and what makes it so special?

I would have to say the Blasket Islands - there is a sense of calm while also being wild . It feels like you are on the edge of the world .

Give me one thing that what inspires you every day.

Having the privilege to do what I do. Anyone that knows me, or has had a trip with me, will know me to be a genuine person who is passionate about Ireland. If I do not know the answer to a question, I will always say " I will get back to you on that". I never fluff it.

If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would buy ?

I would probably invest in schooling and set up an education centre, where the next generation could study Hospitality and learn something about our culture. That's just for starters.

In conversation with Ann Curran of Hidden Ireland Tours Dingle - May 2020.

We would be happy to book a tour for you with Ann on your next stay at Castlewood House.

