



In our latest People Behind the Business we chat to Juli Malone, the Dingle Druid about her love of nature, lovely memories of helping her Dad on their farm, her love of the simple things in life and how much she feels part of the Dingle Peninsula

Why do you love what you do ?

I do what I do because its who I am. I have always from a young age had a deep connection and communication with plants and nature, especially flowers. I grew up on a mixed farm in Burnham just outside Dingle with wonderful bright, engaging and loving parents Anton & Sheila and four siblings. I always loved the land, felt loved by it and part of it.

Tell me about your journey to becoming the Dingle Druid

My journey to where I am now as the Dingle Druid has been there since childhood. I have always had that connection to the Natural World and Spirit.

I studied Horticulture for 3 years in An Grianan in Co Louth followed by a year at Kays school of Floristry in Dublin. I started my own Garden Centre, Florist and Landscape business in 1993 which I ran for 23 happy years in Burnham just 3 miles outside Dingle.

My interest has always been in the natural world. The Celtic wheel of the year, the 8 fire

festivals , indigenous land practices and Spiritual Ecology. Over the years I have trained in many healing modalities, hypnosis, meditation, shamanic journeying, herbalism, Spiritual Ecology, as a ceremonialist, but it has been in my 6 year training in Plant Spirit Medicine with Carole Guyett that I feel I have come home to self and mastered my craft especially as a ceremonialist . From this the Dingle Druid was born and encompasses all that I am, working and co- creating with nature as a basis for the greater good of all.

Tell us about a typical day and what inspires you every day ?

My inspiration comes from nature, people, and where we are in the wheel of the year and life. My work life is very varied I may be working with a couple getting married as their celebrant or doing wedding flowers for them, or both. I may be doing a celebration for someone's birthday, anniversary, renewal of vows, funerals, baby naming any of life's event, it is a privilege for me to be involved with people for these benchmark moment's.

Under Dingle Druid Flowers I may also be working on occasional flowers for any event.

Working as a death Doula / midwife helping people to prepare for death and especially loved ones that surround them in letting go peacefully. Working with those grieving. Working with the living to speak of death and preparing for its eventuality with more ease and less fear, in doing us we can live a much more active less fearful enriching life.

Under Dingle Druid Herbals I may be making soaps, natural soy wax or beeswax candles or any of the other products I do using natural ingredients or foraging for them. I sell on my website www.dingledruid.com or I am also a guild member of An Gailearai Beag in Dingle. A shop of 14 local artists and craft people. Where we each work two days a month in the shop.

I hold lunar ceremonies New Moon, Full Moon, Solstices, Equinoxes, St Brigids day , Bealtaine, Lunasagh, and Samhain. these may be for one person in a private ceremony or have been up to 350 people in the past.

Now all ceremonies are on zoom due to Covid 19. I miss the personal interaction especially

working with tour groups. The advantage is I can now connect with people from all over the world online

There is a growing interest in the ceremonies, based on Celtic Spirituality, Irish folklore and traditions, Plant Spirit Medicine connects us in a deeper way to ourselves. It gives people a chance to take time out from everyday life and travel within, creating more space. Connecting with ones own intuition, generally tapping into the sacred and feeling its benefits in ones body. Helping us to remember who we truly are and our role in the natural world. More dream time.

What is your favourite time of the day ?

Even though I love getting up with the dawn chorus and sunrise, its that time before bed nightly that I love to venture out to the deck in our back garden with Lucy our dog. When I'm in the dark I can connect with the ground beneath me and the heavens above, I do a mental review of the day, give thanks and pray that with all with all my human failings I will do better tomorrow.

What are your fondest memories of growing up in Dingle ?

I have so many lovely memories. Wrens day (26th December) out on the Wran, swimming for over 35 years with Fungie our beloved wild dolphin, amazing live music gigs, years of camping on the Blasket Island each summer. I loved helping my father on the hill fencing (I used to hand him the nails, spent years of my youth hanging out there), I just loved the freedom of it. I spent a lot of time on beaches and hilltops, picking daisies & wildflowers, just simple things like watching the world go by from one of the most beautiful parts of the world and feeling part of it. Eventful nights out with my friends dancing at the Hillgrove. Hanging out with my friend Anne Ashe. Night time swims in phosphorescence with Fungie. Lots of laughter with my friends, Sunsets and sunrises. Night time walks with my mother as a child with the dog and two cats. That feeling of having your small hand held by your parents feeling safe loved and secure. Simple things.

What is your favourite part of the Dingle Peninsula ?

Burnham where I live, I love the hill above the road on the family farm which has seen four generations. I adore looking across at Skellig Michael, the Blasket Islands, Ventry Bay, overlooking Dingle harbour, Eask Tower & Burnham woods are but a few fields away.

Watching the bright lights of Dingle across the Harbour reflecting on the water. Even the family burial tomb is in the graveyard across the road. I feel of this land and I love it, feel loved by it and blessed to raise my family, my son Ruairc, and Roisin-Mya my daughter here.

If you won the lottery tomorrow what would you do with it ?

I can't think of a better way to invest than allowing nature to express itself through a native woodland for generations to come. Now more than ever as humans we can connect to the value of wild spaces and the fallout of the disconnection to wild spaces. My money would be in building that bridge within us, kind of what I do now but in a grander scale.

I have just been granted planning permission to build a Dingle Druid Experience Centre in Burnham, a centre of Spiritual Ecology, Celtic Spirituality, Wildcrafting and co-creating with nature, my lottery win would be a delightful help in building it and enjoying years of happy visitors taking time out to connect with the wealth that our natural world has to offer. Connecting within, slowing down, becoming more peaceful in your mind and your heart. Our beautiful hearts need more care ! I would also bring my family on a trip to Iceland, we would love to explore there, the country not the shop ?

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