

Charmaine's Diary

1st March 2010

Monday

Not even the Rose of Tralee's perennially sunny disposition (!) is immune to what can, at best, be described as Monday morning's unique 'charms'. I have a cold, a very nasty cold. Drive to Donnybrook to drop off video footage of my Indian visit to RTÉ. Notice that I have broken 10,000 kilometres on my lovely Volvo C30.

Tuesday

Thank goodness I am basing myself at home in Athy this year – there is nothing like a mother's TLC when one's not well. Practice Indian sari dressing – it's difficult to wrap and drape six metres of material around oneself elegantly.

Wednesday

Travel to RTÉ to appear on the Afternoon Show. Dress up in the sari and interview with Maura Derrane about my trip to Kolkata (Calcutta), India with Suas Educational Development last week. Am nervous about this gig as I have been involved with Suas for many years and know the staff very well – I do not want to mess up! The interview goes fine and I am relieved that I get to mention Suas's main fundraising campaign in the year – Shamrocks for Schools – taking place on the 16th and 17th of March (St Patrick's Day). Suas recruit 250 volunteers in Dublin, Cork and Galway to paint shamrocks on the faces of parade revellers young and old, collecting voluntary donations. I am thrilled that this year, all of the funds raised will go directly to Suas Partner Projects that I visited in Kolkata. The target is €40,000. When it costs less than €70 to support the education of a child for a year including meals, copybooks and uniform, the money that is raised on St Patrick's Day will go a long way. I've been involved in Shamrocks for Schools on a couple of past St Patrick's days and it's a guaranteed fun day out; the craic is mighty!

Thursday

Do a radio interview with LMF in Louth to talk about the search for my replacement – the 2010 Rose of Tralee. I would definitely encourage all young women to apply. It is an exciting and magical journey that will lead to new friendships, different experiences and great craic - no matter what stage is achieved. Head out for the night to the International Comedy Bar in Dublin. Arrive late and have no choice but to accept the two stools in the front row. My heart thumps through the whole show at the thought that we will be picked upon but we manage to escape. Phew!

Friday

Girls night out and we go to the Inspirations gig in the Olympia in aid of Barrettstown. A host of acts feature – David Gray, Paddy Casey, Mundy, Gemma Hayes and more – each performing songs by their musical heroes and some of their own material. A great night, hosted by good ole Ray D'Arcy, who is introduced as the Kildare Rose!

Saturday

Attend the Trinity Business Alumni Fashion Show in aid of Respect, a charity that fundraises for people with intellectual disabilities of all ages. The show is directed by Celia Holman-Lee, with Eddie Hobbs and Kathryn Thomas as hosts for the evening and musical entertainment provided by the brilliant Dublin Gospel Choir. Make my catwalk debut, strutting my stuff and wearing a LK Bennett puff-shouldered cream coat and a fitted purple dress. Other 'celebrity' models involved include Louis Copeland himself, politician Lucinda Creighton and The Apprentice participant Breffny Morgan. The latter confesses of his dream to host the televised Rose of Tralee selection nights in the Dome. I suggest that he take one step at a time and perhaps start off by applying to be an Escort this year – through his county of Cork. Applications are being accepted now in every county of Ireland!

Sunday

Woke up to the worrying realization that I have to participate in at least five charity runs over the next few months. The only exercise my legs have had since running the Dublin marathon last October is the daily workout of balancing in high heels. So I root out my runners, check for mildew and hit the road. A new me has been born!