

Charmaine's Diary

12th April 2010

Monday

Wake up to the onslaught of lactic acid build-up after the half marathon the day before. Ouch! Drive from Sligo to Dublin. Photoshoot in St Stephen's Green for The Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland. Many children with the disease are unable to say "Cystic Fibrosis" and instead say "65 Roses" so this is why gardener Diarmuid Gavin, the Rose of Tralee and a lovely young fella named Seán who has CF are called to task. Drive home to Athy to a mammy's dinner – there's nothing like it!

Tuesday

Quick phone interview on the Gerry Ryan radio show. Hector is filling in as presenter and hosts a chaotic conversation between 2009 Manchester Rose (Aideen O'Reilly), 2009 Escort Seán McGarrell, Paddy Power, Daithí Ó Sé and me about all sorts, from what who will be Ray D'Arcy's replacement as the next Rose of Tralee host, to the upcoming Kilimanjaro trek that some Roses and Escorts are doing for Voluntary Services Overseas, and of course everything in between. Travel to Drogheda to LMFM for an in-studio interview with radio presenter Gerry Kelly and am privileged to be given a half hour of airtime. Travel back to Dublin to the Lucan Spa Hotel to a briefing night for Dublin Roses who are all in the exact same position as I was last year – filling out my application form!

Wednesday

Spend the morning trying on outfits in clothes boutiques in Athy for an upcoming fashion show and rehearse catwalking down the ramp later that night. Drive to Kill, Co Kildare in the afternoon for a photoshoot in Saplings school to promote a charity fundraiser for Irish Autism Action. This unique fundraiser is the brainchild of, who can only be described as two nutters, Gerry Duffy and Ken Whitelaw, who will attempt to run 32 consecutive marathons in 32 counties in just 32 days! I will be joining the two boys on the Kildare and Westmeath legs of the heroic feat that lies ahead of them in July.

Thursday

Completely charmed by a children's drama group in Athy which is under the guidance of actor Charlie Hughes. I just love how children are liable to ask anything! Take a few twirls down the catwalk at a fashion show in Athy organised by the Lion's Club. Am overwhelmed by the warm reception given to me by my home crowd. Jump into a ballgown and dash to Tullow, chauffeured by Dad, for a local rose selection night coordinated by Tullow Rugby Club. Three fabulous girls are selected to represent the area in the Carlow Selection Night next month.

Friday

Pop in to have some clothes altered by my dressmaker who is like a fairy godmother making sure all my clothes have a perfect fit. Drive from Athy to Clare to attend the county selection night. This is the first time that the International Rose of Tralee has attended the Clare selection and it is my honour to do so. Delighted to get to know Audrey Flynn, the 2009 Clare Rose, and of course, Nuala McKeogh, the 2010 Clare Rose who will no doubt be a fine ambassador for the county.

Saturday

Attend a mock wedding in the Carlton Hotel Tralee. Actors from Fair City and Killinaskully play the wedding party and mingle with guests at the reception, concocting stories of how we all know the bride and groom. Apparently I went to school with the bride (we made our communion together), another man was in a jeans commercial with the groom (as everyone is invited to check out his derriere) and another woman is the tattoo-artist of the bride. The evening ensues with a full wedding reception – a delicious five-course meal, hilarious speeches and a top class band – brilliant fun – and what a unique way to show case the Carlton Hotel Tralee as a wedding venue. Am called upon to do draw the raffle tickets – I don't think I will be asked again as I draw the same person for three prizes – not very popular!

Sunday

Meet two little Rose of Tralee fans, Amy and Ciara, who had gathered many of the Roses autographs last August. They show me their little autograph books and how they conscientiously cut out and stuck photographs of each Rose beside their name. Very cute. Travel home to Athy from Tralee. Hit 15,000 kilometres on my Volvo, one fifth of which were clocked up in the past fortnight!