

## Charmaine's Diary

12<sup>th</sup> July 2010

### Monday

My Monday morning mission: to go for a run in preparation for charity races later in the week and then go to the physio. Old age, inconsistent training and high heels are having their effects on my poor legs! Two of my little cousins from Mullingar are on holiday in Athy for a couple of days and there is great excitement in our house.

### Tuesday

Receive an email from Valerie in the Rose of Tralee office announcing that there are only THIRTY SEVEN days til the Festival. Absolutely bananas how quickly the year has flown. Drive to the Newbridge Silverware showroom to say hello to the marketing department and to pick up my tiara which has been shined up, looking sparkling new. Take a quick peek at the fabulous museum there which now houses the etoile of Princess Diana's wedding dress and her actual veil. Speaking of Princess Diana, I am keeping good company these days. During my visit I discover an eight foot photo of me in the Newbridge Silverware restaurant, with Lady Di on one side and the comedian Bob Hope on the other.

### Wednesday

The pace of my Rose diary has slowed a little in recent days and I take the opportunity to catch up on promised visits in my hometown of Athy. Amongst the visits is one to a Sisters of Mercy house where my primary school Principal, Sr Marie, lives. We spend a relaxed and cheery afternoon reminiscing on bygone times. She and Sr Peg even try on my tiara and sash. If ever I have a sick day, I now know who to call on to be my stand-in...

### Thursday

A number of months ago I was introduced to, in my father's words, two crazy ginnets - Gerry Duffy and Ken Whitelaw. They have set out to complete the epic challenge of doing 32 marathons in each of the 32 counties of Ireland in 32 consecutive days. And the reason for this madness? To raise funds for Irish Autism Action, Autism Northern Ireland and the Irish Cancer Society. I have signed up to accompany them on Day 14 of their monumental journey. The location is Maynooth in County Kildare and I am given the honour to blow the starting whistle. I run a half marathon (13.1 miles) with the boys and am embarrassed when I hit the wall at mile 10, while Gerry and Ken still have to pound the roads for the other 16 miles that day and have another 18 marathons ahead of them. I am relieved to finish the crossing line in 2 hours 3 minutes and honoured to have been involved in this incredibly ambitious and brave feat. Drive home to Athy and pop into my Mum's salon to have a rub-down with the sports therapist. Another advantage of living at home this year!

## **Friday**

I certainly don't have that Friday feeling today as I go to the dentist. Thankfully I'm off the hook this time. Spend the afternoon catching up on the admin side of being the Rose of Tralee - I don't think that anyone escapes paperwork!

## **Saturday**

What better way to kick off the weekend than by taking part in the Irish Runner 5 mile Race in the Phoenix Park. Sporting an ISPC (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) t-shirt my heavy legs make it around the course in 41mins 43secs. After the run I feel as though I deserve to tuck into the delights of Templebar food market – homemade veggie curry and fresh fruit juice topped off with (two slices of) chocolate biscuit cake – couldn't think of anything nicer. Shelter from the lashing rain in the Irish Film Institute and watch a heart-warming film called The Concert. I usually find sub-titled movies tough work but this was great. We catch up with some friends from London who are in Dublin for the weekend. Watch the hurling Munster final, and, with Seán being from Waterford (though confusingly supports Kilkenny), I am glad to see that the Déise is victorious.

## **Sunday**

Decide to go for a Sunday drive and given the teaming rain we settle on Newry as the destination. We are curious about all the hype about going over the border to shop. Stock up on some toiletry essentials but don't go too crazy. Seán torments me all day about going to an evening barbeque back in Dublin and I'm unimpressed given my vegetarianism and the miserable weather. Turns out that he was just trying to get me to dress appropriately and surprises me with tickets for an outdoor gig - Josh Ritter in Iveagh Gardens. Absolutely loved it. This is as near to a normal weekend that I've had in a long time.