

## Charmaine's Diary

28<sup>th</sup> June 2010

### Monday

Wake up in New York. One of my best childhood friends, Louise, lives here now and having attended the Philadelphia Rose selection I am sneaking a couple of "off-duty" days to hang out. We get off to a good start to the week by toddling off to a specialist running shop to get fitted for a pair of runners and pick up a pair of sunglasses. Now in style with our new gear, we have no excuse but to go for a run around Central Park. Tough going in the humidity. To balance things out, we spend the remainder of the day gorging ourselves in crepes and all sorts of gluttonous treats.

### Tuesday

It is absolutely roasting in New York and Louise is anxious to escape the city. We head out to Long Beach and spend the day lazing under the baking sun and catching up. Later meet with my first cousin, Monica, for dinner.

### Wednesday

Squeeze in some last minute shopping before journeying back to Dublin from Newark via Philadelphia.

### Thursday

Arrive back into Dublin Airport like a zombie. Grab a few hours sleep in my home away from home, the Dublin Airport Carlton Hotel, before attending a couple of meetings in the afternoon. Then it's back to where my day began – in the airport – to collect a friend.

### Friday

Roadtrip with the girls to Westport in my sturdy little Volvo. Hit the hay in the Carlton Atlantic Coast Hotel after a fabulous meal in their new restaurant "Fishworks".

### Saturday

A premature start to the weekend when the alarm goes off at 6.45am. We find ourselves back in the car bound for Achill Island to run a half-marathon. We try to wake ourselves up and get psyched for the race by blasting 80's disco music, drinking lucozade and munching on energy bars. I'm not sure if it is a strategic move but I am given the easily identifiable race number "2010" and I am nabbed for photos before, during and after the race. Not my most glamorous moments. I am informed by text that my chiptime is 1.59.17 and I came 709<sup>th</sup>! I am not going to break any records anytime soon but am relieved that I made it around the course without being hospitalised. I later hand out prizes to the winners, the male winner finishing in 1.15.57 and female winner 1.32.39. Super runs considering the hilly terrain and

challenging weather. Spend some time with the lovely 'bean an tí' of our B&B before hitting the hotspots of Achill for the night.

### **Sunday**

Play guest of honour at the Hollymount Vintage Rally organised by the Western Vintage Tractor & Engine Club that is taking place just outside Claremorris, Co.Mayo. Lead by a piper, I am brought by horse and chariot around the show grounds before performing the official opening. There are all sorts of activities taking place - I view some of the restored tractors, some of which date back as far as 1948 and also the vintage cars, the oldest being from 1949 and I even get to sit on top of a big steam powered tractor from 1919 that's fuelled by coal. This is my first official engagement in Mayo and I have a pinch of regret for not having made it to this friendly, welcoming county before now. The day is made extra special by bumping into relations of close family friends. This year's rally supports three charities - Mayo Mental Health Association, National Council for the Blind of Ireland and Mayo Autism Action.