

Charmaine's Diary

5th July 2010

Monday

Wake up in the Carlton Hotel in Westport – the fabulous Atlantic Coast Hotel. Do a photo at their new restaurant Fishworks. Swap the gúna and high heels for a tracksuit and hiking boots before making our way to Croagh Patrick. As we set off up the mountain we are stopped by kind pilgrims who are on their way down and give us their sticks. We soon understand why St Patrick always has a staff. It is STEEP –we had completely underestimated the difficulty in tackling this mountain. A pilgrimage indeed! Probably not helped by running a half marathon two days before. Blessed with a beautifully clear day, we soak up the fabulous views. Motor back to Dublin in the evening.

Tuesday

Photoshoot in Kilbeggan Racecourse to promote a charity benefit night for LARCC Cancer Centre based in Mullingar, Co Westmeath. The race night is taking place on Saturday 7th August. There are five people at the photoshoot, four to which I have family connections but none of whom I had met before. Very bizarre but brilliantly typical of this year. Drop into Granny and Grandad in Mullingar on the way home.

Wednesday

A no make-up day – woohoo! Catch up on some admin before driving to Dublin to watch the World Cup semi-finals in Comans of Rathgar– Spain V Germany. This is the first match I've seen in its entirety and I surprise myself at how much I enjoy it. Bump into one of the Dublin Rose finalists, Laura Hallinan, who works in the bar.

Thursday

Run a few errands around Dublin city centre and drive back to Athy just in time for Mammy's dinner. A serious advantage of living at home!!!

Friday

A kind gift of two tickets sees me making my way to Oxygen with my friend Nicola. The last time that we were at this music festival it was called Witness – 8 years ago. We are conscious of our age amidst all the college students in their uniform of hot pants, fakes tan and wellies, but are comforted when asked for ID when ordering at the bar. Despite the persistently miserable weather we have great fun listening to The Coronas, Vampire Weekend, Arcade Fire and many more. Having said that, I am happy to get into my own bed that night and not a leaking tent.

Saturday

Meet with Clare, the 2010 London Rose, and her mother for a chat about preparations for Tralee – conversation jumps excitedly from dresses and accessories, to accommodation and tickets, to parades and balls. It is really lovely to see another family entering into the magic and excitement of the Rose of Tralee International Festival. Later in the evening attend the Dublin Rose Final in Citywest where 22 young women blind us with their brilliance as Daithí Ó Sé puts them through their paces. Niamh Sherlock, who has the unusual job of being a ‘grant wisher’ with the Make a Wish Foundation is chosen as the 2010 Dublin Rose. It is heartwarming to now see her wish come true for a change. Great night with superb entertainment, made all the more special by the fabulous turnout of Roses, Escorts and even three Roses of Tralee which is a rare occasion – Sinéad Boyle (1989), Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin (2005) and myself.

Sunday

In the afternoon I am reminded of my childhood at a field day in Hollywood GAA Pitch, Wicklow. There are all sorts of activities taking place - throwing sopping wet sponges at people’s faces, hitting a target with a tennis ball, pillow-fighting on a wooden gym horse, milking a fake cow, taking a jaunt in a pony and trap, face-painting and much more. Coincidentally I meet the craftsman from Newbridge Silverware who made my tiara. Head home in the evening and watch some of the World Cup and the Sunday Game with Dad. My heart goes out to Louth.