

Charmaine's Diary

8 February 2010

Monday

Appear on the Afternoon Show to talk about my trip to Belarus with Adi Roche and the Chernobyl Children's Project. Interview with Sheana Keane whose interest, genuineness and warmth put me at ease. The show researcher later tells me that the viewership numbers are high for my segment and I advise them to thank my mother who had told the world and its Granny that I was going to be on! Pop into LK Bennett in Dundrum Shopping Centre who don me with clothes for an upcoming photoshoot before retiring to the Carlton Hotel in Dublin Airport for the next few nights. This is where the Rose Tour began last August and I miss not having the Sydney Rose as my roommate!

Tuesday

Queue at the Indian Embassy in Dublin to apply for a visa which is like taking a step into Delhi itself. Will be going on a field visit with Suas Educational Development next week; a charity dedicated to supporting quality education in targeted under-resourced communities and one with which I've been involved with for the past seven years or so. I have previously spent two summers working with them in Delhi and Calcutta. For me it was a very humbling and enlightening experience and one which I've certainly carried with me over the years; it not only gave me an appreciation for what a fortunate life I've been born into but also a flavour of the power that I have to make a difference. I cannot wait to go back over and revisit the projects and catch up with old friends. Do a surprise visit to my Granny's friend in the Mater Hospital. Photoshoot at Leinster House with the 2010 Rose of Tralee festival charity partners – Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Turning the Tide of Suicide (3T's) and the Mercy Hospital Cork. Enjoy the presentation by the three charities to Senator Mark Daly, and some of his colleagues. Dinner at the Dáil restaurant followed by drinks in the Dáil bar. A real treat!

Wednesday

Pop into the Frank Lyman warehouse, a label that has been very generous in their support, to try find some summery clothes for India – it's about 30 degrees Celsius there at the moment. Meet with Brendan Galvin, coordinator of the Dublin Rose of Tralee Centre, who happens to be a pretty nifty cameraman and editor. We record some infomercials for the search for the 2010 Rose of Tralee. I blunder my way through. Attend the Give it a Twist Photography Exhibition in Temple Bar. Amazed by some unique and cool exhibits. Bump into Jack L, a fellow Athy-born and whose biggest fan is my Mum! Discover Julie Feeney, a quirky performer, with a most extraordinary sound.

Thursday

Photoshoot at the Mansion House to promote the Trinity Business Alumni (TBA) fashion show "Dress to Impress" in aid of RESPECT. Get involved in all sorts of manoeuvres with Kathryn Thomas of RTÉ, Mark Ryan of Accenture and Sr. Martha of RESPECT including racing across Dawson Street with a clothes rail in front of oncoming traffic – with Sr. Martha leading the pack. Great fun despite the bitter cold. Drive to Tralee. Quick visit to Cúil Dídin Residential Care to visit a special resident. Meet up with the Rose Chaperone team who looked after me so well during the festival in Tralee last year and we reminisce on the shananigans and fun times. Already looking forward to next year's Festival.

Friday

Visit Scoil Eoin in Balloonagh, Tralee and receive a very warm welcome. Highlight was the fifth class play, a take on the Rose of Tralee selection night – absolutely hilarious. Drive from Tralee to Wexford which the AA Routeplanner tells me should take 4 hours 13 minutes. Having only gotten my full license in December and being a novice on Irish roads, it takes me, my lovely Volvo and sat nav SIX hours! With a twenty minute turnaround I try to project a state of calm as I arrive at the CONSOLE Valentine's Ball. Philip Kehoe, Escort of the Year in 2007, is a little rusty but plays a very good escort on the night!

Saturday

Drive to Athy. Another quick dress change - photoshoot at St. Laurence's GAA Club. Pose with two members of the doubly-crowned Kildare County Senior Championship and Senior Kildare League team in an effort to recruit participants for the Kildare GAA Rose. The girl selected will then represent Kildare GAA clubs in the Kildare Rose selection. Watch the rugby at home with Dad – a very disappointing result but here's hoping for the Triple Crown...

Sunday

Relief that there is no post on a Sunday as the postman cannot catch me in my pyjamas – a running tradition that leaves me red-faced and puts the Rose of Tralee title into disrepute! Dad gives me a red rose for Valentine's Day – awww! Log onto the Rose of Tralee website and get alarmed that there is only 186 days to the 2010 Festival, meaning that I'm almost half way through my reign.