

Charmaine's Diary

9th August 2010

Monday

Meet a young, up and coming, Dublin-based designer - Dawn Fitzgerald. She has very kindly agreed to loan me a dress from her collection to wear on the final television night of this year's Festival in Tralee. Very excited!

Tuesday

Beautification time in my Mum's salon, Marian's Salon de Beauté in Athy. A serious perk of living at home this year – thanks Mum!

Wednesday

Co Kildare has been enjoying glorious weather for the past few days but I seem to have missed it. Convinced of the advantages of getting some natural Vitamin D, I am determined to get some sun today. With a sore foot, I've been advised to hang up my running shoes for a while and so I decide to give cycling a go instead. I get from the shed Dad's old high nelly – it's a bit rusty with shoddy gears and an uncomfortable saddle – and I am in no wonder as to why I'm dusting the cobwebs off it. I go for a spin out as far as Kilkea Castle and learn why cycling shorts have padding in them! Pop into town do some errands. Bump into an old school pal of mine I haven't seen in years and autograph a local historian's copy of last year's publication of "The Rose of Tralee – Fifty Years A-Blooming"

Thursday

Up early for a baking lesson with Mum. I am learning how to make scones so that I can take them as a little thank-you to some people who have helped me out during the year. Perhaps a little country-bumpkin-esque but there's nothing like home-baking! Amongst the bestowers of kindness to me is Brian Beggan and the ladies of Libra Designs, an Irish label that do some great dresses, and I pop into their warehouse to say hello. Coerce Seán into coming to see a film called "His and Hers" – with a title like that he is convinced that he's in store for a chick-flick. But this Irish film is more like a documentary. It's about 70 women, all from the Irish midlands, arranged in ascending order of age, telling stories about the men in their lives. They begin by discussing dads, go on to ponder boyfriends, and then move on to sons and husbands. It begins with a baby and ends with an elderly lady philosophically contemplating decline. The film is so beautifully familiar, refreshing, sad and funny all at once – highly recommend it!

Friday

Today's engagement has been long talked about - a visit to Athy Garda Station, my Dad's place of work. I am greeted by the sergeant in charge and members of the station's social committee. They have

organised a wonderful meeting of station members, both new and old, their families and friends. A lovely, relaxed occasion. And dare I say that there was a Garda or two (of the male species), at least one of which is high-ranking, who swapped their Garda hat for a try of the Newbridge tiara! What would the Garda commissioner say?!

Saturday

I am ecstatic to learn that Wexford swimmer Gráinne Murphy claimed a magnificent silver medal in the final of the women's 1500 metres final at the European Championships in Hungary this afternoon. I was listening to the commentary of another race of hers on the radio earlier in the week – she was second and third for most of the race – and I nearly cried when I heard she was deprived a medal at the final length. So delighted she is not coming home empty handed. Only 17 years old. Fabulous role model - well done to her.

Sunday

Continue preparations for the festival in Tralee – the bags are now half-packed. The Rose Tour for the 2010 Roses starts today and I have a quick chat with the 2010 London Rose, Clare Kambamettu, before she sets off on an experience of a lifetime. Watch the hurling semi-final between Waterford and Tipperary match with Dad. Do some media interviews over the phone. Catch up with one of my best friends in Dublin for a much overdue chinwag.