

Clare's Diary

6 October 2010

Wednesday

Following a fab home cooked lunch in my Tralee escort, Donal's house, I return to my alma mater, NUI Galway to launch their Mental Health Awareness Week. I am lucky enough to get a glimpse of the artwork of Bobby Baker, a woman who through her diary illustrations has shown the world the reality behind mental health issues; her pictures are both humorous and poignant. It is great to be back on my old stomping ground and I am only sorry I am not there for longer. I am back in the Carlton Shearwater, Ballinasloe by 7pm as I am judging on the panel for the Fashion Entrepreneur Awards. I am delighted to see Sarah O'Neill take the top prize for her beautiful creations.

Thursday

An early start and I am heading for home by 8am. By 11 I have unpacked and repacked the car as my Mum and I set out on our road trip to London. The crossing is pretty rough and our sea legs are nowhere to be found so we are both glad when we touch solid ground again. I am glad to have Mum with me to share the driving as it is a long haul but we reach London by 10pm. We are warmly welcomed by my two cats Lily and Brian, and James who has a lovely dinner prepared for us.

Friday

Today I am giving a handover at work to Lucy, the girl who is replacing me. She has done all the hard work for me and is pretty much up to speed on everything. Tonight, the London RoT committee throw me a fantastic homecoming party in the Crown Moran hotel in Kilburn. I am delighted and honoured to meet some of the past London Roses and Roses of Tralee who are in attendance and it is wonderful to see all my friends. It strikes me that it will be quite a while before I see many of them again.

Saturday

Today is carb day seeing as I will be burning them all off tomorrow. Pasta for breakfast, lunch and dinner, yippee! I have a lovely day ambling around the shops with Mum. We spot a few bargains and a pair of shoes which are definitely not a bargain but I cannot resist them!

Sunday

I keep reminding myself that this is just another run but I feel nervous all the same. I am glad James is with me as we make our way to the starting point in Hyde Park along with 14,000 others. The pistol is fired and we are off! My target is 2 hours so I am proud as punch to see that I am running with the 1 hour 40 group. We pass the Starlight children at 8.5 miles and they give us a loud cheer spurring me on. Suddenly, my hip (which I strained trying on my new heels yesterday) begins to ache intensely and I am forced to slow down. I am sad as I see the 1 hour 50 and then the 2 hour group pass me by. A woman right in front of me begins to wheeze and drops to the ground. I am shocked as people just ignore her and keep going. I stop along with a couple of strapping young fellas who are able to lift her to the side as

we wait for help. Eventually I finish in 2 hours and 4 minutes. James, who sped away at the start, has finished in the fantastic time of 1 hour and 42 minutes. We limp to the Starlight afterparty; the pain disappears as I meet some of the children who will benefit directly from the money raised today, they truly are an inspiration.

Monday

I am back in the office for one last time today. I am awful with goodbyes so promise to return one day with sash and tiara in hand so that I can say 'see you soon' instead. Tonight I pack 4 years of my life into bags and boxes. This sentence is insufficient to describe the amount of time and emotion that goes into this task but finally I am finished. Goodbye London, hello Athy!

Tuesday

Owwwwwww. Everyone told me today I would be in pain. I thought that I had escaped but apparently I am not that lucky. Mum, thankfully drives the whole way to Holyhead as I don't think my poor legs could take it. We arrive home in the early evening and I realise that this really is home for me now, for the next year anyway. My electric blanket is on and there is dinner on the table. There are definitely perks to moving back in with Mum and Dad!