

Clare's Diary

13th April 2011

Wednesday

An early start this morning as my friend Kat and I drive down to Cork popping in to the HOPE Foundation head office on the way. After a quick chat with some of the wonderful staff there we head to the Rochestown House Hotel where Marymount Hospice are hosting a ladies lunch to raise some much needed funds for their new building. We have a delicious lunch and are treated to a spectacular performance by soprano Cara O'Sullivan before hitting the road to Newry. The Co Down selection is taking place tonight and Gemma Murphy is leaving very big shoes behind her to fill. However the judges have a very difficult job to do given the standard of the 17 girls who take to the stage and there is great excitement in the air as Nicole Curran is chosen to represent the other sixteen at the regional finals.

Thursday

Kat, my new chauffeur drives home, which affords me a little study time. I am honoured to be celebrating the Women's Integrated Network 5th anniversary in Athy this lunchtime. We hear from a number of powerful women speakers on interesting topics such as Diversity and the Arts and Women Leaders of the World. I pop off to have my hair done before going for a wedding dress fitting but only because I am modelling it later on at the Lion's club fashion show! I am wearing clothes from a number of local boutiques in Athy and myself and the other 'models' including Charmaine Kenny have great fun backstage before prancing about on the cat walk. The night is a huge success and the Lion's Club manage to raise almost €10,000 for local charities.

Friday

I drive to Galway for my second round interview at NUIG with butterflies dancing in my tummy. As I enter the city I get stuck in a GIANT traffic jam which causes me to be a few minutes late and brings me pretty close to having a heart attack! Fortunately the interviews are running a little behind schedule so it doesn't make me look too bad! The interview is tough and I come out feeling pretty negative about its outcome but I manage to squash this aside in order to enjoy the Tipperary selection tonight in Thurles. Noirin Ryan is selected as the 2011 Tipperary Rose to huge applause!

Saturday

I wake up so excited this morning as one of my closest friends Miriam is marrying the love of her life in Galway. Mark and Miriam have been together for years and have already gone through some pretty tough times, I have tears in my eyes when I see Mir looking so radiant in her wedding dress. As Mark later tells me, he had been feeling really nervous all morning but when he turned around and saw her all the anxiety just vanished.....awwwwwww! I have about

as much rhythm as a three legged rhinoceros but I give it socks anyway and myself and a heap of my uni buddies dance the night away in style!

Sunday

A day off! My friend, Donal and I drive out to sun drenched Connemara where we walk all around Omey Island, my favourite place in the entire world. It's a haven of tranquillity out there and I feel like a new person as we drive back towards the city popping in to see Colm Power, the 2010 Galway Escort. The three of us enjoy some yummy tapas before parting ways. I spend the evening reflecting on Friday's interview and preparing myself for what I think will be inevitable disappointment.

Monday

This morning I drive back to Athy where I am meeting the Mrs Quin's shop staff to do a drive by collection. We have a profitable morning collecting around 20 bags of unwanted clothes, toys and other goodies that will be sold in the shop to raise funds for the National Council for the Blind. This afternoon I head to Newbridge to have a look in some of the shops; I need to get my hands on a few more full length dresses. I don't find any but treat myself to a frappacino to reward my efforts!

Tuesday

This morning I finally get around to booking my flight to Australia which leaves in just three weeks time! An email pops in just as I am about to switch off my computer and it's from the Post-graduate Applications Centre. It's news from NUIG. I can barely type in my password and I feel nauseous as I open the page. This is my last chance to stay in Ireland and near my family in September. I am shocked as I read the line: 'Congratulations, you have been offered a place on this course' and I re-read it three or four times before I call my parents and yell the news down the phone. This is the culmination of eight years of hard work and I can't believe my good luck!