

## Clare's Diary

**17 November 2010**

### **Wednesday**

A magical evening in Newbridge Silverware to launch their fabulous new range of vintage jewellery and home-ware. I am like a magpie when it comes to all things sparkly so I spend much of the first hour oohing and aaaahing at all the beautiful pieces. Everything is glittering including the guest-list. It is lovely to see Gay Byrne and Kathleen Watkins and Anne Doyle again and a pleasure to meet Ronan O'Gara and Donnacha O'Callaghan as well as the utterly gorgeous Miss Ireland who plays the Rose of Tralee on the fiddle.

### **Thursday**

I hit the road early on as I am meeting the one woman show that is Valerie Kerins (organiser extraordinaire without whom the festival and I would be lost!) at Fiona Whyte's studio in Limerick. Fiona is a well known designer who has generously offered me some of her magnificent creations as part of my prize. Her designs certainly have the 'wow' factor and I am thrilled to think I will get to wear one of them soon. After the fitting we head Tralee-wards where tonight I am attending a small get together to thank the businesses of the town who raised over €80,000 to fund the festival's street entertainment programme. This huge achievement demonstrates not only how important the festival is to the local community but how important the community is to the calibre of the festival.

### **Friday**

Banna Beach in the morning is magical and I am lucky to be able to run on it this morning. Not so lucky when my fingers start to fall off from frostbite. I am delighted to be present for the launch of Tralee Community Centre's latest addition. With the help of FAS, the Centre's hard working staff and skilled students have turned an old storage space into a brand new, well equipped, beautifully painted training salon which will benefit many young school leavers giving them the opportunity to increase their employment prospects. Tonight, my family and I are proud to be attending the Pat Healy Orphanage gala ball. The late Pat Healy, and his family and friends have worked tirelessly to ensure his dream of building a school and orphanage in Andhra Pradesh, the state my Dad hails from, is realised. The plans have been drawn and building is just beginning on this fabulous project. I get involved in the bidding during the auction but fortunately for the charity (unfortunately for me) the bids grow too large for me!

### **Saturday**

This morning I fly from Cork to London where I am attending the Killarney Reunion in the Crown Moran Hotel. It is wonderful to realise that I am starting to recognise people at Irish events in London, I feel very much at home among the Kerry community here now! Another great evening is had by all and I am only slightly embarrassed when I draw one of my boyfriend James' tickets in the raffle!

**Sunday**

I have a hectic day catching up with as many friends as possible while I am here. I am super excited today as I have tickets for the latest Harry Potter film booked for weeks. I am a big fan and am not disappointed as the acting and effects have only improved since the last production. Popcorn for dinner yum yum.

**Monday**

Back to a bitterly cold Cork this afternoon where I meet one of my good University friends, Kathy for dinner. We stay up late catching up and nattering away and she is the hostess with the mostess when I finally drop into her spare bed in the wee hours of the morning.

**Tuesday**

Home again via Limerick where I have a photo-shoot in some of Fiona Whyte's dresses. I am clothed in gorgeous but very very thin dresses on a hotel balcony. I am laughing through my chattering teeth pretending I am on holidays in the hottest country known to man. I manage to fool my mind but my body has to sit in the car and defrost for ten minutes before I drive home. However, every time I glance into the back seat and see my fabulous new dresses I am reminded of how worth it the experience was! Back in Athy I have another photo-shoot this evening but this time I get to hold Santa's hand and meet his long suffering wife Mrs. Claus. The Clanard Court Hotel is launching its annual Santa's trail in aid of Age Action and The Jack and Jill Foundation. It is exciting to get into the Christmas mood and I can't wait to come back on Friday for the grand opening.