

## Clare's Diary

**2 March 2011**

### **Wednesday**

Mum, Dad and I are off to Dublin today to meet with the VSO (Voluntary Services Overseas) crew and the RTE production team who will be accompanying us to India in three weeks time. It's very exciting to think that I will get to be involved in the making of a documentary about the wonderful work VSO do, as well as my own cultural heritage.

### **Thursday**

A trip to Kilkea National School today where I meet all the pupils. This school has seen a sharp rise in its numbers in the past few years and they are still getting used to their fantastic extension and the space it provides. The afternoon sees me in TK Maxx in Portlaoise who are hosting a fundraiser in aid of Enable Ireland. Some of their staff model gorgeous evening gowns and eventually a winner is chosen and presented with her very own pink tiara!

### **Friday**

A visit to the dentist is followed by a drive over to the beautiful Japanese gardens in Kildare where I am donning an Irish cricket jersey to support the team who are playing against India on Sunday. The team are the latest ambassadors for the HOPE Foundation; an organisation who as you all know I am only too happy to show my support for. I manage to cram in a couple of hours study.

### **Saturday**

I am on the road to Westport by 10am; one of my closest friends Miriam is getting married in April and tonight is her hen night in Mayo. My plan is to get to the hotel early in the day and get some study in before dinner. However, on arrival I meet Miriam and her sister Emer and we end up nattering away for the afternoon until it is time to get ready! I must say it's so great to see so many uni friends again in one place; there are a few of us who haven't been together in the same spot since college and we have a fab night out.

### **Sunday**

After all the goodbyes and safe in the knowledge I will see everyone again at the wedding I head for home, popping into Athy to meet my friend Brian for coffee. Strange how the people I live closest to are the ones I never seem to see this year. Dad gloats at the unfortunate cricket results but I think we should be very proud of our Irish boys given that they have really held their own this year.

### **Monday**

Mum and I do a little shopping this morning before I attempt to pack my cases for the next three weeks. Given that I only have two nights at home in the next 4 weeks I need to be super organized. I am leaving for Dublin early in the morning so I load up the car with dresses before making supper and getting an early night.

## **Tuesday**

I am up at 5.30am this morning as I need to be in TV3 for 8.30am and the traffic is usually a nightmare. Mum has got up especially to send me off with some toast and jam, a cup of coffee and my daily dose of vitamins. I thoroughly enjoy my interview on Ireland AM and have a great chat with presenter Alan Hughes. I am straight off to the Indian Embassy to meet Malcolm from VSO and I keep my fingers crossed that there are no problems with my visa given that I am on such a tight schedule today and for the next few weeks. Thankfully it all goes according to plan and it will be ready later today. I have changed into jeans and am standing in Merrion Square in a SUAS t-shirt by 11.30am, as I am supporting their annual Shamrocks for Schools launch; I even have my face painted! I head for Tullamore immediately afterwards for a photoshoot in the County Arms Hotel where this year's Offaly Rose Selection will be held. It is lovely to see Arlene Kelly, the 2010 Offaly Rose for some pictures. Next up are some photos in Tullamore shopping centre before I check into the Tullamore Court Hotel where I am attending a celebration of International Women's Day tonight. In all the rush today I haven't had a chance to eat since breakfast and I am ravenous. Fortunately, James the Duty Manager comes to my rescue just after the show with a giant plate of pancakes, cream and strawberries, yum yum!