

Clare's Diary

16th March 2011

Wednesday

I wake up early enough to go for a run this morning, Washington is a beautiful city built for pedestrians with wide streets and blooming cheery trees which line all the paths. I have a slightly surreal moment running past the White House and along the mall when I actually have to pause to allow the fact that I am really here to sink in! Mum and I are attending an Enterprise Ireland Business Networking Lunch hosted by the ambassador, His Excellency Michael Collins. During the lunch we are introduced to Ireland's new Taoiseach, Enda Kenny which is of course a great honour. Afterwards we manage to squeeze in a couple of hours to walk around the city and visit the Holocaust Museum before dinner.

Thursday

Happy St. Patrick's Day! An early start this morning as I head downtown for the Northern Ireland Bureau Breakfast. I meet some wonderful people here over breakfast which has been organized to encourage the establishment of business links between Northern Ireland and the USA. It is amazing how much I take for granted living in Ireland and the past couple of days have reminded me how much we as a country still have to offer the world in terms of tourism and trade. After breakfast I collect Mum from the hotel and together we go to the National Press Club where we are met by the wonderful Tony Culley-Foster, president of CFCO International, who has not only organized much of our itinerary for this trip but is also a super character. We are treated to fantastic company and lunch in this prestigious location before being given the grand tour of one of the most powerful media institutions in the world. A hectic evening lies ahead as we arrive shortly afterwards at the Ambassadors reception where I am only able to stay a short time as I need to be in the White House for 6pm. I can't believe I just typed that sentence! Off I trot, eventually making my way to the correct entrance and getting through security where I have a sketchy moment as the security guard tried to decide whether my tiara constitutes a sharp object! The building itself is beautiful, inside and out and there is an excited buzz in the air. I meet some of the wonderful new friends I met at breakfast for a glass of bubbly before Glen Hansard is introduced to us by Vice President Joe Biden. After his rousing performance of some good old Irish tunes, we are introduced to President and Mrs. Obama and Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Mrs Kenny. I can't believe that I am only feet away from some of the most prolific people of our time and it is a huge honour and privilege to hear them speak. What a day huh!!!

Friday

This morning we meet Kate from the DC Rose Centre who has very kindly organized a tour of Capitol Hill. Fortunately neither houses are sitting so we actually get to walk into and onto the House of Rep's Floor where so many decisions that have affected the world have been made. Following an interesting native American lunch at the Smithsonian Museum Mum and I visit Arlington Cemetery where it is difficult not to feel saddened by the hundreds of thousands of white stones which mark the graves of American Veterans. Soon it is time to say so long to DC as we board our flight to New York-the so called city of dreams.

Saturday

Following a delayed flight and resultant late night Mum and I grab coffee before we head to the meccas of shopping-Macy's and Sak's, along the way I manage to collect a few pairs of shoes! I am excited to be meeting some of the Rose crew who are in NYC following marching in the St. Patrick's Day parade; it's strange to see such familiar faces so far from home and I manage to have a catch up with some the girls that I haven't seen since last August, fab fab fab, we all head out for dinner before I meet Mum; the lack of sleep is beginning to catch up with me and am starting to lose my voice!

Sunday

Another iconic run today around Central Park I am half expecting to see one of the cast of Friends running alongside me as the sights are so familiar even though I have never been here! Some more shopping before we meet Jim Houlihan of the NYC Rose Centre who is our escort to a Kildare Association Luncheon before our flight home later tonight.

Monday

We arrive in Dublin this morning bleary eyed but glad to be back at least for 48 hours! I spend the rest of the day unpacking, washing and repacking before hitting the hay at 7pm...

Tuesday

I meet my friend Kat for a lovely long walk, it's almost 15 degrees today and the sun is shining. I try to catch up on a few things today before our flight to India tomorrow morning!