

Yes, yes, I know it's been a while, oh loyal readers. Sorry. We've been a wee bit busy. To sum up--Elaine came over on her first transatlantic visit, we met up with Anne and Lex in London (brill brill time!! Museums and more...) The garden is growing (tomatos, lettuce, raspberries, herbs, green beans and garlic) and the weather went from nice to super hot and now it's rainy again. Thank goodness. It is no joke being seven/eight months pregnant in humid heat. Oh and the computer crashed.

Horribly. So, if anyone out there thinks they are being neglected, send an email. Chances are we don't have your address anymore! Except for this list, of course. A glimpse into the future: Kathleen is coming to visit for a couple of days and Jill will be here starting starting Tuesday for several weeks in anticipation of babs. Who is staying very firmly put! 39 weeks tomorrow and counting... I figured I'd better get an update in soon. I am still very happy and healthy. It was excellent when my cravings were for fruit and nothing but fruit. The current craving is for crunchy things (unfortunately including cookies--but only crunchy ones!) and milk.

So, over the past few weeks, we have noticed more and more that our fellow expats and natives alike have emphasized conversations with, "This is IRELAND." I thought I'd put together a compilation of some of the things we have found are just "Ireland."

Is it ok to have beer at a children's party? Yes, in Ireland...
(Obviously NOT for the children!)

What does Santa get when he comes down the chimney? Cookies & beer, or cookies & whiskey! Can you imagine the state of him after doing the rounds of the country?

Some excellent expressions:

"That man could see a pound coming from over a hill."

"See you in Heaven and buy you a pint." (Said to Dan by an older man who had just bumped the company van.)

"She could talk a hole in a pot."

And my new favorite--"when I fell pregnant..."

Recently, we were lucky enough for our landlord to give us permission to get a boiler service and take it out of the rent. Now, the boiler controls not only the hot water, but the heating as well. It's prohibitively expensive for gas and electricity here, so everything is on a timer. Our system was less than reliable. The boiler often shut off by itself in the middle of a cycle, usually right before Dan's early morning shower.:(Our thermostats had never worked either, so while the gasman was here, I asked him about them. He checked them out and found that not only had they been disconnected, but they were wired backwards. So, high was actually off and off was high! Our German friend was less lucky. She had been having similar problems with their boiler needing to be reset every couple of hours for it to work. She and her housemates actually broke the reset button from frequent use. Her landlady, instead of getting the actual system fixed, got the button fixed and forbade them to touch it. Instead, she said she would come over daily to press the button! Only in Ireland...

I have been volunteering in the County Archives on a rather fun project. The Archives are stored in the old Gaol, behind the Garda station (police.) Over the last year, they have been gathering interviews from a sampling of residents in the County. These range from County Council officers, teachers, tour guides, railway and factory workers, to folklorists and water diviners. (Yes, yes, only in...) The Archives needed volunteers to transcribe the tapes onto computer. I have been doing a few hours two days a week since June now. The stories I've heard are just brilliant: tales of how to catch an eel in the local creek, swiping apples & turnips to munch, When the Bomb Fell At the Quay, hops (dances) in the fifties, lobster fishing, threshing corn, smuggling over the Border, and the ins and outs of daily life in this smallest of counties. The accents were exciting to decipher. It was hardest when there was background noise or when two people spoke at the same time. I finished up today and was sorry to go. They were getting a wee bit concerned that I would go into labour on them! They kept mentioning that at least the Gards wouldn't be far away...:)

I've made quite a few friends here. A new one (fellow expat from Boston) just had her baby last Wednesday and he is so sweet! It will be fun for our two to be pals, even though we're about 45 minutes drive away. They live at the beach halfway between Dundalk and Dublin, which is cool. Dan and I had a BBQ at another couple's house a few weeks ago. The guy is from South Africa, so he really knows how to BBQ! Apparently Irish BBQ can be quite scary and a bit unsafe... And our first friends (Roger works in Dan's company and Catriona is my best pal here) celebrated their son's 7th birthday with us on Saturday. I had fun making snacks and the cake.

Dan's working very hard, driving around the country and getting in lots of work before he takes some time off when the baby comes. The company is very happy with him and things are looking bright!

Time to sign off now. We'll let you know when there's any news-- don't worry!

Love,
Heather