

Settling back into life in Ireland

Contributed by Apple
Friday, 25 May 2007

After almost 3 months back in Ireland things are going OK.Â Not much better than OK - but its still OK!

Life after Thailand.

The sun is beaming down, people are walking around in T-shirts showing off their wobbly bits and people seem happy. This is Ireland.

Since I came home 3 months ago the weather has been unusually hot and sunny. Global warming is good â€“ at least it is for Ireland. I have been able to walk the local pier every day since I came home and only twice have I been caught out by the rain. The first time was in my first week back when I felt like a cartoon character with a small gloomy grey cloud hovering above my head while everywhere else was basking in sunshine!

Do I miss Thailand? You bet I do!

After almost 6 years working and living in Thailand I am going through a culture shock that is way more intense than my initial shock when moving to Thailand. Ireland has changed dramatically in the last few years and people have become "property" mad. My favourite story is from a bestseller in Ireland - "The Popes Children".

Imagine the scene. Upstairs on a public bus. 2 Polish immigrant workers minding their own business. A few local Dublin guys down the back intent on rising the 2 Polish gents.

After some initial verbal assaults they resorted to throwing things. Finally, one of the Poles had enough and went to the back of the bus to confront the lads. He was a BIG guy who looked like he would be happy to meet anyone down an alleyway! He asked them politely to leave him alone and that all he was doing was trying to make a living in Ireland so that he could send money back to his family in Poland.

The Irish lads kept the conversation going. They asked him about Poland and how much money he was sending home. How much was the rent in Poland? How much was it to buy a house there. They were calculating the yields in their heads. Then one of them suggested that he would be better off buying than renting and explained his reasons for this (including the tax breaks for renting out rooms).

This is the new Ireland. Everyone is a property developer OR speculator. No longer are you measured solely by what car you drive – now it is on how many houses you own, how much they are worth and for the cr me de la cr me – how many different and exotic countries you own property in!

Is this a major opportunity for Thailand. Yes, it WAS! The Irish property boom has certainly peaked and it is likely that most Irish people will be a more prudent with their investments and will seek lower risk.

So what is there to miss about Thailand?

I thought the weather would be top of the list but it hasn't turned out like that because Ireland is going through a prolonged sunny spell!

Then I thought it would be the food or the nightlife or the language. But no. What I miss most about Thailand is the fact that I fitted in!

Yes, I am a different person in Thailand. I feel at home. I feel confident. I like being the big fish. I like being different. I like sticking out of the crowd.

In Ireland I am just another Irish person. But I don't fit in anymore. I don't feel confident. I don't even feel safe when walking around and this is probably due to the fact that I was mugged 3 times when I was younger.

I am out of touch with life in Ireland. I was paying for my groceries the other day and I was fumbling with the Euro coins. I didn't know which was which and the teller (Polish) thought I was messing cause I was Irish!

I knew that it wouldn't be easy settling back into life in Ireland and I knew the critical step was getting a job. This has proved a more difficult task than I anticipated.

It would appear that people do not put any value on the 5 years working in Bangkok. They seem to think that I was living the high life. Nothing could be further from the truth. I worked extremely hard and the hours were long. I jumped in at the deep end of the job and managed to keep afloat and then starting doing laps! It was a highly stressful but extremely rewarding job.

But this counts for very little in Ireland. I am supposed to have more qualifications, accreditations and all the latest buzz words. But I don't have that – instead I have practical experience. I have been there DONE that! I don't talk about doing stuff – I have DONE stuff. The theme of my personal website is "I just did it" and that's how I like to live my life!

So what is next?

Well I have committed to life back in Ireland for at least 1 year. I am hopeful that I will start work soon – it may not be at the Senior end and it may not be the salary that I was expecting but it looks like I will have to start at the bottom and work my way back up again. That is nothing new and doesn't worry me at all. I am confident that I can turn my hand to anything.