



Winning Ways of Lovely Ladies

There were sashes and smiles galore as Bláthnaid McKenna, a 21-year-old graduate of Trinity College from Tullyeast in Co. Kildare, beat 24 other beauty queen hopefuls to be crowned Miss Ireland 2007.

THE EVENT, SPONSORED BY REHABBINGO.COM, was launched by former Miss World Rosanna Davison, fellow Miss Ireland winners Aoife Cogan and Sarah Morrissey, and top model and Miss Ireland judge Glenda Gilson. This was also the first time the Miss Ireland event was held outside Dublin and it took place in the Silver Springs Moran Hotel in Cork.

Since it was first established to raise funds for services for people with disabilities, over €20 million has been won on RehabBingo.com. John McGuire, Managing Director, Rehab Lotteries, says, "The Rehab Bingo website is already hugely popular with younger women, who make up 80 per cent of its players, and the sponsorship of Miss Ireland was seen as a great opportunity to make a wider audience aware of the fun to be had on the website. In addition to sponsoring the event, RehabBingo.com also managed the Miss Ireland website, providing information to the general public about the finalists, the event and the winner's prizes."

In a new departure this year, one of the 25 finalists was given a guaranteed wildcard place in the final ten contestants by members of the public following a text vote. A proportion of the money raised through this was then donated to fund Rehab's activities nationwide.

The gala event was compered by TV3's Alan Hughes and judges on the night included Munster Rugby's Alan Quinlan, top Irish model and face of RehabBingo.com, Glenda Gilson, Irish international and Sunderland star Anthony Stokes, Sinead Desmond of TV3's "Ireland AM", the Irish tenor, Paul Byram, and Miss Ireland 2005, Aoife Cogan.

John McGuire, last year's winner Sarah Morrissey and Andrea Roche, former Miss Ireland and organiser of the event, presented Bláthnaid McKenna, the newly-crowned Miss Ireland, with her tiara, crystal trophy and a bouquet of flowers. Bláthnaid recently travelled to Sanya in China to represent Ireland at the Miss World competition. ■



Pictured above: Bláthnaid McKenna, Miss Ireland 2007

Who to contact

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Pictured left: (left to right) Sarah Morrissey (Miss Ireland 2006), Glenda Gilson (face of RehabBingo.com), Aoife Cogan (Miss Ireland 2005) and Rosanna Davison (Miss World 2003) help launch RehabBingo.com's sponsorship of the Miss Ireland 2007 competition