

## **Congratulations to our 2014 Canterbury Rose of Tralee winner – Lauren Mathewson!!!**

Lauren Mathewson won the title of the 2014 Canterbury Rose of Tralee on Saturday, 29th March at a regional Selection Night held at The Cashmere Club and hosted by the Executive of the Christchurch Irish Society.

Lauren is 22 yrs old, lives in Kirwee in North Canterbury and is a New Zealander with Irish ancestry. She has a diploma in both Agriculture and Farm Management from Lincoln University. She works as a Zoo Keeper at Willowbank Wildlife Reserve and is passionate about animals. Lauren is also a volunteer fire fighter with the Kirwee Volunteer Fire Brigade. She has a host of other awards and scholarships from her school days. She has just finished up coaching kids's cricket for the season.

Lauren now progresses to representing Canterbury at the New Zealand Rose of Tralee National Final held at Twiggers in Addington on 31st May 2014. She will be competing with 7 other regional Rose winners from both islands. Please contact Sean Regan, organiser of the New Zealand Rose of Tralee National event on 03 310 0525 or [seanregan@orcon.net.nz](mailto:seanregan@orcon.net.nz) for more information.

We wish Lauren Mathewson the very best of luck for the National Final and hope that history can be repeated again this year!

Last year, Judeena Carpenter won both the Canterbury and New Zealand Rose of Tralee titles and travelled to Ireland to compete with 31 other Roses from around the globe at the annual International Rose of Tralee Festival.

We do hope that Lauren Mathewson follows in Judeena's footsteps!

### **Selection Night**

All four contestants: Lauren Mathewson, Leanne Cooke, Anna Foulds & Kirby Thompson completed day-time interviews before 3 judges on Saturday and then on-stage interviews in the evening at The Cashmere Club in front of family, friends, supporters and Society members.

Each of the contestants were asked to speak about one of the following topical news stories Syria, Ukraine and the missing Malaysian aircraft and say how they were effected emotionally about what they had seen and heard. They were put on the spot and asked by the MC to ask him a question about anything!

There were some post interview performances which included reciting a personal poem, singing Spancill Hill and a tap dance by the winner Lauren Mathewson which included some Irish steps which she learned only a few days before the event! The performance however is not included in the judging process. It is purely to entertain the crowd which the Roses did so well!

Leanne, Anna & Kirby you should be most proud of yourselves for entering the competition and putting your best foot forward. It is not an easy undertaking but each of you demonstrated inner strength, poise and communicated well. It is one of few competitions where all other entrants are classed as equal second! Congratulations on your efforts. Make sure you tell your children and your children's children about entering as one day you may be watching them on stage in the audience!

A special thank you to all the escorts who took part: Blair Chapman (Lauren), Pauric Harte (Leanne), Francis Herron (Anna) and Kevin Keegan (Kirby). Each of you were very gentlemanly like in your approach.

The MC for the evening was Sean Regan. Sean you did a sterling job and this is not a role everyone can fill. Thank you for your help along the way and encouragement. I look forward to the National event in a couple of months time.

Our wonderful judges had an extremely difficult task of assessing who should lead Canterbury to the New Zealand final. A big thank you to Rebecca Noonan, Sarah Hayes and Shane Geraghty for acting as judges during the day and for the evening show.

We were delighted to have our event at The Cashmere Club for the first time. The venue and facilities were ideal. Thank you for the wonderful three course meal and your help with setting up for our special evening. We hope to return next year.

Thank you to DJ Kere for doing a fabulous job yet again this year. You know all the tunes to play to get everyone on the dancefloor!

Lastly, thank you to all family, friends, colleagues, supporters and Society members for coming along to our very fun night last night! It was a great evening of entertainment!

Lauren, we are all very much looking forward to seeing you at the New Zealand Rose of Tralee National Final at Twiggers on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. All of Canterbury will be behind you!

*By Ita Gain, 2014 Canterbury Rose of Tralee organiser*