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## **High Drama For £700,000 Jackpot Winner Siobhan**

Fermanagh drama teacher Siobhan O'Brien walked round for two weeks with a lottery ticket in her purse - not realising it was worth almost £700,000. And for two hours she lost her lucky red purse before tracking it down to a petrol station where she had left it on a counter.

She got the shock of her life when she finally got round to checking the ticket. It gave her a share of the Lotto jackpot on Wednesday, January 9 - and today (Friday) she collected her whopping cheque for £649,657 as one of four jackpot winners to share over £2.5 million.

And as she sipped a glass of celebratory champagne she said : "I shudder to think what could well have happened to my purse. I was here, there and everywhere with it in my handbag and apart from the petrol station I had a few other narrow escapes. I kept mislaying my handbag when I took a group to a feis in Dundalk where there were 2,000 competitors in three different rooms - and all the time the ticket was there."

News of Siobhan's win will add to the lottery fever already gripping Northern Ireland with over £72 million in jackpot cash up for grabs in tonight's and Saturday night's draws. Tonight's EuroMillions draw carries a mega-jackpot estimated at £54 million. And for only the fourth time in National Lottery history, tomorrow's Lotto draw has a triple rollover worth an estimated £18 million which must be won on the night. If no-one matches all six main Lotto numbers, the jackpot will be shared between any winners in the next prize level.

All of which won't particularly concern Siobhan who lives outside Belleek with husband Tom, a basket-maker who also teaches his art to students. She said:

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# News

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“I’ve been a regular player for years and I won’t break the habit this weekend. I’ll enjoy the excitement - and if I win I’ll be very generous to charity.

“I buy two tickets for each of the two weekly Lotto draws - two tickets play my regular numbers and two are ‘Lucky Dips’. A ‘Lucky Dip’ ticket did the trick - had it been my regular numbers I would have known immediately that I’d won.

“We are delighted with my windfall. It’s just a perfect amount to win - it should allow us to have no financial worries while still keeping our feet firmly on the ground.” The O’Briens have one son, Shane, who this year takes his finals in Law and French at Oxford University, and they have no plans to change their way of life.

Siobhan will continue to teach drama at the Erne Special Needs School in Enniskillen and at St. Ninnidha’s Primary School in Derrylin - as well as leading the cross-community Borderline Players company which was the subject of a television documentary a year ago. As a student she acted with the original Lyric Players and now she is casting an eye towards America with the Borderline Players she founded in Pettigo.

“We have been fundraising to take the group to perform in America - maybe now I’ll be able to pay my own fare! “And since Tom and I met and lived in the States for some years it would be nice to buy a little holiday place in Florida - now that the prices are coming down over there!” Siobhan’s jackpot win helps swell the £200 million won in top tier prizes by Northern Ireland players since the National Lottery began 13 years. And Northern Ireland still boasts the biggest single winner of a Lotto jackpot - the £20.1 million won by Belfast grandmother Iris Jeffrey in the summer of 2004.

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