

By **Angella Johnson**

WITH her glamorous looks and perfect size-eight figure, the newly crowned Miss England is a picture of perfection.

But Georgia Horsley has revealed she kept a secret from the other contestants – she is totally deaf in one ear.

And she almost missed her crowning moment because she didn't hear her name being announced as the winner at the end of the three-day finals last weekend.

'I stood on the stage with the other six finalists and there was an uproar after the two runners-up were placed,' said 20-year-old Georgia, a beauty therapist and part-time model from Malton, North Yorkshire.

'Everyone was cheering and clapping when the winner was announced. But the speaker was on my right side, where I'm totally deaf, so I only heard a muffled sound. I had no idea who'd won and just stood there clapping with the other girls.'

'After a while one of them tapped me hard on the back and said, "It's you, silly." I was stunned and it took a moment or two before I walked to the front of the stage.'

'At first I was worried people might have thought me stupid or something and it was at that point I decided I didn't want to keep my deafness hidden any more.'

Georgia was taken to hospital with suspected meningitis as a two-year-old, but it was not until she was five that doctors realised she was deaf in her right ear.

'As I grew up I didn't want people to know in case they treated me differently or made fun of me,' she said. 'I wanted to be like normal kids. But it did mean that I had a

hard time hearing the teachers at school and I was bullied because I kept asking them to repeat things.'

'Sometimes people thought I was being rude when I didn't respond.

But as I got older I learned to stand in a way that meant people talked into my good ear.'

Georgia says she decided to talk about her deafness to help remove

some of the stigma associated with the disability. 'I can show that it is nothing to be ashamed of,' she said. 'It has not stopped me achieving my dream to be a beauty queen.'

Georgia's prizes include a £15,000 designer wardrobe, the use of a convertible car for a year, a luxury holiday and a trip to China for the Miss World contest in December.

# Revealed: The secret Miss England hid from her rivals



**BEAUTIFUL DREAMER:** Georgia no longer tries to hide her deafness. Left: Her triumph last weekend