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200 members on track at Cork Triathlon Club

Founded in 1999 with three members, Cork Triathlon Club now holds Ironman records. Darragh Bermingham reports

THE Cork Triathlon club members take part in swim sessions in the autumn and winter, bike turbo sessions in Cork gyms, weekly long-distance cycles, track sessions, long distance running, weekly bike time trials and more, all to be ready for one of the most demanding types of race on offer across the globe.

Founded in 1999, following a meeting the year before which was attended by just three people, the club has gone from strength to strength. More than 200 members are now registered with the club.

"In November 1998 a meeting was called for the Silversprings Hotel in Cork to assess the interest in forming a triathlon club in the city," explained club treasurer and level one triathlon coach, Brendan O'Neill.

"As it turned out only three people turned up: John O'Shaughnessy, John Guirey and his son Ronan.

"The club was formed and registered in 1999," he added.

Brendan began running triathlons 15 years ago: "I had always been a runner to a reasonably competitive level but a few knee operations reduced my ability to do high mileage so I decided to spread the load across the three disciplines of triathlon."

Brendan coaches the Cork Tri Club's off-season pool swim sessions on Thursday mornings, Wednesday track run sessions from April to the end of August, and tempo sessions in the autumn and winter months.

"Through the entire year except for a slight end-of-season lull in September we have an activity almost every day of the week." The club also has a very active social committee that organises a number of social events throughout the year. There's a Christmas Party, a Try-a-Tri in May to introduce beginners to the idea of racing triathlon with a BBQ after," said

Brendan. We also put on a meet and greet evening, usually in January with a talk for those interested in starting or joining the club. "This consists of a few short talks followed by tea and coffee and a chance for potential newcomers to talk to existing members," he added. We like to think that we are a friendly and welcoming club, we hope we live up to that aspiration." The club has enjoyed tremendous success at national and international level in recent.

"In 2015 Trevor Woods won a silver medal at the European Championships," said Brendan. "The year these championships were run in Athlone we had a number of medallists, including Lizzie Lee and Amy Wolfe," he added.

The club also won the inaugural National Relay Championships in Mullingar in 2016 and has a strong tradition in Ironman racing which began with John Shaughnessy and Paddy Quinlan.

Two club members, Trevor Woods and Joyce Wolfe, have held Ironman records. Member Chris Mintern is currently racing on the international circuit.

Club members Anne Marie Power and Seán Finn will compete at the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii in the coming months. The club just enjoyed one of its busiest weekends of the year as they organised their annual triathlon, The Lost Sheep, which takes place in Kenmare. The race is among the top ten across the world and the second phase of 200 places sold out within five minutes last April.

Brendan said the club is looking to the future: "We are always trying to improve what we offer to our members in terms of coaching and opportunities for group training.

"Ideally, we would like to have some kind of permanent base for the club instead of always operating out of rented facilities."



Runners in action during a training session of the Cork Triathlon Club at the Mardyke.

Picture: David Keane



Club members Roisin Burke, Steve Evans and Brid Normoyle.

Picture: David Keane



Neil Creedon at the Mardyke.

Picture: David Keane



Runners in action during a training session of the Cork Triathlon Club.

Picture: David Keane



Brendan O'Neill and John O'Shaughnessy at a training session.

Picture: David Keane



Members warming up at the Mardyke.

Picture: David Keane



Kieran Kennedy and Tom O'Connor before a training session.

Picture: David Keane



Seán Finn of the Cork Triathlon Club.

Picture: David Keane