

TOGHER AC

Tom Morgan

The Togher Athletic Club recently celebrated its silver jubilee and as such has been very much associated with BLE since its inception. It is with some satisfaction that the club can look back on the twenty five year plus history and revel in the talent that has captured some of the most prized achievements in Irish athletics over these years.

The club now as in the past has produced athletes that have gained renown at both National and International level. Among the most cherished achievement among folk in Togher would have to be the winning of the Drifter Cup for the best juvenile club in Ireland in 1987.

The dedication of trainers and officials working in combination with some of the top juvenile talent in the country and the fostering of a deep commitment to team spirit were the principal reasons for that particular success. If there was any doubt about the club's supremacy, they stamped home their all powerful authority by becoming the best juvenile outfit in Ireland for the second year in 1988.

In the same year the club's youngsters were unbeatable in Munster. They proved it by winning the award for the best juvenile club in the province.

Successes in recent years have not been confined to the juveniles. The O'Duffy Cup for the best club at the Cork County senior track & field Championships was won in 1989 and retained in 1990 and the club also came out tops in the graded Cork Leagues in both the mens' and womens' sections at the same time.

Boosted by their achievements in both senior and juvenile competitions, they entered a team in the mens "B" section of the AIB National League, duly finished 3rd.

Subsequently the club entered the history books when it became the first to win the inaugural Munster senior league competition. In addition Togher also won the 4X100 metres National senior mens' relay title the same year.

Currently the club has a very strong senior section and a very promising juvenile and veterans outfit. Indeed the future for Togher looks paved with gold.

Established in 1966, the club was set up to offer a social and healthy, sporting outlet to the large young population of Togher. Founder members were Ted Murray, a past chairman of the Cork County Board, the late Liam Daly, a well known athlete in the area, and Tom Morgan who remains very active within the club.

In the early days most of the successes came in cross country. But there was a pronounced swing to track and field with the coming of coaches such as Mossy Cotter, Sean McSweeney, Dan O'Mahony and Mick Dennehy.

Over the years there have been many improvements in the club and a club house was among the many efforts made to ensure that the club's athletes were catered for in a constructive manner. As for the future? Well the club is certainly on a great

footing and there are many first rate athletes making their way through to the senior ranks.

Leading the juvenile ranks is formidable hurdler and sprinter Deborah Brady. She has already gained International recognition competing with the Irish team in Celtic Internationals. She also dominates her events on the National front - winning at 80 metres hurdles, 200 metres hurdles and 100 metres.

Another great prospect is Liam Clinton. He was on the 4X400 metres relay team that contested the European Junior Championships in Yugoslavia in 1989 and the club was also represented at the World juniors a year later when Darren Haddock was a member of the 4X100 metres team that set a new Irish Junior record.

Fergal Turbidity and Ebor Benson are sure to figure in the world of athletics in the future as both have great reserves of natural talent. Fergal made a promising debut as a decathlete this year in the County Championship and here his all-round ability was very much to the fore. With practise he can only improve and the future is very much open to him. Ebor too secured County honours in the area of multi-events this year, at BLOE level. So again yet another prospect in this particular field of athletics.

Talent and victory is not confined to short distanced events either. Faye Boyle is a member of the Cork junior - under 18 - cross country squad and is a distance runner of the future.

There are many promising long jumpers in the club and among those with a bright future are Ross O'Callaghan and Niamh Savage. Both have already won medals up to and including National level. Both are capable sprinters and once strength is developed they can only go from strength to strength in the coming years.

The renowned Valerie O'Mahoney is set for a comeback following the recent birth of her second baby. Valerie hit one of the many high points in her career at National and International level when she won the National senior 1,500 metres in 1989. There have also been many successes over cross country and indeed Valerie remains one of the County's best ever women athletes.

Several members of the club have become involved at County level. Ted Murray was treasurer of the County Board from 1975 until 1982. Yet Ted's contribution was not to end here as in 1989 he was elected chairman of the Board in succession to Fr Liam O'Brien. Mossie Cotter was also treasurer of the Board and indeed was also recorder in 1987 and 1988. George Spicer is of course well known for the promotion of veterans' athletics. He has been the 'vets' representative to the County Board for many years and this year was elected competitions' secretary. Finally John Hayes was elected on to the County Board track & field sub-committee in 1992.

The club house is re-built after damage was caused due to a fire. Here the co-operation of all members was sought and indeed given freely. The club house is again back in action and is a great boost to the club, being as it is the headquarters of Togher Athletic Club.