



Father and daughter together – Jimmy and Gemma at her graduation ceremony.

# Family tragedy gives birth to Wicked Wolf triathlon

LOSING her father to cancer has inspired a Carrbridge woman to take on the tough challenge of organising in double quick time a fund-raiser to help battle the disease.

Twenty-six-year-old Gemma Powell has been very busy over the past three and a bit months bringing together a brand new triathlon in and around her home village.

Gemma said: "Our dad, Jimmy, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on November 20, last year, and died just 10 days later – it was so quick and so devastating for us all.

"I knew I wanted to do something to raise money for Cancer Research UK, but it was a matter of what?

"Mountain biking is my passion but with Carrbridge under three foot of snow for about three months there wasn't much opportunity to get out for a blast.

"It did give me a lot of time to think and that's when I came up with the idea of a triathlon and the Wicked Wolf was born."

It was May before a meeting of fellow local mountain bikers and others could take place to see, if indeed, the Wicked Wolf would be possible, with the date set for Saturday, August 7.

"It's been all systems go since that night," said Gemma. "Getting the go-ahead for the route from all the different landowners along the way was the top priority."

The Inaugural Wicked Wolf Triathlon begins with a three kilometres kayak from the beach at Lochindorb, around the 13th century ruined castle – lair of the notorious Wolf of Badenoch.

From there it's a spectacularly scenic 30 kilometre mountain bike ride over the Lochindorb moor towards Carrbridge then a nine kilometre run around the village's woodlands with a finale finish in the heart of the village.

Gemma said: "There will be a ceilidh in the evening to round the day off – assuming everyone still has some energy for dancing!"

Fellow Wicked Wolf organiser, Lisa Campbell (29), also from Carrbridge is Gemma's best mountain biking buddy – they travelled to New Zealand together last year to take part in a mountain bike event there.

She said: "It's going to be awesome, the down side is – as organisers – Gemma and I can't actually take part!

"But we hope lots and lots of other people will and it's certainly not aimed at the super serious athletes, anyone can take part so long as they are over 16-years-old.

"People can enter either as a team of three – doing one section each – or for the fitter folk, they can sign up as a solo entry.

"We are limited to 50 entries though, so we would encourage people to sign up quickly or they might miss the boat – or should that be kayak!"

All funds raised by the Wicked Wolf will go directly to Cancer Research UK with the event costs being met by entry fees and the generous support of a variety of funders.

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading charity dedicated to research on the causes, prevention and treatment of cancer and is the largest single funder of cancer research in the UK.

The charity supports research into all aspects of the disease through the work of more than 4,800 scientists, doctors and nurses across the UK.

Cancer Research UK spent more than £36 million last year in Scotland on some of the UK's leading scientific and clinical research.

For example, a study in Inverness is looking at whether two new chemotherapy drugs could benefit women with a certain type of breast cancer which can be difficult to treat.

If successful it will mean doctors have much needed new treatment options for this type of breast cancer.

Survival rates for cancer have doubled in the last 30 years but one-in-three people will still get cancer at some point during their lifetime.

For more information visit the Wicked Wolf website page [www.wickedwolftriathlon.co.uk](http://www.wickedwolftriathlon.co.uk) or visit the Wicked Wolf Triathlon event page on Facebook [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) or email [wickedwolf@live.co.uk](mailto:wickedwolf@live.co.uk)