

Marie Griffiths, of School Terrace, Blaengarw. Marie set up her own slimming classes called Slimtone in 1982 and now runs 20 classes. She was the first slimming club to go online and now has members all over the world PICTURE: Peter Botter

The slimm

MARIE Griffiths will never tire of hearing successful slimming stories. More than 30 years after she set up her first slimming class, with just a handful of members, she has members from all over the world. And nothing gives her greater satisfaction than knowing her dream – to run her own slimming business – has helped others in the battle of the bulge. of the bulge.

Marie, who lives in Blaengarw, left a comfortable job to set up on her own and through sheer hard work and determination has seen her Slimtone business grow and grow while her members have, effectively, shrunk!

used to be an office manager for a "I used to be an office manager for a well-known, construction company and loved all the perks that came with the job, especially the biscuits, the staff restaurants and the leftovers from the business fundage."

Rachel Mainwaring

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"I started with one class in Pontycymmer and went from there. I now have 20 classes through Bridgend, the Rhondda and Porth-cawl but it's the online community that is very exciting as I have people all over the world following the eating plan.

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"As I got the business up and running, news travelled by word of mouth and more and more people started coming to the classes. One became two, then three and four and it took five years for me to expand the busi-

"Then I took on a full-time admin manager who specialises in IT. I have 10 lecturers who help me run the classes – and still take six

"Of course, the inevitable happened and I put on some weight so I joined a class and lost 2st but realised it wasn't a permanent solu-

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"I still wanted to have takeaways and the
odd drink but those weren't allowed so it got
me thinking about a diet that would allow you
to have all those treats that make life worth
living!

"It's simple really," she says. "The secret of
successful slimming is following a regime
that is easy to maintain. After that moment of
realisation, not only did my weight begin to
fall again but I was also inspired. I'd always
wanted to start my own business. All I'd ever
wanted was my own idea and realised that this
could be it."

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After months of research, Marie took the big step of leaving her job to set up on her

own.

She knew it was a gamble but was determined to make it a success.

She based Slimtone on the simple idea of healthy, versatile and inexpensive eating plan, taking her own personal experience and research to provide a diet that people could enjoy and succeed with.

"I thought of the name first of all but

"I thought of the name first of all but everything else took much longer. I had no office or equipment and I didn't even have a

when Jook ack it's quite unbelievable to publish sware and I didn't even have a typewriter.

"This was back in 1982 so they didn't have any enterprise funding or small business advisers.

"I had won a top-of-the-range toaster in a work raffle and so I did a deal with my former boss.

"I swapped the toaster for an old typewriter and started work.

"I had to do a lot of homework. I researched the market, did my sums and worked out the best locations. I found out what my rivals were charging and I undercut them. I knew I had to get harder if I was going to make the business a success. I knew the trick would be to get the women into my classes in the first place, then keep them there.

"I looked at halls and venues, I printed leaflets and bought scales that would weigh up to 30st.
"I started with a £1,000 loan and worked hard to publish swifes."

hard to publish professional posters and get www.slimtone.co.uk

myself - and was able to buy a small flat to

myself – and was able to only a sharm of the convert to a new office."

After the successful launch of her internet mail order services in 1998, she went on to introduce an online slimming club and health and fitness portal in August 2000 and has united slimmers from all over the

and has united states one of my first online members was from Germany, who joined after originally coming to my classes but then she had to move away with her husband.

"One of my very first online members lost."

"One of my very first online members lost 10st and has managed to keep the weight off after all these years. "It's lovely to think that Carol from Seattle could be talking to Trudi in Brisbane about lost inches or Farina in Egypt could be congratulating Sharon in Chester for a few lost pounds. It makes me very proud to think that it's open to anyone, anywhere in the that it's open to anyone, anywhere in the world."

Marie, who has a son Alun, found launching on the internet quite an isolating experience as she didn't have many resources to call on for help.

But says she had a very understanding bank nanger who let her use him as a sounding

and a shopping mall where members can buy everything needed for health and fitness.

"When I look back it's, quite unbelievable to think I did it but I'm very proud."

I visit the Slimtone website: