



Swift running with
giants in Lilliput
August 2017

The **Celtic Warrior** weekend promised to be “Ireland’s greatest weekend of long distance sport” covering single discipline events, duathlons, half and full distance triathlons, even bonkers mad Back2Back Ironman and Double Ironman event options. All centred in or around the Lilliput Adventure Centre in Mullingar – an hour ‘n a bit from Athy & all proceeds going to a very worthy cause (Assisting children with Autism).

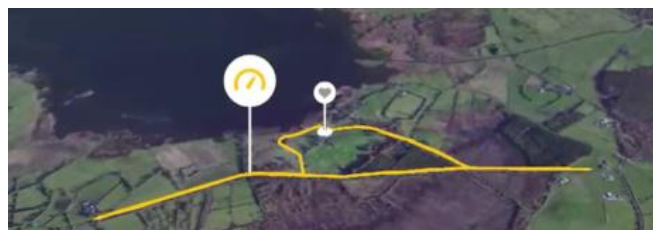
After running the numbers (travel times, expense etc.) I opted for the stand alone Marathon on the bank holiday Monday morning, 11am kick off, entry fee Eur40. The reason it was relatively cheap is because there are no bells and whistles, no big brand frills or razzmatazz, just a simple, yet professionally organised, line up of events for “endurance enthusiasts”. It sounds a bit weird including myself in that demographic but I’m finding myself drawn to these types of events more and more. My lazy training cheapskate inner self revealing himself!! I also liked the fact that the unorthodox structure of the marathon course (multiple 5k laps) would give me a taste of the Donadea 50k format - A bucket list race before likely 2018 race retirement!

Pre-race logistics

I drove (via Monasterevin - Portarlinton) accompanied by carpool co-pilot Diarmuid “Skinny” Flynn who was taking on his 1st marathon. Facilities for parking, showering, changing etc. were all readily available close to the start/finish line. Registration was a breeze and volunteers were super helpful & supportive. Participant numbers weren’t high for the stand alone Monday marathon (approx. 30 participants), the main action was on the Saturday & Sunday. Even so, the mood was upbeat and everyone (marshals & participants) were in great form, with people already on the course (doing the 9am start Half & Full marathon) when we arrived.

The course, conditions & tactics

Each 5.2k(ish) lap was made up of a 3k out and back section & a 2k loop through the centre. The route is largely countryside old tarmac roads, through woods/forested areas & offers pleasant green surroundings. It’s a back to nature type course. There are a few short ups ‘n downs but they are barely noticeable, in the 1st few laps at least. The weather on the day was great. Mostly sunny with a splattering of cloud, lovely conditions for long distance running. That and the laps structure allowing for a simple hydration/nutrition & pacing plan – I like simple, simple works!



This marathon came two weeks before my main event of the year (Hardman, Kerry) so I needed to be (uncharacteristically) sensible and treat it like a last long training run of sorts. No place for heroics or chasing times, just keep a steady/controlled comfortable marathon pace. That said, given the conditions, I did have a sub 4 in mind if things went well. I also planned to accompany Skinny (for whatever section he wanted me to), as I felt just a teeny tiny twinge of responsibility, given I’d “encouraged” him to join me for this event - as oppose to waiting for **DCM** to pop his marathon cherry. Turned out he didn’t need me at all at all and sent me on my way from the start. Given the course structure however participants passed each other several times on each lap, so it felt like we ran together. It actually felt more like a group run with friends than a race.

Marathon breakout:

1st 10k The 1st 2 laps were about warming up the joints, settling in to a comfortable pace/HR and getting used to the terrain. As soon as we set off, participants started supporting each other. Skinny settled in nicely to his chosen pace right from the off and I tipped away at mine.

10-26k Even though participant numbers were low, I always had someone tip tapping behind me or in sight ahead of me. We had guys doing a half marathon at 11am and another started at 1pm. Having people around helps your pacing, puts a little pep in yer step, but it can also be a potential problem. You see, while I like to proclaim that I'm not competitive, I do occasionally suffer from bouts of PSPS (Paul Syder Pacing Syndrome - where one feels the overwhelming desire to unrestrainedly chase down any competitor in front of you). The only problem is I'm no Paul Syder (as much as I try to imitate him with race enthusiasm & tattoo collections), I don't come near the young fella for fitness. That said, apart from a few PSPS induced sprints & subsequent forced pit stops to catch my breath & stretch out sore muscles, I kept a steady pace through this section and felt relatively ok passing the half way mark. It was at this stage, when the leaders of the half marathon had left the course; I noticed there was only one full marathon participant in front of me. "JAZUZ McEntee, 2nd in a marathon". Granted there were only about 30 participants but feck it, 2nd is 2nd, I'll take that!! 5 laps done only 3 to go.

26-36k By the time lap 7 was done the recurring scenery was getting a little jaded, as were the legs. I was struggling physically and was definitely in the "I wish I'd lost those extra kilos" phase, regretting the feed of pints on Friday too. That didn't stop me from accepting the ice-pops being handed out by marshals going up and down the course in a jeep, a super little touch that from the organisers! I noticed I was getting no closer to the leader but was being chased down by a couple of runners behind me. "Awe, relax Fatboy, stick to the training plan".

36-42k As I went out on the final lap, with the weather holding up and the constant encouragement being thrown our way by participants and marshals – even the "race leader" was egging me on - it was easy to keep motivated and push on to the finish. After 36km I did the final body scan, checking the discomfort levels in each joint and muscle. Evaluating whether it was time to settle in and semi enjoy the last lap or push on and chase a time (and technically a podium placing – I'm taking it!!).

Of course, I opted for the latter, sure why not! So ignoring the game plan completely, I popped an ibuprofen, cranked up the high tempo playlist and ignored the HR screen on the watch. I absolutely love throwing (HR) caution to the wind in the final furlongs of a race, crossing the line with empty fuel tanks. That for me is where the joy in marathon running is found, just past the finish line, in a heap on the floor, and that is exactly where I found myself shortly after 3pm.

I reached the finish line (in a PB 3:51:35) totally spent & aching from head to toe but very very happy. Skinny following soon after, finishing strong, clocking a superb 4:36:25 in his first full marathon. Very impressive, especially considering he'd only reached the half marathon milestone at the Stonemad event recently. He's now working out his plan of attack for [DCM 2017!](#)

All finishers were greeted with very sincere praise from organisers and participants. We were also treated to superb postrace nosh (Warrior size burgers, yogurts, coffees etc.). A really nice finishers' medal & cool t-shirt made this a very good bling haul day too!



Final note:

The **Celtic Warrior** weekend didn't garner much interest from the ATC crew this year. A big shout out to Pippy Owens who led the ATC brigade by hammered out a Half Ironman on Saturday in 5hrs plus small change – No messing about there lad! There have also been unconfirmed reports of Keith Pollard being there too? Kudos to both of ye on your Celtic Warrior successes.

After getting a glimpse of the set up myself, I would highly recommend this weekend of events to members for 2018. Particularly for those jumping on the ever increasing ATC tour bus to **IM Barca 2018**. It's perfectly timed in the calendar to gauge your mid-season endurance fitness before the big push for **IM Barca 2018** glory or even for **DCM 2018**. I'm even tempted to park race retirement plans and chance the Full Distance triathlon there myself next year. If only to complete the cool medal set (See below).

The outstanding memories of this day for me though were being part of my mate Skinny's big achievement. A hugely impressive performance in what he himself described as "unimaginable 12 months ago". We also had the opportunity to meet real life **Giants in Lilliput**, sharing the course with some Irish marathon legends. The most humble of men and fabulous ambassadors for their sport:

Eugene "Oggie" Winters, who finish 1st in the 11am marathon in 3:47:44, his 4th sub 4hr marathon **of the weekend!!** Oggie is now my 2nd favourite 66 year old (After Baco Mac of course!!)

Leo Lundy, completing his 200th marathon today (Leo posts a blog & shares race reports for all his events. Well worth checking it out <http://marinotraining.blogspot.co.uk/>)

Dave Brady (67yrs old) – The Rathcoole/Raheny legend started running in 1986 at the age of 36. Dave did his 671st marathon at this weekend's events in **Lilliput** and is on his way to make **DCM 2017** his 700th!!!! He ran 104 marathons in 2014 alone and plans to hit 1,000 by his 70th birthday – He puts my measly marathon efforts in some perspective but also inspires me to rethink my perceived marathon limitations.

There truly were **Giants in Lilliput** this weekend. We met & befriended them. Ran a marathon & selfie'd with them. What a truly memorable & inspirational day.



TIC TAC TIMING The Midlands Leading Timing Company			
Celtic Warrior Weekend Results Full Marathon (07/08/2017)			
Bib	Name	Gender	Time
283	Winters, Eugene	Male	03:47:44
278	McEntee, Eamonn	Male	03:51:35
284	Kelly, James	Male	04:09:40
292	McDonald, Tom	Male	04:11:05
287	Reyes, Bened	Male	04:13:06
268	McCann, Jill	Female	04:13:06
299	Roche, Patrick	Male	04:14:11
293	Barry, Anita	Female	04:15:36
297	Forbes, Fleur	Female	04:26:40
277	Flynn, Diarmuid	Male	04:36:25
276	Gordon, Heather	Female	04:38:47
271	McSorley, Neil	Male	04:40:58
305	Camanglan, Erwin Noel	Male	04:45:49
273	Guthrie, Catherine	Female	04:56:04
272	Dunphy, Shane	Male	05:03:35
300	Brady, David	Male	05:04:15
306	Crawford, Leslie	Male	05:13:47
304	Paralta, Salvador	Male	05:13:50
286	Labuguen, Cary	Male	05:16:31
279	Lundy, Leo	Male	05:26:41
291	Moynihan, Humphrey	Male	05:31:55
289	Mercia, Patrick	Male	05:31:55
308	Adams Byrne, Allison	Female	05:31:56
290	Grimes, Theresa	Female	05:31:56
270	Toomey, Mary	Female	06:05:25
275	Rigney, Larry	Male	06:10:39
274	Forde, Jerry	Male	06:29:32