

Inappropriate Tom: The Online Presence of an Ultra Marathon Runner

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JOGLE: The Tale of the DNF and General ramblings

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Upon starting the longest race of my life to-date, I was somewhat nervous about not finishing this epic 16 day race from John O'Groats to Lands End, as I know that I – like most endurance runners – don't deal with failure very well. After all we all train too hard and sacrifice so much whilst training not to reach our goals.

The overall event had its good points and its 'not so good' points, the not so good points mainly surrounded early starts and the awful weather ☹️ and were easily far outweighed by the friendships coined on the tarmac, the sense of achievement completing each day provided and finally the chance to be in that little 'JOGLE bubble' that allowed you to forget about life's woes and offered your mind just the one task to focus upon.

The first few days of running were – for me – filled with anticipation. I knew I could run 145 miles, but I needed to make sure I took it slow. A lot of people had suggested keeping to a 4mph average moving pace, which I did.

Most of the time spent running during the first week was with fellow JOGLERS, the company was great and the conversation was varied and occasionally somewhat unusual.

The more stranger conversations surrounded trying to put in offer of 'cuteness' baby farm animals (I think lambs won).

The daily games of 'hottie or nottie' and 'nice driver or f*ck*ng w*nk*r' also helped pass the odd mile or two.

After the first few days of completing an average of 55 miles per day, injuries started appearing on various runners (myself included) and then the reality of what was to come became apparent.

Shortly after runners started to drop out and I at least was wondering if I would be next.

Seven-ish days later and I made it across the Scottish border, and having never been to Scotland before now there were some real highlights which – in no particular order – were: Ben Nevis, Loch Ness, the Glenmorangie Distillery, the Ben Nevis Distillery, running for 15 miles and not seeing a single person and finally never having to near Glasgow again when the sun was going down whilst finding the 'scary tunnel' but with interesting 'art'.

Soon after the 'border crossing', I found myself running on my own with 'the machine' usually being quite a way in front and had the opportunity to run with some previously successful JOGLERS which was a fantastic break from listening to the voices in my head.

The problem arrived when on Day 09 it was apparent that various problems with my achilles weren't going to be solved by pain killers and the magical hands of Rory Coleman ([site](#)) and on Day 10 – practically within sniffing distance of Lands End – I realised that my JOGLE experience was over.

The main reasons for taking the option to drop out was two fold, firstly I was told that

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to carry on greatly increase the probability of permanent damage or operations needed and secondly, my ankles weren't able to support my weight whilst running. This meant that whilst running on the road I was flailing around – without jazz hands – into oncoming traffic, which even on various pain-killers I knew wasn't a 'good situation' to be in. So having already got out of the car and ran Rory's famous '10 mile to think', I threw in my lucky cap and called it a day at the next check point.

The event itself was fantastic and I would recommend anyone wanting an adventure to sign up for next year. I will blog about the actual event later on, as the organisation of the event and the fantastic effort of all the people on the JOGLE coach deserve to be blogged.

I do see this attempt of the JOGLE as a failure, I had a great time and I miss the JOGLE environment greatly but at the end of the day I didn't get to the LE. Would I attempt the JOGLE again? YES, finances willing I will be on the coach next year, but next year will be the last attempt.

And now, back to the monotony of life.

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