

Mountains, midgets – and money? The challenge for Daithi

Edinburgh-based adventure enthusiast and humanitarian Daithi Heneghan will on Saturday embark on the Pan Celtic Ultra 2024 – one of the toughest cycling challenges in Europe.

Irishman Daithi will undertake the 2300 kilometre exercise to raise funds for COCO, an international children's charity founded by former world 1500 metres champion and Olympic silver medallist Steve Cram CBE and dedicated to providing quality, sustainable education to children in rural East Africa.

No ordinary cycling event, the annual Pan Celtic Ultra spans rugged terrain and breathtaking landscapes across different Celtic nations.

It demands exceptional stamina, mental fortitude, and unyielding determination. Participants begin by cycling through the night around the entire Isle of Man, racing to complete the island lap in time to catch the morning ferry to the mainland where their solo cycle continues through the Lake District and into Scotland, all the way to the finish line in Inverness – in just 11 days.

Carrying all their camping gear and daily supplies on their

bikes cyclists will face brutally steep climbs, unpredictable weather, and the daunting task of navigating through some of the most remote regions in the British Isles.

Daithi, 58, originally from County Mayo, is no stranger to such epic endeavours in support of COCO. Last year he successfully completed the North Cape 4000, a legendary 4,000-kilometre ride from Turin, Italy to the Arctic Circle. His heroic journey on this 16-day cycle challenge saw him carrying everything he needed to survive on his trusty bike, lovingly named Jasper, whilst travelling across Europe and climbing the height of Everest at least four times over. He raised an incredible £14,500 for COCO, a record-breaking amount of funds for any individual supporter of the charity's mission, bringing hope and education to countless children in East Africa for generations to come.

This year's solo cycle challenge may be shorter in distance, but the Pan Celtic is by no means easier – with tougher terrain, harsher ascents, and the notorious midges of a Scottish summer adding to the torture. Daithi will be pushed to his limits.

Daithi said: "I am privileged that I grew up in a place where I had good food, a supportive family and community, and most of all a great education. Why shouldn't every child, whatever their background, be as lucky as me? So, I am putting my body on the line again to raise awareness of what COCO does and hopefully to raise lots of money to help children and families in Kenya."

COCO help communities to break down barriers to education such as poverty, drought, lack of infrastructure and more. Founded by Steve Cram CBE in 2000 it has supported 74 transformational projects in 16 countries, all motivated by the belief that education provides children with the best possible chance to break the cycle of poverty.

To support Daithi's journey visit: coco.org.uk/daithi-pan-celtic



Steve Cram, left, and Daithi



On his bike: mountains and mides await Edinburgh-based Daithi in the Pan Celtic Ultra cycle challenge.