

Well how many partners have you had?

Well there's been a Stuart, a couple of Steve's, Mark, Simon, a couple of Paul's, Richard, two Dave's, Peter, Graham, Martin, Derek, Bob, Ian, Marciel, Nick, Jeff, Lee and three Andrew's. With some of them it was just the once and with others half a dozen times or more. No this isn't Belle de Jour, the secret diary of a call girl, but my fell running relay partners!

Most of my partners are from the Calderdale Way Relay but also partners from the Pennine Bridleway Relay, Rossendale Way Relay, Ian Hodgson Relay and the FRA Relay, not even started yet on my mountain marathon or Haworth Hobble/Wuthering Hike partners. The Calderdale is my favourite relay and I have done 23 or 24 of them and every leg apart from leg 6. I started running in the relay for the Bingley Harriers E team (no that is not e for elite but the 5th team) and finally managed the A team (there were lots of injuries, illnesses and absences) when I was paired with the great Bob Whitfield who despite being in semi retirement didn't get much of a workout when I struggled to keep up with him. A month after that I joined Tod and have done twelve CWR's in either the Vets or the A team. The first CWR I did for Tod was with Richard Blakeley on leg 4 and we were given a mars bar and a lift home by Margaret (Richard's wife) at the end and I thought this is the club for me.

I think I really enjoy relay's because they are good team events, great for team spirit and camaraderie, and running can be a bit of a solitary affair. There is a bit more to it than who is the quickest in running from A to B but how well a pair run together. It is a great relief if you find partly through your relay that you are slightly stronger than your partner but I think the most memorable are where you are very well matched or even when you have been given a hard time in keeping up with your partner.

Have had some very funny moments when competing in relays. I remember Dave Stephenson and me running for Bingley and about half way up the long drag from Jerusalem Farm to Wainstalls at the end of leg 4. We were just approaching the hamlet of Saltenstall when a lone runner approached at speed. When he got close to us he bawled out across the valley to his "mate" who was half way down the hillside on his way down to Jerusalem Farm (literally a mile away) and shouts "come on, get a move on, these two are knackered and we can beat them". His partner didn't say anything and was probably pretending he wasn't with his loony mate.

When doing leg 5 of the Rossendale Way relay with Marciel for Tod (anybody who ran with Marciel in a relay or even training were assured of a good work out) he offered to carry my bum bag for the last mile. I obviously declined this kind offer – mind if it had been a rucksack I could have been tempted. Also remember on the Rossendale Way relay (the only other time I made the Bingley A team) taking over from Andy Peace and Mick Hawkins who had taken Bingley from 10th to 2nd before handing over to me and Andy T. who dropped from 2nd to 8th on leg 3. I had reccied the leg the previous day (both ways) – including cycling from Hebden Bridge to Sharneyford – which may have been, in retrospect, a bit much!

Dave Collins