

Leeds Liverpool canal & the prime minister

I have a just giving page set up, I've been interviewed by sports relief press release people, I've run constantly (often twice a day) for a couple of months, I'm all set.

A week before I'm due to set off I run (slowly) the howarth hobble, then I get home from work on the Monday to an email from the prime minister inviting me to a reception lunch. After much deliberation my daughter persuades me to go.

Rhys & I arrive at no. 10 & after photos we go in to find Davina McCall there, Rhys pounces on her, I stand quietly in the corner feeling like a spare part, eventually I get a few words in & she moves on.

After chatting to several people it appears my efforts are not trivial & I can actually hold my own. The prime minister comes round to have a few words with us all about what we are doing & he says " ah yes I've read about this, well I must say you look very fit" & moves on.

The following Friday the fun begins at granary wharf at 9.30 my brother appears to wave me off, I take a few pictures & off I go, I see Rhys again at 13 miles, quick refreshments while a hailstorm passes & I set off past salts mill. We have lunch on the tow path at keighley. & on towards Skipton & colne the section through Barnoldswick is surreal & eery, it's gone dark, & I mean dark! There's no lights anywhere even in the distance, no shadows no trees, nothing, every now & then I bump into a gate & I can just about make out where the water is with my head torch, Rhys says he's by a lock but I haven't seen one, all of a sudden I turn a corner & there's a factory, it's enormous & lit up like an airport, sure enough there is the van. It's 10.00 & time to stop for the day, I'm 4 miles short but it's sleeting & the dark is just odd. Home for a bath, food & to catch the end of sports relief on the tv.





I wake the next day feeling good, no aches or pains anywhere, no blisters. We pick up Nick & go back to where we left off, it's funny in the daylight it's got buildings & barges & trees, we set off towards burnley at reedley marina Nick stays with Rhys & I carry on alone, I belong to an internet support group called "run mummy run" & 2 of the ladies from Burnley are meeting me along the way, they are with my mum by the bus station, my mum has asked everyone in her village who runs what I would need, & is sat on the tow path with home made flapjack, coke, Mars bars, & jelly beans. I eat a piece of flapjack & fill my pockets & set off with these two girls, we run another 6 miles & they get picked up, I pick up Nick again & we run through Accrington & Blackburn. As night falls so does the temperature & nick is with me again for a last slippery muddy section finishing 4 miles earlier than planned again. We head back to Rhys house for the night.

We plan an earlier start on Sunday morning as I have further to go than hoped. I feel great, better than Saturday. We set off & nick is with me for the start, but it becomes apparent he's in pain, at 96.5 miles we meet Rhys & nick stays with him for the afternoon, I set off & as the weather is better today I get a wriggle on, the paths are getting better & I pootle along quite happily. When I have 13 miles to go, nick rejoins me & is flying along we are counting down the bridges coming I to the docks, & suddenly we find locks, with very short sharp downhill bits which are very tricky at 127 miles! In the distance on the other side of the canal someone's head torch is having a disco, it can only be Rhys! We cross the bridge & Rhys declares the run over.