

Felix: 24 months ago I had been asked by my dad to lend a hand (and van) to help out with road support on the 2023 DPFR BG weekend. Having managed to avoid the running bug entirely until this point I had no intention of this being anything more than a nice weekend away with Dad and his club.

After a night and day of rainy lay-bys, broken sleep and general BG antics, Dom suggested I borrow his running shoes and tag on to the back of Matt Spoor's final leg back to Keswick. I dutifully hung on to the back of the group with a bag full of borrowed kit and Matt's change of shoes. We ticked off the last three tops and then began the first steady, then hair-raising descent off Robinson. My enthusiasm certainly outweighed any technical skill down the grassy fell, but in this moment I realised what a special thing I had been a very small part of.

Experiencing such a warm welcome from the club that weekend and seeing the levels of obsession and love for the outdoors, sealed the deal that this was a kind of running bug I would happily catch.

So began the baptism of fire that was learning to run from scratch with Dark Peak. Each Wednesday would inflict a degree of soreness that would just about ease up in time for the next week. Over the following couple of years, I've thrown myself into local races, supported rounds and worked my way through some of the incredible DP Peak District challenges.

This year, I assembled a support team of dear friends and family and stepped up to the Moot Hall for my biggest challenge to date. With perfect conditions, the next 21 hours would go as well as I could ever have hoped. Looking around and embracing the support from every-one, it was such a special day that I'll hold dearly forever.

Felix Watts