

IT'S GREAT OUTDOORS

The GB Relay, an audacious attempt to set a world record for the greatest distance run non-stop by a relay team in the UK, set runners the usual problems of weather and terrain and one or two trickier posers.

It was only 10k, the weather was tragic and the roadside route through central Scotland was rarely attractive – yet I was proud to be running in the GB Relay.

Two days later, this time in glorious sunshine amid the beautiful rolling hills of Dumfries and Galloway, I ran another stage of the epic round-UK challenge.

Over 32 days, many thousands of runners have also joined in an attempt to break the world record for the greatest distance run non-stop by a relay team in Britain.

The event, nicknamed the People's Relay, is charting a coastline course of mainland Britain, covering more than 7000 kilometres in 594 stages.

The GB Relay is the brainchild of Paul Shack, a runner based in Guiseley, near Leeds, in West Yorkshire.

On June 1, Paul saw the GPS-tracked baton set off for its first leg from Scarborough, north along the coast.

Two days, 30 stages and about 300km later, the baton, known as Casey, crossed the England-Scotland border into Berwickshire.

Over eight days, Casey journeyed 160 stages via the east, the north-west and south-west Scottish coast.

As June progressed, the GB Relay continued to make its way back into

England, through Wales and then along the south-west, southern and eastern English shoreline. The expected finish date is Wednesday, back on the Yorkshire coast.

Paul is hopeful the British relay record will be successful.

He said: "So long as Casey is not dropped – this is one of the big rules of this record – we will physically beat the record by quite some margin."

"However, it is up to Guinness to judge if we meet their stringent criteria and that can be a lengthy process."

Few people will be surprised to discover that the Scottish part of the GB Relay featured wide-ranging weather and testing terrain.

My stage, number 151, took place on an afternoon of very heavy rain between Dennyloanhead and Kilsyth.

At that point, on day nine, the People's Relay was behind schedule, so I was required to run the 10k at full pelt.

And while stage 185, which

HANDOVER Fiona passes on the tracker during the Southwick to New Abbey leg



ONE NATION, ONE BATON, ONE DREAM

“Leaving to run 10k at the time I'd be going to bed was a touch odd



FIONA RUSSELL

amounted to 14km between Southwick Parish Church and New Abbey, was dry, the ups and downs of the terrain were more testing.

The previous week, Sam Ghibaldan, from Edinburgh, ran a stage from Aberlady to Prestonpans in East Lothian.

And the 1am start didn't seem to deter eight of his friends coming along for the run too.

Sam said: "Leaving the house to run 10k at the time, I'd normally be going to bed was a touch odd, but the run was great."

"We went a bit off-route and enjoyed off-road paths and sand dunes beneath bright moonlight."

"But being part of the wider world record attempt team gave us a real sense of purpose."

Stage 128, on June 8, was Caroline Gregory's turn to take part in the People's Relay.

The managing partner at The Lovat Hotel ran 10km from Invermoriston to her home village.

She said: "It was perfect timing, with

a start at 6am and before work. I was also lucky and had gorgeous sunshine."

"It was great to take part in such an exciting event and to run a stage close to my Highlands home."

Two days later, Mark Russell, of Glasgow, ran double the distance between Girvan and Ballantrae on the Ayrshire coast.

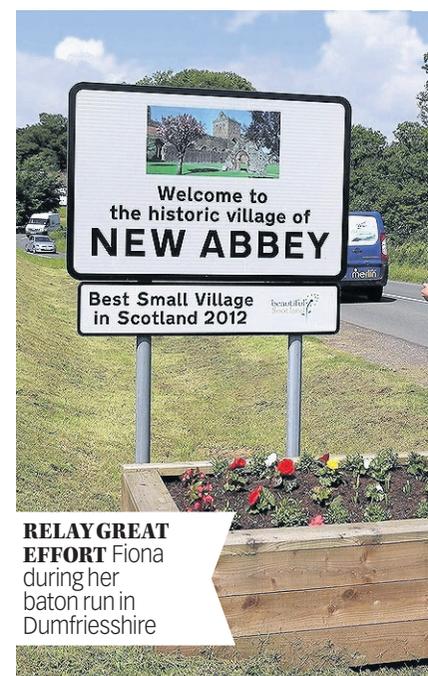
The yoga teacher from Glasgow said: "Although my part was 20km, it was still small compared to the overall relay distance."

"I am delighted to run as part of a world record-breaking team and my section was a real treat, with wonderful views of the sea and Ailsa Craig."

Another stage runner, Karen Robinson, found the camaraderie among her 12-strong group provided the incentive to start running just before midnight.

Karen's group were also making the most of the Whitekirk to North Berwick 10km run to raise funds for a cause close to their hearts.

Karen, of East Whitburn, said: "Our neighbour, Neil Brownlie, died of a



RELAY GREAT EFFORT Fiona during her baton run in Dumfriesshire