

The Fellrunner June 2000



Making a Splash!

Main picture: Yorkshire under 16's champion David Sugden of Holmfirth Harriers, leads Bradford Airedale veteran Richard Crossland at Bunny Run 4
Photograph: Peter Hartley

Inset: Dave Scott (Clayton) crosses Ogden Clough at Half Tour of Pendle, followed by Andy Green (Bfd Airedale)
Photograph: Peter Hartley

Under 14, Jack Weeden (Keighley and Craven) at The West Nab junior championship race.
Photograph: Dave Woodhead

Jean Rawlinson of Rossendale dashes through Sladen Beck at The Stanbury Splash
Photograph: Peter Hartley



TAIL OF THE CHOCOLATE BUNNY

Once upon a time there was an Inn on a hill, where nearby there was a small stretch of moorland, and on that moorland people gaily flew their kites, model aeroplanes, rode their bikes and walked their dogs in total innocence.

That was of course until 1992 when some scantily clad strangers started to appear on the moor. They had strange footwear and spoke in jibberish tones, with comments about Egg Stage, lactic acid, studs and Easter eggs all being muttered in sheer excitement. As with all stories there is an happy ending, if you shut your eyes and say the magic words three times.....

BUNNY RUNS.....BUNNY RUNS.....BUNNY RUNS.....

now the story will unfold.

GOULD RUN AT ONE

A new name now adorns the belly of the fluffy bunny perpetual trophy, which is only awarded at bunny run one, the name etched there is Siggie Gould, or it could well be Siggymoud Abderus Gould. The 22 year old, has been a member of the British orienteering squad numerous times, but found his over enthusiasm in his running, and not map reading his downfall, so fell running could be just what he's looking for. Formerly of Leeds City, by now he will be draped in the famous Bingley Harriers colours, so he's bound to be an attribute to their already strong team. He took all the honours here only being headed by Karl Smith briefly on the way to the Egg Stage, but Siggie passed the marker in 3-28, two seconds clear. His debut up the steep banking echoed the comments of the other 227 runners, "I virtually had to scramble up the steep banking, and felt totally heavy legged on the immediate fast running along the wallside, expecting Karl Smith or anyone to come flying past. I suppose they felt as bad as me". The Devon born lad eventually crossed the finish line in 18-24, twenty seconds ahead of Graham Patten, with first over 40 Steve Oldfield once again dominating that category in third. At 43 years, Steve is certainly maturing with age, this was his 10th Bunny over 40 triumph, and came 2 days after winning Pendle fell race outright. As reported in one local newspaper, "there is only supposed to be some 300ft of climbing, but it feels like a lot more at the pace at which these races are run".

Returning the ladies fluffy bunny from last year's win, Chairperson of the English selection committee, Sarah Rowell duly kept her mitts firmly on the perpetual trophy, with a convincing victory in 21-01. The Guinness beer, Easter cake, chocolate bunny (in its hutch), metre of mini rolls, boing rabbit toy



Hand over hand is the only way Photo: Steve Bateson

and a giant Easter egg should keep her chocolate needs at bay.

Certainly the biggest surprise of the night was a coach full of soldiers from the Army Apprentice College at Harrogate all 47 running in their army red vests, a wonderful sight to see. Although they all seemed to set off together, it was obvious rivalry was intense, and Scott Haslam's victory salute in 33rd position said it all. Yes, the Corporal had just pipped the Captain Ian Johnson by two seconds, and certainly earned his prize, and the admiration of his colleagues. The downside of their journey home was that John Brannon, winner of the pint of orange contest caused quite a commotion by having to stop the bus owing to a call of nature.

No such problem for Danielle Kane the girls winner, while in the half yard of ale contest, race organiser Dave Woodhead put to good use his large mouth, and duly won in 9 seconds with seven competitors emptying the glass.

THE MASTER AT TWO

With the undisputed King of the Bunny runs, Ian Holmes attending, the question was who would be second, as always when the master is around. The 34 year old duly obliged by notching up his sixteenth Egg Stage win in 3-34, and also his sixteenth outright victory. As Ian says, "these races are ideal speed sessions, and with the British championship race Clachnaben at the weekend it was ideal preparation. I always go off fast and then ease off, the rest of the field give up too easily especially to the Egg Stage. It has been voiced that Paul Sheard knows a Leeds City track athlete capable of beating me, bring him on, NO CHANCE! I tend not to run faster than I have to, once someone's broken my course record of 16-43, then that will give me the incentive". (For the record Holmsie won at Clachnaben).

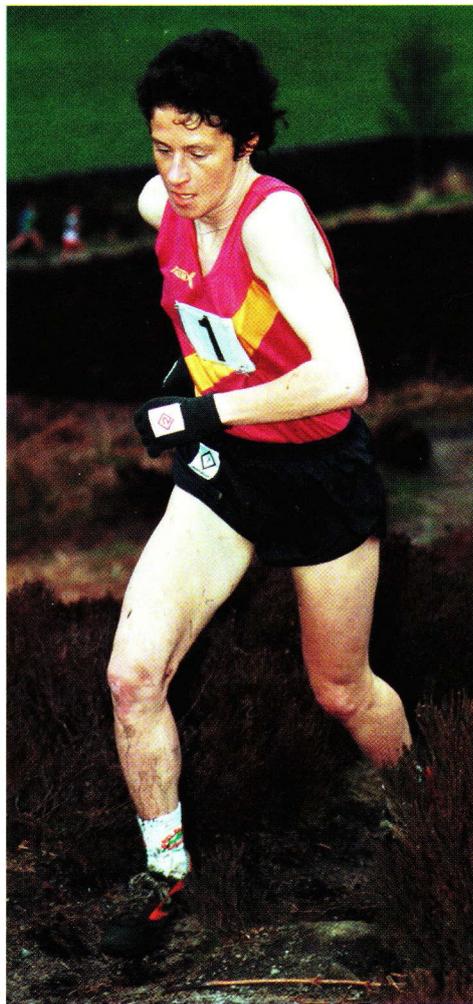
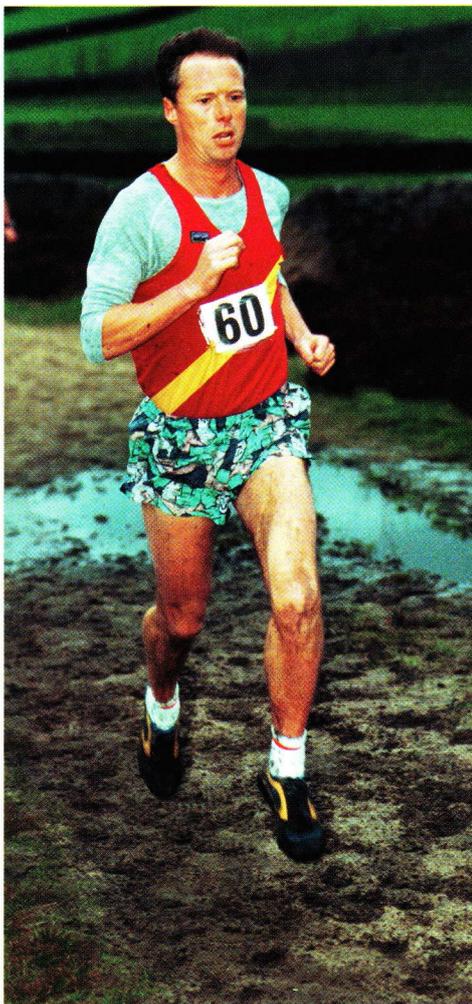
The answer to who finished second was no other than Robert Hope, who got the better of Siggie Gould by 8 seconds from a massive field of 250 including 56 ladies, which is very encouraging.

These races are all about completing the course, in no matter what time, Ian may well do 17-38, but the organisers recognise the slower element with a prize for the person with the most guts and determination, which this evening was duly won by Mary Shepherd, showing her children Sally and David that mum can run aswell. Another feature is that spot prizes are alive and well, for those runners who might not get the chance of a prize otherwise. At each race a free guess the winner's race time is always on offer, with the prize being what else but a Cadbury's kilo bar of chocolate, with under 16 winner Mark Buckingham's dad John being the recipient to Holmfirth's joy.

Once again the Army came mob handed, with Scott Haslam finishing 33rd position again, but being quicker by some 30 seconds, as new names filled many of the first 40 mens prizes.

After finishing 16th overall and winning Wardle Skyline on the Sunday, Sarah Rowell could only manage 42nd here and yet improved her time from Bunny one by 6 seconds. A part of the winners prizes tonight were 3ft tall blow up bunny rabbits, one of these mysteriously found its way into Paul and Jo Briscoe's vacant rabbit hutch, much to their surprise. You don't have to look far for the culprit although she is in denial, but has a wicked sense of humour.

A new feature is the amount of cyclists now competing, in the ladies it was last year's 3 Peaks cyclo cross winner, Kali Taylor with husband Ian being the fastest on two feet aswell as two wheels. Others to feature include Alistair Rees, Mark Chryssanthou



Mens and ladies series winners - Graham Patten and Sarah Rowell Photos: Peter Hartley

awarded, along with a bottle of Briscoe's Holmsies bobtail brew and the fell running book *Staying the Distance* by Rob Grillo to all category winners in the overall series.

In the men's it was a shock to see the calibre of Mick Hawkins win at his debut at the race, he also won the Egg Stage in 3-32, leaving Rob Jebb second in both these categories. With the aforementioned not competing in the series in third Graham Patten established a series lead from Steve Oldfield, who like Sarah made sure of the veteran forty title in the series. Bingley won the team competition with Hawkins, Jebb and Max Brear who still holds the under 16 record of 18-44 from 1997, 3 giant kilo bars of Cadbury's chocolate were their reward.

Proving that the more Bunny Runs you compete in, the more accomplished you become the Army's Scott Haslam improved to 20-13, just behind first under 16 David Sugden of Holmfirth.

CABBAGE BUT NO PEN AT FOUR

Anybody that's old enough to remember Fridays in the 60's and 70's, must recall CRACKERJACK on their TV. The gist of the game was to pile the contestants' arms with prizes they had won, with a cabbage being the last thing they had to hold, whatever they dropped they lost.

This was implemented at bunny four where Ian Holmes, Rob Howarth and Lisa Richardson were piled high with beer, cake, giggle bunny, metre of mini rolls, jelly bean carrot, half a dozen Thorntons chocolate eggs and a giant Easter egg off the table plus a cabbage for good measure! If they dropped anything they forfeited it, needless to say to the riotous crowd nothing went astray. One of the comments shouted was "where's the Crackerjack pen?"

Besides the three winners at bunny four, since Graham Patten the overall winner of

and Robin Bradbury who all seem to be finding the transition into fell running a new successful challenge.

LUCKY HANDBAG AIDES SARAH AT THREE

An Easter present of a purple furry rabbit handbag stashed full of chocolate eggs, proved to be Sarah Rowell's lucky charm. After emptying the contents, the former Olympic Games and World Cup athlete pinned it to her shorts, and raced away to break her own V35 record. This 20-36 clocking also proved to be the fastest time since Jo Smith two years ago.

"It was very pleasing to get the old gits record, maybe the bunny handbag helped me as I wanted as many people to see it as possible," said the now 37 year old. Certainly this proved the case as 220 athletes including 55 of the fairer sex were left giggling and astonished at seeing the lucky charm, this win ensured Sarah won the overall title, with three straight wins. Sarah will by now be competing in the Adrenaline Rush 2000, a five day 300 mile event in both North and Southern Ireland involving everything to do with outdoor sports such as, cycling, swimming, trekking, running etc.

Second lady was an unattached athlete who has improved throughout the series, Rebecca Kendall, a Yorkshire born lass and a former

orienteer, (another not too competent with a map). The 24 year old research assistant at Leeds University intends to stay in fell running, although shortly will be sent to Coventry (through her job!), not renowned for its hills. Congratulations to 53 year old, Barbara Carney of Bingley whose time of 27-04 was a new over 50's record. This also ensured Barbara the giant crème Easter egg



Starters egg each other on with real eggs. Photo: Peter Hartley

the series had never experienced the thrill of being piled high with prizes it was put right at this prize giving much to the delight of the other runners. Graham's record was 2nd, 4th, 3rd and 3rd, with three to count to the overall he won with 8 points from Steve Oldfield with 13 points, and Will Smith from Keighley and Craven with 17.

Graham competed in the series to get fit after spending three months in New Zealand, his winter home. There he did win three races, the Luxmore Mountain Grunt 28k, the Snowfarm half marathon a 21k trail event and the Mount Iron Classic 16k, but more importantly spent his time paragliding. An optometrist in Keighley, Graham has represented Wales at road, cross-country and fell, and before that was a part of the GB orienteering squad in the 70's and 80's. One of his dreams is to paraglide above the 3 peaks course and take different and exclusive photos of the runners as they compete in that gruelling event.

Ian Holmes popped along for another speed session, and along with Robert Jebb who finished second they ran the first half fast and then just jogged to the finish as they say, all because they had the 3 Peaks at the weekend.

An interesting name in second to the Egg Stage behind Ian's 3-34 was Keighley and Cravens Will Smith, the Oakbank PE teacher not the movie star, was timed at 3-39 and finished 7th on the night, from 174 runners including 37 ladies.

A total surprise at the prize giving for 16 year old Lisa Richardson was her name being called out as the ladies winner, she had no idea when she finished how she had done, so the haul of chocolate prizes was even more a shock. Lisa has represented the England junior team at Knockdhu and the Dublin international, and under Stuart Swann's guidance is obviously doing something right. Certainly she enjoyed all the razzmatazz of the races, and competed in the entire post race contests, along with Nathan Lawton, Peter Dickinson and Anthony Lloyd. Lisa did herself proud as she initially thought she was in the under 18 category, but to her dismay she was classed as a senior, and proved herself against the other more senior ladies. Only 14 seconds behind was another youngster, Helen Glover from Oakbank school, who could have run the series as an under 16 girl, but chose the senior category for some reason.

The veteran over 50 series award hinged on bunny fours outcome, Doctor Brian Parkinson was ready for the showdown with Barry Rawlinson both having 5 points so far. Brian deservedly took the chocolate, beer and book series prize with three firsts and a third. Not strictly a new face to running, he has orienteered for some 15 years, and before that was an accomplished Airedale and Spen Valley athlete, who has now joined Bingley.

With a mammoth prize giving of 70 Easter eggs for bunny four, another 54 overall eggs plus the Briscoe's 'Holmsies bobtail brew' and Staying The Distance books, not forgetting several boxes of mad about chocolate eggs being thrown into the eager and hungry crowd. The buffet following was soon devoured, then the revelry really kicked off with the Pint of orange won by under 16 winner Mark Buckingham and girl Danielle Kane, before Holmfirth's secretary, Jeff Pierson showed how not to drink half a yard of ale, his spillage was excessive to say the least.

RELAY EGG SURPRISE

A beautiful sunny evening greeted the 44 teams that entered the finale to the Bunny Run series involving three runners per team each covering 2.5m/250ft, or basically the long lap of the bunny race route.

First leg runners were instructed to line up and receive their egg baton – not boiled or anything, just an egg as it left the hen, simple as that! While Eileen clucked round at the start with her tray of eggs, the runners were being instructed that any breakage or failure to negotiate the egg all the way around the course would result in a penalty of three minutes. Much showboating, astonishment and sheer delight was evident, before the mad scramble to be off; in fact quite a few were shell-shocked.

Certainly the competition at the front end was extremely tense, with Mick Hawkins running a record breaking final leg in 12-13 to take over a minute out of Gary Devine. This snatched victory for his ad-hoc 'Triple H' team of brother Stephen Hawkins 12-49 and Robert Hudson, 12-42, who set a new record of 37-44, over one minute off P&B's 1997 old record, with Bingley 3rd team.

Individually seven runners broke Gary Oldfield's 12-53 record, with Mick Hill actually breaking it twice as he ran P&B's second leg in 12-17 and P&B's Z teams third leg in 12-47.

Although attracting over a dozen international runners, this event is very much a fun event with the emphasis on participation, this obviously means a few runners are poached into various teams with only ten fully fledged athletic clubs entered.

Holding to that tradition the first family team in a new record of 42-49 were the Wadsworths or Wharfedale 'B', Sam, 14-10, Richard, 14-36, and James, 14-03, beat the former holders Steven, Sam and Martin Hounslow who could only manage thirteenth and second family. P&B Girlies with Sally Corbin, 16-43, Sarah Rowell, 15-03 and Ruth Schofield, 16-34 easily won the ladies with an aggregate time of 48-20, from Keighley and Craven ladies with Bingley ladies third. One interesting technique used by Ruth Schofield was to deposit the egg into her bra for safe keeping while she ran, this was much to the delight of John

Buckingham who was collecting the relay batons at the finish. He already has volunteered to collect the eggs next year, and will offer more assistance if this technique is taken up by more ladies. As for the fellas you're on your own!

Body Zone were the first mixed team, with John Adair, 15-56, Steve Schofield, 17-59 and the female member Lisa Lacon, 16-13, who finished 16th, one place ahead of the Rogans a mixed and family team.

The changeovers were eggstremely tense affairs, with outgoing runners cradling their palms awaiting the fragile baton egg; meanwhile the incomers were reducing speed rapidly to make safe delivery. The saying 'feathers will fly' was very appropriate at these changeovers as everybody including spectators were highly charged with excitement, and near hysteria as the egg was exchanged.

Much to the Woodentops surprise only two eggs were broken one by a little boy who was heartbroken that he had smashed his egg as he stumbled, and the other cracked, but ingeniously sneaked through onto the tray, it was probably while John was helping Ruth.

SKULDUGGERY reared its ugly head, in the form of the under 16 Last Minute team comprising of Ross Whitaker, 16-01, Mark Buckingham, 14-06 and the culprit Matthew Pierson, 14-34. This youngster made one very big error, in that he handed the egg baton to his unsuspecting mum, Jeanette, and then cheekily recollected it just prior to the finish. Unfortunately for Matthew he did this in full view of several other teams, who hurriedly reported it to race control. Much to his embarrassment, the team's and his mum Jeanette's, this was brought to the attention of everybody at the prize giving. It has to be emphasised that his mum had no prior knowledge to what the baton was going to be or Matthew's intentions. Although there was much jeering and heckling it was decided to let the result stand, now that's true sportsmanship by the regulars at the Bunny Runs.

Next year be warned, skulduggery will not be tolerated!

As for next year who knows what the baton will be, but we do know someone who has an ostrich farm just up the road, so why not turn up just to see what the Woodentops have in store for the Bunny Run Relay runners.

Now the tale is told of the parable of the Bunny Runs.

The moorland is now settling down.

The Inn on the hill is now much quieter.

The Woodentops can now sleep soundly.

So it's time for bed one and all.

Oh yes! And by the way they all lived happily ever after.