

# HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

From Harden Moore

After this year's Bunny Runs it has been brought to the attention of the Woodentop organisers that the 50 plus bottles of 'Holmsies Bobtail Brew' Briscoe beer given out to the various overall standings should be renamed,

## 'Hope Springs Eternal'

Why? Well, Robert Hope in the three BR's he has run in this year has dominated the event, much to his surprise, but all the masses of chocolate couldn't have gone to a more appreciative chocoholic. Robert even took time out to bake a carrot cake with part of his prize and present the Woodentops with a few slices. At the Crackerjack style prize giving Robert certainly likes to share, because he generously tosses aside numerous prizes into the crowded pub to great roars from the gathering. He has loosened the tight grip Ian Holmes has on the BR's, because until this year only Greg Hull had the audacity to run Ian into second place. Remember Robert Hope ended Ian's reign at the Stoop fell race last year, Robert is certainly starting to get a reputation and become a stone in Ian's shoe!

A certain amount of credit must go to Steven Hawkins who made most of the running in three of the races, finishing second on all occasions.

But if people feel the label should be changed for his outstanding performances, then here's a few other ideas for the bottle.

### 'Shaw Winner'

Andy Shaw has put in some startling runs to clinch the over 40 title, winning all four races, and has never been outside the first six overall. He has been very close to Steve Oldfield's record of 18 minutes dead, which shows the old adage 'life begins at forty' is true. One of his ambitions has been fulfilled, that is an England vest for the Knockdhu International, and of course being piled high at a BR.

### 'Cocks' Stiff One'

In honour of the over 60 winner Tim Cock, who won three races outright, with rival Malcolm Coles blotting his copy book at the first BR. Tim actually didn't even start running until he was 40, when his son Stephen challenged him to a race round the block - "If you think you're fit dad". He was startled to find that squash and badminton



David Harman (Holmfirth) and Gary Bailey (Bingley) sprint for the line at Bunny Run One. (Photo David Brett)

hadn't prepared him, and he had to walk up the hill and vowed then to get into shape. This year has been his most successful with the Stoop, Boulsworth, Soreen Stanbury Splash, Noon Stones, Ilkley Moor and Midgley Moor, just a few over 60 prize wins. Tim is also heavily involved in administration in the sport, and is currently chairman of Holmfirth Harriers, and secretary of the Yorkshire Veterans Association. Retired now, he always with a group of friends takes part in a different marathon each year, it's become a ritual. In February it was 3-43 at the Las Vegas Marathon, next year could be Barbados.

### 'Pauline's Perky Pop'

Pauline Munro showed consistency with two wins and two seconds and showed that last year's four wins plus series win wasn't a fluke. Juggling a very busy solicitor's work schedule with homelife and training sometimes proves difficult to get the right balance for racing. Winning numerous races and an England vest last year, this year hasn't been as fortuitous with only Soreen Stanbury Splash being a first to date. But determination and hard work, neither of which Pauline is shy of, will pay dividends.

### 'Brownlee's Blaster'

Alistair Brownlee, apart from at the first run, has mixed it with the big guns to win the Under 16 boys series win, and during the series incredibly celebrated his 14th birthday. This was at BR 4, where the packed Guide Inn did a raucous rendition of "Happy Birthday, dear Alistair" to the much embarrassed young lad. A Bradford Grammar School student, he has twice been National Triathlon Champion, 1999 and 2000, and is currently leading the championships this year. An excellent swimmer, cycling is his weakness, but running is his forte. He is the current Yorkshire X-Country Champion, repeating this feat from 2001, and if fell running takes his fancy he will be unstoppable, already he has retained the Yorkshire fells Championship title. Interestingly his first ever race was at Pen Hill, at West



U16 champion Alistair Brownlee of Bingley doing well against the big boys at Bunny Run Three. (Photo David Brett)

Witton in the Dales, where he talked his dad Keith into letting him run, but ended up having to be rescued after he found himself hung on a barbed wire fence unable to move. Younger brother Jonathon also BR ran, and is as talented as his brother, being Yorkshire swimming champion for the last three years and National Tri Champion twice. Both live for sport, and give Keith a hectic schedule in travelling here, there and everywhere. These three all combined in the BR Relay under Brownlee Bombers to finish fourth family team.

### 'Walker's Mighty Atom'

Danielle Walker not only won the Under 16 girls category, but set a new record of 22-26 into the bargain, at BR Two. For a girl of such little stature, Danielle certainly packs a punch and would have finished 4th lady overall had she been in that category. Every Tuesday would see her alongside Holmes, Hope, John Taylor and the like on the very front grid, where you have to have your wits about you with over 200 to nearly 300 runners jockeying for position. She teamed up with U16's Victoria Snape and Laura Livesey, like last year, for the Relay under the dubious name of 'The Little Bitches'.

'Rogan's Run' and 'Thompson's Torpedo' could honour joint over 50 winners Paul Rogan and Stuart Thompson, while 'Gay's Grog', 'Johnson's Jollop' and 'Smith's Slurper' covers over 50 Gay Leary, Helen Johnson over 35 and Jane Smith over 40 series winners. At the prestigious BR One Helen Johnson won the perpetual bunny rabbit trophy for first lady home, and also besides the masses of chocolate is now the proud owner of Lucy rabbit, a Bear Factory cuddly toy named after record holder Lucy Wright, and born that very night or so the birth certificate stated. Other recipients were Ian Holmes and Andy Shaw, who collected rabbits named Ian and Steve respectively after the other course record holders, Holmes and Oldfield.

'Saz's Sozzler', to celebrate the achievement of Sarah Rowell not only being the first ever solo lady runner, thereby setting a new record of 49-45 in the relay event, but that she also actually beat all the other ladies' teams into the bargain, and recorded 2nd, 4th and 9th fastest leg times that night, only Lucy Whitaker ran faster with 15-58.

According to Ian Holmes the revelation of the Bunny Runs was Mark Buckingham who won three Egg Stages, and set a new Egg Stage record of 3-20, deleting Holmes' six year old record. At BR One Ian thought he had the Egg Stage sewn up, and couldn't believe that the young upstart Mark sped past to deny him. "It will be interesting next week to see if Mark is willing to put himself into the same pain threshold again or if he'll shy away, having tasted what it's like to really hurt". Mark showed he has the staying power, talent and with experience and maturity will flourish.

So why do so many love the Bunny Runs? It is after all only a race, with chocolate prizes, and Crème Eggs to all finishers. The truth is even the Woodentops don't know, you're best asking the 200 odd runners that turn up every Tuesday without fail for a three mile thrash around the moors above Keighley. In fact this year saw Gavin Bland travel from the Lake District to sample the delights!

So will 'Hope Springs Eternal' be on the bottle?

We think not, after all Ian Holmes has won twenty Bunny Runs, and won the series title four times.....so Robert there's a bit of catching up to do, you're only at four Bunny wins and one series; what should we use to get you up, the stick or the carrot?

## Believe it or not .....

Yuppiedom comes to fell-running !! Approaching the last part of the climb at this year's Wray Caton Moor Race Wendy Dodds and various other competitors were astonished to overtake a gentleman running up the slope immersed in a very serious conversation about car insurance on his mobile phone !! This was the same gentleman who, at registration, asked the organisers where the changing lockers were and if his number was self-adhesive - what with this and Bannsey Harriers I can't help wondering if fell-running is changing its image for the worse !