

The lunatics are taking over the asylum!

Bunny Runs

A senior runner looking at all the young, eager, fresh faced juniors warming up said 'bloody hell, the lunatics are taking over the asylum', this is definitely the case as they all want to pit their wits against the big 'uns, this is what the Bunny Series is all about, and pit them they do, admirably. All the youngsters want to do is 'mix it' with the seniors, unfortunately for the seniors this means eggstra hard racing, if they don't want egg on their faces.

The new course has got the seal of approval, and although faster, it is more runner friendly with wider paths and few bottlenecks, with the start easily coping with an average of 200, much better than Harden Moor, which is now just a distant memory. The Old Sun Hotel is a family run establishment by Peter, Carole and son Robert, and they really rolled out the welcome mat, embracing the Bunny Runners and the races quaint and quirky ways.

IT'S CHOC'S AWAY!

32 year old GB international Alan Buckley, who ran in the recent World Cross Country Champs in Kenya was the celebrity and shouted 'GO' to the 188 runners which included 65 ladies. Alan got into the antics of a BR by wearing bunny ears and a bunny nose, which kind of complimented his GB track suit beautifully. What a night it was for the Buckley's as Alan's wife Jo, the recent Yorkshire half marathon silver medallist won the ladies Egg Stage in 4-08 just ahead of English U14 champion Mel Hyder down from the Lake District. 30 year old Jo continued to blaze the trail to win in a new record for the revised route in 18-37, with Keighley & Craven's Helen Glover, 22, only 7 seconds behind and young Mel came a further 9 seconds adrift, and the first FU14. Jo last won the race under her maiden name of Smith in 1998, and held the second fastest ever time over the old Harden Moor course behind Lucy Wright. To round off the Buckley's celebrations, the following day saw them popping corks with their first wedding anniversary and sharing her chocolate haul, we hope the cuddly perpetual rabbit trophy enjoys the Buckley homestead on Harden Moor.

Local club Keighley & Craven dominated both the mens and ladies team chocolate prizes, and in the ladies Rosie Hellawell, 8th, and the second FU14, backed up Holly Williams, 6th, and Helen Glover, 2nd, Rosie the Yorkshire U12 champion pursued the first V60 Graham Breeze all the way to the line; age before beauty by a mere two seconds.

Showing no signs of age or loss of speed, 41



179 Dave Lewis
196 Ben Ingleson

year old Ian Holmes put the youngsters in their place setting a new record of 15-15, breaking away on the roller coaster part in West End Quarry, although Jonathan Hare kept a beady eye on his 'quarry', the back of Holmes, and never gave up with one second separating them at the end. Third was 'Two Dogs' Matthew Pierson from Holmfirth who also won the Egg Stage in 3-28, well shy of his mentor Mark Buckingham 2006 record of 3-24, who couldn't attend any of the Bunny's due to him studying across the pond in America. Incredibly this was Ian's 23rd BR win - his first coming 13 years ago in 1994 - could this be the year we see Ian make it a magical 25?

Sports company **Crosstrax** generously donated a pair of fell shoes to each BR, for a free prize draw to all runners, the BR1 winner was Chris Stacy of Otley AC who finished in 49th in 19-53, while guess the mens winning time winner was Martin Horbury.

IT'S BIRTHDAY FUN!

200 chocolate chasing runners 'hared' around the 3 mile circuit in near perfect conditions, with records tumbling everywhere. But before all this began it was birthday fun, for Rosie Hellawell, and her mummy, Steff, as they were brought forward to receive a 'Happy Birthday' rendition from the congregation of 'rufty tufty' fell runners, before being given a 5 second head start. A womans age should NEVER be revealed but between you and me, one was 13 the other 40.

Donning the guest celebrity bunny ears and nose for that night, Ben Lindsay of Pendle AC, a GB international, who cut his teeth on the BR's not that long ago, just missed out in the ferocious battle for the Egg Stage award, with 'Two Dogs' Pierson just hanging on, literally, to



Hare & Holmes
do battle

win in 3-28. Although a virus picked up at the World Junior Cross in Kenya, certainly didn't help this 1-55, 800m runner's cause. Holmsey laid off the pace and joyfully watched these two lock horns, and gleefully acknowledged the pair as lactic acid coursed through their veins which virtually stopped them in their tracks, tactics tonight were his aim. Pushing on Holmes eventually won in a new record of 15-10, with Andy Hilton of York Acorn and young Hare having their own personal battle, Hare once again losing out by one second. Two new youngsters appeared, stamping their prowess on the race in the form of Barrow's Stephen Wilson, the new U16 record holder in 17-19 and Marc Scott, the U14 winner in 18-09. Shock of the night, was the shocking pink attire of team Sport Camps from Keighley, with the ring leader being 'big' Willy Smith, who finished fifth overall just ahead of a tiring Lindsay while his other

co-conspirators were Rob Shaw 8th, and Adam McLean 9th, as they took the team award.

Lucy Griffiths, by now sunning herself in South Africa, set her stall out and won the ladies Egg Stage in 4-05, showing what determination and perseverance can achieve, but she did pay the price and slipped to sixth lady behind birthday girl Rosie. Dr. Jo Buckley won again, just having the experience over FU14 Mel Hyder, as they both improved on their own records, while Helen Glover feeling the effects of third place at Pendle Hill finished third, again.

At the fever pitched prize giving, where young and old gather round to watch that nights racing on the big screen, and where chocolate literally rains on everybody, young and old again fight it out to compete on a different level, to see who is the best chocolate catcher. In amongst the mayhem the **Crosstrax** prize shoe draw was won by, V50 Jonnie Butler of Keighley & Craven who finished in 103rd in 21-24, and the guess birthday girl Rosie's time was won by Nigel Bedell.

IT'S THE BEST EVER!

Keighlian, Ian Holmes, achieved another milestone in his illustrious career in winning an amazing 25 BR's ahead of the 212 strong field. In many peoples eyes Ian has got to be the best fell runner ever, winning all the classic races – 3 Peaks – Ben Nevis – Scafell – Snowdon – Burnsall – Bens of Jura – Mount Kinabalu in Borneo – you name it, his name is on the trophy, and not just once! And as for Haworth Moor 10 Stoops, 13 Soreen Stanbury's, 12 Auld Lang Synes and 4 Withins Skyline race wins speak for themselves. So the accolade of best fell runner ever fits perfectly on his shoulders, and to acknowledge his BR achievement of 25 glorious wins he was presented with a statue of Billy Whizz. The statue was inscribed with 'To commemorate Ian 'Billy Whizz' Holmes winning 25 Bunny Runs', it was funny at the prize giving because the comments were he had a striking resemblance to the Beano comic cartoon character. On the night he even reduced his own course record by 10 seconds to 15 minutes dead, with again youngster Hare in second, but also inside Ian's old mark of 15-10. Current British and English fells champion and former World Sky Running champion, Robert Jebb, posed in the now famous bunny ears and nose, as he was the guest celebrity, he finished third, with Martin Peace tenth, plus Ian, Bingley Harriers easily won the team. This is now getting boring, because 'Two Dogs' Pierson won yet again in 3-29, but at least he had Ian breathing down his neck at the line.

Last years BR winner, 'Scary' Mary Wilkinson another Bingley international returned to break Jo Buckley's ladies record by a massive 69 seconds, and took the Egg Stage in 4-08, still seven seconds shy of Blue Haywood's 2006 record. Mel Hyder again broke the FU14 record, with FU16 Rossendale's Emma Flanagan having a fantastic run in third. Emma has ensured her form has come good at the right time, and the 15 year old has just secured one of her dreams, and will run for England in the Marco Germanetto race in Italy, well done Emma! The ladies team



'Scary' Mary leading the group, followed by U14 winner Marc Scott (81), Rob Thackeray (187), U14 Ben Marriott (46), V40 Andy Shaw (72)

Photo courtesy of Peter Ellwood

was won by Ilkley Harriers, with FV40 Alison Bennett, who finished 7th, and also set a new record of 22-00, next was second FV40, Diane Hagger, 9th and 15th was third FU16 Catherine Gibbons. All these ladies had other members of their families running, as does numerous others, because this is what the races are all about. Can mum beat dad? Or are both going to get beaten by their offspring? A race is a race, but here racing seems all the more relevant when family is involved!!

For a refreshing change the guest celebrity drew a ladies name out of the bunny hat for the **Crosstrax** shoe prize draw, and Holly Page of Halifax Harriers who finished 8th lady was the well chuffed recipient, the guess the winning ladies time was also won by a lady, Gillian Sessford, hope you enjoyed your Easter Egg.

IT'S THE SCARY ONE

Taking it a step further the guest celebrity World Downhill Mountain Bike champion, Karen Ballantine, not only donned the customary ears and nose, but also had to contend with being dressed as a playboy bunny girl, which might have dumbed down her world championship rainbow cycle jersey. But this bubbly character thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and seeing her white bobbing bob tail setting off into the distance being chased by 197 eager runners, brought a smile and a giggle to the crowds watching. Fresh back from running in the Addis Ababa 5k race in Ethiopia, Scary Mary executed a winning performance by not only slicing 6 seconds off her own record of 17-26, but more importantly she broke the illusive 4 minute barrier for the ladies Egg Stage with 3-59. The 26 year old finished 21st overall, but still had two BU14 runners, Marc Scott and Ben Marriott ahead of her. You may be asking yourself where her nickname Scary comes into the equation, it's because of her absolute recklessness when descending, and sheer fearlessness when competing. Jo Buckley finished second in her fastest ever time, 18-08, and clinched the series

title, which will now feature her picture on the 2008 beer bottle label, along with Ian Holmes, this is part of the prize for winning the series.

Feeling the need for chocolate, 41 year old Greg Hull of Leeds City, returned after an absence of 11 years, and duly won in 15-07, but was disappointed that Ian Holmes was a spectator, he reckoned it would have been an epic head to head, maybe next year. Not quite 'The Rumble in the Jungle' but more like 'The Thriller on the Hiller'. Ian was resting for the 3 Peaks, he finished third. Greg one of the Leeds City greats first won a BR in 1993, before winning again in 1996, so with this win he has finally achieved his hat trick of BR wins! Even though his campaign has been over a span of 14 years, this really does show the caliber of this remarkable athlete, who has represented England over all surfaces. 'Two Dogs' was second, who again took the Egg Stage in a slowish 3-30, with new Yorkshire Inter-Counties representative, Graham Pearce from Ilkley finishing third.

Still young at heart and with a spring in their step, FV60 Jan Atkins, FV50, Linda Bostock, FV40 Alison Bennett, MV60 Graham Breeze and MV50 Malcolm Pickering all won three races each, and consequently the series awards.

At the mammoth chocolate eggstravaganza of a prize giving, which also includes the overall prize giving as well, the **Crosstrax** prize shoe draw winner was Anthony Blythe of Idle AC who finished in 116th in 22-04. Besides the abundant Easter egg prizes to numerous overall competitors, they also received a limited edition specially labeled bottle of ale, this year with the picture of 2005 series winners, Blue Haywood and John Heneghan, (there wasn't a series in 2006). For any of you 'worrying willies' out there, don't, the traditional giving and receiving of the brew to the junior boys and girls is watched on by mum and dad, grandpa and grandma, uncle and auntie, in fact just about all the family are there to cheer them on. This is what the Bunny Runs are all about, FUN and if you don't get it, then maybe the Bunny's aren't for you.



Ooops, where's the egg? World Champ Alistair Brownlee with not a safe pair of hands.

Photos courtesy of Paul Wood

IT'S THE EGG FINALE

Smiling all over her face, and rightly so, celebrity here was the newly crowned Queen of the 3 Peaks, and with it the Yorkshire championship, none other than Scary Mary Wilkinson, who donned the bunny ears and nose to bring the series to its finale – The relay!

This is when even more fun is to be had, because any concoction of team is accepted, and runners certainly take on this challenge, from assembling runners they've made friends with along the way, to mixed and family teams taking precedence. This was never so more evident this year, when for the first time ever a family team won outright, The Brownlee Brothers, both who are world class triathletes, Jonathan Brownlee ran fastest on leg one, over the two and half mile / 250ft circuit with 12-55, and has just been selected to run for England in the Marco Germanetto race in Italy. Elder brother, World champ Alistair ran legs two and three to record 9-23, and then 9-55 for the two mile / 200ft circuits. We warned you they were coming to win in the last *Fellrunner* issue, although super slick on the running, their ability to keep a grip of the baton proved to be their Achilles, never mind lads the best relay teams drop the baton! Well when we say baton, we mean an egg, not just any egg mind, these were painted silver to recognize Ian Holmes' 25th BR victory, and yes, they are fresh eggs not hard boiled or pot ones. To give credit to Alistair, he did retrieve the egg from the ground, but by then it was out of its shell and running free, he still scooped up what he could, and began his leg with egg flailing everywhere, much to the shock and amusement of the other 54 teams waiting to take possession of their baton eggs at the Dimples Quarry change over. The Brownlee's didn't put much

thought into their team name, but that's not the case with everyone else, wacky, bizarre, comical, topical, farcical and just plain stupid team names are somehow conjured up, it seems as much time is taken thinking them up than is actually spent running the race. Sport Camps finished second team with Adam McLean running second fastest on leg two with 9-45, whilst Matt Billy No Mates, Matthew Pierson, finished third running all the legs himself, with 13-20, 9-59 and finally 10-02, very impressive. Another solo competitor, 18 year old Jonathan Hare finished fourth. Team name, The Twirlies, finished top ladies in 16th, with Helen Glover, 15-37, Laura Greenham, 12-04 and Holly Williams, 11-48, all these girls run for Keighley & Craven, second were GU16's Flower Power, Sarah Wilson, 20-52, Emilee Throup, 13-51 and Emma Thompson, 14-12. What a team Whizz were, the GU14's, Charlotte Cox, 20-17, Hannah Kutny, 16-41 and anchor girl, Chelsey Holder, 15-46, although rumour has it the egg didn't make it back in one piece.

With more prizes donated to the family and mixed sections, it's not surprising that 11 family and 26 mixed teams get themselves organised, with the second mixed being made up of two classy U14 athletes, Marc Scott ran 15-16, to pass the egg to Mel Hyder, 11-11 and then Marc ran again, 11-29 to take team Marc, Mel & Marc to 12th overall. Pendle Posy with Anna Anderson, 15-44, Dean Thompson, 11-07 and Anna's dad, John, 11-27 finished 3rd mixed, Snap, Crackle & Pop were 4th.

We don't know which was which, but The



good, The bad & The ugly team finished second family, with junior Oliver Watson running last leg, 13-48, dad Jerry, first leg, 15-30 and Jill Myers second leg, 12-29. Our BR4 celebrity, Karen Ballantine teamed up with hubby Dick to finish third family, although Dick must have found it hard having competed the 3 Peaks race just 48 hours earlier, and here running legs one, 16-26, and three, 11-44, while Karen ran, 13-53.

Here are a few team names to cogitate with whilst you read this eggcellent magazine and dip your soldiers in your chucks; 2 fat 2 furious, Squashed Tomatoes, Innit T'winnit, Stripey Legs, A pea between 2 meats, Skool Kidz (their teacher Mrs. Roberts picked their prizes up, as they had school the next day). But the most reluctant prize winner of the night has to go to Declan Bulmer who came forward with Emma Spencer and Melissa Berry, team name Declan Dollies; he'd been out voted on the name, now that's girl power for you!

Finally a first ever we believe anywhere, as the Ginsters team of current English fells champion Natalie White, partner Tim Austin and their beloved four legged friend, Val Austin-White took the egg to anchor them home in 10th overall and first mixed team, now that's pooch power for you!

VIEWS OF THE THE BUNNY'S FROM OTHER ANGLES

One of the revelations of the BR's was 13 year old Marc Scott who now holds both the under 16 and the under 14 records, and even had his photo in the premier athletics magazine, Athletics Weekly, there he was pictured on the last climb with rival U14 Ben Marriott and the new ladies record holder Scary Mary, who they both beat. Marc is the youngest of triplets, Ben and Rob are not as keen on running, but share a passion for football like Marc, with all three playing for North Allerton Juniors, although Marc plays in the A team in the Teeside League Division 3 where they finished fourth; Ben and Rob play in the B team. Marc's siblings did come along to BR2 to cheer him on, maybe next year the lure of chocolate could persuade them to participate.

So different from Cross Country

I started running 3 years ago at the age of 10, and joined Richmond & Zetland Harriers and soon decided that I wanted to compete at the longer distances. As soon as I was old enough at age 11, I started running in the North Yorkshire South Durham cross country league and was actually 2nd overall in my first season, also winning the North Yorkshire and York Area Schools Championships.

After this I entered my first fell race, the Baht'at then an English championship race in March 2006, and came 14th overall taking a liking to the steep hills and boggy conditions. This past cross country season at U13 I have recorded some decent results, notably - 11th in the UK Inter Counties, which helped Yorkshire win a Gold Team Medal, 4th English Schools cross country Cup Final, 4th in the Yorkshire Championships and 17th at the English National

Championships. My next aim is to compete in the FRA Junior English Championship, and I decided to get some fell practice by running in the Bunny Run Series which I found to be different from cross country races. These races had a great atmosphere, and also gave you the chance to run against runners of all ages and abilities which provided a greater challenge. I found the course to be quite demanding and a lot faster than I expected, although there were some quite long hills, I was hoping it would be wet and boggy as I prefer to run in ankle deep mud. I really enjoyed the races, and have never ever received so many Goodies for winning a race. I thought the organisation and especially the Prize giving was First Class. My long term ambition is to run for England at either cross country or Fell, but hopefully both. I am now looking forward to the FRA races where I hope to have as much fun and success!

Marc Scott, Richmond & Zetland, U14 & U16 Record Holder with 16min 58sec.



Birthday girl Rosie Heflawell (73) leads the pack

Bunny experiences of a tail ender Granny age 62 and a bit

'No matter how hard I ran I just couldn't catch the little girl with golden curls racing ahead of me in her Keighley and Craven vest, running with her father. Every so often she walked up the steep inclines, my chance to catch and overtake her. Then she'd hear my gasping as I nearly reached her. Throwing a glance over her shoulder her eyes wide in horror at the sight of me, her grandmothers age, catching up on her – off she shot up the hill like a bat out of hell it was then I realised that the BR's included a clandestine race involving junior and senior runners. Their aim to beat us seniors, mine to overtake as many youngsters as my aging body would allow.

Such fun, what a course, what a place, Penistone Hill, a place that seems to know no sun or warm weather, what a race. At my age, 62, I ought to know better and do as my family expect, sit and knit whilst dispensing grannyish wisdoms. But no, I have for a long time harboured the desire, nay, urge to run the Bunny Runs. My family said, "mum's crazy", and off they went to live half way round the world whilst I plotted how to fit work around the logistics of getting to the BR's on time. It was impossible. It was only when I retired to look after Jim, my bees and my allotment that suddenly, this year, I was free to achieve my dream, to run at least 3 BR's. I would have run all 4, but was away in Ireland for the first run, running the Connemara marathon.

So on a freezing cold windy evening, thankfully wearing my thermal, I lined up at BR 2 at the back to sing "Happy Birthday" to the girl whose 13th birthday happened to be that day, along with her mums 40th. What a heady experience to be on the start line including many legends of fell running. My excitement was just too much. I was actually there; so were my doubts. Would I get totally left behind, would I get lost? Ok the course was marked but, let's face it I went astray on the Rivock Edge fell race, also a marked course, when hypnotised by the semi naked bodies of the cream of English manhood flying downhill towards me on their return. I failed to follow the marker sending me on the correct route, away from them, choosing instead to run towards them. What woman wouldn't, I argue.

It was brilliant, (The BR I mean). I didn't get lost, and the course was wonderfully marked. A perfect course for anyone wanting an introduction to fell running, with the bonus that experienced international fell runners of all ages also took part. Ok I was at the back, but all my daily niggling aches and pains were swamped by my total body insurrection at being made to run over such a testing course. Every part of me hurt. It was truly mind over matter. The exhilaration of being able to run, and keep up with the pack, and even start to overtake other runners, including some of the youngsters, made it all worth while. A plus is that I didn't fall, or twist my ankle, or, even fall into the lake we all had to traverse around.

The course even sent us all down the steep



part of the quarry, then immediately made us scramble up the other side. It was here that I overtook some of the youngsters, knowing that I had to get some distance between them and me because I knew that as soon as they hit the slightest downhill, off they would shoot like race horses.

Rob Jebb started BR 3, in a gale and the BR 4 was started by world downhill mountain bike champion, Karen Ballantine who took part in the race, but stopped half way round to cheer us on. Her words of encouragement were invaluable as my tired legs tried to run up an embankment. I was so impressed that such a wonderful athlete should take time to shout words of encouragement to me, an also ran at the end of the field. But that is the nature of the Bunny Runs. I felt welcomed, whatever my performance, and didn't at anytime feel that I was holding up the race or keeping marshals out. The weather improved for BR 4 and I was able to shed my thermal. At the last downhill to the finish line someone shouted to me, "well run – now just let go". And I did, leaning forward, arms out I felt as though I was flying freely, and finished loving the exhilaration. What a race!

Over the three races I ran I shaved 1 minute 5 seconds off my time, did even Ian Holmes achieve this I wonder? What more can I ask of that, we all have our goals and I feel that I certainly achieved mine.

And I haven't talked about the presentations – where we can all watch our performance on the big screen in the Old Sun Hotel. Yes – the whole race is filmed from warming up to the finish line. So whilst Dave Woodhead dispenses the biggest eggs I have ever seen to the winners and others, we can relive the race; he must have more Easter eggs than Tesco's!!!

What a series of races, what an experience. Thank you Dave, Eileen and the helpers for all your hard work and for opening up fell running to everyone, whatever their age or ability. Especially, thank you for allowing the kids to run with the adults. I loved every minute despite the pain, and will definitely be returning next year'.

Lyn Eden, a granny from Nidd Valley Harriers, Harrogate, best time of 29-20.

Everyone's a winner!

'Why do hundreds of runners gather on a Tuesday evening at Penistone Hill during April? Because there is fun to be had and chocolate to be won! It's quite unbelievable that a mid-week race of just 3 miles can attract so many runners, but such are the quality & reputation of these races that the fields are not only big, but usually contain several world class runners putting themselves on the line to risk being beaten by the undaunted up and coming youngsters.

Having won the 'Return of the Bunny Run' last year I thought I knew how to race against these young whippets, but once again I was left feeling like I was standing still as the majority of the runners sprinted away from me at the start in search of the 'egg stage' prize. How do they manage to start so fast? I think I may invest in some starting blocks for next year!

Once over the shock of being totally left behind I eventually clawed my way through the field as the sprinting specialists began to slow after their rather exuberant starts, and just managed to claim the female 'egg stage' ahead of the ever so impressive U14 runner Melanie Hyder...now that's a girl who has a very promising future ahead of her.

Being a relatively short, very runnable course provided a good opportunity to push the pace, but since last year an extra hill had been added at the end of the course, and this proved to be a real sting in the tail, and with the finish in touching distance provides a final opportunity to be caught. Thankfully, the lure of the chocolate pulled me through to a reliving victory.

Being a series of events, provides a great opportunity to measure your progress, and when I returned the following week I was just as keen to better my own performance as I was to win, and this time my personal goal was to challenge the 'Egg Stage' record which I had missed the previous week, and was piped to last year by another star of the future Blue Haywood. This time I was better prepared for the furious start, and managed to get the record and hold on to my title. But more importantly it was great to see the satisfaction gained by individuals as they made improvements each week, and proves it is not necessarily winning that is most important at the Bunny Runs, but rather beating your personal best. The chocolate sharing fest that evolves at the prize giving in the Old Sun Inn afterwards ensures that everyone feels like a winner anyway!

Bring on next year...I think I may have just enough chocolate to last me till then, and I hope that everyone continues to improve their Bunny Run PB's, that's me included!

Mary Wilkinson, Bingley Harriers, ladies record holder with 17-20 & Egg Stage record holder with 3-59

Congratulations to BR3 guest celebrity Rob Jebb on winning the classic 3 Peaks race, and with it his first ever Yorkshire fell's title, obviously the good luck tidings all the Bunny Runners articulated at the prize giving worked it's magic.