

BUNNY RUN ONE Keighley, West Yorkshire

BRITISH and English champion Ian Holmes held off Bingley team-mate Andy Peace to finish just 10 seconds down on Greg Hull's year old course record, *Gareth Webb reports.*

Had Hull, who was on hand to see Holmes' impressive display, been competing it's quite possible the record would have gone. As, perhaps, would the en-route Egg Stage mark as Holmes won for the ninth time in 3:24 - just two seconds outside his own record.

From the gun Holmes, currently in heavy training for the Three Peaks at the end of the month, and National Duathlon champion Peace, who passed up an event in Guernsey after recovering from a recent bout of flu, pulled well clear and ran side-by-side for well over two-thirds of the race.

Peace, first Briton (in ninth) at last summer's World Trophy, admitted "there was no point in killing myself" with this being his first race since the National and had to give best to Holmes on an ascent in the latter stages.

But after making up the deficit on the next climb, Peace saw his Bingley team-mate pull even further away on the tops to come home 13 seconds clear and announce himself as overwhelming favourite for the series - especially as Peace says he will not be running all

Although no records were set at the sharp end, Bradford's Steve Oldfield found himself much closer to setting new figures as he equalled his own year-old M40 record by finishing sixth overall in 18:28. Third-placed Gary Devine led Pudsey to the team title by just three points from Bingley.

Victoria Wilkinson claimed her first victory in the event after finishing second and third in previous attempts.

More significant, however, was that Wilkinson - 10th in last Decembèr's European Junior Cross Country (non-championship) race - finally achieved something that has eluded her over the years as she beat former world champion Carol Greenwood for the first time. Even more pleasing considering Greenwood had beaten her 18-year-old team-mate into second place at Broughton Hall three days earlier.

A delighted Wilkinson, who placed 57th - nine places ahead of Greenwood - said: "I ran a much better race than Saturday. Carol's training for the Three Peaks though and is doing much longer stuff than I'm doing. I'm aiming for the shorter, faster races this year and so I was confident I would have a bit more speed in my legs than Carol.

"I only decided to do the race a few days earlier and so it was pleasing - especially as I've still got a lot of speed left from the cross country season."

The race attracted a record 273-strong field (including 57 women) - a hugely impressive figure compared to 165 who competed in the corresponding race last year.

welcome 19th wedding anniversary present for race organiser Dave Woodhead, who said with tongue planted firmly in cheek: "What comes first, a Bunny Run or an anniversary? I'm not prepared to answer that one!"

Men (3M, 300ft)

1 I Holmes (Bing) 16:57; 2 A Peace (Bing) 17:10; 3 G Devine (P&B) 17:46; 4 G Oldfield (Brad Air) 18:05; 5 A Whalley (P&B) 18:24; 6 S Oldfield (Brad Air, M40) 18:28 (equals rec); 7 M Horrocks (CleM) 18:39; 8 A Brown (Leeds) 18:43; 9 D Woolley (Keigh RR) 18:47; 10 J Deegan (P&B) 18:56; 11 M Woods (CleM) 18:58; 12 A Maloney (Roch) 19:01; 13 S Neill (P&B) 19:08; 14 J Hall (Holm) 19:15; 15 R Skelton (Cald V) 19:19; 16 M Moore (Pudsey Pacers) 19:20; 17 J Brooks (Bing) 19:25; 18 B Goodison (Abbey R, M40) 19:26; 19 M Pickering (Ilk, M40) 19:27; 20 L Spencer (Keigh RR) 19:28

U16: S Asquith (Holm) 19:56; 2 G Pearce (Ilk) 21:43; 3 D Needham (Keigh RR) 21:52

M50: 1 P Carr (Keigh RR) 20:23; 2 P Ogden (Spen) 20:36; 3 T Knowles (Keigh RR) 21:55

M60: 1 B Crowther (Bing) 24:51; 2 J Newby (Todm) 27:32; 3 B Hargreaves (Todm) 27:52

TEAM: 1 Pudsey & Bramley 18; 2 Bingley 21

Egg Stage Prize: 1 Holmes 3:24; 2 Peace

Women

1 V Wilkinson (Bing, U20) 20:49; 2 C Greenwood (Bing) 21:02; 3 K Drake (Spen, W35) 22:01; 4 P Oldfield (Brad Air, W35) 23:18; 5 C Young (Leeds, W35) 23:26; 6 L Stoney (Spen, W35) 23:31; 7 A Lloyd (St B) 23:38; 8 H Johnson (unatt) 23:42; 9 L Pyne (Cald V, W35) 24:23; 10 E Tomes (Keigh RR) 24:25; 11 A Curle (Fellan)