

# Fun in the sun



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The hottest and driest month of April ever, or at least since meteorological records began, saw runners enjoying the spring sunshine as they 'hopped' to it every Tuesday night. Even the nations Easter Eggs were in jeopardy as the mercury shot up to 26C (79F), and it was reported that sun-kissed Blighty, and even Yorkshire, would be hotter than Sydney, Cape Town and even the Kenyan capital Nairobi. With all the hot weather it was reported that chocolate sales were down, but we can confirm that the fell running fraternity did their bit to keep them bouyant. The only concern for the hot spot of Haworth and the Old Sun Hotel was that all the chocolate eggs didn't melt or turn to goo.

These races are an institution for many, you could even say an Easter, or chocolate, pilgrimage for the 280 that raced each evening, and what would the Bunnies be without the legendary Ian Holmes? Of course he didn't disappoint; even now at 45 years of age he can show anyone a clean pair of heels, and true to form Ian duly obliged with his 30th win. This was at BR3, where with perfect race judgement he caught Egg Stage winner Tom Adams on the final climb, who had given tell-tale signs to Ian by looking back; he'll never do that again. Ian powered away to win in 15-04, which is only four

seconds outside his own V40 record set in 2007. Ian first hared on to the scene in 1994 winning BR2, BR3 & BR4 and won the Egg Stages there. He even managed to get within a second of Greg Hull's then record. He did rewrite the record books in 1997, and remains the record holder for the course on Harden Moor and he has six series wins and nineteen Egg Stages to his name.

## Hot Bunny Girl

Katie Walshaw is now the proud carer of 'Mary' the cuddly bunny perpetual trophy. "Why Mary?" you ask, well it's after the current record holder 'Scary' Mary Wilkinson. Holmfirth Harrier Katie is fast becoming a hot bunny girl, having now amassed six wins and two series titles, not to mention six Egg Stage wins. She now ranks equal fourth on the ladies all time winners list with Carol Greenwood. Just ahead are Pauline Munro and Blue Haywood, with seven wins each, and top of the carrot is Spenboro' great Kath Drake with nine wins. This year Katie recorded her fastest ever Egg Stage time at BR3 with 4-01, just two seconds outside Scary's record. While at BR2 the attentions of Shaftsbury and Barnet 1500m new Bunny, Philippa Aukett and three times winner Jo Buckley challenged her and pushed her to a very fast 17-30 only ten seconds outside Scary's 2007 record. Katie, along with series FV40

winner Kath Farquhar and rising FU14 stars Olivia Sykes, Erica and Lucy Byram helped Holmfirth ladies dominate the team competitions winning all the chocolate on offer. Flashy, Dashy and Splat was the relay team name which comprised of Katie running two legs and Kath the other. These two set a new ladies record of 34-00.

The famous yellow vests of Holmfirth were prevalent throughout all the events, just like bees round a honey pot. Olivia Sykes' dad, Jonathan, even provided the race with the best fancy dress – what a funny sight it was to see Donald Duck, not waddling, but showing his tail feathers to many as he embarrassed countless good runners finishing 74th overall just behind Rossendale Harrier Michael Toman.

## Wedded bliss

Then finally at the relay we had our very own Kate and Wills wedding team in Lucy Griffiths and Chris Needham, (Chris ran two legs) who were getting married the day after our future King and Queen. No egg baton for these two though who ran in bride and groom attire, but a rolling pin, what else?

Talking of weddings we had a 'Bunnymooner' in last years series winner Tom Adams who only four days previous had married his sweetheart Joanne in bonny Scotland. Cor, what a great



Above: Emily Cox of Keighley Et Craven  
Left: Ben Mounsey Egg Stage winner at BR1 Et now relay record holde. Middle: Donald Duck chased by Dale Leadbeater at BR3

start to married life winning BR2 and also eggsterminating the Egg Stage record as he ran away from Wardle Skyline winner Tim Ellis, Ian Holmes and 2010 BR3 winner Adam Osborne. 28 year old Tom has certainly thrown down the gauntlet with a time of 3-17 – any takers....Andi Jones?!

Tom Addison has grown up on a diet of Bunny Runs, even at the tender age of two he was watching out of his push chair as his dad Michael ran in the first ever race in 1992, where dad finished tenth overall just ahead of Scoffer Schofield and the race organiser. At BR1, the now 21 year old played it cool knowing that the lactic

acid that can build up by going too fast too soon is fatal, as Tom discovered when winning the Egg Stage in 2009 at BR3 before struggling to finish sixth. So now Tom used his knowledge to race it perfectly and win in 15-53. The Egg Stage winner here was Ben Mounsey in 3-45 who went on to finish fourth just over 30 seconds adrift.

Surprisingly with the dry conditions there were only three records set in the normal races with James Hall regaining his BU16 title, taking 23 seconds off William Smith's time to go under 16 minutes with 15-55. Jo Buckley set a new FV35 record with 18-09 and of course Tom Adams with the Egg Stage. But in the relay it was seven new

records with the Lancashire Lads winning in 28-50, second were Yorkshire Mixture the first mixed team in 29-45. Runny Bunnys, the BU16 team, were fourth in 29-54. The Separated at Birth team were first V40 in 31-44. Flashy, Dashy and Splat were first ladies in 34-00 and Holmfirth Pesky Kids first GU14 in 36-51, who all ran in fancy dress. Ben Mounsey was the final record setter improving Alistair Brownlee's time to 9-12.

Mayhem is the norm in the Old Sun Hotel with chocolate galore on the prize table and flying through the air. Flashing teeth are so last year, so pink glittery flashing bunny ears replaced them and could be seen everywhere !!



Can you spot Jonathan Sykes dressed as Donald Duck at BR3

# Me, Alfie and Sport

By FU14 2010 English & 2011 Bunny Champion Elizabeth Greenwood of Blackburn Harriers

Hi I'm Lizzie Greenwood and I'm 12 years old, and I like running, swimming, netball and tennis. I started running when I was 9 to help improve my biathlons, a run and a swim. I started by entering a few local races and it was there that I met Jackie and Richard Taylor who invited me to try Blackburn Harriers. I'm glad they did because I started to really enjoy running and joined Blackburn Harriers in 2008. I ran once a week and loved every minute. I couldn't really fit any more running in because I swam four times a week with Pioneer 79 swimming club which is based in Accrington. Recently, for convenience, I have changed to Burnley Bobcats swimming club which I am enjoying. My favourite stroke is Butterfly and my favourite event is 200m Butterfly. I also played netball and tennis twice a week. As I got older I realised that I enjoyed running better than my other hobbies so increased my training to three times a week, dropping my tennis and netball to just playing at school or with my friends.

At one of my training sessions my coach, Richard, suggested trying fell running. I decided to give it a go as a change from my favourite type of running, cross country. I've got to admit my first fell race, the Anniversary Wa in the Lakes in 2009, was very scary on the downhill, but overall I really enjoyed the race and continued to do fell runs throughout the season.



In 2010 I started secondary school at Clitheroe Grammar School which I really enjoy. I was also glad I didn't have to drop a training session to fit in all my homework!!! Some of my teachers at school have been very supportive and encouraging, always asking how I've done in races.

In 2010 I competed in five of the six FRA junior championship races. My most memorable fell race is the Anniversary Wa when I won the U12 race outright. I found Coiners the most difficult because it is a very long, hard race.

Also throughout the season I have competed in cross country races. My best performances have been fourth in the Inter-counties in Birmingham in 2010 and second in the London Mini Marathon in 2011. My brother was very pleased as he watched them both with a group of his friends on TV in London.

I have got an older brother, Martin 24, and a sister, Carla 22, not forgetting my crazy pup Alfie who usually attends most races. He's a Westie and really enjoys meeting all the other runners and dogs at races although this drives my mum crazy as he always pulls on the lead. He's much better behaved at home as he spends most of his time asleep on the back of the armchair.

My brother and sister both like sport and are

both P.E teachers, Martin in London and Carla in Pendle. They are both very encouraging and love to hear about my races, sometimes even coming to watch.

In my spare time I enjoy shopping and going to the cinema with my friends.

My favourite foods are Spaghetti Carbonara, any other pasta dishes, lots of fresh fruit and obviously chocolate!!!

My future ambitions are to win national or inter-county titles, but most of all I just want to carry on enjoying the sport.

My most recent fell races have been the fantastic Bunny Runs. I found the first one quite tough, not knowing what to expect, but as I got used to them I loved the other three. They were really good fun with my team mates Becky Taylor, Sally Searson, Katie Buckingham and Georgia Turgoose. I was amazed at the amount of Easter eggs given and thrown at the end in the very crowded pub. We all went home with our arms full of chocolate!!!

I'd like to thank Jackie, Richard and George from Blackburn Harriers because without them I wouldn't have been able to achieve any of my goals.

#### Lizzies main achievements to date:

- U12 English fell champion
- U12 English uphill champion
- Year 7 English schools fell champion
- Lancashire U11 cross country champion 2009
- Lancashire U13 cross country champion 2010.
- Lancashire 800m and 1500m U13 champion 2010
- National Biathlon Champion 2010

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We only did it for the chocolate!  
Left to right: Kath Farquhar, Katie Walshaw, Becky Taylor Et Lizzie Greenwood at BR3



Inset top: 2010 FU12 English fells champion. Below: 2nd FU14 at Coiners championship race 2011 This photo: Winning outright at Anniversary Wa in 2010

Photo © Dave Woodhead www.woodentops.org.uk

# Top of the hops

By Six times Bunny winner – Katie Walshaw of Holmfirth Harriers

Firstly, let me tell you a bit about myself and how I started running. I was born on the 2nd of August 1984 in Huddersfield which makes me 26. I live in Honley and have done all my life. I am currently doing some voluntary work at Meltham Primary School as an Education Training Assistant with Year 6 which I am loving.

I started running when I was seven years old. It was my teacher's idea at the time to try out a cross country race for schools around the area. I thought 'what the heck' and gave it a go, having never run before in my life! I did the race which was very testing, I got a stitch half way round and cried my way to the finish. The most amazing thing was that I came third out of about 200 girls from 7-11 yrs. I was snatched up then by someone from Holmfirth Harriers who was watching that day. I had some fantastic years from about 7-13 in all fields from track to road and cross country but my main passion was the fells! I just love the buzz of flying off the top of a hill, wind in my hair going flat out and also having the odd tumble!

I had a bit of a blip from 14-18 yrs. I just didn't seem to click with running, even though I would train and train, nothing seemed to happen. I just did the odd race here and there. I had another passion in my life, horses. I was four when I started riding and my dream was always to own a horse. I finally got one when I was 15, called Billy. He and my Springer Spaniel, Pepper are my life, as well as running. I have had Billy for 11 years now and I ride him regularly in the British Eventing pre novice class, where we finish in the top 20, which is no mean thing! Competing here means long

days out, with dressage, cross country and then finally show jumping. By the days end your thighs are really sore, much more than from any race I'd do. Billy seemed to give me a boost of confidence, which lifted me out of my sticky patch with my running. So, aged 18 I decided to make a fresh start. I grabbed my fell shoes, did my first fell race in six years and came third lady. From then on my running has gone from strength to strength. Over the past three years I have gone from 56th in the National Cross Country to 33rd this year and finished 13th in the Northern.

I did my first marathon three years ago at Blackpool in 3hrs 3mins. I have got many pb's over the past years. The main thing though is that I am once again enjoying running and hopefully I can keep going for many years to come.

One of my favourite races which I have done over the years has to be the Bunny Runs which are run round a quarry near Haworth. It is so much fun – three miles of pure chaos! It is for children and adults of all abilities. It is also a very fast and furious race, with a lot of pushing and shoving at the start to make sure you are in a good position.

The first year I was beaten by Blue Haywood, but I was defiant last year and got first lady. I retained my title this year too which I was very pleased about. The winnings are out of this world, I literally had a cardboard box full of chocolates and Easter Eggs and bunny ears!! I donated most of my winnings to the school I work at and Ivy Farm Stables, much to their delight.

Anyway, that's me and how things have panned out for me so far. For the future I would love to get

# Walshaw sets new standard

**HOLMFIRTH Harrier Katie Walshaw was on flying form at the Corner's fell race, finishing amongst the leading runners and slashing a sizeable chunk off the ladies' record.**

Corner's is acknowledged to be "a runners' fell race", with the 7-mile paths and tracks.

The recent spell of dry weather made the going though the notorious bogs at the edge of Sandalston Pasture were as wet as ever.

The race is organised by Calder Valley Fell Runners and – until this year's event – both the men's and ladies records were held by Calder Valley stalwarts in Ben Mousney 45 minutes 10 seconds and Jo Ruskey.

Taking advantage of the good conditions, Katie socketed around the course in a record-breaking time of 51.07.

Match to the obvious surprise of some of the onlookers, who weren't expecting to see a female runner in the top 10, she also finished in eighth place overall in a total field of 103.

Walshaw's record-breaking run also put her ahead of Holmfirth's first men to finish – Jonathan Sykes (53:17) and Gavin Baxter (53:54).

Next Harrier home and second female finisher, was ladies' captain Helen Berry (54:17).

The trio of Walshaw, Berry and newly-wed Lucy Neeldham secured the ladies team prize for Holmfirth.

The men's team prize went to Calder Valley. The race was won by Stuart Bond, of Dark Peak, in 45:17, who couldn't quite find the speed to shave a slice off the men's record.

Corner's was the fourth race in this year's Holmfirth Harriers fell championship.

The next race in the series is the Fairfield Horseshoe in the Lake District on 14 May.

Harriers results: Katie Walshaw (51:07), 13 Jonathan Sykes (53:17), 15 Gavin Baxter (53:54), 17 Helen Berry (54:17), 22 James St Paul, 26 Lucy Neeldham (55:42), 34 Paula, 40 Lee (56:14), 42 Debbie Hall (56:10), 65 Claire Ash (70:34).

**NEW RECORD:** Harriers' Katie Walshaw set a new ladies' record for the Corner's fell race in the Lake District on 14 May.

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Katie & Billy at the Northallerton one day event in May 2011



another horse, keep improving with my running and become a primary school teacher.

Since the Bunnies Katie has represented Yorkshire at the UKA McCain Fell Inter Counties, and been selected for England for the International Mount Snowdon race.

Photo © Dave Woodhead www.woodentops.org.uk



Katie Walshaw BR series winner 2011



Katie Walshaw with BR2 winner Tom Adams & 30 times winner Ian Holmes

Photo © Dave Woodhead www.woodentops.org.uk

# Return of the Rocket

By 2nd = V50 series winner Rob Sanders of Black Combe Runners

Friday morning: the second of two surprises this week, an unexpected telephone call. It was Dave Woodhead ringing to apologise for not giving me a bottle of Bunny Beer and Easter Egg as a prize for the overall series. I'd never actually met Dave, but anyone with an opening gambit like that merits a certain respect.

The first surprise of the week had come on checking the results of BR3 when, idly scanning the list of series winners, I saw my own name. 2nd = V50, unexpected considering I can't have been higher than tenth in that category in any of the races. Naturally in the post race euphoria of the pub I hadn't exactly been waiting, ears pricked, for my name to be shouted out above the din of hyper-active kids eager for chocolate, or the equally frantic clamour of adults for beer. Many of the latter were obviously in need of a tonic after being shown a clean pair of heels by most of the former. So when the call came I was already bathing in the sweet glow of success, entirely unfazed by potentially missing out on a tangible prize. After all are we not amateur

athletes, untainted by the grubby quest for material gain and driven only by dreams of glory, or the honour of merely taking part? My astonishment is understandable as it can't be often that a race organiser personally telephones someone from the slower half of the field to shower them with gifts. Needless to say this led me like a lamb to the slaughter when it came to the sting.

Which when it came it was a double blow. Perhaps I could write an article for 'The Fellrunner'.....and my photo would be in as well.

Though potentially as vain as the next person, I lack the kind of looks that are in any way enhanced by the photographer's art. That much will be immediately obvious from a cursory glance at whatever photo of my exploits, if any, is chosen to appear here. As for writing an article, 'not about the Bunny Runs, but about YOU', another problem presented itself. What to say that might engage the 'gentle reader' let alone the not so gentle? It can't be that hard to write



Rocket Rob Sanders putting the effort in at BR3

Photo © David Brett www.photos-dsb.co.uk

interestingly about the titans of our sport, but what about the Pooters?

'I was born in a town of A in the year 19.'

Two grand, no need for dostoevsky or Dickens to pen the athletic achievements of 2nd = V50 in the Bunny Runs; better to avoid any David Copperfield rubbish and cut to the chase.

Like many others, I started in the early 1980's boom and took to fell running because I was already a climber and rambler. Anyway, who in their right mind would run round Lake District roads when they could run over Lake District fells? So I joined Black Combe Runners in it's first year and started running fells...Ineptly by and large, although once being in the top half of the field at the Three Shires race (35th out of 75 in 2-38). 'Rocket Rob', my nickname in the club, was more a tribute to the rich vein of irony prevalent amongst the membership at the time, than any attempt at an accurate description of my prowess. Apart from being in the top 25 of the Ramblers 4x3000ers one year, which is only a walk really, and in the first dozen at the Langdale Gala where 13 runners ran, that was about it.

Like many others, I packed in when, after a recurring knee injury, I was daft enough to listen to a doctor who said I should stop running. I started again in the last two or three years doing odd races here and there, hence my arrival at the Bunnies.

I've been surprised and delighted to find twenty years on from my salad days that, thanks to a boom in fell runner numbers and presumably a boom in their waistlines, I could still muddle through just ahead of the last of the stragglers. So some things haven't changed. Fellrunners still show the same lack of the ego so prevalent in other sports; races are like the Bunnies, cheap to enter, though some entry fees are a bit cheeky; and running over the hills is as much fun as ever. Or most of the time: a knackered ankle brought on by a moment of carelessness while being pointlessly competitive on a club social run leaves me with ample time to pen this piece and wondering when the next race will be.

Not much of a rocket now but, in the words of one great American intellect, 'I'll be back', if only to see Dave for the beer.

Photo © David Brett www.photos-dsb.co.uk



Rocket Rob with 128 James Rowe & 127 Graham Dendle on the first climb at BR1