Buckleys celebrate anniversary in style

GREAT Britain international Alan Buckley, who ran in the World Cross-Country Championships, was the celebrity guest for Bunny Run One held at Peninstone Hill in Haworth on Tuesday evening.

Buckley, 32, of Harden Moor, set off the 188 runners (including 65 ladies) around the three-mile circuit in the first of a four-race series.

He got into the Easter spirit of the event wearing bunny ears and a bunny nose which accompanied his Great Britain tracksuit.

What a night it was for the Buckleys, as Alan's wife Jo, a recent Yorkshire half-marathon silver medallist, won the Egg Stage in 4.08 just ahead of English U-14s champion Mel Hyder.

Jo went on to win the ladies race in 18.37, a new record. Keighley & Craven Athletics Club

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finished only seven seconds behind and Hyder was a further nine seconds adrift.

Jo last won the race under her maiden name of Smith in 1998.

To round off the Buckley celebrations, the following day saw them popping corks for their first wedding anniversary.

Showing no signs of age, 41-year-old Ian Holmes, put the youngsters in their place winning his 23rd Bunny Run. His first win was in 1994, 13 years ago. He also set a new record with a time of 15.15. He did, however, lose in the Egg Stage to Holmfirth's Matthew Pierson who was timed at 3.28.

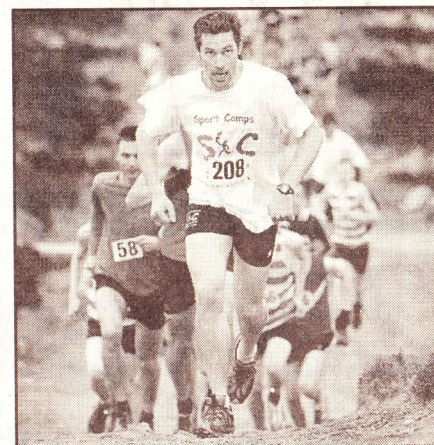Keighley & Craven AC won both team

awards with Will Smith, Steve McDermott and Rob Shaw placing fourth, sixth and ninth respectively in the mens race.

In the ladies race, Helen Glover, Holly Williams and Rosie Helliwell placed second, sixth and eighth respectively. Rosie also won the U-14s girls race while Silsden's Thomas Sessford won the U-16s boys title.

With the race video being shown in the Old Sun Hotel afterwards, extensive chocolate prizes and chocolate "throw-out" created an "eleggtrifying" atmosphere, said race organise David Woodhead.

Bunny Run Two will be held Tuesday, April 10, at 7.15pm with the Great Britain junior Ben Lindsey the guest celebrity.

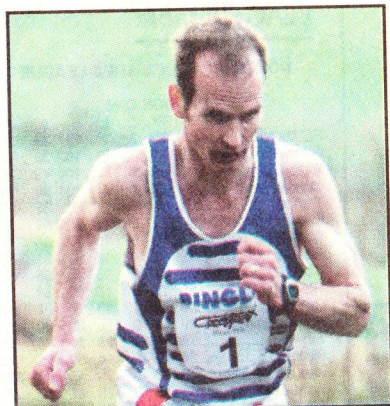Ring David Woodhead on 01535 669100 for further details.

UP THE HILL: Keighley & Craven AC's Will Smith finished fourth in Bunny Run One on Tuesday.

Ian Holmes dubbed 'the best fell runner ever'

KEIGHLEY born and bred Ian Holmes, who runs for Bingley Harriers, achieved another milestone in his illustrious career.

He won his 25th Bunny Run on Tuesday, topping a 212-strong field in the third part of four-race series at Peninstone Hill in Haworth.

The 41-year-old has won all classic races - Three Peaks, Ben Nevis, Snowden, Scarfell and Burnsall - "You name it, his name is on the trophy, and not just once," said Bunny Run organiser Dave Woodhead. "The accolade of best fell runner ever sits nicely on his shoulders."

To acknowledge this achievement, after Tuesday night's race he was presented with a statue of Billy Whizz, the Beano comic cartoon character. The statue featured the inscription, "To commemorate Ian 'Billy Whizz' Holmes winning 25 Bunny Runs".

THE BEST: Keighley's Ian Holmes won his 25th Bunny Run on Tuesday.

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On the night, Holmes reduced his own course record by 10 seconds, to 15 minutes, with youngster Jonathan Hare second who was also inside Holmes' old time.

Travelling from his home in the Lake District, former Sky running world champion and English and British fell running champion Robert Jebb, the guest celebrity, finished third.

Jebb, Holmes and Martin Peace all ran for Bingley Harriers, which won the team prize from Sports Camp of Keighley.

Last year's Bunny Run One winner Mary Wilkinson, another Bingley Harriers international, returned to break ladies record by 69 seconds. She also took the

Egg Stage in 4.08.

Mel Hyder again broke he girls U-14s record with girls U-16s winner Emma Flanagan third overall.

Improving Keighley & Craven AC lady Holly Williams finished sixth, two places higher and 40 seconds faster than Rosie Hellawell, who was second in the girls U-14s.

Thomas Sessford of Silsden was another record breaker, finishing 21st overall and taking the boys U-16s title.

In the mens Egg Stage, Matt Pierson won yet again but had Holmes breathing down his neck at the line.

The fourth and final Bunny Run of the year will be held next Tuesday starting at 7.30pm. The celebrity will be Haworth's world downhill mountain bike champion Karen Ballentine.

For more information about the race, contact Dave Woodhead on 01535 669100.

Birthday girl fun at second Bunny Run

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TWO-hundred chocolate-chasing Bunny Runners "hared" around the Bunny Run Two, at Penistone Hill, in Haworth, on Tuesday night.

Celebrity guest Ben Lindsey, a Great Britain junior international in cross-country who first started running in the Bunny Runs, also competed in the event.

Unfortunately he just missed out in the fierce battle for Egg Stage award with last week's winner Matthew Pierson just having the edge. Although a virus picked up at the World Cross-Country Championships in Kenya didn't help Lindsey's cause.

Records tumbled throughout the evening with Keighley's Ian Holmes, representing Bingley Harriers, winning the event. He has now amassed 24 Bunny Run victories and took five seconds off his record on the night.

Race organiser David Woodhead said: "Ian didn't contest the Egg Stage award knowing he didn't have the speed, now age 41, and so left it for the youngsters."

Jo Buckley of Harden Moor also set a new record of 18.35 repeating last week's win with U-14 Mel Hyder of Dallam AC only one place behind as she set a new U-14 record.

Twenty-year-old Helen Glover of Keighley & Craven AC was third as she was feeling the effects of running up and down the Pendle Hill Fell Race on Saturday where she also finished third.

BIRTHDAY GIRL: Rosie Hellawell of Keighley leads the pack at Bunny Run Two at Penistone Hill on Tuesday night.

Sports Camp, a local team, won the men's team event. Their runners, Will Smith in fifth, Rob Shaw in eighth and Adam McLean in ninth were all dressed in pink on the night.

Keighley & Craven AC won the ladies team race and their top runners were Glover in third, Rosie Hellawell in fourth and Holly Williams in eighth.

It was also Rosie's 13th birthday along with her mum Steph's 40th birthday.

Rosie was second in U-14s with a time of 19.52, and Steph, running in her first ever competitive race, finished in 195th in a time of 31.35.

All of the Bunny runners sang "Happy Birthday" to the Keighley pair and gave them a ten-second head start in the race.

● The celebrity guest for next Tuesday's Bunny Run Three is British and English fell champion and cyclo-cross superstar Robert Jebb who runs for Bingley Harriers. The race starts at 7.30pm.

'Scary' Mary breaks another race record

HAWORTH'S own world down-hill mountain bike champion Karen Ballentine started the fourth race in the Bunny Run series at Penistone Hill in Haworth on Tuesday.

Ballentine, wearing her world champion rainbow jersey and also dressed as Playboy bunny girl, was given a head start on the 197 runners.

In the men's race, Silsden's Graham Pearce finished third in fastest time of the series behind 41-year-old Greg Hull and Egg Stage winner Matthew Pierson.

Hull, of Leeds, first won this race in 1993 before winning again in 1996, so his hat-trick of wins is spread over 14 years.

The performance of the night went to Bingley Harrier "Scary" Mary Wilkinson, who broke the four minute barrier to win the Egg Stage in 3.59, slicing two seconds off Blue Haywood's time.

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The 26-year-old, nicknamed "Scary" because of how high she finishes against the men and her downhill running ability, finished 21st overall just ahead of U-16s winner Thomas Sessford of Silsden. Wilkinson reduced her own record time by six seconds.

The second lady was Harden Moor's Jo Buckley, who won the overall ladies series from Haworth's Helen Glover.

While Keighley's Ian Holmes, who did not run on Tuesday, reigned supreme by winning the mens series.

The Bunny Run relays takes place next Tuesday. Race organiser Dave Woodhead explained: "Any team of three runners can take part and the relay baton is an egg."

For further details, ring Dave on 01535 669100.

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